Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

Intellectual Encounters across the Mediterranean: A Decolonial Reading of Moroccan Islamicate Ambassadorial Narratives in Early Modernity

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University of Debrecen
Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies
2024

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral (Ph.D.) degree in Literature and Cultural Studies

Written by Achraf Guennouni Idrissi, a certified Master of Arts

Prepared in the framework of the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies of the University of Debrecen
British and North American Literature and Cultural Studies programme
Dissertation advisor: Dr. Balazs Venkovits

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Acknowledgments

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude and indebtedness to my supervisor, mentor and friend Dr. Balazs Venkovits, for providing invaluable guidance, mentorship, and unwavering commitment. This dissertation owes its existence to his erudition and patience. I am thankful for his thorough and multiple reviews of various iterations of all the chapters, consistently offering insightful and encouraging feedback. Your questions and feedback have propelled my research into new and fruitful directions, proving invaluable in the crafting of this dissertation. I sincerely appreciate your unwavering commitment to my project and my development as a scholar.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Peter Csato who allowed me to intrude on his classes even when I did not sign up for them. I benefited greatly from your insights into the mechanics of interpretation and a significant part of this dissertation owes its fruition to your stimulating lectures. Likewise, I appreciate Dr. Agnes Gyorke for her continuous support during all my chapter defenses, and for her insightful and challenging questions not only about my work but also about my friend Salah Chaoui's research project. The few occasions on which we academically engaged are disproportionate to the reaped benefits I garnered from your comments on my friend's dissertation.

My sincere appreciation extends to my professors and mentors for their invaluable professional and moral support. I would like to express gratitude to Dr. Khalid Bekkaoui for guiding me in the direction of this research field. Without his inspiration, and academic, and personal support, I might not have undertaken such a venture. I would also like to thank Dr. Peter Kitlas for having influenced this research project in many ways. His published articles, the invitation to New York University-Abu Dhabi for a workshop on Islamic diplomacies, and his intriguing discussions of Moroccan ambassadors, have all contributed to the improvement and refinement of this project. Thanks to you, and your lovely wife and scholar Susan Abraham for your hospitality in Abu Dhabi, and particularly to Susan for providing me with valuable references on al-Hajari. Special thanks also to Dr. Houssem Eddine Chachia for accepting to be on my doctoral committee. Your prolific work on the Moriscos and North African history has been instrumental, and I am grateful for your hospitality in Tunisia during the training school, which

played a pivotal role in redirecting my focus and put me in contact with Peter and Susan whose friendship I deeply appreciate. My gratitude to Salah Chaoui for his encouragement and assistance in recent years. A significant part of this research would not have been possible without his support during our time together amid the pandemic.

The successful completion of this dissertation was made possible through the generous support of several grants and scholarships. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship for providing the grant that facilitated my research at the Institute of English and American Studies, UD. Additionally, the travel grants from the Käte Hamburger Research Center global dis:connect: Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, and EMoDiR (Early Modern Religious Dissents and Radicalism): Goethe Universität, Frankfurt, allowed me to do research and engage with a stimulating group of scholars whose feedback on my work was invaluable.

Furthermore, various parts of this dissertation have had the privilege of being vetted and accepted for publication in highly-established journals in the field. Thank you to the reviewers and editor of *Diplomatica:* Brill for doing their diligence in reviewing my article about al-Hajari which is forthcoming in 2024. Similarly, I appreciate the reviewers and editor of *Medieval Encounters:* Brill whose profound engagement with my article on al-Ghassani (also forthcoming in 2024) has influenced how I approached other chapters in this dissertation. Thanks to UCLA CMRS Center for Early Global Studies for publishing my article entitled "Colonial Spanish America through Arab Christian Eyes: Al-Mawsuli's Travels, 1668–83" (2023) in their prestigious journal *Viator: Renaissance and Medieval Studies*. I also want to thank *VTU Review: Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences* for publishing my article on Ahmed el-Kerdoudi (2022), and for the Whitestone Foundation for publishing an earlier version of my article on al-Ghazzal (2021) in their online journal *The New Polis*. It is important to note that these three articles are not part of this dissertation; the first two were side projects, and the last one was completely rethought and rewritten in light of the feedback received at the University of Manchester.

Also, this dissertation would not have come to fruition without the generous conferences in which I presented my papers for the past five years. In addition to, Dr. Kitlas's invitation to the Islamic diplomacies workshop in NYU Abu Dhabi, Dr. Tom Menger and Dr. Hanni Gieger's invitation to the Global Dis:connect Munich Summer School, and Dr. Xenia von Tippelskirch's invitation to EmoDir workshop, I had the pleasure of presenting my work in various venues online

and in person. Special thanks go to the Research Training School “Late Medieval and Early Modern Migration Routes and Identity Spaces in the Mediterranean” which was organized by the Cost Action research fund under the supervision of Dr. Houssem Eddine Chachia, Dr. Gerard Weigers and Dr. Luis Bernabe in Tunis (2022). I extend my gratitude to the organizers and participants of the following conferences and events: the 2023 *Studia Mediterranea* Conference at the University of Split, Croatia; the Symposium “Travel in a modernizing world (1700-1840)” at the University of Manchester (2021); the 11th World Congress of the International American Studies Association University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland (2023); the International and Interdisciplinary Online Conference “Narratives of Intercultural Mediation” (2022) and the International Conference “Perspectives on Philosophy and Philosophical Education,” at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Faculty of Philosophy (2023); and the Networks Conference (2020; 2022). Participating in these conferences has not only enriched my academic experience but also allowed me to meet outstanding friends and scholars from around the world.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my mother, who, even in the face of my father's passing, supported my decision to pursue studies abroad, recognizing the responsibility that fell on my shoulders as the elder sibling. She displayed incredible resilience, taking on the care of my younger brother and sister. Without her, I wouldn't be the person I am today. I also wish to convey my appreciation to my fiancée, Yuliana Demyanenko, who believed in me even when I doubted myself. Thank you for enduring my extended hours in front of the laptop and for your constant curiosity about my work.

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A Note on Translations and Selection

The translations which I present in the forthcoming chapters are crafted with the utmost commitment to preserving the essence of the original texts. In navigating the delicate balance between faithfulness and clarity, I have conscientiously striven to retain the peculiarities and distinctive stylistic nuances of each author. These four writers composed their works in a rich tapestry of classical and colloquial Arabic, weaving in regional dialects and idioms particular to their geographical backgrounds. To render their accounts in English, I have relied on the existing published translations, except when I discerned subtle shades of meaning that had eluded prior interpretations. In such instances, I provided my translations, offering a comparative analysis with the available renderings. Notably, in my examination of al-Uthman al-Miknasi, I undertook the task of translating his Maqamat myself, as no prior translations were accessible. In an effort to encapsulate the Arabic essence and vivid imagery where a direct English counterpart was lacking for certain European or American novelties, I opted to transliterate select terms. It is worth mentioning that the authors frequently employed synonyms and repetitions to underscore their points, and I have also retained these in my translations.

Introduction

This dissertation explores Moroccan ambassadorial narratives during the early modern period (17th-18th centuries) from a decolonial perspective. It does not claim that these texts or their authors were concerned with issues of decoloniality. It rather argues that the way in which these narratives have been interpreted by scholars from the Global North and South needs to be decolonized so as 1) to unravel the intellectual and diplomatic merit of Moroccan diplomatic travelogues; 2) and to deflate the proclivity of rendering religion as a limiting interpretive prism when dealing with the non-Muslim Other. Moroccan ambassadors evoke various concepts and intellectual acuities which were formulated in parallel with Enlightenment modalities of diplomatic conduct, yet by virtue of having been fermented in non-European geographies, they were discounted for having been developed in a space of coloniality, not modernity. As such, I introduce 'decolonial hermeneutics,' which is a conceptual and interpretive praxis intended to explore the Self within its own epistemic and intellectual realities before engaging with the Other to establish the comparative framework.

This project investigates four Moroccan ambassadorial travelogues: Qasim al-Hajari's *The Supporter of Religion against the Infidel 1611-1613*, Mohamed ben Abdel Wahab al-Ghassani's *The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive 1690-1691*, Ahmad Ibn al-Mahdi al-Ghazzal's *The Result of Reasoned Judgement in Diplomacy and Jihad 1775-1776,* and Ibn Uthman al-Miknasi's *The Elixir Liberating the Captive 1779-1780* and *The Traveling Full Moon Guiding the Traveler to the Liberation of Captives from the Hands of the Infidel Enemy 1781-1783*. The choice of these texts was compelled by the fact that these are the only ambassadors who left actual narratives depicting their journeys and impressions of Europe between the 17th and the 18th centuries, and their conceptualizations of travel, territoriality and diplomacy in relation to Islamic jurisprudence. Their relevance resides in demonstrating the role of Islam in international politics and the acumen of the Muslim ambassador in conducting international affairs, using their reasoned judgment to critique and engage with legal *fatwas* (decrees) deduced from the Quran and Sunnah (Islamic tradition).

This dissertation traces back Moroccan diplomatic thought in the works of these four actors arguing that their intellectual and diplomatic movement across the Mediterranean allowed them to engage with and draw on their local intellectual traditions as well as on European imperial and contemporary history to construct diplomatic thought and praxis which was endemic to Morocco, given its historical overlaps and geographical proximity to Europe which facilitated the

dispatching of various diplomatic missions to Europe. Moreover, through their accounts, I shed light on how an Islamicate diplomatic ethos was forged by evoking conceptual acuities from within the Islamic jurisprudential and legal traditions. inquiring into the conditions of the possibility that furnished the constitution of such invocations as possible areas and questions of inquiry.

This project is prompted by the failure of what I refer to as the Self/Other paradigm to recognize the intellectual and diplomatic merit of Moroccan diplomats beyond the dichotomy of either embracing or rejecting modernity. This dissertation seeks to offer a more nuanced understanding rooted in the embodied subjectivity facilitated by phronesis. Cartesianism, with its emphasis on the rational intellect and dualistic formations of subject/object, Self/Other, mind/body ect, has often overlooked the complexities of human experience and the situatedness of knowledge within lived contexts. As will be argued in the second chapter, Phronesis, as practical wisdom, enables the embodied subject to engage in nuanced moral judgments, navigate complex social interactions, and discern meaning within historical and cultural contexts. In contrast to Cartesian dualism, which tends to prioritize abstract theoretical knowledge, phronesis emphasizes the importance of lived experience, ethical engagement, and contextual understanding in shaping human understanding in cross-cultural, cross-intellectual and interreligious rubrics.

My intention is not to dismiss the totality of Cartesian epistemology as an axis of hermeneutic engagement but rather to temper it, i.e. to situate it historically and unravel its hermeneutic limitation particularly vis-à-vis the place of the sacred within our interpretive, political and ethical engagements with the world. The interpretive subject is reconceived as an embodied Self situated within specific historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts. Rather than being evaluated solely in terms of their proximity to the standards of modernity standards, Moroccan diplomats are examined as complex individuals whose actions and decisions are informed by practical observation, ethical considerations, and historical consciousness, in relation to their intellectual as well as professional engagements. This perspective allows for a more holistic appraisal of diplomatic encounters, one that recognizes the multiplicity of perspectives, motivations, and cultural dynamics at play. My denomination of the Self/Other paradigm, whichwill be fleshed out in detail throughout this dissertation, is governed by a biased proclivity, namely that of rendering modernity as the epistemological yardstick around which the caliber of Moroccan Muslim ambassadors is evaluated. Such a paradigm asks the following questions: How did the Muslim Self conceptualize the Christian Other across the Mediterranean? Could Muslim

travelers comprehend European modernity, and its manifestation in technology, social structures, political institutions, economic systems, and gender roles? Did they transcend their religious perspectives, perceive the 'decadence' of their tradition, or exhibit reformist tendencies?

Whereas these questions are relevant, as they allow us to understand how Muslim cultures imagined and represented modern European societies, they remain insufficient because they do not acknowledge the constitutive role of coloniality in the formation of European modernity, and of Muslim-Christian relations after the political fall of Granada in 1492 and its aftermath with the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609. Thus, instead of the above queries, this project poses the following questions: How did Muslim scholars, undertaking journeys into Europe post-1609, intellectually interact with the phenomenon of European Modernity? Was there a critical assessment of such a phenomenon from within the intellectual landscape of the Islamic world? Did this assessment align with critiques from other Western or non-Western scholarly circles? Further inquiries delve into the rationale behind Muslim ambassadors' travel to Christian lands, considering that such travel was generally prohibited. How did the epistemological intricacies of the *Rihla* complexify diplomatic endeavors? In the realm of diplomacy, how did Moroccan Muslim ambassadors navigate the complex interplay between ethics and politics in a world whose modern fabric was marked the asymmetric force of imperial relations? What role did Islam play in shaping these ethical considerations? Last but not least, how did these ambassadors perceive the interconnection between Islam, governance, and diplomatic representation?

While my questions express a certain primacy of the Self, as they begin from the epistemic contours of Muslim ambassadors, they still invoke the Other but not as an implied yardstick but as an element within a chain of other elements which once fit together, can constitute a new understanding of cross-confessional diplomacy. I simply reorient the terrain of intellectual exploration, redirecting the focus from examining Moroccan ambassadorial thought against the backdrop of 'Western' modernity to scrutinizing the latter through the lens of the former's intellectual framework. This conceptual pivot encapsulates what I refer to as decolonial hermeneutics. In this light, I argue that the Self/Other paradigm is epistemologically biased and obfuscates the intellectual and diplomatic merit of Moroccan state actors. As such, through employing a decolonial historical approach and drawing on the theoretical framework of the New Diplomatic History, this study aims to unveil non-Western dimensions of Islamicate intellectual and diplomatic history. Again, this project's invocation of decoloniality is not to be conflated with

claiming that Moroccan ambassadors expressed a decolonial consciousness. It is rather intended to showcase the epistemological bias of other readings which prisoned these texts within a specific interpretive mold. To this end, this dissertation demonstrates that the diplomatic ventures of Moroccan Muslim ambassadors across the Mediterranean facilitated cross-confessional and intellectual encounters with early modern Europe. It also played a crucial role in generating various conceptual and ethical formations. These drew from local Islamic jurisprudential and intellectual traditions, as well as European Mediterranean and Atlantic political, social, economic, and intellectual history. This amalgamation is conceptualized as Islamicate diplomacy from a Moroccan perspective.

With a decolonial-inflicted reading, this dissertation starts with rethinking the significance of the date 1492, which has been acclaimed by decolonial theorists to be the birth of modernity/coloniality, from the perspective of the Islamic Maghreb. It also marks it as a date whose significance for the Islamic world cannot be fully comprehended without linking it to the expulsion of the Moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula in 1609. This step serves to contextualize Moroccan intellectual and diplomatic traditions within the broader modern and colonial world system. I have endeavored to unravel, from modernity's exteriority (Mignolo 2011), the hitherto unrecognized non-Western dimensions of intellectual and diplomatic history, and challenge the prevailing historical bias that construes diplomacy as an inherently European enterprise. In so doing, this dissertation foregrounds the conceptual and ethical formulations that underpinned what I have termed 'Islamicate Diplomacy.'

