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The Making of a Christian Atlantic

The Role of Islam in the Early Modern Emergence of ‘the West’

Abstract. This article sets out to define the role of Islam in the early modern emergence of a Christianized transatlantic sphere that was to stand at the origins of our contemporary notion of “the West”. Part One discusses various sources and scholarly opinions with regards to the role played by Islam in the European-Christian discovery, conquest and settlement of South America. It shows that, in spite of early Muslim ventures into the Atlantic, the Islamic sphere ultimately failed to take advantage of its Atlantic coast-lines in the medieval period. Part Two argues that, from the early modern period onwards, the Islamic sphere was systematically sidelined by Christian maritime powers in their quest for dominance over the Atlantic sphere. Part Three explains how these European-Christian efforts to deny Islam access to the Americas are reflected in the early modern Muslim documentation of the Americas, to the extent that the earliest description and history of South America in Arabic, dealt with in Part Four, was written as late as two centuries after Columbus reached the Caribbean by a Christian, i.e. the Chaldean priest Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣili from Baghdad. Against this backdrop, the article concludes with some reflections on the significance of this documentary evidence for the emergence of the transatlantic sphere known as “the West” in English, “al-gharb” in Arabic, a sphere that was almost untouched by Islam until the twentieth century.

Around the year 417 CE, the late Roman historiographer Orosius contemplated the successful Christianization of the Roman Empire in his *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*. Although menaced by ‘barbarian invasions’, the empire as depicted by Orosius had, in his time, achieved a perfect state of order: it had abolished the chaotic multiplicity of pagan divinities, exchanging it for the rule of one single God, a process of unification paralleled in the secular sphere by the exchange of a multiplicity of unreliable legal systems with the ubiquitous rule of (Christianized) Roman law. Thanks to this state of affairs, Orosius, who had left his native town Braga for North Africa and the Holy Land, was free to travel the Mediterranean, in his eyes clearly a Roman-Christian sea:

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“The breadth of the East, the vastness of the North, the extensiveness of the South, and the largest and very secure seats of the great islands are of my law and name because I approach Christians and Romans as a Christian and Roman. I do not fear the gods of my host; I do not fear his religion as my death; nor do I have such a place that I fear, where the owner is allowed to do what he wishes and it is not permitted a stranger to act in a way that is proper, where the law of my host is that which is not mine; the one God, who in the days when He Himself willed to become known, established this realm’s unity, is both loved and feared by all; the same laws, which are subject to one God, prevail everywhere; and wherever I shall go unknown, I do not fear sudden violence as if I be unprotected. Among Romans, as I have said, a Roman; among Christians, a Christian; among men, a man; I implore the state through its laws, the conscience through religion, nature through its communion.”¹

Written around twelve and a half centuries later, a text of the late seventeenth century contains a comparable statement. Now, however, God has not revealed himself in the Christianization of a Mediterranean-centred Roman Empire but by allowing Catholic Christianity to spread into the Atlantic sphere and by bringing Atlantic peoples into the folds of the Holy Church:

“With regard to the Holy Church, bride of our Lord the Messiah, to which—after His Ascension—Saint Peter the Rock was appointed as its head and administrator together with those succeeding him: it has not ceased to extend its grasp and to enlarge its protecting care, to the degree that there is no place or region in the four inhabited corners of the world in which you will fail to find the preaching of the Gospel and the truth of the righteous faith among different peoples and in various languages. The damned slanderer, the enemy of what is good and rewarding, however, did not cease in his efforts and vigilance to confuse the conscience of the believers as to overwhelm them and to tear them away from the bosom of the Church, their mother. (...) When the aforementioned groups detached themselves from the bosom of the

1 Paulus Orosius, *History against the Pagans*, trans. Irving Woodward Raymond, New York 1936, 176–177 (Book V, chap. 2,3–6); Paulus Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII accedit eiusdem liber apologeticus*, ed. Carolus Zangemeister (CSEL 5) Vienna 1882, 280–281 (lib. V, cap. 2,3–6): *latitudo orientis, septentrionis copiositas, meridiana diffusio, magnarum insularum largissimae tutissimaeque sedes mei iuris et nominis sunt, quia ad Christianos et Romanos Romanus et Christianus accedo. non timeo deos hospitis mei, non timeo religionem eius necem meam, non habeo talem quem pertimescam locum, ubi et possessori liceat perpetrare quod uelit et peregrino non liceat adhibere quod conuenit, ubi sit ius hospitis quod meum non sit; unus Deus, qui temporibus, quibus ipse innotescere uoluit, hanc regni statuit unitatem, ab omnibus et diligitur et timetur; eadem leges, quae uni Deo subiectae sunt, ubique dominantur; ubicumque ignotus accessero, repentinam uim tamquam destitutus non pertimesco. inter Romanos, ut dixi, Romanus, inter Christianos Christianus, inter homines homo legibus inploro rempublicam, religione conscientiam, communiōne naturam.*

Holy Church, the Lord Messiah decided to admit various people of different ethnicity and character (...) who had been living in the fourth world-region which was hidden to the eyes and concealed to thoughts, so that even the great priest and doctor of the Holy Church, Saint Augustine, used to believe that this world-region was not inhabited by humans. Our plan is to bear witness to and to relate how these aforementioned peoples [re]turned to the true faith and how they were integrated into the bosom of the Holy Church (...). The region, about which we intend to speak, extends far in length and breadth and is larger in length and breadth than the three other regions known as Asia, Africa and Europe. It has been given a new name: they called it America (...).²

This quotation does not only merit attention because it claims the Atlantic sphere for Catholic Christianity, even regarding the spread of the latter to the Americas as a divine act of compensation for the losses incurred by the Catholic Church due to the rise of protestantism. Its peculiarity derives from the fact that it forms part of the introduction to the earliest description of (South) America written in the Arabic language.

The article at hand sets out to explain why it is no coincidence that this Arabic text was not written by a Muslim but by a Christian. Part One will discuss various sources and scholarly opinions with regard to the role played by Islam in the European-Christian discovery, conquest and settlement of South America. It will establish that, in spite of early Muslim ventures into the Atlan-

2 Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣilī, *siyāḥa*, ed. Antūn Rabbāṭ, Beirut 1906, 2–3: *fa-ammā l-kanīsa l-muqaddasa ‘arūs al-sayyid al-Masiḥ allatī ju‘ila Mār Butrus al-ṣakhra ra’suhā wa-mudabbiruhā min ba‘da ṣu‘ūdihi al-majīd wa-min ba‘dihī li-lladhīna yakhlufūnahu fa-lam tazal tamtadd aṭnābuhā wa-tatawassa’ aknāfuhā ḥattā innahu lam yakhlū makān wa-iqlīm min arba‘at aṭrāf al-maskūna illā wa-tajid fihī karāzat al-injil wa-ṣiḥḥat al-īmān al-mustaqīm bayna ṭawā’if mukhtalifa wa-lughāt mutafarriqa. wa-ammā l-la‘in al-thilāb, ‘aduw al-khayr wa-l-thawāb, fa-lam yazal mujtahidan wa-muḥtarisan ‘alā taza‘za‘ damā’ir al-mu‘minīn ḥattā yuṭghihum wa-yaṭraḥuhum min aḥḍān al-kanīsa ummihim. (...) fa-lammā tafarraqat al-ṭawā’if al-mudhkara min aḥḍān al-kanīsa al-muqaddasa shā’a al-sayyid al-Masiḥ an yudkhal ‘iwaḍahum anāsan mukhtalifi l-ajnās wa-l-ṭibbā’, gharībī al-alsun wa-l-lughāt (...), wa-kānū sākinīn fī l-iqlīm al-rābī’ alladhī kāna mukhfiyan ‘an al-abṣār wa-mastūran ‘an al-afkār, ḥattā inna l-qiddīs al-‘azīm mu‘allim al-kanīsa al-muqaddasa mār Aghuṣṭīnūs kāna yazunn anna hādhā l-iqlīm huwa ghayr maskūn min al-bashariyyīn. fa-sabilunā an nabarhan wa-nubayyin ruju’ hādhihi al-ṭawā’if al-madhkūra ilā l-īmān al-ḥaqīqī wa-iḥtīdānihim li-l-kanīsa al-muqaddasa (...). wa-ammā hādhā al-iqlīm alladhī qaṣadnā al-takallum ‘anhu fa-huwa mumtadd al-ṭul wa-l-‘arḍ wa-huwa akbar min al-thalāthat aqālīm al-ukhrā al-ma’rūfa bi-Āsyā wa-Afrīkā wa-Ūrubbā ṭūlan wa-‘arḍan, wa-qad ja‘alū lahu isman jadīdan wa-sammūhu Mīrikā (...), Reprinted as Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣilī, *al-dhahab wa-l-‘āṣifa: riḥlat Ilyās al-Mawṣilī ilā Amrīkā. awwal riḥla sharqiyya ilā l-‘ālam al-jadīd*, ed. Nūrī al-Jarrāḥ, Beirut 2001, 28–29. On this passage see John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory*, in: *Past and Present* 222 (2014), 1–93, here 71–74.*

tic, the Islamic sphere ultimately failed to take advantage of its Atlantic coastlines in the medieval period. Part Two will show that, from the early modern period onwards, the Islamic sphere was systematically sidelined by Christian maritime powers in their quest for dominance over the Atlantic sphere. Part Three will trace how these European-Christian efforts to deny Islam access to the Americas is reflected in the early modern Muslim documentation of the Americas, to the effect that the earliest description and history of South America in Arabic, dealt with in Part Four, was written, almost two hundred years after Columbus reached the Caribbean, by a Christian—the Chaldean priest Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣilī from Baghdad. On this basis, the article will conclude with some reflections on the significance of this documentary evidence for the emergence of the transatlantic sphere known as ‘the West’ in English, ‘*al-gharb*’ in Arabic, a sphere that was almost untouched by Islam until the twentieth century.