While the decolonial approach pertained to how the texts were read by other scholars, my interpretations of Moroccan narratives are inspired by the latest scholarly conceptualizations of New Diplomatic History (Watkins 2008; Windler 2001; Krstic and van Gelder 2015; Alloul and Auwers 2018). My focus on diplomatic actors is oriented by the NDH theoretical insights which I utilize to dethrone the centrality of the Great Histories; that is those which focus solely on Sultans/Kings as the sole harbingers of Moroccan diplomacy and account for how Moroccan individual ambassadors generated spaces of autonomy which, while operating under the shadow of the Sultan, still managed to construct and theorize diplomatic traits, language and praxes which corresponded to the larger interests of Morocco and its religio-political underpinnings. This approach zooms in on actors who were either unrecognized within official state bureaucracies and histories, or pays attention to how, in the case of Morocco, state actors such as ambassadors

envisioned their diplomatic profession and influenced the decision-making process, unraveling a history that transcends the parochial renditions of diplomatic history in the figure of the Sultan or the King. I use NDH to foreground Moroccan ambassadors' shared experiential foundation, which purposefully disseminated knowledge resulting from diplomatic endeavors among a collective of ambassadorial cadres with the specific aim of offering guidance and instruction to their fellow successors. Additionally, I advance that their interconnectedness as a collective of state agents is substantiated by a shared Islamicate diplomatic and intellectual ethos. This shared ethos serves two essential purposes: firstly, to delineate the ethical dimensions inherent in diplomatic practices within the Islamicate Mediterranean, contributing to the formulation of an ideal portrayal of the Muslim diplomat; secondly, as a strategic measure to counter jurisprudential criticisms related to territoriality and the challenges associated with travel in Islamic law.

In the context of diverse Islamic jurisprudential schools, opinions about travel to non-Muslim lands varied depending on historical and political circumstances, yet the consensus among most Islamic legal schools included the acceptance of travel with the purposes of ransoming captives. Consequently, Muslim ambassadors venturing into non-Muslim territories made sure to incorporate references, particularly in the title and preamble of their compositions, to Quranic verses lauding travel, esteemed Muslim scholars whose works carried significant cultural weight, or the Sultan's concern for captivity, subtly alluding to issues of conversion and the responsibility associated with the title of the Commander of the Faithful/Caliph. These references formed the justificatory foundation upon which the genre of Ambassadorial *Rihla* (to be discussed in detail later) commenced its unfolding. In line with this, the current project highlights how Moroccan ambassadors crafted Islamicate diplomatic ethics by invoking concepts from within Islamic jurisprudential and legal traditions, and through using their accounts of Europe as opportunities to delineate their intellectual vision as well as the changing dynamics of international affairs. Such ventures showcase how Moroccan diplomats utilized their awareness of Europe's global imperial incursions and inter-religious rivalries to configure their diplomatic praxis within an era characterized by the emergence of Enlightenment-inspired ideals of statecraft and diplomacy. Ultimately, this dissertation showcases the entanglements of global contexts with local geographies, and the intellectual and diplomatic encounters which ensued following such encounters in the international arena. As such, it aspires to "get beyond the impasse of radical

alterity and clash of civilizations, and hopefully to put to rest the idea that East and West, Islam and Christianity have continuous and autonomous histories" (Rothman 2015, 258).

1. Dissertation Thesis and Division

The dissertation starts with the historical reconsideration of the significance of 1492, particularly from a Moroccan perspective. Chapter I aims to offer a nuanced understanding of how the birth of modernity/coloniality unfolded on the Southern Mediterranean shores. With a decolonial-inflicted sensibility, chapter one excavates the material and imperial conditions which accelerated the frequency of diplomatic dispatches and furnished the grounds in which questions of how to deal with the Christians were reinvigorated in a context of modernity/coloniality. It is not that these queries were unconventional developments in Islamic history or Muslim-Christian relations. Rather, the novelty resides in the nature of the encounter with a Christian Europe whose potency and crusading caliber were supplemented by imperialism, the beginning of which, as I argue, started with the expulsion of the Jews, the political fall of Islamic Granada and imperial encroachments on Moroccan coastal territories, before it expanded itself to engulf the Americas. This point is rarely invoked or simply brushed aside in decolonial literature. Reading Moroccan ambassadorial texts within the material background of such entanglements yields a profound interpretation as it explains and unravels the material conditions which made it possible and inevitable to castigate the Other on religious grounds. However, as I also argue throughout the following chapters such castigation did not adulterate intellectual engagement but rather potentiated it in such a way that shows us the possibility of advancing sound and astute civilizational critiques from within religious epistemologies.

By contextualizing the historical events preceding and succeeding the date 1492, this chapter not only reveals the colonial condition that catalyzed modernity's global transformations but also distinguishes the Muslim experience from that of Native Americans whose centrality to the decolonial conceptualization of modernity is well-established in the field (Dussel 1993; Mignolo 1995; Quijano 2007; Escobar 2007). This distinction is particularly potent in the interplay between religion and race within the modern/colonial world system. This historical chapter emphasizes the commonalities between their (Muslim and Indigenous populations) experiences, illustrating how certain imperial and colonial practices traversed between the Muslim world and the Americas. It also serves to contextualize the focus which, in the following chapters, is directed toward those existing in modernity's exteriority (Mignolo 1999, 36), highlighting how Muslim

subjects, who were disenfranchised within the epistemic hierarchy of the modern/colonial world, engaged with the imperial, historical, intellectual, and diplomatic facets of European modernity within a space of encounter informed by local and global intellectual traditions. Concretely, the material conditions that I map out as being embodied in European imperial incursions upon Moroccan shores and the latter's awareness of its limited power in comparison with such a force (especially in the 18th century), partly underpinned the rise of a justificatory discourse in which Moroccan ambassadors opted for *Ijtihad* (reasoned judgment) to justify the Sultan's retreat from waging *Jihad* against certain imperial powers. It also unravels the condition of possibility that undergirded the rise of a discourse in which the formulation of a new diplomatic ethics of dealing with the Other, whose power rendered relations on a plain of asymmetrical force, became necessary and pervasively pursued.

In light of the historical context presented in chapter I, chapter II introduces the hermeneutical approach that facilitated the fruition of this dissertation, showcasing the analytical significance of what I refer to as decolonial hermeneutics. It is primarily a thorough discussion of Gadamerian hermeneutics which I problematize in relation to Otherness using a decolonial-inflicted consciousness. Such a discussion is followed by my conceptual delineation of decolonial hermeneutics. I advance that the latter allows us to substantially flesh out the intellectual landscape in which Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy was configured, and the historical, cultural, political, jurisprudential and religious contours which furnished Moroccan diplomatic philosophy without falling in the anachronistic traps of imposing European diplomatic modalities on diplomacy as it developed in the Islamic Maghreb. Additionally, it also allows us to trace how different knowledges about the Atlantic and Mediterranean world have been repurposed and utilized by Moroccan ambassadors to advance their diplomatic interests in Europe and as such construct a set of Islamicate diplomatic ethics, the distinction and sophistication of which stem from their ability to navigate the relationship between religion and politics.

In chapter III, I explore the Morisco Qasim al-Hajari's *The Supporter of Religion against the Infidel 1611-1613* by inquiring into the intellectual context in which his text was composed. As such, the brevity with which he invoked certain historical scenes is mapped out into an intellectual rubric which was cross-cultural, cross-confessional and multilingual. Al-Hajari's account is the first Arabic account about the plight of the Morisco community written two years after their expulsion in 1609. His narrative has been examined for its insights into archaeological

history in early modern Spain, the history of Arabic studies in Europe (Jones 2020; Wiegers 1988, 2010), the political and cultural history of Muslims in Spain (Harvey 1964, 2005; al-Qadduri 2006), religious polemical encounters (Chachia 2015), the Lead Books affair's translation, and as a testament to the unexplored domain of translation in early modern Morocco (Gilbert 2020). It has also been scrutinized as a reflection on the clash of civilizations and religious incommensurability in the early modern era (al-Shamali 2015). Notably, scholars like Rasha al-Khatib (2018) and Oumelbanine Zhiri (2023) have delved into al-Hajari's role in the emergence of early modern Orientalism and his often-overlooked contributions to the rise of oriental and Arabic studies in the European Republic of Letters. However, al-Hajari has not been explored in relation to his diplomatic merit and the Mediterranean and the Atlantic intellectual undercurrents which underpinned his diplomatic thought. Particularly, I shed light on how a scene from Spain's colonial expansionist encounters with Native Americans is utilized within an Arabophone context of the early modern Islamicate world and repurposed to advance Moroccan diplomatic interests. I trace how al-Hajari Islamized the momentous and violent imperial encounter between the Aztec king Montezuma and the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés (1519) in Mexico. I also invoke the texts and narratives which circulated around the time he lived in Granada, Seville and Madrid, and inquire into the possible encounters which might have undergirded the brief references in his text to Atlantic and European history. As such, it is as much an exploration of al-Hajari's narrative as it is of the intellectual context in which some of these textual invocations could make sense to a readership who has been deemed by Bernard Lewis and others to be uninterested in other civilizations (Lewis 1982, 1993, 2002). Additionally, I showcase how he juxtaposes the scene involving Montezuma and Cortés with Spain's violation of the treaties with Muslim Andalusians (1492-1609) and its incursions upon its neighboring protestant powers, establishing Spain's treasonous ventures as precedent infringements of international law indicative of Spanish diplomatic praxis. Al-Hajari's account not only indicates the itinerant condition that characterizes the circulation of ideas between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean but also demonstrates how imperial episodes acquire different meanings through diplomatic endeavors and within different hermeneutic communities. This chapter constructs the intellectual context that underpinned the early formation of Moroccan diplomatic thought and reinforces how historical knowledge circulated between the Islamic Maghreb, Europe and the Americas.

In chapter IV, I deal with the narrative of the Moroccan minister and ambassador Mohammad bin Abd al-Wahab al-Ghassani who embarked on a diplomatic mission to 17th-century Spain. Commissioned by King Mulay Ismail, his purpose was to negotiate with the Spanish monarch Carlos II for the release of Moroccan captives and the restitution of Arabic manuscripts taken from Muslim libraries in al-Andalus. In his work *The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive* al-Ghassani crafted the first Arabic account of Spain post-Muslim expulsion, offering a poignant narrative that meticulously documented the historical, social, religious, and administrative facets of Spanish life and culture. His account has been read as a parochial representation of civilizational incommensurability obscuring his astute intellectual insights into the changing sociological fabric of Spanish society as well as his nascent formulation of an Islamicate diplomatic ethos. In this chapter, I further delve into the epistemological reality of the Islamic Maghreb and explore how diplomacy enabled the utilization of local indigenous knowledge to construct a historically informed analysis of Spanish modernity by drawing on Ibn Khaldun's historical philosophy and Spain's imperial incursions in the Americas. First, through a decolonial hermeneutical approach, I read al-Ghassani's use of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history to fathom Spanish modernity, as an attempt to utilize local Islamicate epistemology in the face of an engulfing modernity whose beginning was marked by the expulsion of his ancestors from Islamic Spain (1609). Second, I underscore the burgeoning of Islamicate diplomatic ethics which were dislodged from the secular formation of diplomacy in its early modern Western conception. In light of these two arguments, this chapter reiterates the significance of the period of 1492-1609 for the study of the Islamic Maghreb, particularly as it is premised upon confronting unprobed historical presuppositions about the paradigm of decline in the writing of Islamic cultural history.

Chapter V aims to foreground a praxis of non-Western diplomacy showcasing the interplay of international affairs and intellectual thought. The 18th-century Moroccan ambassador Ahmad al-Ghazzal's diplomatic *Rihla* titled *The Result of Reasoned Judgement in Diplomacy and Jihad (1775-1776)* uncovers a certain segment of the diplomatic universe that has been heretofore overlooked, yet one could argue it is more than ever pertinent to the effort aimed at understanding geopolitical and religious impacts on contemporary diplomacy. Appointed as an ambassador by Sid Mohamed bin Abdullah, al-Ghazzal undertook a diplomatic mission to secure the release of Muslim captives in Spain. His mandate also included the crucial task of rescuing valuable Islamic

books from the libraries of the Spaniards. I argue that al-Ghazzal reframes diplomacy within the Islamic legal and jurisprudential tradition by drawing on the concept of al-*Manfa'a* (mutual benefit) and *Jizyah* (protection tax) and through rethinking the telos of *al-Jihad*. He utilizes his *Ijtihad* (reasoned judgment) within the complex contours of the *Rihla* to articulate his diplomatic philosophy and shifts the debate from war to the pursuance of the *Maslaha* (common good) as the realm of Islamicate diplomacy. Additionally, such an endeavor challenges the prevailing tendency in diplomatic studies scholarship to interpret 'non-Western' practices through a predominantly Western lens. Thus, it lays bare how the formation of modern diplomacy within the rubric of Western Enlightenment – as a systemic component of the professionalization of state craftsmanship – depersonalized the praxis of diplomacy and denuded it of the cultural and historical specificity necessary for the understanding of 'non-Western' diplomatic ventures.

Chapter VI uncovers the diplomatic input of the Moroccan Muslim traveler Muhammad Ibn Uthman al-Miknasi by mapping out the ethical and conceptual prisms that he configured throughout his career in diplomacy and international affairs. He stands as a prominent figure, marked by his three travelogues and a two-decade-long career under various sultans. His accounts have been perused from within the Self-Other paradigm (Matar 2015) and for his role in demarcating the temporal as well as the spiritual contours of Moroccan Sultanic rule across the Mediterranean (Kitlas 2015). My study offers a translation of his *Maqamat* which is a style of rhymed prose known for its suitability for satirical, critical and instructional composition. In conversation with these and a few other studies, I shed light on his travel accounts to Spain (1779-80), Malta, the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily (1781- 83), arguing that al-Miknasi's diplomatic philosophy drew on Islamically inflicted affective, intellectual, ethical and historical precedents to configure the caliber and acumen of the Muslim ambassador as he/she navigates international affairs across the Mediterranean basin. Additionally, I explore how jurisprudential prohibitions were circumvented by generating a set of Islamicate diplomatic ethics that both attended to the sanctity of religion as well as the pressing global political and regional alterations. The features of the concepts that al-Miknasi evoked were formulated in parallel with Enlightenment modalities of diplomatic conduct, yet by virtue of having been conceptualized in a geography of coloniality, they were left out of the narrative of modernity.