The Role of Islam in the Disclosure of the Atlantic Sphere

Scholarship has proposed various hypotheses that explain the expansion of Christian Europe into the Atlantic sphere against the background of its relations to the Islamic sphere. In line with his well-known theory of “Challenge and Response”, Arnold Toynbee described European-Christian expansionism into the Atlantic sphere as a Western response to centuries of Muslim alias “Syriac” pressure exerted on the medieval Franks and the Christian realms of the Iberian Peninsula. According to Toynbee, the Muslim invasion in 711 as well as subsequent raids against northern Christian societies provoked an expansionist drive among the latter which expressed itself first in the so-called reconquest (*Reconquista*) of the Iberian Peninsula,³ then in the Portuguese and Castilian surge into the Atlantic.

“[T]he Western reaction to Syriac pressure which declared itself on the battle-field of Tours in A.D. 732 continued in force and increased in momentum on this front until, some eight centuries later, its impetus was carrying the Portuguese vanguard of Western Christendom right out of the Iberian Peninsula and onward overseas round Africa to Goa and Malacca and Macao, and the Castilian vanguard onward across the Atlantic to Mexico and thence

3 On the ambiguities of the term *Reconquista* see Nikolas Jaspert, *Reconquista. Interdependenzen und Tragfähigkeit eines wertekategorialen Deutungsmusters*, in: *Christlicher Norden—Muslimischer Süden. Ansprüche und Wirklichkeiten von Christen, Juden und Muslimen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, ed. Alexander Fidora and Matthias Tischler, Münster 2011, 445–465.

across the Pacific to Manila. These Iberian pioneers of Western Christendom performed an unparalleled service for the civilization which they represented. They expanded the horizon, and thereby potentially the domain, of our Western Society from an obscure corner of the Old World until it came to embrace all the habitable lands and navigable seas on the surface of the planet. It is owing to this Iberian energy and enterprise that Western Christendom has grown, like the grain of mustard seed in the parable, until it has become ‘the Great Society’: a tree in whose branches all the nations of the Earth have come and lodged. This latter-day Westernized World is the peculiar achievement of Western Christendom’s Iberian pioneers; and the Western energy which performed this feat was evoked and sustained and wrought up to its high intensity by the challenge of Syriac pressure on the Iberian front.⁴

Many of Toynbee’s premises are not necessarily shared by contemporary research, among others his definition of the Muslims as carriers of “Syriac” civilization, his reduction of the so-called *Reconquista* to an ideologically motivated expansionist drive and his mechanistic approach to world history in general. Notwithstanding, scholarship has not entirely discarded the idea that the European-Christian expansion into the Atlantic can be explained with reference to certain features of the so-called Spanish *Reconquista*,⁵ as well as to more general Mediterranean preliminaries. Recent medievalist research has repeatedly defined the high and late medieval Mediterranean as a kind of ideological, logistic, military and economic ‘training ground’ for ensuing Atlantic activities. Latin-Christian expansionism into the Mediterranean, as expressed in the Norman establishment in southern Italy and Sicily, the crusades, the conquest of Constantinople and the annexation of great parts of the Byzantine Empire in and after 1204, the *Reconquista* and the establishment of highly active merchant diasporas in all important ports of the southern and eastern Mediterranean can certainly be regarded as experimental variants of conquest and colonization.⁶ As Robert Bartlett put it:

4 Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 2, London 1963, reprint of 1934, 203–204; see Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History. Abridgement of Volumes I–VI by David Churchill Somervell*, Oxford 1987, Reprint of 1946, 124–125.

5 See Abbas Hamdani, Columbus and the Recovery of Jerusalem, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99/1 (1979), 39–48; José-Juan López-Portillo (ed.), *Spain, Portugal and the Atlantic Frontier of Medieval Europe*, Farnham 2013; Thomas Benjamin, *The Atlantic World. Europeans, Africans, and their Shared History 1400–1900*, Cambridge 2009, 1–325.

6 See Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (ed.), *Coloniser au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1995; Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (ed.), *Le partage du monde. Échanges et colonisations dans la Méditerranée médiévale*, Paris 1998; Peter Feldbauer, Gottfried Liedl and John Morrissey (ed.), *Von der mediterranen zur atlantischen Expansion*, Vienna 1999; Felicitas Schmieder, *Das Werden des mittelalterlichen Europa aus dem Kulturkontakt. Vorausset-*

“The mental habits and institutions of European racism and colonialism were born in the medieval world: the conquerors of Mexico knew the problem of the Mudejars, the planters of Virginia had already been planters of Ireland. (...) The European Christians who sailed to the coasts of the Americas, Asia and Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries came from a society that was already a colonizing society. Europe, the initiator of one of the world’s major processes of conquest, colonization and cultural transformation, was also the product of one.”⁷

Complementing research on the medieval and early modern expansion of Christian Europe, various scholars have made efforts to understand to which degree Muslims were involved in the exploration of the Atlantic sphere. Extreme positions go as far as asserting that Muslims, not European Christians, have to be regarded as the ‘real’ discoverers of the Americas. Such allegations are based on a handful of medieval Arabic-Islamic sources as well as on research highlighting the Islamic contributions to the fields of geography, cartography, navigation and nautical science.

One should recall in this context that the Muslim conquest of North Africa in the late seventh century provided the expanding Islamic sphere with access to the Atlantic. Contemplating that, from the seventh century onwards, Muslim fleets became so active in the Mediterranean that Henri Pirenne was prompted to refer to its western parts as a “lac musulman”.⁸ One wonders why this naval force was not also used to surge forth into the Atlantic. Christophe Picard and Andreas Obenaus have shown that the Viking raids on the Iberian Peninsula in the ninth century actually provoked investment into the maritime infrastructure in the Atlantic port cities of al-Andalus while the Iberian engagement of two North African dynasties—the Almoravids and the Almohads—was only possible because maritime communication facilitated the administration of these African-Iberian empires in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁹

zungen und Anfänge der europäischen Expansion, in: *Expansionen in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Renate Dürr, Gisela Engel and Johannes Süßmann, Berlin 2005, 27–41; Jérôme Baschet, *La civilisation féodale. De l’an mil à la colonisation de l’Amérique*, Paris 2006; José Juan López-Portillo (ed.), *Spain, Portugal and the Atlantic Frontier of Medieval Europe*, Aldershot 2013. Also see Jock H. Galloway, The Mediterranean Sugar Industry, in: *Geographical Review* 67/2 (1977), 177–194, on links between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic sphere with regard to the crop, the organization of labour and variants of colonization, as well as the article by Iván Armenteros Martínez in this volume.

⁷ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Exchange*, London 1993, 313–314.

⁸ Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, Paris 1992, 119–120, 215. On early Muslim fleets see Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland. Das Mittelmeer unter byzantinischer und arabischer Hegemonie (650–1040)*, Berlin 1966.

Arabic-Islamic texts written between the tenth and the fourteenth century document several instances in which Muslims ventured forth into what these sources denominate “the Ocean” (*al-Uqyānus*), “the encompassing sea” (*al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ*) or even “the sea of darkness(es)” (*baḥr al-zulmāt*).¹⁰ Two of these texts shall be presented here. Around the middle of the tenth century, the Arabic-Islamic polymath al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) reported on an Andalusian expedition into this maritime space:

“Some claim that this sea is the source of water for all other seas. Strange things are reported about it (...), stories of people who shunned the risk and exposed themselves to its dangers on their own, some escaping unscathed while others perished, and of the things they lived through and saw. Among these was a man from al-Andalus called Khashkhāsh. He belonged to the youth of Córdoba, gathered a number of them and set out into the encompassing ocean with them in ships which he had equipped in preparation. He disappeared for a while and then returned with large booty (...).”¹¹

Around the middle of the twelfth century, the Arabic-Islamic geographer al-Idrīsī (d. c. 560/1165) reported on a group of adventurers who had started out into the “sea of darkness” from Lisbon, “to find out what was in it and where it ends.” On a transport ship equipped for several months of travel, they sailed westward for a period of approximately twelve days, then southward for another twelve days, eventually reaching an island inhabited by sheep-like animals. After sailing southward for another twelve days, they encountered an inhabited island. Communication with the inhabitants was possible thanks to an autochthonous interpreter with Arabic skills. Pushed by the west wind for a period of three days, the travellers then reached another location populated by Berbers who claimed that Lisbon lay at a distance of around two months of travel.¹² Considering that Columbus’ fleet setting out from the Iberian city

9 Christophe Picard, *L’Océan Atlantique musulman: de la conquête arabe à l’époque almohade. Navigation et mise en valeur des côtes d’al-Andalus et du Maghreb occidental (Portugal, Espagne, Maroc)*, Paris 1997; also see Christophe Picard, *La mer et les musulmans d’Occident au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1997; Andreas Obenaus, *Islamische Perspektiven der Atlantikexpansion*, 2 vols, Vienna 2013.