In the following chapters, I demonstrate how by amending our approach to explore the Self within its contours, i.e., Moroccan ambassadors within their epistemic rubric, allows us to

construct the intellectual and religious landscape which shaped Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy in the early modern period. Then, by theorizing how Muslim ambassadors navigated their profession within the space of the Mediterranean (sometimes with Atlantic underpinnings), I showcase how they critically engaged with European modernity utilizing both their local indigenous knowledges as well as Europe's imperial history, religious divide and diplomatic conduct. This does not only point to how Morocco and its ambassadors were well aware of European history and its political realities across the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic, but it also undergirds the ethical formulations that they developed in relation to how they engaged with Europe as well as with their own jurisprudential circles and diplomatic cadre. These actors display an astute awareness of European regional and international affairs and exhibit the complex itineraries of imperial histories, repurposing them into means that serve the advancement of different diplomatic ends. Accounting for these developments enables us to construct the broader history of Islamicate diplomacy from a Moroccan perspective. In this regard, this dissertation provides one of the first attempts to inquire into the conditions of possibility of a discourse in which the contours and ethics of what could be considered 'Islamicate diplomacy' were formulated. It was not a diplomacy of equals but one that is conditioned by certain possibilities which compelled Muslim ambassadors to think otherwise and find new ways of maneuvering between pressures of religion and politics. Such reasoned ventures force us to carve out a space within the study of intellectual history to regard ambassadors as intellectual thinkers, capable of theorizing, conceptualizing, and embodying their philosophies. As the project aspires to shed light on Islamicate diplomacy in early modernity (17th and 18th centuries), this dissertation advances a decolonial reading that seeks to pluralize our understanding of modern diplomatic thought and praxis and contribute to the integrative approach which the practitioners of the New Diplomatic History have argued for in relation to early modern Mediterranean and cross-confessional diplomacy.

2. A Note on the Scope and Limitations of the Study

This dissertation draws its conceptual and analytical rigor from various fields of the study such as literary and cultural theory, religious studies and history. While its interdisciplinarity has become almost inevitable in the humanities and social sciences, I would like to demarcate my audience and the scope in which this project pursues its analysis of the chosen corpus. The doctoral program

under whose auspices this project has been undertaken pertains to cultural and literary studies. Had I been writing such a dissertation in a doctoral school of history, this dissertation would have turned out and been structured differently, particularly as it relates to the delineation of theory and methodology; thus, creating a more seamless discourse and alleviating concerns regarding the audience's familiarity with specific terminologies or conceptual frameworks. My methodological approach in navigating historical narratives within the realm of literary and cultural studies pivots towards unraveling the intricate mechanics of interpreting the sacred within the hermeneutic domains of cross-cultural encounters. Central to this exploration is the resonance of decolonial theory, which offers a potent lens for dissecting interpretive dynamics within fraught discursive landscapes. While my primary concern is the situatedness of the sacred within the scope of our interpretive praxis, I have also ventured, through my theoretical discussion, to advance a novel contribution vis-à-vis what I perceive as absence, or rather cursory mentions, of the Muslim experience from the debates surrounding the birth of modernity/coloniality. As such, I hope to illuminate the intricate interplay between interpretive paradigms, historical contingencies, and the sacred which render crisscrossing between disciplines a necessary endeavor.

Had I approached such venture as a historian, the decolonial framework would have been dropped in favor of a more grounded historical mapping which would have emphasized the diplomatic and intellectual traditions prior to al-Hajari and as such allowed us to foreground more the networks as well as the trajectories in which diplomatic knowledge was passed on through various diplomatic cadre, not only in the form of travel/diplomatic reports but also letters, bibliographies, autobiographies and treatises. However, given my formal contours and disciplinary concerns, my research centered on the diplomatic endeavors of Muslim ambassadors in Europe, a focus that necessitated the exclusion of a substantial corpus of literature pivotal to the narrative I sought to construct. This corpus encompasses not only diplomatic accounts addressed to the Sublime Porte and other Muslim regions but also the correspondence of diplomats who traversed Europe without composing formal travelogues. While my scholarly instincts inclined towards a more concentrated exploration of Islamicate diplomacy, the exigencies of justifying a heavily historical project within the framework of a Literary and Cultural Studies program prompted strategic choices aimed at accommodating diverse scholarly concerns. For instance, two notable travelogues are predating al-Hajari's seminal work. One, authored by a Moroccan prince and the other by Moroccan envoy al-Tamaghrouti, provided invaluable insights into 16th-century Ottoman

diplomatic culture from a Moroccan perspective. These texts served as windows into Sultan al-Mansur's distinctive caliphal and diplomatic vision in Ifriqya, particularly illuminating the dynamics of diplomatic exchanges between Morocco, Libya, and West Sudan. Furthermore, my inquiry extended to the Saadi and Alawite dynasties, pivotal witnesses to the dawn of modernity and its ensuing repercussions, including imperial expansions along North African shores and the consequential expulsion of Jews and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula. These historical events, often overshadowed in decolonial debates emphasizing racial dynamics within the colonial matrix of power, underscore the multifaceted intersections of religion, identity, and socio-political upheavals engendered by encounters with modernity.

The question of scope also becomes pertinent as my choice of corpus could be seen as approached synthetically, hence creating an appearance of disconnection between each ambassador. I aimed, albeit within the confines of limitations, to underscore the existence of a shared body of knowledge disseminated among Moroccan travelers. In contrast to their European counterparts who could draw upon an extensive corpus of literature, Moroccan travelers faced a scarcity of Islamic sources which were rendered obsolete by the transformative socioeconomic landscape of early modern Europe catalyzed by the riches derived from the New World. Nonetheless, discernible in their narratives are subtle allusions and, at times, direct borrowings from one another. Moreover, it is evident that they availed themselves of alternative channels of knowledge acquisition, including interactions with captives and the exchange of letters. Central to their collective experience was a concerted effort to reconcile their religious convictions with the geopolitical and diplomatic vicissitudes precipitated by their engagement with Europe. This shared endeavor underscores a pervasive motif threading through their accounts: the imperative to recalibrate their understanding of religion in response to the exigencies of their diplomatic missions.

They are discussed together not only because they were the only Moroccan travelers to Europe from the 17th to the 18th centuries who left written accounts about their journeys. They also were subjects who witnessed the earliest imperial incursions upon Moroccan ports, the living memories of their dispossessed coreligionists, heard tales of displacement and desecration, and experienced the advancement instigated by modernity; the impact of which sometimes forced diplomatic relations to mitigate imperial damage, trade one port for another, support a war against a common enemy, sign a peace treaty etc. While the first element of the decolonial in my project

pertains to the hermeneutics, the second resides in these historical contingencies as material conditions which underpinned the acceleration of various positions, diplomatic, intellectual, epistemic and hermeneutic.

Chapter I: The Forgotten 1492: Islam in Light of the Decolonial Configuration of Modernity/Coloniality

1. The Islamic Maghreb in light of Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality

As I have outlined in the previous section, this chapter aims to set the stage for the subsequent units, centering its attention on how the Islamic Maghreb, the space from which the Moroccan ambassadors ventured into Europe, is positioned outside the narrative of modernity, as articulated by Mignolo (1999, 36). It underscores that the experience of modernity in the Islamic Maghreb had its specificities and cannot be subsumed under the centrality of the Native American experience which focalizes race as the organizing principle of modernity/coloniality. This chapter highlights the significance of religion to the problematics of modernity/coloniality and foreshadows its centrality in the accounts of Moroccan ambassadors as the epistemological, hermeneutic and intellectual framework in which the encounter with the Other took place. However, instead of dismissing it as a deterministic interpretive acuity which could not liberate its practitioners from the premises of incommensurability, this dissertation investigates the role of religion, particularly Islam, in the formation of border-crossing experiences as they manifest in cross-cultural and cross-confessional intellectual and diplomatic encounters in early modernity.

The proposition that the burgeoning formation of 'Western' modernity was initiated by the European colonial encounter with the Americas in 1492 has become axiomatic within decolonial epistemology (Dussel 1993; Mignolo 1995; Quijano 2007; Escobar 2007). Various 'Western' historians, however, designate the Reformation as marking the birth of modernity, particularly in reference to its profound implications for European society, including religious, political, and cultural transformations. Challenging the authority of the Catholic Church and initiating religious transformations across Europe (Gregory 2016, 143-145); emphasizing individual interpretation of scripture fostering a spirit of religious autonomy and intellectual inquiry (147-149); coinciding with the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution, periods characterized by significant advancements in technology and exploration (150-152); the ubiquity of a Protestant work ethic which has been linked to the rise of capitalism and the spirit of entrepreneurship propelled economic development during the early modern period (Liana and Marsh 1990); these are the claims which associate the Reformation with the birth of European modernity

The recognition of the Reformation as the starting point of modernity undermines the role of Spain and Portugal in shaping the structures that underpinned modernity, particularly through their colonial endeavors. Spain and Portugal were among the earliest European powers to engage in large-scale colonial expansion, beginning with the voyages of Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama in the late 15th century. Their conquests and colonization efforts led to the establishment of vast empires in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, profoundly shaping the modern world order (Wallerstein 2004, 20-22). Their colonial projects involved the imposition of imperial structures, such as governance systems, legal frameworks, and economic institutions that played a crucial role in perpetuating colonial domination and exploitation, shaping socio-economic relationships and power dynamics that endure to this day (Grafe et al. 2006). Their impact on the global distribution of wealth, resources, and power cannot be overstated. They extracted vast quantities of natural resources from colonized territories, fueling economic growth and industrial development in Europe while impoverishing and exploiting indigenous populations (Mahoney 2010, 35-46). The focus on 'Northern Europe' or the areas west of the Pyrenees reinforces Enlightenment stereotypes about Southern Europe whereby countries such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal were often depicted as more backward or less civilized compared to Northern European nations like England, France, Holland and Germany. The political works of Voltaire (1733), Montesquieu (1748), Edward Gibbon (1776) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1750) played a significant role in shaping Enlightenment-era attitudes towards Southern European countries, perpetuating stereotypes of cultural inferiority and contributing to the broader discourse of European cultural hierarchy.

Decolonial and Latin American historians have deflated the so-called inferiority of Spain and Portugal by uncovering how their encounters with indigenous populations between the 15th and 17th centuries underpinned the rise of a systemic totality which was to be wrenched out from their dominion in the 17th and 18th centuries by Holland, England, and France. Epistemologically, such an encounter displaced previous civilizations into an imperial historical and teleological framework of time progression which delegitimizes their existence by designating them as occupying the lagging temporal and spatial abyss called the 'premodern' (Mignolo 2002a, 936; 2011a, 279). As such, it configured relations of power that have oriented and continued to shape inter-civilizational encounters ever since 1492. Decolonial theorists utilize the term 'coloniality', coined by Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano (1991, 2000), to indicate the relations of this power differential, which is in itself a bi-dimensional analytical concept enabling us not only to point out

the persistence of colonialist relations of power beyond the materiality of colonialism as a political phenomenon, but also, and more importantly, to disclose the surreptitious aegis of 'Western' modernity; that which is dialectically constitutive of modernity yet undisclosed in its pursuit of universalism; that which Walter Benjamin insightfully summed up in his "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" stating that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one to another" (Benjamin 256-257).

Quijano's understanding of colonial barbarism went beyond reducing it to economic, political, and military occupation to question the epistemological fundamentals sustaining the hegemony of European modalities of knowledge production. This entails a critique of the epistemic regime which legitimizes imperial expansion and construes itself as a yardstick of universal validity. This is the presumed yardstick to which I propose the corrective approach that I formulate as decolonial hermeneutics. It unravels the epistemic and interpretive assumptions that while they bring Muslim ambassadorial accounts into current debates, they underhandedly dislocate them to the realm of civilizational insularity. This is a reading praxis which is necessarily hierarchical and has its origins in the formation of modernity/coloniality. Both Walter Mignolo and Quijano posit that the logic of epistemic coloniality shaped the hierarchical classification of the populations which emerged in the 16th century. They argue that a taxonomy of race developed in accordance with imperial expansion dividing people into a social hierarchy following the epistemological modes of naturalism in the 17th century and biologism in the 18th (Mignolo 2007, 489; Quijano 2007, 171). These two modalities, they believe, find their formational kernel in the '*Reconquista'* against the Andalusian Iberian Muslims who were driven out of their territories from the 11th century onwards. Quijano advances that it is only with the configuration of the modern/colonial world system that race is solidified as the organizing epistemic principle of colonial power (Quijano 1999, 175). However, my position in this chapter is that race is underpinned by a history of zealotry which utilized religion and ethnicity as the organizing principles of alterity before race attained its prominence in the experience of the Americas, and eventually traveled back to haunt the Muslims in the form of Islamophobia and the Jews in terms of antisemitism.

As a philosopher of decolonial thought, Enrique Dussel's work is foundational to understanding the underside of modernity i.e., its constitutive yet surreptitious side of coloniality. He writes that

> the birthdate of modernity is 1492, even though its gestation, like that of the fetus, required a period of intrauterine growth. Whereas modernity gestated in the free, creative medieval European cities, it came to birth in Europe's confrontation with the Other. By controlling, conquering, and violating the Other, Europe defined itself as discoverer, conquistador, and colonizer of an alterity likewise constitutive of modernity. Europe never discovered (des-cubierto) this Other as Other but covered over (encubierto) the Other as part of the Same: i.e., Europe. Modernity dawned in 1492 and with it the myth of a special kind of sacrificial violence which eventually eclipsed whatever was non-European. (1995, 12)

In the spirit of Benjaminian critique, any reference to modernity obligates one to evoke its hidden side of coloniality. The encapsulation of such a dialectic is usually termed 'modernity/coloniality,' the slash designating the fact that the former is implied in the latter and vice versa. One of the cardinal targets of decoloniality is what has been identified by Enrique Dussel as the myth of modernity, namely the universalist tendency that Europe has reached the civilizational and intellectual zenith of the world, and by extension, the task of civilizing, educating those who 'lag behind' falls on its shoulders (Dussel 1995, 75); those which Mignolo refers to as habituating the imperial/colonial difference in Eurocentric[1] cartographies of power differentials (Mignolo 2002b, 59).

It should be stated that this dissertation is not an emotional rejection of modernity. Rather, I am interested in disclosing how Moroccan Muslim ambassadors critiqued and engaged with various manifestations of modernity through their diplomatic experiences in Europe, and how such encounters compelled them to rethink local intellectual and jurisprudential debates concerning the nature of their profession as diplomats. As Souleymane Bachir Diagne notes, "the notion that an approach is decolonial if and only if it has nothing to do with anything European is absurd. Decoloniality cannot be confused with what could be called epistemological nativism" (2020, 74). I join the recent shift towards a decolonial paradigm that is undergirded by various fundamental

[1] Eurocentrism refers to the ideologies that present Europe or the West as normative and superior to other regions of the world, regarding history, culture, and values (Amin 1988). Ella Shohat and Robert Stam further hone such a definition by conceiving "Eurocentrism as an epistemic infrastructure and a historically embedded matrix of asymmetrical relationalities and ethnocentric assumptions that plagued conceptualizations of the relationship between the West and the non-West" (2014, 364).

issues which postcolonial theory is still struggling to address. It is not that there is a categorical insularity or opposition between their critical proclivities. It is rather that their approach to certain issues that render stressing divergences and convergences a sensible venture for the sake of clarity. While postcolonialism emerged as an intellectual movement primarily focused on cultural issues, decoloniality originated from the work of scholars from South America and emphasized a longer historical time frame. The geographical locations and imperial interlocutors differ in these two approaches. It can hardly be denied that postcolonial theory was rooted in the context of the former British Empire and predominantly expressed in Anglophone scholarship which may not be directly applicable or transferable to the Maghrebian or Latin America due to the regions' distinct historical and geopolitical circumstances. However, both postcolonial and decolonial perspectives aim to challenge Eurocentric narratives and historical accounts by critiquing the parochial nature of arguments that attribute the origins of modernity solely to Europe and emphasize the broader histories of colonialism, empire, and enslavement. Both disciplines nurture the radical potential to unsettle and reconstitute standard processes of knowledge production by questioning the universalist claims of 'Western' knowledge and highlighting the need to incorporate diverse cultural traditions and gendered perspectives (Bhambra 2014, 116-117; Broeck and Juncker 2014, 9-12; Ramamurthy and Tambe 2017, 510). Postcolonial studies have addressed both cultural and socio-economic aspects, but there has been a tendency for it to remain firmly in the realm of the cultural. In contrast, decolonial thinking, influenced by scholars from sociology and philosophy, has been more strongly linked to world-systems theory and social theory traditions, addressing issues of development, underdevelopment, and the broader structures of power (119). It is not that scholars from each discipline engaged with issues of culture, social theory, and indigenous epistemology on both ends of the spectrum; it rather showcases that the underlying conditions in which both disciplines emerged influenced the critical caveats that were emphasized in their scholarship.

This is the running argumentative thread of the essay collection entitled *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate* in which "the philosophical and ideological blind spots of postcolonial theories" were laid out by various decolonial scholars (2008, 5). More recently, the journal *Postcolonial Studies* has put together a special issue entitled "Postcolonial responses to decolonial interventions" (2022) which features various seasoned postcolonial scholars such as Achille Mbembe and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The issue begins by evoking

the vociferous decolonial critiques of postcolonial theory while noting "among postcolonial critics – with some exceptions – a predominant tendency either not to respond to these charges or to downplay them in favour of reconciliatory moves" (2). The issue aspired to provide a corrective to such a deficit, and "reclaim the value of its [Postcolonial theory's] critical apparatus in the context of the unfinished struggle for decolonizing knowledge and the social unconscious of postcoloniality" (1). They note how the issue of the critical canon, which is largely poststructuralist and deconstructionist, remains at the heart of postcolonial theory which locates it within the specific boundaries of a Eurocentric tradition (4). This is not to deny the foregrounding of indigenous knowledges which postcolonial scholarship, it is rather the fact that the foundational moments of postcolonial theory have its original beginnings in knowledges underpinned by specific material conditions which need to be filtered before any conceptual applications in different contexts. As such, it is a critique of the tendency to use critical colonial concepts across various colonial context without heeding the historical process which distinguishes various colonial situations from others. This is underpinned by the fact that in postcolonial theory, decolonization conventionally viewed in reference to "India, Africa and the various countries in the Caribbean which gained their independence from their European overlords in the twentieth century;" whereas "to view the matter from the perspective of Latin America […] is to discover a completely different sociopolitical and cultural inflection to the process of decolonization" (Quayson 2012, 12).

Additionally, the perceived underlying analytical rubric of postcolonial theory, despite its call for indigenous knowledges, is viewed as Eurocentric. As Colpani et al. advance "the ambivalence for which decolonial critics reproach postcolonial theory refers to what they see as the intrinsically 'corrupted' and harmless texture of its critical apparatus, resulting from the postcolonial's deep conceptual entrenchment in the legacy of European thought" (8). This is a dominant trend of thought in decolonial theory which is carried out under the premises of opting for revolutionary thought, which is believed to uproot structures of coloniality, as opposed to the reformist tendencies of postcolonial theory, which subvert colonial situations through critical reformist efforts, that remain in the eyes of decoloniality, as actions appropriated and absorbed within the totality and logic the systems of coloniality. I theoretically and analytically situated my dissertation between the two extremes. In my view, in decolonial theory, there is a tendency whereby various philosophies which could be tempered through critical filtering is outrightly

dismissed under sweeping argumentative maneuvers which take a particularity to undermine the entirety of a body of knowledge. Mignolo's dismissal of the Gadamerian project is just one instance which will be tackled in chapter two, let alone the tendency to paraphrase an idea from a book and dismiss whole bodies of knowledge without making specific references. While I do believe in invigorating an Islamicate form of hermeneutics from within the epistemic realities of my corpus, I also demonstrate in the next chapter the value of having a critical dialogue with other (European, Western or otherwise) philosophies which could be filtered through our intellectual embeddedness.

My dissertation showcases that the various subjects who dwelled in exteriority and modernity cannot be homogenized into one disenfranchised group. While the ambassadors chosen for this dissertation were not aware of decolonial issues, the material as well as the intellectual context from which they travelled to Europe was marked by immediate and poignant memories of dispossession especially in the 17th century. However, in the case of al-Hajari, his encounter with Europe showcases the tapestry of the intellectual landscape in which he composed his narrative drawing on local, cross-cultural, cross-confessional and multilingual knowledges which testify the unhomogenized and complex nature of the presumed border between modernity and its exteriority. In my exploration of al-Ghassani, which takes place following al-Hajari's, I exemplify an engagement with modernity which accounts for its benign manifestations as well as the sociohistorical transmutations that befell the society as a result of such a phenomenon, and unravel the overlap which he had with a Spanish group of political and economic thinkers known as the Arbitristas. This demonstrates that working within local epistemic contours of the Self can also yield valid intellectual assessments which move beyond the 'desire' of modernity. As Wael Hallaq notes,

> It is often argued (in what has become received wisdom among university students and most scholars) that a critique of modernity is ineluctably bound with modernity and cannot escape or transcend its epistemological framework. Every critique is thus destined to reenact or at best revise an aspect of modernity, but modernity nonetheless. Of course, the ramifications of such views are serious, not only because of the sense of epistemological resignation that it signifies, but also because it is profoundly erroneous. It is also serious,

if not dangerous, because it fortifies the ideological discourse of modernity, validating the status quo, the desideratum of the modernists. (2018, 66)

The shift toward decoloniality is oriented by an analytical will to map out the contextual realities of Western universalist thought, and as such disclose its limitation, demarcate its boundaries, access its premises within its historicity and civilizational context (Siavash, et al. 2017). It also unravels the epistemological ventures which developed in parallel to the European imperial domination of the world since 1492, an endeavor whose telos is to shed light on local, native and indigenous knowledge which might have preceded, developed in tandem with, dialectically, or in geographies of faraway proximity from Europe. Yet, it has been left out of history, overlooked or ignored within human canons of intellectual thought. The latter phenomenon has been designated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2015) as "epistemicide," and later developed by Ramon Grosfoguel to encompass the four epistemic genocides which took place in the long 16th century, against populations of Muslim and Jewish origins in the conquest of al-Andalus who were forced to convert under the precept of *Limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood); against native Americans after Columbus' voyage into the Americas; through the enslavement enterprise which kidnapped Africans and enslaved them into forced labor in the Americas; and finally against women burnt alive in the name of being witches (Grosfoguel 2013, 73).

I invoke epistemicide as the proposition that a certain body of knowledge does not meet the standards set by European epistemology, and as such it is discounted as being primitive, undeveloped, premodern or folkloric. While both postcolonial and decolonial scholars deal with such an epistemic obfuscation, the former approach it from within the premises of Western thought, which decolonial thinkers believe to be Cartesian, and as such hindered by a blind universalist hubris (Bhambra 2014). While both align themselves with subaltern philosophies and the traditions of thought which have been unaccounted for by the driving force of modern teleological history, decolonial thinkers further push the boundaries of such a position, first by tracing back the genesis of Western hegemony all the way back to 1492, and second by fleshing out the 'dark side' of its ascendency, i.e., by unraveling how the birth of the modern world system is underpropped by material conditions of economic domination and exploitation which for the first time rendered race as the organizing principle of the colonial matrix of power (Quijano 2007, 170). It is this particular point where decolonial theorists propound modernity and coloniality to be interdependent, that is

coloniality is constitutive of modernity, its dark side which has remained surreptitiously undetected or deliberately camouflaged by the colonial will to universalist formations of knowledge. Decolonial scholars argue that the historicity of the Cartesian model, particularly in reference to Descartes' dualism (mind/body; subject/object; knower/known) which dominated knowledge production in the humanities and social sciences is undergirded not only by modernity but also by coloniality.

The decolonial critique of the Cartesian model is two-pronged: first, it targets the conception of rationality within Cartesian philosophy and the proceeding dichotomies which Rene Descartes instituted between mind and body, and by extension Man and Nature (Grosfoguel 2006, 169). This is not exclusive to decolonial theory. In fact, well before its shift from a focus on dependency theory to issues of epistemology, Cartesian subject/object dualism has been critiqued from within the intellectual premises of philosophy, structuralism, poststructuralism, postcolonial theory and anthropology. In *Being and Time* (1962), Heidegger offers a critique of Cartesian philosophy's tendency to prioritize 'knowing' as the primary mode of interaction with the world, as it raises the question of how the knowing subject transitions from its inner realm to one that is external and other. In opposition to the traditional understanding of the subject as a knower and the object as the known, Heidegger proposes that such an epistemic relation is a derivative mode of Being-in-the-world (59). He highlights that since Descartes, particularly within German idealism, the fundamental ontological problem has been the determination of the person, ego, or subject through self-consciousness (Heidegger 1982, 174). However, he contends that merely accepting self-consciousness as the predominant element of the subject is insufficient for determining the subject's self-understanding. Instead, he argues that self-understanding is always contingent upon Dasein's mode of being, influenced by the authenticity or inauthenticity of its existence (174). In his work *The Savage Mind* (1962), Lévi-Strauss argued against the Cartesian notion of a rational subject separate from the external world, proposing that human thought, including cultural patterns and myths, operates according to underlying structures that are unconscious and universal. The British anthropologist Tim Ingold's *The Perception of the Environment* (2000) challenges, among many things, the Cartesian division between mind and body, arguing for an ecological approach to understanding human-environment relations. He emphasizes the inseparability of humans from their environments and as such configured a relational phenomenology which recognizes the dynamic and embodied nature of human

perception and action. Michel Foucault's work challenges the Cartesian notion of a rational and autonomous subject particularly in his *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *The Order of Things* (1966), whereby he demonstrated how power relations shape subject formation, through the interplay between language, power, and social institutions.

Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) could also be seen as a critique of subject/object dualism whereby the 'Orient' is rendered as a passive, exotic other to the rational, enlightened 'West.' Said argues that this binary opposition reinforces colonial power dynamics and obscures the complexity and diversity of non-Western cultures. Similarly, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) interrogates the limitations of the authoritative subject of the 'Western' discourse and representation in understanding the experiences of marginalized groups, particularly women in postcolonial contexts, advocating for a more self-reflexive and politically engaged approach to knowledge production. In a similar vein, Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) showcases how the dynamics of colonial mimicry and hybridity challenges fixed notions of identity and cultural authenticity, emphasizing the need for a more fluid and dialogic understanding of cultural identity. in *Margins of Philosophy* (1972) Jacques Derrida critiqued binary dualisms arguing that traditional Western philosophical discourse is characterized by a hierarchical structuring of binary oppositions, where one term is privileged over the other. This privileging of one term leads to the marginalization or repression of the other, creating an asymmetrical relationship. He demonstrates how seemingly opposite concepts, such as presence/absence, speech/writing, or nature/culture, are actually intertwined and dependent on each other. Derrida's critique destabilizes the hierarchical order of these binaries, revealing their inherent instability and the impossibility of fully resolving the tensions between them.

These critiques are by no means a comprehensive list. However, all critiques of Cartesian dualism pertain to its relationality, which is a force exercised over an asymmetrical plain (Self/Other), and historicity, whereby the mind, as a thinking substance, is distinct from the material body, which is extended in space, and as such is able to pursue unitary rationalist system which could explain all of reality. It is indisputably parochial to reduce the totality of modern Western philosophical thought to Descartes, especially when we consider the fact that the rationalist school of Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza was intricately critiqued by the empiricist philosophy of John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume, let alone their culmination in the impressive synthetization of Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealist philosophy. Apart from

Enrique Dussel who was a philosopher proper, it is particularly evident that decolonial theory seems to be hasty at advancing categorical denunciations of various western philosophies without attention to the meticulousness and the rigor which could be salvaged from such knowledges.

However, firstly, to my mind the centrality of Cartesianism to decolonial theory resides in the fact that Descartes, with an unprecedented focus and rigor, rendered the center of Western philosophy the question of the theory of knowledge, i.e., the idea that philosophy starts with the question of what I can know, a personal and egocentric question (Heidegger 1982, 126). Prior to Descartes, philosophical endeavors were often preoccupied with questions concerning the nature of reality, existence, and the cosmos. These inquiries were often rooted in metaphysical speculation, sought to unravel the underlying principles governing the universe and humanity's place within it. With Descartes, there emerged a shift in philosophical focus from ontological concerns about the nature of reality to epistemological inquiries about the nature and limits of human knowledge as it plays itsself within the indubitable 'I'. This epistemological turn, epitomized by his emphasis on the certainty of knowledge derived from rational reflection, exerted a profound influence on subsequent Western philosophy and all philosophers between him and Kant continued to grapple with questions of epistemology, exploring issues related to the nature of perception, the origins of knowledge, and the criteria for certainty and truth. The distinction between subject and object, knower and known is simply impossible for the hard sciences, humanities and social sciences to do without, particularly as they operate through a dualism, a world which we can know independently of our process of knowing it. The issues reside in Descartes' pursuit of decontextualizing and as such universalizing epistemic production. I think it is at this level that decolonial theory should aspire to render the subject as an essentially embodied creature without any rash dismissal of the totality of Western philosophy.