10 See Obenaus, *Islamische Perspektiven* (cf. n. 9), vol. 2, 212–250.

11 al-Masʿūdī, *murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawhar*, ed. Charles Barbier de Meynard and Abel Pavet de Courteille, vol. 1, Paris 1861, 257–258 (cap. XII): *wa-tadḥḥab qawm ilā anna ḥādhā l-baḥr aṣl mā’ sā’ir al-biḥār wa-lahu akhbār ‘ajība (...) wa-fī akhbār man gharrara wa-khāṭira bi-naḥsihi wa-man najā minhum wa-man talafa wa-mā shāhadū minhu wa-mā rā’ū wa-idh minhum rajul min ahl al-Andalus yuqāl lahu Khashkhāsh wa-kāna min fatyān Qurṭuba wa-aḥdāthihim fa-jama’a jamā’a min aḥdāthihā wa-rakaba bihim fī marākib ista’addahā ḥādhā al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ fa-ghāba thumma inthanā bi-ghanā’im wāsi’a (...).*

Palos de la Frontera took around one week to reach the Canaries, then another forty days to reach San Salvador, the travellers mentioned by al-Idrīsī cannot have sailed very far across the Atlantic.¹³

In answer to the question to what extent Muslims were involved in the European discovery of the Americas, various scholars have justifiably pointed to the important contributions by Arabic-Islamic geographers, cartographers and navigators to late medieval and early modern European-Christian geographical and nautical knowledge and skills.¹⁴ Fuat Sezgin even went as far as postulating that “the maps used by European ‘discoverers’ must have been of Arabic-Islamic provenance”, given “that many of the new islands and coastlines are drawn in those maps with a degree of longitudinal precision that was not approached in Europe prior to the eighteenth century.” Since Sezgin is also convinced that contemporary Spanish texts mention pre-Columbian contact between South America and the Islamic sphere, he can be clearly identified as one of the defenders of the hypothesis that Muslims discovered the Americas earlier than the Europeans—a hypothesis recently taken up by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.¹⁵

Even those lacking experience with historical sources on late medieval nautical and cartographical knowledge in the Mediterranean cannot miss the fact that the debate about who first ‘discovered’ the Americas is not only highly

12 al-Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum sive “Liber ad eorum delectationem qui terras peragrarare studeant”*, ed. Alesio Bombaci, Enrico Cerulli, Francesco Gabrieli et al., fasc. 5–8, Leiden 1980–1983, 548–549 (*al-iqlīm al-rābī*’, *al-juz’ al-awwal*): *wa-min madīnat Lishbūna kāna khurūj al-mugharrarīn fī rukūb baħr al-ẓulmāt li-ya’rifū mā fīhi wa-ilā ayna intihā’uħu (...)*; see *Géographie d’Édrisi*, trans. Pierre Amédée Jaubert, vol. 2, Paris 1840, 26–29.

13 On the period needed by Columbus’ fleet to cross the Atlantic see Urs Bitterli, *Die Entdeckung Amerikas. Von Kolumbus bis Alexander von Humboldt*, Munich 2006, 58.

14 Donald Hill, *Islamic Science and Engineering*, Edinburgh 1993, 34–54, 187–202; Henri Grosset-Grange and Henri Rouquette, Arabic Nautical Science, in *Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science*, ed. Roshdi Rashed and Régis Morelon, London 1996, vol. 1, 202–242. See the most recent contribution on this question by Obenaus, *Islamische Perspektive* (cf. n. 9), vol. 1, 131–144; *ibid.*, vol. 2, 171–178, 331–338.

15 Fuat Sezgin, Die Entdeckung des amerikanischen Kontinents durch muslimische Seefahrer vor Kolumbus, in: *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Bd. 13: Mathematische Geographie und Kartographie im Islam und ihr Fortleben im Abendland: Autoren*, ed. Fuat Sezgin, Leiden 2007, 2–39, here: 28, 32. Sezgin’s hypothesis has recently been backed by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, see, Muslims discovered America, says Turkish president, in: *The Guardian*, 16 November 2014, URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/16/muslims-discovered-america-erdogan-christopher-columbus> (accessed 11 January 2016). See the harsh and equally ideological, if not islamophobic criticism of Sezgin’s hypothesis in Frederick William Dane, *The Muslim Discovery of America*, Nordestedt 2013.

ideological but ultimately pointless. Regardless of who ‘discovered’ the American continent, the fact remains that European Christians and not Muslims settled, colonized and exploited this ‘New World’. As will be shown in the following pages, the European Christians involved in these processes deliberately and systematically constructed bulwarks against what they regarded as an Islamic ‘infiltration’ of the Americas by taking expedient legal and practical measures.

Bulwarks against the Islamic Infiltration of the Americas

Legal rulings issued since 1493 prove that the Spanish Crown made great efforts to keep Muslims out of South America as soon as its discovery had taken place. Although in need of skilled labourers for the development of the earliest Spanish outpost in the Caribbean, the island Hispaniola, the so-called ‘Catholic Kings’ Isabella of Castile and Fernando of Aragon, insisted in 1493 that no Muslims (*moros*) be recruited.¹⁶ As stated in a royal instruction issued in 1501, the exclusion of Muslims from the new colonies was motivated by the wish not to endanger the future Christianization of the indigenous population:

“Likewise, we have to bring about the conversion of the Indios to our Holy Catholic Faith with much care. To avoid that persons who are suspicious with regard to their faith, present an impediment to the aforementioned conversion, do not consent nor create the opportunity that Moors (*moros*), Jews, heretics, persons reconciled to the faith (*reconciliados*) nor recent converts to our faith go over there, with the exception of black slaves who have been born into the sphere of Christians who either are our subjugated or natural subjects.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Martín Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los Españoles desde fines del siglo XV*, vol. 2: *Documentos de Colón y de las primeras poblaciones*, Madrid 1859, 47 (n° 23, 23 May 1493): *vos mandamos que luego busqueis en esa frontera los dichos veinte hombre de campo, é otro hombre que sepa hacer las dichas acequias, que non sea moro, que sean hombres seguros é fiables (...)*.

¹⁷ *Cedulario indiano recopilado por Diego de Encinas*, 4 vols, Madrid 1596 (facsimile reprint 1945–1946), vol. 1, 455: *Ytem, por quanto nos con mucho cuidado avemos de procurar la conversión de los indios a nuestra Santa Fe Católica; y si hallá fuesen personas sospechosas en la fe a la dicha conversión podría ser algún impedimento, no consentiréys, ni daréys lugar que allá vayan moros ni judíos, ni herejes, ni reconciliados, ni personas nuevamente convertidas a nuestra fe, salvo si fuesen esclavos negros o otros esclavos negros que ayan nacido en poder de cristianos nuestros súbditos y naturales*. See Louis Cardaillac, *Le problème morisque en Amérique*, in: *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 12 (1976), 283–306, here: 285; Antonio Garrido Aranda, *El morisco y la inquisición novohispana. Actitudes antiislámicas en la sociedad colonial*, in: *Andalucía y America en el siglo XVI*, Madrid 1984, 501–533, here: 502.

A ruling from 1522 tying the right of non-Christians to travel to the colonies to royal permission shows that some exceptions were made. At the same time, however, the law extends the general travel prohibition to the children of the aforementioned non-Christian groups.¹⁸ In 1526, this prohibition, repeated in 1531 and 1550, was further applied to slaves who had grown up under Muslim rule.¹⁹ These and other provisions show that the Spanish Crown took great pains in the sixteenth century to ensure that the newly acquired colonies would be kept free from any form of non-Catholic religious influence. As Charles V stated in 1543, the New World was supposed to become Catholic, the spread of Islam to be avoided at all costs:

“Know that we have been informed that to these regions have passed and everyday pass a number of male and female Berber slaves as well as other free persons such as recently converted Moors and their children who have been prohibited from passing because of the huge inconveniences which, according to experience, have appeared as a consequence of their passage. And [they have also been prohibited from passing] because one has heard of the damage potentially produced by those having passed and those passing in the future, because in a new territory such as this one where the Faith is newly planted, it is adequate to avoid every opportunity of sowing and publicizing the sect of Muhammad or any other sect that offends God our Lord and commits perjury vis-à-vis our holy Catholic Faith.”²⁰

¹⁸ *Recopilacion de las leyes de los Reinos de las Indias*, vol. 4, Madrid ³1774, 4 (Libro IX, Titulo XXVI, Ley xv): *Que ninguno nuevamente convertido de moro ó judio, ni sus hijos, pasen à las Indias sin expresa licencia del rey.*

¹⁹ *Recopilacion de las leyes de los Reinos de las Indias*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 18), 4 (Libro 9, Titulo 26, Ley 19): *Que no passen esclavos Gelofes, ni de Levante, ni criados entre Moros* [11 May 1526; 28 September 1531; 16 July 1550]; *Cedulario Indiano*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 17), 384: *Y porque los negros que ay en aquellas partes de Leuante, muchos dellos diz que son de casta de Moros y otros tratan con ellos, y en una tierra nueua donde se planta agora nuestra santa Fe Católica, no conuiene que gente desta calidad passe a ella, por los inconuinentes que dello podrian suceder: vos mando que en ninguna manera ni por ninguna via dexeis ni consintais passar a las nuestras Indias, islas e Tierra firme del mar Oceano, ninguno esclauo negro, que sea de Leuante ni se aya traído de alla, ni otros ningunos negros que se ayan criado con Morisco, aunque sean de casta de negros de Guinea.* [1550]

²⁰ *Cedulario Indiano*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 17), 382: *Sepades que nos somos informados que a essas partes han passado y de cada dia pasan algunos esclauos y esclauas Berueriscos y otras personas libres, nueuamente conuertidos de Moros e hijos dellos, estando por nos proueido que en ninguna manera passen por los muchos inconuiente que por experiancia ha parecido que de los que han passado se han seguido. Y porque se escusen los daños que podrian hazerlos que huieren passado y de aqui adelante passaren, porque en vna tierra nueua como essa, donde nueuamente se planta la Fe, conuiene que se quite toda ocasion, porque no se pueda sembrar y publicar en ella la secta de Mahoma ni otra alguna, en ofensa de Dios nuestro Señor, y perjuzyio de nuestra santa Fe Catolica. Visto y platicado en*

A document produced by the authority responsible for issues of emigration, the *Casa de Contratación* in Sevilla, shows clearly that the Spanish Crown was not able to fully control the departure of ships to the New World.²¹ This is corroborated by the contemporary legislation cited above which regularly refers to Muslims who reached South America in spite of the prohibition.²² The presence of non-Catholics in the new colonies made it seem expedient to prohibit the latter from possessing Indio slaves in 1513.²³ In 1530, the local authorities in the new colonies were ordered to send Berbers, Moors, Jews and Mulattos, who had reached the colonies without royal permission, back to Spain.²⁴ This ruling was extended to Muslims (*moros*) who had recently converted to Christianity, as well as to their children, in 1543.²⁵ As late as 1570 it seemed necessary to give instructions for the enslavement of Muslims preaching or disturbing the religious order of the colonies in any other way. The instruction even mentions Indios who had converted to Islam, but forbids their punishment, calling for the necessity to win them over to the Catholic faith with the help of arguments.²⁶

el nuestro Consejo de las Indias, fue acordado que deuiamos mandar que todos los esclauos y esclauas Berueriscos, personas nueuamente conuertidos de Moros y sus hijos, como dicho es, que en essas partes huuiere, sean echados de la isla y prouincia donde estuuieren, y embiados a estos Reynos, de manera que en ninguna forma queden en essas partes (...). The decree was reconfirmed in 1552.