Secondly, such embodiment should be coupled with a historical grounding whereby we can trace how Cartesian dualism comes to bear upon imperial and colonial situations. The conceptualization of reason within the Cartesian model is one in which the European self is always rendered not only as the subject producing knowledge but also as the imminent consciousness that make the very conditions of knowledge production, that is the epistemological domain, possible. That Cartesianism is historical and as such is a particular node in an amalgam of world knowledges should be an axiomatic statement. What remains within our purview is to temper it, filter it, and subject it to the historical and material realities of other experiences. This dissertation pursues such

a venture by establishing a hermeneutic relation between the knower and the known; a relation driven by phronesis and oriented by a conscious and historically embedded reflexivity which aspires to keep at bay the Derridean hierarchical structuring of binary oppositions. As such, this dissertation shifts the context of such an epistemic conceptualization to the Islamic Maghreb, and follows the processes which Muslim ambassadors pursued to generate knowledge of and about Europe. What emerges in their narratives is a focus on reason, first-hand empirical observation, historical and contextual awareness that testify to an emphasis on observational analysis as a way of fathoming manifestations of modernity.

The consequences of such a shift are monumental as they demarcate not only the genesis of the European point of view but also the historicity of domineering colonial tendencies. The global scale on which Europe inaugurated itself also initiated what could be formulated as the Eurocentric episteme, i.e., geopolitics of knowledge where we moved from a theo-political to an ego-political conception of the world (Grosfoguel 2011, 5). Such a colonial filtering also configured the world in terms of asymmetrical binaries between a center and a periphery, with the latter representing the realm of non-European Other. My dissertation does not invoke Muslim intellectuals within the postcolonial framework of 'writing back' but rather focuses on showcasing how they advanced their own intellectual understanding of the Other in their own writings, within their own epistemic contexts which happened to be already characterized by intellectual overlap, given their encounters with the Other through their profession as ambassadors.

These instances of encounter allow us to reflect on the alterity against which Europe posed itself, as formulated in Edward Said's *Orientalism* whereby European imperialism in the so-called Orient was preceded and paralleled by the institutionalization of a representational and cognitive framework which was integrated into the imaginary of the colonized and the colonizer alike, and without which Europe's political and economic domination of the Orient would have been impossible. As Said advanced, the construction of the alterity (the Orient) is a simultaneous configuration of the Self (the Occident), and of a locus of enunciation with the power to articulate the otherness of the Other (Said, 1979, 1-3). Mignolo's argument brings the reality of the Americas into the debate, and suggests that the alterity of the Orient is different from the experience of the Americas. The ontological difference which was categorically established between Europe and the Orient was not present in Spanish imperial discourse because, Mignolo argues, the New World was a natural extension of the European Self, not its ontological opposite. He writes that

> during the sixteenth century, when "America" became conceptualized as such not by the Spanish crown but by intellectuals of the North (Italy and France), it was implicit that America was neither the land of Shem (the Orient) nor the land of Ham (Africa), but the enlargement of the land of Japheth. There was no other reason than the geopolitical distribution of the planet implemented by the Christian T/O map to perceive the planet as divided into four continents; and there was no other place in the Christian T/O map for "America" than its inclusion in the domain of Japheth, that is, in the West (Occident). Occidentalism, in other words, is the overarching geopolitical imaginary of the modern/colonial world system. (Mignolo, 2000, 58-59)

If the Americas were seen as an extension of the European domain of Selfhood, then, as I argue, Christian Europe's first alterity and its ontological otherness had been those who represented an obstacle to its Catholic unification before the conquest of the New World, i.e., the Jews and the Muslims living in the Iberian Peninsula. The blurry juridical and biblical status of the newly 'discovered' lands, being neither a part of Europe nor Asia or Africa, allowed Christianity to reformulate the ancient division of the world (three continents inhabited by the three sons of Noah) into a classificatory system based on ethnicity and religion. If the "the occident, […] was never Europe's Other but the difference within sameness" (57), then the imperial taxonomy which altered Jews and Muslims utilizing an ethnoreligious nexus preceded the rise of the first modernity, within Christendom, as opposed to the second modernity which was formulated and secularized during the Enlightenment. As Ella Shohat articulates, "the *conquista* [that is of the Americas] was itself already informed by the proto-Orientalism of the *reconquista* of Spain and Portugal" (2014, 371). The *reconquista* underpinned the *conquista* discursively and epistemologically.

While the racial difference became the organizing principle of modernity/coloniality, religious alterity did not disappear vis-a-vis the Muslim Other, it was rather subsumed by race and morphed into the form of racism understood today as Islamophobia (Grosfoguel 2010). As such, my position is that decolonial theory, in relation to the location of Muslims within the hierarchy of the modern/colonial world system, must rethink its homogenization of the mechanics of colonial othering to account for experiences in which racial difference was preceded by other acuities of power. The modern/colonial world system's first configuration of a unified identity was

underpinned by ethnic and religious differences and propagated through the apparatus of blood purity; an apparatus, which while reflecting the local history of a classificatory matrix pertaining to medieval European Christian culture, still managed, by the virtue of the global hegemony which Spain attained in the 16th and 17th centuries, to impose itself as a global design. Of course, such a distinction establishes a spectrum whereby not only the superiority of the European self is exercised but also the preeminence of certain forms of knowledge over others.

With a decolonial-inflicted consciousness, my project is interested in the epistemological restitution of one of those peripheral knowledges, i.e., the invigoration of non-Western (in my case Islamicate) formulations of hermeneutical, intellectual and historical bodies of knowledge so as to demystify the Eurocentric knowledge which sees itself as the standard against which other knowledges are to be accessed and in/validated. I have referred above to Anibal Quijano's notion of epistemological reconstitution (2007, 176). Many conflate such a notion with the postcolonial concern for what could be formulated as epistemological plurality particularly as it relates to the question of recognition. The question implies that there is a dominant and well-established basis which certain knowledges must fit with in order to be recognized. At this level, the concern of decolonial thinkers is not to reconstitute knowledges and cosmologies which could be announced to parallel the caliber of the scientific and technical rationality of the 'West.' Such a tendency is believed to be already enmeshed in a paradigm which renders that rationalistic outlook on the world as the measuring principle of what must be perceived as knowledge. The focus on indigenous, native and local knowledges is not driven by a nativist ethnocentrism but rather by the objective to highlight the value of such knowledges which envision the world from different vantage points. My position is that the understanding of Islamicate forms of diplomacy and international affairs has the potential to expand our understanding of non-European diplomatic philosophies but also how religion and politics influence each other in contexts of governance, statecraft, and cross-confessional relations particularly between Europe and the Islamic Maghreb. This concern whose beginnings I trace back to the 17th century, becomes more nuanced and sophisticated in the 18th century with al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi who rethink Islamic jurisprudential issues in light of the profession of diplomacy and its impact on the nature of travel and territoriality.

It should be mentioned that the critique of Eurocentrism is by no means pioneered by decolonial thinkers. Postcolonial thinkers wrestled with it for decades (Said 1978; Wolf 1982;

Amin 1989; Lambropoulos 1992; Shohat 1994; Young 2001) yet decoloniality aspires to do away with the proclivity of critiquing Eurocentrism from within the epistemological premises of the 'West' itself. Ramon Grosfoguel detects the dominance of 'western' theoretical models even in postcolonial critiques of the Eurocentric paradigms which emanate from the Global South (Grosfoguel 2011, 2-5). As such, decolonial scholars seek what Walter Mignolo has formulated as 'Pluriversality,' (2000) and what Abdelkabir Khatibi (2019) refers to as 'Other-Thought,' namely the critical circumvention between universalist totalities (e.g., Eurocentrism, Islamic Fundamentalism, secularism, etc…) and the postmodernist deconstruction of rationality and reason. The 'Other-Thought' which this project brings to the fore is underscored by a condition of possibility which was violently initiated in 1415 with the Portuguese invasion of the Moroccan Ceuta, exacerbated with the political fall of Islamic Granada in 1492, culminated in 1609 with the final expulsion of the Moriscos, and constructed the Mediterranean as a space of encounter; a space which accelerated the movement of people and ideas across the sea between Europe and the Islamic Maghreb. It is in that sense of movement and mobility that I invoke 'Other-Thought' as a critical intervention from a space of exteriority which is needed for the definition of the Self but also rendered as that which is external to modernity. I posit that diplomacy furnished Muslim ambassadors with one of the possibilities to cross the Mediterranean into Europe, and that such encounter facilitated the utilization of local and global knowledges to craft a distinctively Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy aware of its own specificity as well as of its integrative position within the diplomatic economy which was being formulated across the Mediterranean. As such, we will be able to deflate the claim which situates diplomacy uniquely within the historical realities of modern Europe disregarding non-Western histories of diplomacy and international affairs.

2. 1492 Reimagined: a Historical Perspective from the Islamic Maghreb

To reiterate, this study initiates its investigation in 1492, to examine how the leap into modernity which characterized Europe in the 16th century has usually been juxtaposed with a downward historical spiral of decadence, decay and decline in the world of Islam. In fact, such a view has held sway over European renditions of the Islamic cultural history ever since the 19th century (Von Hees 2017, 11). The analysis of Muslim communities has never been dislodged from the looming idea that "Muslim resentment against the West can be explained as a psychological reaction to the 'decline' of Islam" (11). Douglas A. Howard concurs that ever since the death of

the Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent in 1566, the Islamic world "has traditionally been viewed as an era of stagnation and decline," and "social life was characterized by moral and cultural decadence" (1988, 52-53).

The issue here is that any invocation of the notion of decline directly equates political, economic, or military decline with intellectual decline, and almost in a Marxist spirit always presupposes that the former necessarily determines the latter. To counter the dominance of such a paradigm, several scholars have been exploring the philosophical and intellectual landscape of the Islamic world in the early modern period,[2] yet very few have explored early modern diplomatic exchanges between the Islamic world and Christian Europe as intellectual attempts to engage and analyze European modernity beyond the dichotomy of either accepting or rejecting it. The dichotomy of being enchanted by modernity, and thus advancing a reformist discourse of the 'premodern' tradition, or being appalled by modernity, and as such denouncing its premises through a religious diatribe, has become a dominant prism through which early modern Moroccan ambassadorial accounts have been approached (Matar 2002, 2006, 2008, 2015; Heimer 2008; Alami 2013; Zhiri 2016; Aammari 2018). Matar argues that between the 16th and the 18th centuries, Moroccan ambassadors expressed an "ignorance about the regions in which they were traveling, the societies, the traditions and customs and political administrations of their hosts" (2020, 213). It is as if the understanding of modernity constitutes the only basis that makes their intellectual venture worthwhile. While such an approach might be valid to the study of the 19th century as has been demonstrated by Ahmed Alami Idrissi, travel literature of the 17th and 18th centuries "still reflected a certain self-confidence and pride that would disappear from travel literature written in the nineteenth century after Morocco witnessed a series of military defeats" (2013, 31).

The periodization of Islamic history from a Eurocentric prism has compelled various scholars from the Global South and North to rethink historical metanarratives about the past. Thus, since I adopt a long durée historical perspective which starts and takes into consideration the

[2] While many historians tried to dismantle the decline paradigm through shedding light on the military resurgence of the Ottoman empire in the 16th and 17th centuries, this study is interested in countering the declinist paradigm from the early modern intellectual and diplomatic ventures of the Islamic Maghreb. The work of Khaled El-Rouayheb is crucial in relation to the intellectual and philosophical regard. See El-Rouayheb, Khaled, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); El-Rouayheb, Khaled, "Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab–Islamic Florescence of the 17th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, 2 (2006): 263-281; El-Rouayheb, Khaled, *Relational syllogisms and the history of Arabic logic, 900-1900*, (Brill, 2010); El-Rouayheb, Khaled, "Sunni Muslim Scholars on the Status of Logic, 1500-1800," *Islamic Law and Society* 11, 2 (2004): 213-232; El-Rouayheb, Khaled, and Sabine Schmidtke, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, (Oxford University Press, 2016).

history preceding and succeeding the date 1492, my intervention adopts decolonial thought to account for the phenomenology of the Muslim world, particularly those of the Islamic Maghreb. Such an endeavor hopes to constitute the experiential realm of attempting to grasp and counter from within the epistemological localities native to the Islamic Maghreb, the incursion of 'modernity/coloniality' upon their lands. I particularly focus on the experience of encountering and border-crossing which took place in the early modern period, as embodied in the experience of Moroccan-European diplomacy, to closely look at how Moroccan Muslim ambassadors configured Islamicate diplomatic ethics within that space of colonial exteriority. Michel-Rolph Trouillot reflected on the date 1492 by writing that:

> As a tool of historical production, that date anchors the event in the present. It does so through the simultaneous production of mentions and silences. The recurrence of a predictable date severs Columbus's landfall from the context of emerging Europe on and around 1492. It obliterates the rest of the year now subsumed within a twenty-four hour segment. It imposes a silence upon all events surrounding the one being marked. A potentially endless void now encompasses everything that could be said and is not being said about 1492 and about the years immediately preceding or following. (2015, 117)

The silences which Trouillot is insinuating echo what the Moroccan philosopher and literary critic Abdelkabir Khatibi identified as "silent societies" (2019, 38). These can be mapped out as follows: the Conquest of Granada (1492), the last Muslim Emirate in Spain; "the expulsion of 3 million Muslims and 300,000 Sephardi Jews" (Shohat 2014, 59); the infringement of the Treaty of Granada and the intensification of forced conversions and Inquisitorial investigations; and the destruction of libraries and bodies of Islamicate knowledge. These events had an afterlife which was acutely present in the intellectual and jurisprudential landscape of 17th-and 18th-century Moroccan ambassadors to Spain. Encounters with what has been called by al-Ghassani, al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi the 'remnants of al-Andalus' generated various instances of opprobrium toward the Christian Other which was believed to have desecrated the sacred spaces of Islam in Andalusia. Another element which was present in their accounts is the issue of Ceuta, particularly that of al-Ghazzal whose critical engagement with local jurisprudential debates justified the Sultan Muhammad III's abstinence from waging war on the Spanish occupied Ceuta under the premise

that it was not beneficial for Islam to undertake such an action at the time. Contextually, the date 1492 cannot be bracketed out from two modern/colonial instantiations of power differentials: the preceding Portuguese invasion of the Moroccan Ceuta (1415), in which North Africans' anti-colonial resistance was embodied not only in their military and political resistance but also spiritual and epistemological to the colonial expansionist project (Julien 2011; Diouf 2013); and the proceeding dispossession and displacement as it manifested itself in the final expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609. The invocation of these experiences, which appeared in various degrees of intensity in Moroccan ambassadorial narratives, is necessary to understand their encounters with modernity/coloniality. It is relevant for this dissertation as it traces back the early manifestations of such encounters and their impact on Catholic Christian presence in the intellectual and jurisprudential circles with which Moroccan ambassadors were in critical dialogue.