21 Cardaillac, *Le problème morisque* (cf. n. 17), 298.

22 Guevara Bazán, *Muslim Immigration to Spanish America*, in: *The Muslim World* 56/3 (1966), 173–187, esp. 175.

23 Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección* (cf. n. 16), 402 (§ 175): *y porque la dicha isla se pueble de cristianos viejos y personas que tengan el celo que deben y son obligados al servicio de Nuestro Señor é mio, mandase que ninguno hijo ni nieto de quemado, ni hijo de reconciliado, ni hijo ni nieto de judío ni moro pueda tener ni tenga, ni le sean dados Indios en la dicha isla.*

24 *Recopilación de las leyes de los Reinos de las Indias*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 18), 4. (Libro 9, Título 26, Ley 17): *y si el esclavo, que assi se passare sin licencia, fuere Berberisco, de casta de Moros, ò Judios, ò Mulato, el General, ò Cabo de la Armada, ò Flota le buelva, à costra de quin le huviere passado, à la Casa de Contratacion, y le entregue por nuestro à los Jueces de ella; y la persona, que esclavo Morisco passare, incurra en pena de mil pesos de oro, tercia parte para nuestra Camara y Fisco, y tercia para el Acusador, y la otra tercia parte para el Juez que lo sentenciare, y si fuere persona vil, y no tuviere de que pagar, le condene el Juez en la pena à su arbitrio.* [25 February 1530].

25 *Cedulario Indiano*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 17), 382: *personas nueuamente conuertidos de Moros y sus hijos (...).* [a. 1543, confirmed 1552].

26 *Cedulario Indiano*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 17), 374: *Tambien se nos a pedido de vuestra parte que atento que ay en essa tierra isla de Moros, y ellos vienien atratar y contratar, los quales impiden la predicacion del santo Euangelio, y os inquietan. os demos licencia para hazer a los tales moros esclauos, y tomarles sus haciendas: estareis aduertido que si los tales Moros son de su nacion y naturaleza Moros y vinieren a dogmatizar su secta Mahometica, o hazer*

Due to this Muslim ‘infiltration’, the local authorities started to take concrete measures against Islam in the new colonies by having recourse to the inquisition from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards. Collected by Louis Cardaillac, the few documented cases from Peru, Mexico and Guatemala suggest, however, that the authorities were mainly battling Islamic remnants rather than a dynamic religious group spreading the message of the Qur’ān. In 1560, three persons were judged culpable of being Muslims in Cuzco, two of them for having dared to spread the Islamic faith. The cases dealt with in Lima, Mexico and Cuzcatlán in the years 1569 to 1570 then only deal with public expressions of sympathy for Islam. In connection with a woman named María Ruíz, the tribunal judged a case of former adherence to Islam: a *morisca* from the Iberian Peninsula, she had given herself up to the inquisition in 1596, confessing that she had practiced Islamic rites as a child, before her emigration to Mexico. Given that she had voluntarily confessed the ‘sins of her youth’, the inquisition dealt with her discreetly and even refrained from informing her husband. The official request, read out publicly during the opening of the tribunal of Cartagena de las Indias in 1610, to denounce every possible indication of affiliation to Judaism, Islam or Protestantism, must be read as a measure to build up public pressure to conform to the religious norms propagated by the Catholic Church in the colonies.²⁷

Aside from these legal and practical measures taken to prevent the spread of Islam in the colonies and to extirpate all possible Islamic remnants, the colonists also introduced anti-Islamic traditions to the colonies, thus creating an ideological bulwark against Islam. In many cases, the early colonizers seem to have regarded the autochthonous population of the new colonies through the mirror of their recent experiences with Islam on the Iberian Peninsula.²⁸ In line with this, they also began to import anti-Islamic Iberian traditions to the New

guerra a vosotros o a los Indios que estan a nos sugetos o a nuestro Real seruicio, los podreis hazer esclavos, mas a los que fueren Indios y ouieren tomado la secta de Mahoma no los hareis esclavos por ninguna via ni manera que sea, sino procurareis de los conuertir y persuadir por buenos y licitos medios a nuestra santa Fe Catolica.

²⁷ Cardaillac, *Le problème morisque* (cf. n. 17), 91–98. On pages 304–305 he provides the documentation of the case of María Ruíz, 305–306 of the request for denunciation. Also see Rukhsana Qamber, *Inquisition Proceedings Against Muslims in 16th Century Latin America*, in: *Islamic Studies* 45/1 (2006), 21–57.

²⁸ Mercedes García-Arenal, *Moriscos e indios: para un estudio comparado de métodos de conquista y evangelización*, in: *Chronica nova* 20 (1992), 153–175; Mercedes García-Arenal, *Moriscos and Indians. A Comparative Approach*, in: *The Middle East and Europe. Encounters and Exchanges*, ed. Geert Jan van Gelder and Ed de Moor, Amsterdam 1992, 39–55; Jens Lüdtke, *Das indianische Fremde als arabisches Fremdes*, in: *Romania Arabica. Festschrift für Reinhard Kontzi zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Jens Lüdtke, Tübingen 1996, 481–494.

World. These traditions originate in Iberian festivities known today as *fiestas de moros y de cristianos*. Still celebrated today, they commemorate the Christian conquest of Iberian localities during the so-called *Reconquista* by staging battles between Muslim and Christian forces as well as, in some cases, the destruction of Islamic symbols (including puppets of the prophet Muḥammad) and the conversion of the Muslim host to Christianity.²⁹ Equivalent festivals in Mexico, e.g. the festival of Zacatecas, stage the legendary crusade of Charlemagne and the Battle of Lepanto, mixing various elements from Catholic, Aztec and Mexican national tradition.³⁰

One should note, however, that in spite of all these measures taken against Islam in the New World, the attitude towards Muslims—a religious group rarely encountered—was not necessarily hostile. A sermon preached by the friar Juan de Grijalva in the Mexican city of Puebla on 11 September 1621 proves that members of the clergy in the colonies could even show empathy for the fate of the Moriscos, recently expelled from Spain.³¹

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Mexican expressions of sympathy for the fate of the Moriscos cannot obliterate the Spanish Crown's considerable efforts to ensure that Catholic Christianity remained the only viable religion imported from the Mediterranean into the Atlantic sphere. In spite of the above-mentioned Islamic remnants in the colonies, these measures seem to have proven effective. Among other things, this is corroborated by the scarcity of Muslim sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth century on the Americas as well as the fact that the few existing texts are all dependent on European-Christian sources of information.

²⁹ See Marlène Albert-Llorca, Mahomet, la Vierge et la frontière, in: *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 4 (1995), 855–886; Marlène Albert-Llorca, L'image du Maure dans les fêtes de "Moros y Cristianos" (Pays valencien, Espagne), in: *Héritages arabo-islamiques dans l'Europe méditerranéenne*, ed. Catherine Richarté, Roland-Pierre Gayraud and Jean-Michel Poisson, Paris 2015, 449–460. On the destruction of puppets of Muḥammad see Hubert Kahl, Mohammed brennt nicht mehr. Streit um spanische Dorffeste, in: *Ntv*, 20 October 2006, URL: <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/dossier/Streit-um-spanische-Dorffeste-article337385.html> (accessed 11 April 2015). See Max Harris, *Aztecs, Moors and Christians. Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and Spain*, Austin 2000, 18–19, 31–66, on the medieval origins of these festivals.

³⁰ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors and Christians* (cf. n. 29), 2–16.

³¹ Robert Ricard, Les Morisques et leur expulsion vus de Mexique, in: *Bulletin Hispanique* 33/3 (1931), 252–254.

The earliest known Muslim reports on the Americas already date from the early sixteenth century and are written in Ottoman Turkish, not in Arabic. The earliest known document is a commented map of territories in the south-western Atlantic produced by the Ottoman admiral Piri Re'is around 1513. In his comment, Piri Re'is reports on the discovery of the Americas, his source of information being a Spanish captive who had travelled to the Americas with a Genoese infidel named "Qulünbü".³² Further Ottoman references to the discovery of the Americas can be found in the *kitab-ı Bahriye* of 1521 by the same author, the *al-muhit* written in 1554 by the admiral Seydi Ali Reis, a geographical work composed by Tunuslu Hacı Ahmet in 1560 as well as another Ottoman map produced in 1567.³³ The first substantial Ottoman description of the New World dates from 1580 and is entitled *tarih-i hind-i garbi*, i.e. History of Western India.³⁴ This detailed and illustrated description of South America is mainly based on contemporary Spanish historiography in Italian translation.³⁵

³² Gregory McIntosh, Christoph Kolumbus und die Piri-Re'is-Karte von 1513, in: *Cartographica Helvetica* 11/2 (1995), 36–42, here: 38, with a German translation of the Ottoman comment. See Paul Kahle, *Die verschollene Columbus-Karte von 1498 in einer türkischen Weltkarte von 1513*, Berlin 1933, 16–26; Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, New York 2010, 23–25.

³³ Dealt with in detail by Thomas Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World. A Study of Tarih-i Hind-i Garbi and Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Americana*, Wiesbaden 1990, 7–16. Also see Ali Hamdani, Ottoman Response to the Discovery of America and the New Route to India, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101/3 (1981), 323–330; Fuat Sezgin (ed.), *The Ottoman Geographers Kemāl Re'is (d. 1511), Piri Re'is (d. 1554) and Sidī 'Alī (d. 1562). Texts and Studies*, Frankfurt 2008; Emine Fetvacı, Others and Other Geographies in the Şehnâme-i Selim Hân, in: *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 40 (2012), 81–100; Bilgin Aydın, XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Seyahatnâmeleri Hakkında Bir Değerlendirme (An Overview of the Ottoman Travelogues of the Sixteenth Century), in: *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 40 (2012), 435–451; Baki Tezcan, The Many Lives of the First Non-Western History of the Americas: From the *New Report* to the *History of the West Indies*, in: *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 40 (2012), 1–38. On Ottoman knowledge about contemporary Habsburg Spain see Alain Servantie, Charles Quint aux yeux des Ottomans, in: *Carlos V, los moriscos y el Islam*, ed. María Jesús Rubiera Mata, Madrid 2001, 195–319.

³⁴ Goodrich, Ottoman Turks (cf. n. 2), 15. For a juxtaposition of the *tarih-i hind-i garbi* with an almost contemporary Mexican chronicle reporting on the Ottoman Empire, the *Repertorio de los tiempos* by an emigrant from Hamburg called Henrico Martínez (Heinrich Martin), see Serge Gruzinski, *Quelle heure est-il là-bas? Amérique et islam à l'orée des Temps modernes*, Paris 2008.

³⁵ Goodrich, Ottoman Turks (cf. n. 33), 32–38, mentions Pedro Martin d'Anghiera, *De orbe novo* (1516); Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *De la natural hystoria de las Indias* (1526); Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias* (1552); and Agustín de Zárate, *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Peru* (1555).

It deals with Columbus' discoveries, the conquests of Mexico and Peru at the hands of Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro as well as with the flora and fauna of the continent, among other things.³⁶

In his study and translation of the *tarih-i hind-i garbi*, Thomas Goodrich points out that there exists no relationship between the various Ottoman Americana mentioned above, all of which drew on different European-Christian sources and had practically no effect on other compilations of knowledge produced in the Ottoman sphere of the sixteenth century. In Europe, he argues, the increasing use of the printing press ensured that the discovery of the Americas was soon communicated to a large audience, consequently prompting reactions in various social circles. The aforementioned Ottoman Americana, in turn, formed part of a discourse restricted to specialists of geography and maritime navigation that had no traceable impact on society.³⁷ We should consider, however, that the aforementioned Ottoman texts testify to an intensive flow of information from the western Mediterranean, including the Iberian Peninsula, to the Ottoman Empire. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Ottomans controlled parts of the Maghreb and were actively involved in the fate of the Iberian Muslims and Moriscos.³⁸ In addition, many Sephardic Jews and Moriscos who had been expelled from Spain either 1492 or around 1609, sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire.³⁹ This intensive Ottoman engagement with people from the western Mediterranean implies that Ottoman scholars could poten-

³⁶ Goodrich, Ottoman Turks (cf. n. 33), 149–338.

³⁷ Goodrich, Ottoman Turks (cf. n. 33), 15–16: “No Ottoman cartographer, geographer, or historian of the sixteenth century used information provided by an earlier Ottoman, and there is no insertion of news of the New World into general compilations of knowledge. In Europe, by contrast, there was a constant flow of news, a growing realization of the political and economic significance of the New World (...)” On the inner-European diffusion of information about the New World see Bartolomé and Lucile Bennassar, *1492, un monde nouveau?*, Paris 2013, chapter 1.

³⁸ See James Monroe, A Curious Morisco Appeal to the Ottoman Empire, in: *Al-Andalus* 31 (1966), 281–303; Andrew Hess, The Moriscos. An Ottoman Fifth Column in Sixteenth-Century Spain, in: *American Historical Review* 741 (1969), 1–25; Abdeljelil Temimi, Evolution de l’attitude des autorités de la Régence de Tunis face à l’accueil des morisques à la lumière d’un nouveau firman du Sultan ottoman, in: *Actes du Ve symposium international d’Études morisques sur la Ve centenaire de la chute de Grenade 1492–1992* ed. Abdeljelil Temimi, Zaghuan 1993, 711–722; Abdeljelil Temimi, Politique ottomane face à l’expulsion des morisques et à leur passage en France et à Venise 1609–1610, in: *Revue d’Histoire Maghrébine* 22/79–80 (1995), 397–420; Pieter S. van Koningsveld, An Appeal of the Moriscos to the Mamluk Sultan and its Counterpart to the Ottoman Court. Textual Analysis, Context, and Wider Historical Background, in: *Al-Qantara* 20/1 (1999), 161–189; Mehmet Özdemir, Ottoman Aids to Andalusian Muslims, in: *The Turks, vol. 3: Ottomans*, ed. Hasan Celâl Güzel, Ankara 2002, 207–221.

tially draw on a great number of information carriers with at least some knowledge of the new Spanish colonies in the Americas. We must also take note of the fact that the period of Ottoman maritime expansion slowly came to a halt at the end of the sixteenth century for various reasons discussed by Salih Özbaran and Giancarlo Casale.⁴⁰ This may explain why further Ottoman investigations concerning the Atlantic sphere were not undertaken as is suggested by Ḥajjī Khalifa or Kâtip Çelebi (d. 1068/1657), an Ottoman scholar involved in the translation of various European geographical works into Ottoman Turkish.⁴¹ Complaining about the lack of geographical knowledge among his Ottoman contemporaries, Kâtip Çelebi proves the relevance of such knowledge by claiming that the Ottomans had somewhat been excluded from what was happening in the Atlantic sphere because they had failed to invest in the acquisition of geographical knowledge in the same way as the Europeans:

“Of the necessity of this science [of geography] the following provides a sufficient indication and a clear proof: that the infidels by application to it have discovered the New World (*yeñi dünyā*), and have penetrated the harbours of Sind and Hind (...).”⁴²

39 Aron Rodrigue, The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire, in: *Spain and the Jews. The Sephardi Experience 1492 and After*, ed. Elie Kedouri, London 1992, 162–188; Jacob Barnai, The Jews of Spain in Egypt, in: *Moreshet Sepharad. The Sephardi Legacy, vol. 2*, ed. Haim Beinart, Jerusalem 1992, 72–76; Joseph Hacker, The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century, in: *ibid.*, 109–133; Abraham David, Iberian Exiles in the Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire, in: *Sephardic Identity. Essays on a Vanishing Jewish Culture*, ed. George Zucker Jefferson 2005, 43–53; Gilles Veinstein, L'établissement des juifs d'Espagne dans l'Empire ottoman (fin XV^e-XII^e s.): une migration, in: *Le monde de l'itinérance en Méditerranée de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne. Procédures de contrôle et identifications*, ed. Claudia Moatti, Wolfgang Kaiser, and Christophe Pébarthe, Paris 2009, 667–683.

40 Andrew Hess, The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire in the Age of the Oceanic Discoveries, 1453–1525, in: *The American Historical Review* 75/7 (1970), 1892–1919; Salih Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion. Studies on Ottoman-Portuguese Relations in the Indian Ocean and Ottoman Administration in the Arab Lands During the Sixteenth Century*, Istanbul 1994; Salih Özbaran, *Ottoman Expansion Towards the Indian Ocean in the 16th Century*, Istanbul 2009; Casale, *Ottoman Age* (cf. n. 32).

41 See Sonja Brentjes, Mapmaking in Ottoman Istanbul between 1650 and 1750: A Domain of Painters, Calligraphers or Cartographers?, in: *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies*, ed. Colin Imber, Keiko Kiyotaki and Rhoads Murphey, vol. 2, London 2005, 125–156, here: 126–132; Pinar Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Farnham 2014, 149–151.

42 Translation adapted from Haji Khalifeh, *History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, transl. James Mitchell, chapters 1–4, London 1831, 3–4; original text in Kâtip Çelebi, *Tuhfet ül-kibar fi esfar il-bihar*, Istanbul 1141/1729, 30: *ve bu 'ilmiñ luzûmuna delil-i kâfi ve burhân-ı vâfi bu yeter ki kuffâr-i hâksâr ol 'imlre taqayyud ve i'tibârile yeñi dünyâyı*

At the end of the sixteenth century, around half a century later than their Ottoman equivalents, Arabic Americana began to be produced. This seems strange considering that the Muslim West of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century could have hardly failed to notice the intensifying maritime traffic from the Iberian Peninsula to the new colonies. Among the earliest Arabic texts mentioning the Americas we find an annalistic chronicle that even refers to this maritime traffic and its disturbance—not by Muslims but by other Christians. Al-Fishtālī (956–1031/1549–1621), court historiographer and head of the chancery of the Sa‘dī sultan Aḥmad al-Manṣūr al-Dhahabī, dedicates a passage to the English attack on the Castilian port of Cádiz in 1596:

“The galleys of the Andalusian tyrant and his fleet, prepared to set sail to India (*al-Hind*), was stationed there without someone to protect it. So the English fleet pounced upon (...) and attacked it. It was allegedly made up of five ships belonging to the tyrant, charged with riches said to have contained wares highly demanded in the developing territory of India (*arḍ al-Hind al-nāmiyya*), their estimated profit amounting to 200,000 [dīnār?].”⁴³

Thus, at the very end of the sixteenth century at the latest, Northwestern Africa seems to have been aware, not only of the riches transported to and probably also from the Americas in the royal Spanish fleets, but also of the nature of the economic relations between a developed mother-country and developing colonies. This may also apply to the period predating the events of 1596. However, due to the lack of Arabic sources on the subject, we are forced to turn to Castilian sources to find out if Muslims of the sixteenth-century Maghreb had access to other sources of information on the Americas. A history and topographical description of Algiers, conceived by a Christian captive in the so-called Barbary States between 1577 and 1581, provides an example. It lists the different origins of the various Christian renegades living in Algiers during the author’s captivity, informing us in this context of the presence of “Indios from the Portuguese Indies, Brazil and New Spain.”⁴⁴

bulub banādir-i sind ve hinde müstevlī oldı (...). I would like to thank Şevket Küçükhuşeyin for providing me with a transcription and precise translation of the original Ottoman text.