With a crusading spirit, Portugal made its way to the Moroccan shores sailing down to the coasts of West Africa looking for trade routes, and it managed, with enough time, to establish slave trade in West Africa (Newitt 2010). Around the same time, Spain was concocting plans to render Muslim and Jewish life considerably stifling so as to drive them out of a Spain which was believed to be tainted by their presence (Friedman 1987, 29). The Conquest of Granada and the establishment of the Inquisition are two interlinked acts aimed at materializing a long-awaited plan, that of a religiously unified and racially pure Spain. The uprooting of Muslim and Jewish presence from Iberia was perceived by the Monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile as a cardinal condition before Spain could carry out its expansionist will into the world. As Carol Lowery Delaney argued in her *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem* (2011), when Columbus asked the Catholic monarchs to fund his project, he had to wait for six years for it to get approved. It was only after the capture of Granada and the transference of the Muslim polity to the Catholic dominion that the Columbian project was attended to and the Santa Fe Capitulations were signed on 17 April 1492 (103-105). Columbus, admittedly saw his venture as connected and conditioned upon Catholic triumph over the Muslims and the Jews. In his letter to the Spanish Crown, he stated that

> in this present year of 1492, after your Highnesses had given an end to the war with the *Moors* who reigned in Europe, and had finished it in the very great city of Granada […] YOUR HIGHNESSES, as Catholic Christians and princes who love the holy Christian

> faith, and the propagation of it, and who are enemies to the sect of Mahomet and to all idolatries and heresies, resolved to send me, Cristobal Colon, to the said parts of India to see the said princes, and the cities and lands, and their disposition, with a view that they might be converted to our holy faith. (1893, 15-16)

When decolonial scholars designate the date 1492 as marking the birth of modernity, it is not to suggest that such a phenomenon bulged into existence out in one year. The inception of modernity was only possible when "Europe was in a position to *pose itself against another*, when, in other words, Europe could constitute itself as a unified ego exploring, conquering, colonizing an alterity that gave back its image to itself" (1993, 66). Columbus' letter showcases that the 'Moors' and the 'Jews' represented the difference from within; the alterity which hurdled the pursued 'unification;' what Mignolo identifies as the imperial difference. However, the conquest of Ceuta instantiates that the Muslims, unlike the Jews, were simultaneously part of the colonial and imperial differences. Mignolo's proposition that "the colonial difference came into being during the so-called 'conquest of America,'" and as such underpinned "the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit and of the modem/colonial world" (1999, 36), should be historicized so as to showcase that before the colonial difference articulated itself in the Americas with a racial hierarchy, it had a historicity undergirded by a religious hierarchy which began in the Conquest of Ceuta 1415 and further continued in the Conquest of Melilla a few years after 1492, in 1497 when the Atlantic commercial circuits, the nature of the Native Americans (humans, sub-human, non-human, Godless people, people with a soul, people without a soul, etc.…), and the legality of Spanish claims on indigenous territories were still being figured by the Catholic Crown. These configurative processes were largely oriented by "preexisting forms of ethnic and religious otherizing [which] were transferred from Europe to its colonies" (Shohat 1999, 60).

Parallel to the Columbian project, the inquisitional apparatus was carrying out its mission of forced conversions and ethnic cleansing. The inquisitional imposition of ethnic and religious categories upon the Spanish Muslims and Jews generated a regime of alterity which justified bureaucratic and arbitrary violence instituted by the Church-sponsored inquisitorial bodies all over Spain. The triumph of such an enterprise and the establishment of Catholic rule in Spain redirected its attention toward foreign lands and Columbus set foot in America a few months after the Conquest of Granada. This moment is underpinned by a history of anti-Muslim zealotry which led

Portugal to invade and colonize various cities and ports at the Northwest coast of Africa in pursuit of finding an undermining sea-route alternative to the Muslim-controlled caravan inland routes which facilitated the movement of sub-Saharan gold, silver and slaves in the region. The overarching aim was to find new routes to India and Asia which would circumvent the Muslim-controlled inland roads. Charles Ralph Boxer (1969) attributed the establishment of Atlantic slave trade and the age of European maritime colonization to Portugal's colonial incursions upon Morocco and West Africa (185). The invasion of Moroccan Ceuta in 1415 was a crucial and strategic triumph because it had been a paramount trade center for commodities travelling from Asia and Africa to South Western Europe. Through such an invasion, the Portuguese managed to expunge a pivotal supply route for Granadian Muslims (Cornell 1998, 164). My position is that the decolonial focus on the date 1492 should not blind us from the accumulative colonial momentum which Catholic powers in Southwest Europe generated before they set foot in the Americas. The invasion of Ceuta was a monumental catastrophe in North Africa and had a resounding effect on the consciousness of Morocco. As Vincent J. Cornell noted:

> One cannot overemphasize the impact of the conquest and subsequent depopulation of *Sabta* [Ceuta] on the inhabitants of the Far Maghrib. Even the fall of Granada in 1492 failed to provoke the same level of outrage and despair as the loss of this mercantile and intellectual center on the formerly secure southern shore of the Dâr al-Islâm (1998, 164)

The emergence of such a colossal issue in al-Ghazzal's and al-Miknasi's ambassadorial narratives is not accidental. Its importance resides in its specific designation of the Moroccan into a defensive position which they were never to break again. While Moroccans were accustomed to fighting the Catholics in the Iberian Peninsula, this was an act of reversal whereby the Portuguese Christians fought and conquered the Muslims in their land. As Sir Charles Raymond Beazley pinpointed about the invasion of Ceuta, "among all the enterprises of European states in the later Middle Ages no single one had a more marked crusading character" (1910, 13). The crusade launched by the Portuguese in Africa was underpinned by a crusading history which targeted Muslims and Jews all over Iberia. It was a historical event legitimated by a Catholic papal sanction, and as such the support generated by the Catholic fold on such ventures continued to triumph, crusading chronologically through Moroccan cities such as Ceuta (1415–1668), Ksar esghir

(1458–1549), Tangier (1471–1661), Asilla (1471–1550), Safi (1488–1541) and Azamor (1513–1541). Along with other colonial incursion in Africa, the Americas and Asia, my contention is that Portugal was the first embodiment of modern/colonial imperialism until Ceuta came under the sovereignty of Spain in 1580; a city which is still occupied as of the present. If Spain's colonial expansion into the Americas instantiates a conquest of 'savage' enemies, it was preceded by a conquest and colonization of what the Catholic fold considered 'civilized' enemies who just happened to be worshipping the 'false God.'

As such, religion should be accounted for as a category of analysis in decolonial debates. While race is more akin to the analysis of the Amerindian experience, the displacement of Muslims and Jews from al-Andalus and the proceeding expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609 should be seen as suspended between a nexus of religion, ethnicity, then race, i.e., an ethnoreligious nexus for Jews and a religio-protoracial nexus for Muslims before racism engulfed all non-western population. The expunging of religion from these nexuses happened due to the encounter with the Native Americans who, by virtue of being proclaimed to have no God, were racialized and their humanity questioned (Maldonado-Torres 2014, 649). This was to travel back to Europe and be imposed on Muslims and Jews whose blood no longer signified impurity but inhumanity, i.e., a form of racism was born which Grosfoguel and Salman Sayyid identify as Islamophobia (2011); it is the modern/colonial racialization of Muslim identities. At this point, conversion to Christianity became irrelevant because it did not matter if newly converts could prove that they worshiped the 'true' God. Muslimness and Jewishness became definitive markers or racial difference. This is relevant to my analysis of al-Ghassani who, in 1690-1691 still detected Spain's obsession with racial purity and the widespread epidemy of false accusations of Jewish ancestry which Spaniards accused each other with for profit. Additionally, the relevance of such a nuanced distinction between Muslim and Amerindian experience explains my focus on religion as a vital component not only in how Christian Europe imagined and dealt with the Islamic world, but more importantly, in how Islam, in addition to other local intellectual knowledges, constitutes a vital part in how Muslim ambassadors tried to make sense of their encounter with Europe. Their invocation of various elements from Islamic intellectual history generated several critiques which current historical scholarship testify to their validity. Thus, race should not uncritically be taken to subsume religion.

Thinking *from* and *with* such a silenced history will allow us to unravel how Catholic Spain's historical atrocities were perceived and fathomed by people dwelling in the Southern Mediterranean shore; by those who inherited such violent memories of racialization and dispossession and how such histories constituted a legal precedence which Muslim ambassadors evoked in their intellectual and diplomatic encounters with Europe in the early modern period . It will also disclose the efforts which various intellectuals exercised in their attempt to make sense of such an engulfing phenomenon as European modernity. The latter ventures are paramount as they will sketch out how knowledges were affected by the advance of European domination, and how people writing from within their local epistemologies analyzed the global encompassment of modernity. Therefore, taking into account how such repercussions interpenetrated the social fabric of Muslim societies will enable us to unravel the epistemic conditions and attitudes which characterized relations between Islamdom and Christendom in Early modernity. It will also allow us to revisit certain traditions, in my case intellectual and diplomatic, which experienced, and in some ways countered, modernity/coloniality as it was threatening to obliterate their distinct ways of knowing, thinking and acting. The undoing of the myth of modernity does not blindly relegate modernity to the background; it rather imagines new ways from the fissures of coloniality to transcend the modern encompassment of how we interpret the world, and as such it can open new pathways into the exploration of how the Mediterranean furnished what Jason Sparkes identifies as the Muslim Atlantic (2020).

To sum up, this chapter aspired to factor in some of the historical context which preceded and proceeded the date 1492 into the decolonial discussion of the relation of modernity/coloniality and the solidification of race as the organizing principle of such an all-engulfing phenomenon. My contention in emphasizing those events approximate to 1492 is that it unravels the religious undercurrents which underpinned the centralization of race as the driving factor of alterity in the Americas. However, the perspective of the Muslims living in the southern Mediterranean shores remained attached to a religious phenomenology where the Othering of the Christians was religious not racial. As Matar noted, "the psychological impact of the arrival, from 1609 to 1614, of hundreds of thousands of frightened and embittered men, women, and children who had been driven out of their European homes because of their Islamic faith, or the racial residues of that faith, permanently changed Arab and Islamic views of Europeans" (Matar 2003, xxvii). This dissertation sheds light on some Moroccan Muslim intellectuals who either experienced the

immediate impact of modernity/coloniality in the form of expulsion or through the inheritance of ancestral memories and histories of dispossession which their families suffered from as they were dislocated from their homes. Those intellectuals are also ambassadors who, by virtue of their profession and position within the Moroccan court, were dispatched on diplomatic missions to Europe during its imperial and colonial zenith. The mis/fortune of crossing into Christendom, which was facilitated by diplomacy, generated a unique experience of modernity/coloniality whereby these ambassadors had to respond to both to modernity and tradition i.e., to the European professionalization of statecraft, technological advancement, development of political institutions and violence of the expansionist colonial project, as well as to Islamic jurisprudential thought particularly in relation to the notion of travel and the issue of territoriality. The summation of such encounters resulted in two historical developments, the first intellectual and the second diplomatic. The former pertained to the meticulous and experiential analysis which those intellectuals subjected European modernity to between the 16th and the 18th centuries using local Islamicate epistemologies and philosophies; the latter concerns the developmental crafting of what I identified as Islamicate diplomatic ethos/ethics which eventuated from their reflection on encountering Europe as well as on the local jurisprudential debates about Muslim-Christian relations and territoriality.

The decoloniality of this dissertation resides particularly in decentering and delinking from the Eurocentric intellectual and diplomatic models which were cultivated during the modern/colonial world system, showcasing that in my historiographical inquiry into the intellectual and diplomatic histories of the Islamicate world, those modalities should not be presumed as the yardstick against the experiences of those dwelling in modernity's underside are to be accessed. Muslim Moroccan ambassadors drew on their historical experiences as well as local intellectual and jurisprudential debates to formulate their own understanding of diplomacy in the early modern Mediterranean. They utilized Atlantic, European and Mediterranean histories to further Morocco's diplomatic interests and discerned with a critical eye the sociological permutations which altered the societal fabric of Europe, particularly Spain, after the conquest of the Americas. If we accept the Mignolian premise that decolonial thought is the "counter point" (Mignolo 2000, 46) of modernity i.e., that it developed since the end of the 15th century in the physical and epistemological struggles of responding to the imperial/colonial relations of power, then the intellectual and diplomatic epistemology of these Muslim Moroccan ambassadors

constitutes a decolonial option. What eventuates from such an option, is a history of a Moroccan diplomatic cadre aware of its specificity and conscious of itself as a communal diplomatic tradition beyond the European models of diplomacy and international affairs.

Chapter II: Obfuscated Epistemologies: Decolonial Hermeneutics

This chapter is meant to situate my conceptualization of decolonial hermeneutics within a relevant theoretical rubric. It starts with stating a core hermeneutic problem related to how various scholars from the Global South and North have approached Moroccan ambassadorial narratives. Then, it presents a theoretical conversation with various hermeneutical traditions aspiring to bring decoloniality into a dialogue with hermeneutics to establish an interpretive practice by which we can read 'non-Western' narratives beyond their proximity to the ideals of modernity. Its relevance to this project resides in developing an interpretive sensibility which I pursue in my analysis of Moroccan ambassadorial narratives in the following chapters, and which I have designated as decolonial hermeneutics.

As a distinct style of critical engagement, decolonial thought reserves a particular attention to thinkers and social movements which have in one way or another been revolutionary enough to see "beyond modernity in some fashion" (Escobar 2004, 210). Such a belief is premised upon the idea that those dwelling in modernity's exteriority, the "outside that is precisely constituted as difference by hegemonic discourse" (218), have a potentiality of decolonial options which the universalist totality of the modern/colonial world system have either obfuscated or deemed primitive and folkloric. Thinking *with* and *from* those spaces allows them to enunciate thought and experiences beyond the Eurocentric parameters which prioritize certain intellectual canons over others. In this respect, some of the conceptual artillery developed by Walter Mignolo is paramount as it potentiates our ability to articulate a locus of enunciation which is rooted beyond Eurocentric philosophical modalities. His concept of the colonial difference demarcates the limits of 'Western' thought and facilitates the possibility of invigorating local histories which have thus far been deemed theoretically and critically impotent (2002, 66-67).

Mignolo's formulation provincializes 'Western' knowledge i.e., it reveals such a knowledge to be a local perspective driven by a universalist will to naturalize its epistemic standards as the measure of all human knowledge, as emanating from what the Columbian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez denominates as the *zero-point* of enunciation. In his words, 'Western' epistemology pretends to have "no specific place on the map but is instead a neutral observation platform from which the world can be named in its essentiality" (2021, 4). It establishes itself as the natural basis against which other knowledges are to be accessed. This is

evident in Abdul Salam Heimer's reading of Moroccan travelogues to Europe where he argues that "the more writers perceive the development of the other, the more they come to notice the underdevelopment of the I" (2008, 183); and where he writes that "the mediocre level of culture of Moroccan writers […] was responsible for the misunderstanding of the other and the I in their exchanged relations" (199). It is also perceivable in Nabil Matar's reading of al-Ghassani (see chapter VI) when he stated that "the world of the Europeans so overwhelmed him that he could do nothing to 'defeat' it except to brandish the weapon of his *deen* [religion] against the marvelous changes of its *dunya* [world]; Islam became not only the symbolic sword against the unattainable, but the shield of resistance and rejection—and the harbinger of victory" (2005, 76). Al-Ghassani's socio-historical analysis of Spain was dismissed as a religiously motivated inflation of the Self in the face of the Modern European Other despite the overlap which his analysis of Spanish modernity had with various 17th-century Spanish political and economic scholars known as the *Arbitristas*. Both came to similar conclusions despite operating from within two distinct epistemic and religious locations. His reading of al-Miknasi whom he designates as "the most widely traveled writer in the early modern Arab world" (Matar 2020, 206) proceeds in the same logic. Noting how he was overwhelmed in the face of European modernity and could not but "invoke Quranic verses" to reaffirm his religious superiority (208). What is rather overwhelming is Matar's obsession with rendering any invocation of religion as an impediment in the face of understanding and intellectually engaging with the Other. This dissertation showcases that while still operating within a religious Islamic framework, Moroccan Muslim ambassadors exercised their intellectual agency by carving out hermeneutic spaces where they expanded the zone of the familiar, reflecting on the scope of their profession and its ethical dimensions, and displaying a complex understanding of how ethics relates to politics.

This project shall instantiate how decolonial hermeneutics, as a conceptual acuity of demarcating Eurocentric limits and thinking from and with local experiences, can be a fruitful tool to read and theorize from within the parameters of the Self before expanding such contours to account for the experiences of encountering the Other. Quijano articulated such a concern as follows:

> The critique of the European paradigm of rationality/modernity is indispensable, even more, urgent. But it is doubtful if the criticism consists of a simple negation of all its

> categories; of the dissolution of reality in discourse; of the pure negation of the idea and the perspective of totality in cognition. *It is necessary to extricate oneself from the linkages between rationality/modernity and coloniality, first of all, and definitely from all power which is not constituted by free decisions made by free people*. (2007, 177) [my emphasis]

The extraction of the Self from within the dictates of Modernity/Coloniality is the axis around which the hermeneutic lucubration of the primary corpus selected for this dissertation has been approached. The assumption of such a proposition, which will be argumentatively pursued throughout the dissertation, is that reconciliating oneself with one's history and memory, first within its own local intellectual landscape, and second in relation to the geopolitical and epistemic alterations generated by shifts in modern global politics, enmeshes one's identity in an epistemic location in which human beings are capable of creativity. Within the boundaries of their own identity, they remain open to the identity of others. This 'Other,' who is different from the Self in their attributes and components, when taken to be the starting point from which to fathom and scrutinize the Self, the undoubtedly asymmetric nature of their relations adulterates the analysis, and reveals the socio-epistemic location of the critic, when what is assumed to be an inability to understand or appreciate the Other arises throughout the investigation. It is at this particular juncture that the situatedness of knowledge becomes paramount to this project because Matar (in certain studies) Heimer, Oumelbanine Zhiri, and several scholars who dealt with Moroccan ambassadorial accounts speak from a "social location" which does not necessarily align with their "epistemic location." Ramon Grosfoguel differentiates between two forms of embeddedness which refer to "the locus of enunciation, that is, the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks" (2011, 5). He further argues that epistemologically, the triumph of the modern/colonial world system resides "in making subjects that are socially located in the oppressed side of the colonial difference, to think epistemically like the ones on the dominant positions" (6). Whether with a willful awareness or unintentionally, several historians, literary and postcolonial critics whose works will be discussed throughout the following chapters assumed modernity to be the yardstick against which the intellectual and diplomatic ventures of Muslim Moroccan ambassadors are judged *a priori*. I, based on Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri (2006), refer to this proclivity as an epistemological bias.

The problematic is that the epistemic criterion of assessment pertains to Muslim Moroccan ambassadors' ability or inability to understand the manifestations of European modernity, i.e., political institutions, administrative bodies, gender relations, and technological innovation, etc. As such, the latter becomes the basis that severs the modern from the pre-modern, the *humanitas* from *anthropos* (Osamu 2006, 260). It also creates a spatial asynchronicity whereby those deemed as indisposed to understand modernity (i.e., premoderns), became existing in a historical aura of timelessness, entities which occupy a space of exteriority, denied of coevalness and contemporaneity (Mignolo 2011b, 192). When the 'Western' modern paradigm is construed as the fundament against which the experience of non-western subjects is to be evaluated, the coloniality of such a paradigm is either neglected or trivialized and parochialized into an expression of a philippic rejection of the values and ideals of modernity. The triumph of such a project generated strong beliefs in the notion of materialist progress and solidified the idea that the telos of history is to strive toward developmental expansion on a global scale. Those non-western subjects whose experiential realms or measures of progress did not align with the materialist paradigm, i.e., those for whom religious values and ethics constitute their phenomenological realm, were relegated to the realm of the primitive and folkloric. Their encounter with and analysis of 'Western' modernity is reduced to an invective expression of their parochial religious belief (Islam) which could not allow them to understand or accurately access European modernity. Those who were flabbergasted by modernity and supported the uncritical transposition of its values to their home countries were celebrated and praised.

My proposition of decolonial hermeneutics aspires to deflate such a dichotomy not by rejecting modernity and espousing to divulge an 'authentic' sense of Selfhood from within the archives of tradition. It rather, through the chosen Moroccan ambassadorial travelogues, approaches Europe through a comparative approach which subjects its paradigm to a critical assessment and highlights the intellectual entanglements and diplomatic engagements which took place between Europe and the Islamic Maghreb. As Souleyman Bachir has repeatedly noted, an outright rejection of the 'West' is an "inverted European narcissism that posits Europe as the source of all social evils in the world. Such an approach remains Eurocentric 'Europe exhibiting its own unacceptability in front of an anti-ethnocentric mirror,' in Derrida's words and also exempts Third World patriarchal elites from all responsibility" (2020, 3); it is an expression of epistemological nativism and an essentialist trap which would only lead to further corroborating civilizational

insularity, and as such exceptionalism. What particularly concerns my formulation of decolonial hermeneutics is how coloniality of power still underwrites some of our epistemological and hermeneutic praxis even when dealing with texts which predate colonialism.

As such, by starting from the insights grounded in the intellectual traditions shaped by the effects of Western modernity, this dissertation opted for decoloniality to instantiate how an epistemic shift towards indigenous knowledges can demarcate the limits of 'Western' modernity as a standard of valuing/un-valuing knowledge, and by extension unearth the unrecognized intellectual endeavors which encountered and paralleled such a phenomenon in its immediate heyday. By beginning from within the premises of the Self, that is to say, the epistemological resources (historical, philosophical, religious, diplomatic etc.) which were available to Moroccan ambassadors before they ventured into Europe, and then tracing the epistemic and perceptual alterations and reformulations which were generated by encountering and analyzing the Other, within the context of its own Modernity, this project reverses the hermeneutic paradigm which has so far been imposed upon their intellectual output, by recentering the Self, with all its epistemological undercurrents, as the vast compass in which the Other is to be fathomed, interpreted and critiqued. In other words, I shift the geography of reason: instead of studying Moroccan ambassadorial thought in light of 'Western' modernity, I interrogate the latter through the former's thought. This is what I refer to as decolonial hermeneutics.

1. Towards a Decolonial Hermeneutics

"[T]he hermeneutically trained mind […] will make conscious the prejudices governing our own understanding, so that the text, as another's meaning, can be isolated and valued on its own […] historical objectivism shows its naivete in accepting this disregarding of ourselves as what actually happens. In fact, our own prejudice is properly brought into play by being put at risk. Only by being given full play is it able to experience the other's claim to truth and make it possible for him to have full play himself." (Gadamer 1989, 299)

I envision decolonial hermeneutics as an interpretive praxis governed by *Phronesis,* not by disembodied rationality. . I invoke phronesis to underscore the ethical dimension of interpretation, emphasizing the importance of humility, openness, and respect for the other in the hermeneutic encounter. Phronesis guides the interpreter in cultivating these ethical virtues, enabling them to

approach the text, tradition, with integrity and authenticity. This section will pertain to reflecting on the epistemic erasure tackled by decolonial hermeneutics, and the following section will position decolonial hermeneutics' use of *Phronesis* in light of other hermeneutic traditions. The study of Eurocentric history has demonstrated that various civilizations and cultures have been deliberately trivialized or left out of history because they fell outside the hegemonic canons of thought. These abysmal indentations in the fabric of Eurocentric teleological history have inspired many postcolonial, revisionist, and subaltern scholars to retrieve those lost voices and philosophies that were disenfranchised by the colonial matrix of power (Said 1987; Guha 1983; Spivak 1988; Chakrabarty 2000). This has become the critical orientation of scholars both from the Global South and North, and spread across various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. However, what seems to surface, even in scholarship which is premised upon the idea of rethinking history from the margins, that is, studies that aspire to make 'present' those voices which have been obfuscated and absented, end up rendering their 'presentist historical enterprise, one of subtle obfuscation.

Various studies of the corpus which concerns this dissertation exemplify such a phenomenon. The absence I refer to here, vis-à-vis these ambassadorial accounts and probably many others, is not related to not being considered within academic scholarship. Rather, it stems from being imprisoned in a paradigm of consideration whose premises could not break from the Self/Other paradigm, so as to envision these ambassadors as intellectuals, and their works as intellectual creations in their own right. In other words, their existence and consideration within certain hermeneutic rubrics are only invoked in relation to an Other, an external entity which obscures their intellectual merit. To distance myself from the primacy of such a paradigm, I have attempted to ask different questions that shed light on an obfuscated side of the Moroccan ambassadors' intellectual and diplomatic output which is lost when we limit ourselves to the Self/Other paradigm. Decolonial hermeneutics shifts the geography of reason by unravelling the processual negation of other-knowledges and the silencing of alternative concepts and theories which emanate from the colonial difference. It does so, in this dissertation's instance, by ultimately exploring how Muslim intellectuals in the early modern period situate themselves and engage with the modern/colonial world both from within the contours of their religious and political history, and the legal and colonial history of Europe as it manifested itself in the Mediterranean as well as the Atlantic worlds. At this level, decolonial hermeneutics allows us to enter the global discourse

from a local standpoint, which is designated in Eurocentric un/valuation of knowledge as a peccable nescience. Decolonial hermeneutics particularly facilitate such a reading by disclosing how a group of Muslim Moroccan intellectuals related Islam to the realm of ethics, politics, diplomacy and international affairs in a period which closely witnessed the birth of the modern/colonial world system and the shifts in imperial/colonial power differentials which took place as the Netherlands, France and Britain replace Spain and Portugal in the colonial matrix of power.

I am not proposing to understand the Self as an isolated unit of analysis detached from any influence of the Other. I am rather propounding that when we relate to knowledge as subjects, we are already relating to a knowledge which has been affected by the coloniality of power. As such, mapping out the pathways of such adulteration is necessary to understand the location of the Self within the epistemic hierarchy of the modern/colonial world system. It is in this sense that decolonial hermeneutics begins from within the contours of the Self; not to propose that there is a pure 'mythical origin' of Selfhood but rather to showcase the 'secular worldly beginning' (in Edward Said's terms) of how those dominant and subaltern cultures are always already 'imbricated;' and as such any claims to mythical purity are always already discounted by the saturated epistemic hierarchy of the modern/colonial world. Decolonial hermeneutics bears within it an emphasis on carving out interpretive spaces where knowledge is not envisioned along an axis of center/periphery but rather through a multiplicity of centers in infinite interaction with each other. Its focus on situatedness is not meant to simply prioritize local spaces over the totalizing proclivities of imperial knowledges but exactly to articulate what eventuated from an encounter between the two, i.e., an encounter between Muslim intellectuals and modernity. Yet, such interactions are not mystified by claiming that they operate on a symmetric plain of knowledge production. It is in the meticulous decortication of asymmetric power relations that we understand how modernity/coloniality managed to sustain itself in our (epistemic) reading practices irrespective of our social location. The corpus of Muslim Moroccan ambassadors to Europe in its modern/colonial heyday particularly instantiates what emerged from such an encounter, i.e., the ethics which ensued from such a collision between modernity and its exteriority.

2. Gadamer, Otherness, and Decolonial Hermeneutics

The question of Otherness has generated extensive attention in philosophy, anthropology and cultural studies (Said 1978; Baudrillard 1981; Levinas 1986; Ricoeur 1992; Dussel 1996; Simão and Valsiner 2007; Simão 2023). It is not that othering is particular to Western civilization but rather that it is a constitutive part of 'modernity' as it developed within the imperial and colonial rubrics of Europe. The idea of encountering the Other presumes a Self, with a caliber of epistemic and discursive authority to represent itself as the focality in contrast to an Other. As such, within decolonial scholarship, it is envisioned as a monotopic rendition whereby the imperial Self locates the Other within the hierarchy of the colonial difference and establishes relations of power, of knowledge, and of truths governed by such a regime of modern/colonial alterity.

Otherness in the modern/colonial world was constituted on ontological and epistemic bases and carried out by institutions which had the power to define humans, culture, progress, civilization, knowledge, etc. by the local experiences of Europe. The modern/colonial rendition of Otherness followed the progressivist thinking which locates the Other in a primitive line of evolutionary development and as such allocates to the Self the authority of *La Mission Civilisatrice* so as to guide those timeless beings into the realm of the enlightened and the civilized. As such, many theorizations of the issue of Otherness and the notion of the encounter raised ethical questions pertaining to how to orient oneself toward the other.[3] The majority of these approaches either insinuate or implicitly speak of the impossibility of rendering the Other *completely* fathomable; hence our proclivity to engulf Otherness in our epistemic landscape of sameness so as to ethically relate, converse and understand it. Emmanuel Levinas envisioned such a process of epistemic containment as a violent enterprise because it appropriates the Other and subjects it to the totality of the same (1979). Others such as Hans George Gadamer believed in the prospect of dialogue and its value as an axis of ontological constitution. His notion of expressive dialogism propounds that the Self is configured both in relation to its communal tradition as well as to the intersubjectivity which is invigorated once we interact with other cultures (1989, 302). In this light, the Self is suspended between its awareness of belonging to a certain tradition, and the effect of the interactive venture of encountering the Other. The philosophical topography in which Gadamer

[3] For a non-comprehensive list, consider: Emmanuel Lévinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987); Emmanuel Lévinas, *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1990])

imagines the crystallization of his socio-dialogic ontology is premised upon the existence of a horizon, which he defines as "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (Gadamer 1989, 302) for genuine historical hermeneutics. Gadamer believed that the adoption of his philosophical hermeneutics would bestow upon the Self an interpretive sensitivity, a sense of tact, proportion, and Aristotelian *Phronesis* which he refers to as Effective Historical Consciousness. Gadamer's formulation was conceived through his critique of positivism and historicism, particularly their tendency to undermine such interpretive sensitivity in favor of categorical reason and certainty (1989, 276-77). To expand the interpretive horizon, Gadamer altered various cultural traditions so as to render them consistent with the mutations in the overall *Gestalt* of knowledge which is a product of historical development. This pertains to his simultaneous understanding of the fact that knowledge is relative to its historical context and temporality, but also of the fact that the contingency of knowledge does not render it entirely relative. During different historical periods, there are different ways of fusing horizons; i.e., encyclopedically organizing the cultural traditions which go up to that period. It is a fight, as it were, between relativism/subjectivism (which is a necessary byproduct of aesthetics) and the absolutism characteristic of positivist thought. Gadamer emphasized the importance of historical consciousness in interpretation, recognizing that understanding always occurs within a historical and cultural context. As such, phronesis enables the interpreter to grasp the historical situatedness of the text or tradition and to interpret it in light of its historical context. This practical wisdom allows for a more nuanced and contextually sensitive approach to interpretation, avoiding anachronistic readings and fostering a deeper appreciation of the text's significance.