⁴³ al-Fishtālī, *manāhil al-ṣafā fi māthar mawālīnā al-shurafā*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm Karīm, Rabat 1972, 196: *aghribat al-ṭāghīya al-andalusiyya wa-uṣṭūluhu al-mu‘idd li-safar al-Hind jāthima ‘alayhā wa-muḥāmiyya dūnahā fa-awjafa ‘alayhā uṣṭūl al-Inklīz (...) fa-awqa‘ bihā wa-kānat fīmā za‘amū khams marākib li-l-ṭāghīya mashhūna bi-l-amwāl yuqāl fihā min al-sila‘ al-nāfiqa bi-arḍ al-Hind al-nāmiyya al-arbāḥ yusāwī al-mi‘ayn min al-ālāf (...)*”; translation adapted from Nabil Matar, *Europe Through Arab Eyes, 1578–1727*, New York 2009, 162.

By the seventeenth century, Arabic texts feature more substantial information on the Americas. It is probably no coincidence that this information features in the writings of a certain Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajārī, a bilingual Morisco employed at the court of the ruling Saʿdī sultan.⁴⁵ Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajārī visited France and Flanders around the year 1612 to seek restitution for property robbed by Christian captains from various Morisco families during their expulsion from Spain in 1609.⁴⁶ In the travel account terminated in 1047/1637 that reports on this mission,⁴⁷ Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajārī reports that he has read about the circumnavigation of the earth by a certain “Bidru Ṭashābar” or “Biduru Ṭashāyira” who set sail from Portugal, passed through the lands of the Western Indians (*al-Hunūd al-maghribiyya*) and then returned home via the encompassing Ocean (*al-muḥīṭ*), the eastern islands, the regions around Baghdhad and the Mediterranean.⁴⁸

44 The author is either identified as Diego de Haedo, Antonio de Sosa, and even Miguel de Cervantes. See the quotation in: Diego de Haedo, *Topografía, e historia general de Argel*, vol. 1, Madrid 1927 (reedition of Valladolid: Diego Fernandez de Cordoua et Ouiedo, 1612), 52–53: *No hay nación de cristianos en el mundo de la cual no haya renegado y renegados en Argel. Y comenzando de las remotas provincias de Europa, hallan en Argel renegados moscovitas, rojos [...], búlgaros, polacos, húngaros, bohemios, alemanes, de Dinamarca y Noruega, escoceses, ingleses, irlandeses, flamencos, borgoñones, franceses, navarros, vizcaínos, castellanos, gallegos, portugueses, andaluces, valencianos, aragoneses, catalanes, mallorquines, sardos, corzos, sicilianos, calabreses, napolitanos, romanos, toscanos, genoveses, saboyanos, pamonteses, lombardos, venecianos, esclavones, albanes [...], griegos, candiotas, cretanos, chipriotas, surianos y de Egipto y aun Abejinos del Preste Juan e indios de las Indias de Portugal, del Brasil y de Nueva España.* See the English translation: Antonio de Sylva y Sosa, *An Early Modern Dialogue with Islam. Antonio de Sosa’s Topography of Algiers (1612)*, ed./transl. María Antonia Garcés and Diana de Armas Wilson, Notre Dame 2011, cited in: María Antonia Garcés, *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive’s Tale*, Nashville 2005, 34–35; Farid Khiari, *Alger: une société métissée au XVII^e siècle*, in: *Confluences Méditerranée* 10 (1994), 59–68.

45 On the author and his activities in Europe see Gerard Wiegers, *A Life between Europe and the Maghrib. The Writings and Travels of Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajārī al-Andalusī*, in: *The Middle East and Europe. Encounters and Exchanges*, ed. Geert Jan van Gelder and Ed de Moor, Amsterdam 1992, 87–115.

46 Nabil Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians. Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century*, New York 2003, 5–8.

47 Aḥmad b. Qāsim, *riḥlat Afūqāy al-Andalusī: mukhtaṣar riḥlat al-Shihāb ilā liqā’ al-ajānib, 1611–1613*, ed. Nūrī al-Jarrāḥ, Beirut 2004. This travel account was integrated by the author into the following larger work: Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajārī, *kitāb nāṣir al-dīn ‘alā l-qawm al-kāfirīn / The Supporter of Religion Against the Infidels*, ed. / trans. Pieter S. van Koningsveld, Qasim Samarrai, Gerard A. Wiegers, Madrid 2015.

48 Aḥmad b. Qāsim, *riḥla* (cf. n. 47), 100; Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajārī, *kitāb nāṣir al-dīn* (cf. n. 47), 192 (AR), 207 (EN). It is not entirely clear to whom Aḥmad b. Qāsim is refer-

Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajarī also acquired information about the Americas via his relations to the Ottoman sphere. Among other things, he reports that the king of Spain (*sulṭān Ishbāniya*) had been denied the possibility of stationing a permanent representative at the Ottoman court of Istanbul. The Ottomans allegedly took this decision “when they became aware of his inimical attitude towards Islam” (*lammā taḥaqqaqū min ‘idāwatihi li-l-islām*), probably in connection with the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609,⁴⁹ but also when they had learnt that the Spaniards had murdered the “sultan of the Western Indians in the city of Mexico (*Mīshiqu*) called Moctezuma (*Mutashumah*)” while they were offering diplomatic presents to the Aztec ruler.⁵⁰

Up to the middle of the seventeenth century, Arabic-speaking Muslims had thus learnt a few things about the Americas from European-Christian and Ottoman sources of information.⁵¹ They may have even encountered the one or the other ‘Western Indian’ in the context of their hostile or peaceful relations with the Spanish monarchy. However, they did not participate actively in the further exploration and settlement of the Atlantic sphere.⁵² It is only at the end of the seventeenth century, around two centuries after the European-Christian discovery of the Americas, that readers of Arabic were (theoretically) able to lay their hands on an Arabic description of South America produced by an eyewitness, the aforementioned Chaldean priest Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣilī from Baghdad.

ring. According to the editors of the *Kitāb nāṣir al-dīn*, 207 (EN), note 67, the author is referring to Pedro Teixeira, a Portuguese traveller of Jewish background who published his *Relaciones del origen, descendencia y sucesión de los Reyes de Persia, y de Harmuz, y de un viaje hecho por el mismo autor desde la India Oriental hasta Italia por tierra* in Antwerp 1610.

⁴⁹ On the Ottoman reception of the expulsion of the Moriscos see the literature cited in n. 39.

⁵⁰ Aḥmad b. Qāsim, *riḥla* (cf. n. 47), 101; Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥajarī, *kitāb nāṣir al-dīn* (cf. n. 47), 195 (AR), 208 (EN).

⁵¹ Another author who recorded information about South America was the Tunis-born physician Ḥusayn Khūja b. ‘Alī b. Sulaymān al-Ḥanafī, who, around the year 1138/1725, wrote a medical treatise on quinine in which he pointed to the latter’s South American origins. See Ḥusayn Khūja, *al-asrār al-kamīna bi-aḥwāl al-kīna kīna*, ed. al-Kurrāy al-Qusantīnī, Tunis 1993, 39–43 (South American origins), 17 (date of MS).

⁵² See Nabil Matar, *The Maghariba and the Sea: Maritime Decline in North Africa in the Early Modern Period*, in: *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Braudel’s Maritime Legacy*, ed. Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood and Mohamed-Salah Omri, London 2010, 117–137.

The Earliest Arabic Eye-Witness Account of South America

The figure of Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣili has been known to western scholarship ever since he was mentioned in Georg Graf's multi-volume history of Christian-Arabic literature as well as in Ignaty Yulianovich Krachkovsky's history of Arabic geographical literature.⁵³ In recent years, his travel account,⁵⁴ followed by a history of South America still awaiting a critical edition, has been used by a number of scholars, most recently by John-Paul Ghobrial. The latter wrote two elaborate articles on this author and his writings as well as on other documentary evidence of his extensive travels.⁵⁵

Ilyās b. Ḥannā set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and then travelled via Aleppo to Europe, where he was received by the highest authorities. In Rome he had an audience with pope Clement IX (sed. 1667–69); in Paris he encountered Louis XIV (ruled 1643–1715) and the Duke Philippe I of Orléans and was active as an interpreter for the Ottoman ambassador sent by sultan Mehmed IV (ruled 1648–87).⁵⁶ In Madrid he presented the Spanish regent Maria Anna of Austria (ruled 1665–75) with a letter by pope Clement IX⁵⁷ and asked her for permission to travel to the Spanish colonies (*bilād Hind al-gharb*). In this context, Ilyās b. Ḥannā refers to the aforementioned legislation of the Spanish Crown that barred any non-Catholic non-Spaniard from travelling to the colonies who could not produce a royal permission to do so:

“They do not allow any stranger to the Spanish race (*al-jins al-sbanyūli*), not even merchants or priests, to accompany them, unless he possesses an order issued by the king, as we have mentioned before. Until this day, these are the stipulated laws and rules laid down in the days of Charles V, one of the kings

⁵³ Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlich-arabischen Literatur*, vol. 4, Città del Vaticano 1951, 98; Aghnāṭiyyūs Yūlyānūfīsh Krātshkūfskī, *tārīkh al-adab al-jughrāfi al-‘arabī*, vol. 2, Kairo 1963, 701–706.

⁵⁴ Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa* (cf. n. 2); Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-‘āṣifa* (cf. n. 2). The travel account has been translated into English in: Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians*. (cf. n. 46), 45–111; Caesar E. Farah (trans.), *An Arab's Journey to Colonial Spanish America. The Travels of Elias al-Mūsili in the Seventeenth Century*, Syracuse 2003.

⁵⁵ Ya‘qūb Sarkīs, ṣāḥīb riḥlat awwal sharqī (‘irāqī) ilā Amīrka, in: *mağallat luğat al-‘Arab* 60 (1931), 331–354; Elias Muhanna, Ilyās al-Mawṣili, in: *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography: 1350–185*, ed. Joseph Edmund Dowry and Devin J. Stewart, Wiesbaden 2009, 295–299; John-Paul Ghobrial, *Stories Never Told: The First Arabic History of the New World*, in: *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 40 (2012), 259–282; Ghobrial, *Secret Life* (cf. n. 2), 51–93.

⁵⁶ Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 7–8; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-‘āṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 37, 39.

⁵⁷ Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 9; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-‘āṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 40.

of Spain and the lands of Hungary, in whose time they conquered the lands of the Indians.”⁵⁸

Having procured this royal permission, Ilyās b. Ḥannā was allowed to board a royal galley in Cádiz on 12 February 1675, thus accompanying the Spanish fleet setting out every three years to fill the royal treasury with the precious metals of Peru.⁵⁹ Having arrived in Venezuela, he travelled via Columbia, Panama, Ecuador and Peru to the silver mines of Potosí. In 1680, during a one-year stay in Lima, he began writing his travel account. Leaving Peru, he traversed Central America, stayed in Mexico-City for six months and then returned to Europe via Veracruz and Cuba.⁶⁰

Scholarship has speculated on Ilyās b. Ḥannā’s motivations to undertake this long journey to and through South and Central America. Ignaty Krachkovsky, Georg Graf, Elias Muhanna and John-Paul Ghobrial surmise that he may have intended to collect money for the Chaldean church, whereas Nabil Matar points to the wealth Ilyās b. Ḥannā acquired during his journey, not only in the form of gifts but also through commercial activity.⁶¹ Krachkovsky, Muhanna and Matar also deliberate on the question of whether Ilyās b. Ḥannā was charged with an official mission which he chose not to mention in his travel account. In this context, they point to the Ottoman escort that accompanied him to Jerusalem, his audience at the papal curia, his reception at the French and Spanish royal courts, the luxury of travelling in a private cabin aboard the royal galley to South America, the servants catering to his needs during his travels, his relations to governors and inquisitors in the colonies, his intercession for the disgraced and deposed viceroy of Lima, and finally papal and royal Spanish honorary titles mentioned in the Latin-Arabic prayer book printed in Rome at the orders of Ilyās b. Ḥannā in 1692.⁶²

58 Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 13: *wa-lā yad’ūna insānan gharīban ‘an al-jins al-sbanyūli yurāfiqūhum lā tājiran wa-lā kāhinan in lam yakun ma’ahu amr min al-malik, mithla mā dhakarnā sābiqan. wa-hādhihi hiya ilā l-yawm qawānīn wa-nawāmīs mauḍū’a min ayyām Kārlus al-khāmīs min mulūk Isbānya wa-bilād al-Majar, ḥaythu ‘alā ‘ahdihi fataḥū bilād al-Hind.*; cf. *ibid.*, 11: *li-annahū lā yaqdir gharīb an yajūz ilā bilād al-hind in lam yakun ma’ahu amr min al-malik.*; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-‘āṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 47, 45.

59 Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 12–13; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-‘āṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 46–47.

60 Vgl. Graf, *Geschichte der christlich-arabischen Literatur*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 53), 98.

61 Krätshkūfskī, *tāriḥ*, vol. 2 (cf. n. 53), 701–706; Graf, *Geschichte der christlich-arabischen Literatur*, vol. 4 (cf. n. 53), 98; Muhanna, Ilyās al-Mawṣilī (cf. n. 55), 298; Ghobrial, *Stories* (cf. n. 55), 260; Ghobrial, *Secret life* (cf. n. 2), 63–64; Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians* (cf. n. 46), 47.

Regardless of his motivations, it is clear from his travel account that Ilyās b. Ḥannā regarded himself as part of the colonial ruling class. He may have observed that the Spaniards' treatment of Indios was often unjust.⁶³ However, when staying overnight in an Indio village on his way to Potosí, he resorted to methods of punishment also used by the ruling class. Presenting a royal writ entitling him to the services of a local muleteer to the village elder, he paid the mules under the condition that they be at his disposal early the next morning. When this did not happen and his investigations led to an encounter with an inebriated village elder who had the gall to reply to his questions "in the Indian language" (*bi-l-lisān al-hindī*), Ilyās b. Ḥannā ordered the latter to be flogged.⁶⁴ The travel account does not convey the impression that its author felt a stranger in South America. He may emphasize repeatedly that he celebrated Mass 'Oriental style'⁶⁵ and may occasionally take on the role of an observing ethnographer.⁶⁶ In general, however, Ilyās b. Ḥannā seems to have exhibited the same confident poise of belonging to the dominant civilization as his colonial European contemporaries.

The Emergence of a Christianized Transatlantic Sphere

Ilyās b. Ḥannā's identification with the colonial elite is inextricably linked to his self-perception as an agent of expanding Christian truth. The purpose of his writings is, to quote John-Paul Ghobrial, "a celebration of the spread and triumph of Christianity—and in particular the Catholic Church—across the entire world."⁶⁷ Ilyās b. Ḥannā states in the quotation cited at the beginning of this article that Christ himself had facilitated this expansion and had thus created a

62 Krätshkūfski, *tārikh* (cf. n. 53), vol. 2, Kairo 1963, 701–706; Matar, *In the Lands* (cf. n. 46), 46; Muḥanna, Ilyās al-Mawṣili (cf. n. 55), 295–299, 298.

63 Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 53: *fa-ana ṣadaqtu kalāmahu min jihat al-ẓulm alladhī nazartuhum ya'malūnahu 'alā l-Hunūd*; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-ʿāṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 94.

64 Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 47; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-ʿāṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 87.

65 Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 34: *thumma ṭalabū minnī an uqaddis fa-arsaltu wa-uḥḍirat min al-dār ālat al-quddās fa-qadastu lahum quddāsan bi-l-lisān al-kaldānī ya'nī al-suryānī al-sharqī fa-ṣāra 'indahum inshirāḥ zāyid li-istimā' quddāsī*; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-ʿāṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 72.

66 See his comparison of the custom to drink the beverage mate in Buenos Aires with that of drinking coffee "in our countries" (*fī bilādīnā*): Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *siyāḥa*; (cf. n. 2), 51; Ilyās b. Ḥannā, *al-dhahab wa-l-ʿāṣifa* (cf. n. 2), 92.

67 Ghobrial, *Secret Life* (cf. n. 2), 71.

Christian sphere presided by the pope and administrated by different institutional agents of the Catholic Church and, at least partly, the Spanish Crown. The latter's legal, practical and ideological measures had ensured effectively that this new sphere in the process of Christianization remained impervious to Islamic influence for several centuries.

This notwithstanding, we should not believe that only insignificant numbers of Muslims or descendants of Muslims entered the Americas in the Early Modern Age. Aside from the abovementioned sixteenth-century Spanish legislation, many sources suggest that many Muslim immigrants actually entered the Americas, but belonged to social strata that lacked the possibilities of building up functioning Islamic infrastructures. Among other factors, Bartolomé de las Casas' (d. 1566) reasoned plea—later recanted—to spare the autochthonous 'Indio' populations from slavery by importing black slaves from West Africa, can be held responsible for the fact that various Muslims reached the Americas during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries to work as slaves on South and Central American plantations.⁶⁸ This is even corroborated by a rather late Arabic source: the Ottoman marine officer 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Baghdādī tells us how his boat made leeway on the Atlantic and involuntarily reached the coast of Brazil in 1865–1866. His travel account, written after his return via Damascus to Istanbul, not only contains a very short history of Brazil but also reports on al-Baghdādī's encounter with black slaves of Muslim faith,⁶⁹ possibly contemporaries and descendants of those Muslim slaves who had participated in the uprising of 1835 in the Brazilian region of Bahia.⁷⁰

From the late eighteenth century onwards, relations between the Americas and the Islamic world intensified. Among other things, the United States' increasing engagement in the Middle East made further knowledge on the 'new continent' available to the Arab world.⁷¹ We already find a brief reference to the American revolution in the travel account to Spain of Muḥammad b. 'Uth-

⁶⁸ See Francis Patrick Sullivan (ed.), *Indian Freedom. The Cause of Bartolomé de las Casas, 1484–1566: a Reader*, Kansas 1995, 159–161; Sylviane Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, New York 1998, 33 (Brazil, Trinidad, Cuba), 45 (Brazil, Jamaica, Trinidad, Bahamas, Santo Domingo, Buenos Aires, Chile, Peru), 72 (Cartagena, Colombia, 1620; Brazil, mid-1800s). See Chris Gratien, Race, Slavery, and Islamic Law in the Early Modern Atlantic: Ahmad Baba al-Tinbukti's Treatise on Enslavement, in: *Journal of North African Studies* 18/3 (2013), 454–468.

⁶⁹ György Hazai, Istvan Ormos, Abenteuer eines Irakers in Brasilien, in: *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae* 36/1–3 (1982), 215–226.

⁷⁰ João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*, Baltimore 1993.

⁷¹ Ami Ayalon, The Arab Discovery of America in the Nineteenth Century, in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 20/4 (1984), 5–17, here: 7–17. Also see Michael Oren, *Power, Faith and*

mān al-Miknāsī (d. 1213/1799).⁷² As Ami Ayalon has shown, substantial information on the Americas, especially the United States, became available to Arab readers from the 1840s onwards, e.g. in the works of Rifā‘at al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, in Buṭrus al-Bustānī’s *Encyclopédie arabe (dā’irat al-ma‘ārif)*, several translations of European books, as well as in the emerging Arab press.⁷³ Whether South America received comparable attention in this period remains to be investigated, as does the question as to which role Islam played in relations between the Americas and regions in the Pacific and Indian Oceans boasting large Muslim populations. It is clear, in any case, that, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, various Arabic-speakers from the Ottoman Middle East voluntarily emigrated to South America, most of them Arab Christians.⁷⁴ A directory published in 1941 by Aḥmad Ḥasan Maṭar under the title *Guia social de la colonia árabe en Chile* contains several hundred prosopographical entries as well as the addresses of Arab immigrants to Chile, corroborating that Arab mass immigration to South Americas is a rather recent historical phenomenon. This “social guide” is mainly written in Spanish, but also carries the Arabic title “Statistical, social and economic guide to the pronouncers of [the Arabic letter] dāḍ in Chile” (*dalīl al-iḥṣā’ al-ijtimā’ī al-tijārī li-nāṭiqī l-dāḍ fi Tshīlī*), a common way of defining Arabic speakers regardless of their religious affiliation. The guide thus testifies to the social and economic establishment of a group, defined in linguistic terms, in Chile.⁷⁵ Considering that the first mosque in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro was inaugurated as late as 1955,⁷⁶ we may surmise that

Fantasy. America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present, New York 2007; Ussama Makdisi, The Question of American Liberalism and the Origins of the American Board Mission to the Levant and its Historiography, in: *Liberal Thought in the Eastern Mediterranean. Late 19th Century Until the 1960s*, ed. Christoph Schumann, Leiden 2008, 15–28; Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Nearest East. American Millennialism and Mission to the Middle East*, Philadelphia 2010, 15–97; Samir Khalaf, *Protestant Missionaries in the Levant. Ungodly Puritans, 1820–1860*, New York 2012.

⁷² al-Miknāsī, *al-iksīr fī fikāk al-asīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Fāsī, Rabat 1965, 96–97; cited and translated in Ayalon, Arab Discovery (cf. n. 71), 7; see Matar, In the Lands of the Christians (cf. n. 46), xxxvi.

⁷³ Ayalon, Arab Discovery (cf. n. 71), 7–17. To Ayalon’s extensive list one could add Khayr al-Din al-Tūnisī, *aqwām al-masālik fī ma’rifat al-mamālik*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥaddād, Beirut / Cairo 2012, 715–721, with a short explanation on how parts of the Americas were discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1485 (sic!), followed by details on the continent’s geographical location and three lists, mentioning the most important mountains, valleys as well the number of inhabitants of selected locations.

⁷⁴ Kemal Karpat, The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860–1914, in: *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 17 (1985), 175–209; Nedim Ipek, The Emigration from the Ottoman Empire to America, in: *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 12/1–2 (2006), 29–43.

Muslim communities in South America only began to organize publicly in the course of the twentieth century. Further research on the early Muslim public organization in the highly diverse countries of South and Central America is certainly necessary before it is possible to draw definite conclusions.⁷⁷ However, seen in conjunction with the comparatively meagre Ottoman and Arabic documentation of the Americas in the Early Modern Age, the lack of evidence for Muslim mass immigration to the Americas before the twentieth century implies that the anti-Islamic immigration policy introduced by the Spanish Crown of the early sixteenth century had been effective. The Christian Atlantic sphere envisioned by Ilyās b. Ḥannā had become a reality—at least for a certain period.

Circumstances have changed enormously in the course of the past century. In terms of religion, South America may still be dominated by Catholicism as well as Christian-indigenous-African forms of syncretism, both increasingly challenged by evangelical movements.⁷⁸ In comparison to the seventeenth century, the life-time of Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣilī, relations between South America and the (Arabic-) Islamic world, however, have acquired completely new dimensions. Various websites, exhibitions and books express themselves on the Arab and Islamic factor in South America, political and economic elites discuss Arab-South American alliances.⁷⁹ Apart from the South American-Arab summit meetings held under the acronym ASPA (*Cumbre América del Sur* –

⁷⁵ Ahmad Hassan Mattar, *Guía social de la Colonia Árabe en Chile (Siria – Palestina – Libanesa)*, Santiago de Chile 1941; See for the situation today: Muhammed Abdulla al-Ahari, The Caribbean and Latin America, in: *Islam Outside the Arab World*, ed. Ingvar Svanberg and David Westerlund, Richmond 1999, 443–461.

⁷⁶ María del Mar Logroño, Latin America, in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. Juan Eduardo Campo, New York 2009, 439–440.

⁷⁷ See three recent overviews by Kambiz Ghanea Bassiri, *Islam in America: the Beginnings*; Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbic Castle, *Islam in Mexico and Central America*; Marco Gallo, *Muslims in South America. History, Presence, and Visibility of a Religious Minority in a Christian Context*, all in: *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, ed. Roberto Tottoli, New York 2015, 109–122, 154–169, 170–180. On Muslim immigration to North America see Michel Nancy and Elisabeth Picard, *Les Arabes du Levant en Argentine*, Aix-en-Provence 1998; Kambiz Ghanea Bassiri, *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order*, Cambridge 2010. Also see Ernesto Capello, Latin America, in: *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, ed. Kees Versteegh, vol. 3, Leiden 2008, 1–6.

⁷⁸ See Hans-Jürgen Prien, *Das Christentum in Lateinamerika*, Leipzig 2007; Lee Penyak and Walter Petry, *Religion and Society in Latin America. Interpretative Essays from Conquest to Present*, Maryknoll 2009.

⁷⁹ See the literature cited in the previous footnotes as well as Fehmy Saddy (ed.), *Arab-Latin American Relations: Energy, Trade, and Investment*, New Brunswick 1983; Isaac

Países Árabes) since 2005, the popularity enjoyed by the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez (1954–2013) in the Arab world provides an example for this contextual shift. Chávez stood for an anti-imperialist stance vis-à-vis US hegemony in South America and the Middle East,⁸⁰ an attitude phrased playfully in the song title *Romper las cadenas*, “breaking the chains”, sung by Columbian Salsa musician Yuri Buenaventura and Moroccan Rai-musician Cheb Faudel in Spanish and Arabic.⁸¹ The so-called ‘Muslim ban’—US-president Donald Trump’s highly contested Executive Order 13769 (27 January 2017) that denied entry to citizens of several predominantly Muslim countries⁸²—may forcefully recall the Spanish Crown’s sixteenth-century efforts to exclude Islam

Caro, *Relaciones militares de América latina y el Caribe con Israel y el Mundo Árabe*, Santiago 1985; Lorenzo Agar Corbinos and Raymundo Kabchi (ed.), *El mundo árabe y América latina*, Madrid 1997; Eurídice Charón Cardona, *Las sociedades árabes en Cuba (1904–1958)*, in: *Boletín del Archivo Nacional – La Habana* 11 (1998), 32–37; Anton Escher, *Arabische Netzwerke in Lateinamerika. Theoretische Überlegungen mit empirischen Anmerkungen am Beispiel Venezuela*, in: *Die islamische Welt als Netzwerk. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Netzwerkansatzes im islamischen Kontext*, ed. Roman Loimeier, Würzburg 2001, 355–366; Amadou Mahtar M’Bow and M. Ali Kettani, *Islam and Muslims in the American Continent*, Beirut 2001; Rigoberto Menéndez Paredes, *Los Árabes en Cuba*, La Habana 2007; Abdeluahed Akmir (ed.), *Los árabes en América Latina. Historia de una emigración*, Madrid 2009; Lorenzo Agar Corbinos, *Contribuciones árabes a las identidades iberoamericanas*, Madrid 2009; Ahmad Al Atrach, *Rethinking Arab-Latin American Relations: A Theoretical Framework*, *Centro de Estudios del Medio Oriente contemporáneo, Córdoba/Argentina: working paper 04/2009*, URL: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=106274> (accessed 28 January 2016). Sergio Macías Brevis, *Influencia árabe en las letras iberoamericanas*, Sevilla 2009; Raanan Rein, María José Cano and Beatriz Molina Rueda (ed.), *Mas allá del Medio Oriente. las diásporas judía y árabe en América Latina*, Granada 2012. See the following homepages: URL: www.arabe.cl/inmigracion.html and www.rimaal.org (accessed 28 January 2016); as well as the bibliography of ASPA under URL: <http://www.bibliaspa.com> (accessed 28 January 2016). Also take note that the official magazine of the Peruvian ministry of foreign affairs dedicated an entire issue to the Arab world and its relations to South America, see *Chasqui. El correo de Peru. Boletín Cultural del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores* 17 (2010), URL: <http://www.rree.gob.pe/politicaexterior/Documentos/Chasqui17Esp.pdf> (accessed 16 February 2017).

80 Ali Hashem, Hugo Chavez’s Mixed Legacy in the Middle East, in: *Al-Monitor*, 6 March 2013, URL: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/chavez-legacy-middle-east.html> (accessed 19 November 2015); See James Rochlin, *Subaltern Orientalism and Counter-hegemonic Struggles. The Construction of Arab, Chinese and Russian Communities in Chavista Venezuela*, in: *Estudios políticos* 45 (2014), 33–54.

81 Published on the album Yuri Buenaventura, *Herencia africana*, 2008.

82 Donald J. Trump, Executive Order 13769: Protecting the nation from foreign terrorist entry into the United States, published 27 January 2017, URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/27/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-e>

from the Americas. However, the world has changed considerably since then: one does not have to read Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* to see that centres and peripheries have shifted and their relationships undergone considerable changes since the life and times of Ilyās b. Ḥannā al-Mawṣīlī.⁸³

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[ntry-united-states](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/donald-trump-courts-immigration-ban-170206042616383.html) (accessed 16 February 2017). On the follow-up see, for example, al-Jazeera, Donald Trump clashes with courts over immigration ban, in: al-Jazeera, 8 February 2017, URL: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/donald-trump-courts-immigration-ban-170206042616383.html> (accessed 16 February 2017).

⁸³ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton 2000.