While his notion of horizon bestows upon the interpretive subject a sense of judgement that is aware of the discrepancies between the past and the present, it seems to me that his venture to reevaluate the theory of knowledge still operated within the realm of a Eurocentric tradition. His critique of disembodied rationality is a critique of a Eurocentric phenomenon from within the premises of its own philosophy. His expansion of the European hermeneutic horizon to rethink and enlarge its tradition in light of present development remained unaware of the modern/colonial epistemological hierarchy in which the knowledges which have always accounted for *Phronesis* as an interpretive outlook of the world had been deemed irrational and folkloric. Indeed, phronesis was considered one of the four cardinal virtues by Aristotle, alongside sophia (theoretical wisdom), andreia (courage), and sophrosyne (temperance) (Kirkeby 2009, 70; Kenny 2016, 55). Phronesis

involves the practical judgment necessary for making virtuous decisions in particular situations, and it was also recognized as a crucial virtue by Stoic philosophers and even by Socrates. However, as we have highlighted above, during the birth of modern philosophy, there was indeed a shift in emphasis away from the practical wisdom championed by phronesis in favor of a focus on theoretical knowledge and epistemology. Rationalism and Empiricism prioritized the pursuit of theoretical knowledge based on reason or sensory experience. Their focus was on developing systematic methods for acquiring certain and universal knowledge, which often sidelined the more contextual and contingent nature of practical wisdom. The Cartesian emphasis on the intellect as the locus of knowledge and understanding overshadowed the importance of practical wisdom rooted in lived experience and moral judgment. The pursuit of scientific knowledge based on empirical observation and mathematical reasoning diverted attention away from the complexities of moral decision-making and practical ethics.

However, so as not to fall into sweeping generalizations, I should note that phronesis did not disappear entirely from philosophical discourse during the modern period (Kenny 2016, 22). Figures such as Francis Bacon and John Stuart Mill, for example, acknowledged the importance of practical wisdom in guiding human conduct and social organization (Kenny 2016, 22). As far as philosophical hermeneutics is concerned, it is Gadamer who brought back the centrality of phronesis. He challenged the notion of understanding as a methodological process governed by fixed rules or procedures. Instead, he emphasized the practical wisdom inherent in the act of interpretation. Gadamer's horizonal fusion, which highlights the fusion of the interpreter's horizon of understanding with that of the text or tradition being interpreted occurs through a dialogical process characterized by openness, receptivity, and engagement. Phronesis guides the interpreter in this dialogical encounter, enabling them to discern the meaning embedded within the text or tradition in its particular context. Gadamer's emphasis on historical awareness was revolutionary but did not extend its bounds to think about the the fact that various non-Western cultures that are altered and made consistent with historical development to widen the horizon of the interpretant has already been located in a conception of historical teleology that is driven by evolutionary progress as it was conceived in the Enlightenment. As such, those appropriated cultures are subsumed into a modern historical teleology which has already delegated them to a different temporal and spatial rubric, i.e., premodern and primitive.

The Gadamerian hermeneutical project was underpinned by a 19th century German tradition which took the scholarly study of hermeneutics seriously. For instance, the Diltheyan conception of knowledge as either nomothetic or idiographic is central to understanding Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy (1989, 188). The first pertains to knowledge which is about the external world; knowledge which generates scientific laws. The second refers to knowledge of the internal world of cultural symbolism; knowledge which requires *Verstehen* (Understanding) instead of *Vernunft* (Reason or Rationality). The former involves interpreting from the perspective of human being, and being attuned to the contextual nuances. The latter refers to disembodied rationality. Gadamer emphasized *Verstehen* in his critique of the positivist and historicist attempts to transfer the soft sciences from the realm of hermeneutics to that of mathematical certainty (1989, 284-85). He also linked *Verstehen* with the Husserlian idea of lifeworld (1936, 108-109) which approaches knowledge as it appears in concrete historical context to render hermeneutics as a phenomenological investigation of the domain of knowledge, i.e., as it appears from within the premises of the Self. In this sense, decolonial hermeneutics could be designated as Gadamerian because my interpretations of the narratives of Moroccan ambassadors and their interpretations of European modernity both attended to the contextual intricacies of the Self before accounting for the Other within their epistemic framework.

Additionally, Gadamer was also influenced by Martin Heidegger's *Dasein*. He posits that "we can inquire into the consequences for the hermeneutics of the human sciences of the fact that Heidegger derives the circular structure of understanding from the temporality of Dasein" (1989, 266). His conception of dialogue as an axis of ontological constitution is directly related to Heidegger's ideas (a) that temporality and human existence are inextricably bound up, and (b) that being only exists in language, and that both of these ideas have determinative effects on the products of human knowledge. Heidegger's idea of temporality is particularly paramount to understanding Gadamerian hermeneutics. Gadamer wrote that

> interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. […] Working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed 'by the things' themselves, is the constant task of understanding. […] the fore-meanings that determine my own understanding can go entirely unnoticed. […] All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or text. But this openness always includes our

situating the other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it. (267-68)

This passage captures the essence of the hermeneutic circle. In the following, I will extrapolate from its textual concern to reflect on Gadamer's relevance to Culture as a whole. In the above-quoted passage, Gadamer explicates that our first encounter with a part of a text (or an Other) directly generates an opinion about this part with respect to a supposed totality of the text (fore-meaning). This presupposed sense of what the whole might resemble is then used to interpret successive parts that are continually referred back to the preformed meaning of the whole, which itself keeps changing as a result of encountering more and more of the parts. The circularity of such a hermeneutics resides in the oscillation between a pre-conception about the totality that we form through our first encounter with a part, moving to another part on the basis of which the whole changes again and so on (1989, 270).

To further elucidate, let's consider the following: Gadamer advances that because humans live in temporality, the movement of time means that they are constantly distanced and as such alienated from their cultural traditions (1989, 307). If humans wish to broaden the horizon of their understanding so that it extends beyond its truncated domain to the horizon of Culture as a whole, it must unremittingly reinvent, reabsorb and reinterpret the cultural tradition so as to keep it alive. In this sense, Gadamerian hermeneutics is an attempt to overcome our constant alienation from our cultural tradition. Thus, we could argue that history for Gadamer is not teleological in the Hegelian sense, i.e., a culture progressing toward an eschaton which marks the end of history, but rather a culture progressing away from its condition of permanent alienation. Progress in the Gadamerian sense would be to complete the hermeneutic circle, go back to our tradition, and undo the alienation. Distance, that of the Self's historical present situation from the traditionary past is viewed positively by Gadamer as it allows us to persistently relate the present to the past and as such reinterpret expanding our horizon.

The hermeneutic agency that Gadamer's phenomenological and ontological bent bestows upon the Self is astounding, particularly in relation to its dislocation of the world into the contours of human consciousness. It becomes incumbent upon the subject to hermeneutically approach the world as it discloses itself within the premises of the Self, and further reinvent such a world by constantly changing it. This is exactly what I extricated from the interpretive practice of Moroccan

ambassadors and how they related to their jurisprudential and intellectual traditions in light of their profession as diplomats and encounter with Europe. The displacement of the Christian/European Other into the hermeneutic realm of their Selves compelled and enabled them to 'reinvent' their jurisprudential traditions so as to accommodate the secular novelties that they encountered in Europe and which were generated through the enterprise of diplomacy.

Gadamer emphasizes that "transposing ourselves consists neither in the empathy of one individual for another nor in subordinating another person to our own standards; rather, it always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other" (1898, 305). The problem is that some Selves are more equal than others. Not all selves within the epistemic hierarchy of the modern/colonial world system are endowed with the hermeneutic agency to overcome their particularity and pursue a universal ideal that can transcend the limitation of their situatedness. As I noted above, Gadamer advances that even if knowledge is historically embedded, it does not necessarily mean that it is all relative. This seems to me reminiscent of the accusations which pertained to Nietzsche's so-called relativism or perspectivism. His critique was not that everybody is correct from their perspectives but was rather aimed at the idea that a belief should be binding on all others in the world. This belief about one's belief, which is called a meta-belief, was the target of Nietzsche's critique of dogmatism (Schrift 2014, 43). This is not a relativist position because we believe our beliefs precisely because we hold them to be superior to other beliefs. This is natural. What is unnatural is believing that your beliefs must be believed by all others. In the same spirit Nietzchean spirit, coloniality is not a matter of subordinating the Other to the standard of the Self but rather of an established epistemic yardstick whereby the Self is instituted as universal and its historicity is mystified as irrelevant to the knowledge produced under the aegis of such an enterprise. This is evident for instance when Matar invoked the notion of decline in relation to the episteme in which al-Ghassani, al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi engaged with Europe. He posited that "for the Moroccan to concede decline, he would have had to concur that his own *deen* (religion) was equal in teleological value to the *dunya* (world) of the Europeans—and to believe that the worldly success of the French was more important than the Straight Path to the paradise of God" (2005, 54). The emphasis on parochializing everything about the way in which Muslim travellers engaged with European civilization to claims of confessional incommensurability already renders any intellectual critique tainted by a claim of religious superiority. It also presumes that religious outlooks necessarily hinder critical faculties

in how Muslims relate to the foreign and the unfamiliar. This is inconsistent with the narratives chosen for this project because it is their awareness of their religious and intellectual traditions and their encounter with European modernity which render their accounts as exemplars of how political realities could alter religious and jurisprudential decrees. Additionally, in the early modern period, when Moroccan ambassadors travelled to Europe, their main objective was neither concerned with decline nor with progress, they were driven by political and religious duties to ransom captives, retrieve Islamic books, and pursue peace and commercial relations. To invoke their accounts within the paradigm of decline and progress is to presuppose Enlightenment ideas of linear historical development and the belief in continuous human progress which emerged in a specific context and cannot be evoked without their colonial history.

It also severs religion from the realm of rational inquiry and politics, a separation which was not endemic to the Islamic world particularly in how Muslim scholars believed that there was no inherent contradiction between religious teachings and the pursuit of various branches of knowledge. In Islamic tradition, knowledge is not compartmentalized into religious and non-religious categories. Instead, all knowledge is considered a means of understanding the Creator's wisdom and the natural order of the universe. As such, an interpretive maneuver which is neither aware of how Muslims relate to the sacred nor of the yardstick through which it approaches other knowledges is oblivious to the power differentials between the Self and the Other. For instance, Gadamer's Self was still embedded within a Eurocentric tradition and the expressive dialogism he pursued was inattentive to the power differential which (a) locates the power to appropriate and enlarge the hermeneutic horizon within the hands of a subject historically endowed with the power to posit what counts and does not count as knowledge and (b) discounts the hermeneutic venture which emanates from modernity's exteriority, those which embody the experiences of subjects outside the domains of Eurocentric canons of thought. To shift the enunciating subject from the context of European thought to that of the Islamic Maghreb in how we read and encounter Otherness, certain ethics of interpretation need to be laid out so as not to render my interpretation of Moroccan ambassadorial narratives an empty claim to the superiority of the Self over the Other.

This issue which I hope to tackle through my proposition of decolonial hermeneutics pertains not only to how to deal with the other ethically, but to the will which has the right to define what those ethics are to begin with, i.e., the Self which presents itself as entitled to construe the universal ethics of dealing with the Other, and in which this Other finds itself compelled to

overcome its deficiency through processes of emulation which only further alienate it from its indigenous knowledges. This is a perspective which I owe to my engagement with Gadamer. It also delinks from the cardinality of the notion of time to Gadamer's hermeneutic projects by embracing a spatial configuration of history. The prioritization of space over time derails from historical teleologies of progress and development which are anchored in time as an unfolding linearity, and think about different cultures not along an evolutionary plain which designates tradition as static and modernity as dynamic but in terms of geopolitical interactions and exchange. This becomes lucid in al-Ghassani's critique of Spanish modernity and its effect of the sociological structures of Spaniards as well as in al-Miknasi's castigation of the Ottoman's undiplomatic and irreligious actions of ransoming only Turk captives and not Arabs. The spatial distinction which Morocco held in relation to its proximity and imperial history with Europe as well as its autonomy from the Ottoman expansion in North Africa are crucial factors in how Moroccan ambassadors envisioned temporal and spiritual authority in the early modern Mediterranean.

It is their spatial situatedness outside the trajectory of modernity which informs my decolonial approach to their narratives. As such, I proposed decolonial hermeneutics to alter the loci of enunciation to those subjects who have been Othered in modernity's exteriority, to look at them as subjects capable of generating their ethics of relating to the Other; adept enough to engage in interpretive and critical processes; and to investigate how their emic intellectual and religious contexts shaped the development of such ethical formations and oriented political action in the global arena of international affairs. Here I fathom ethics to be the orientational praxis that concerns itself with inquiries pertaining to how one should or should not act in the world as well as in relation to others (Makdisi 1985, 47). On the one hand, I understand ethics to be addressing questions of how individuals should act in the world, guiding their behavior in accordance with principles of right and wrong. This aspect of ethics involves self-reflection and moral reasoning, considering factors such as personal values, intentions, and consequences of actions. On the other hand, ethics also pertains to how individuals should interact with others, involving considerations of fairness, justice, and respect for their rights and dignityEthical principles guide interpersonal relationships, shaping behaviors such as honesty, empathy, and cooperation. Their confluence serves as a guiding framework or practical orientation for navigating the complexities of life. It implies that ethical principles provide a moral compass which, for instance, help Moroccan ambassadors orient themselves toward virtuous conduct and meaningful engagement in foreign

non-Muslim environment. This orientation involves not only ethical decision-making but, as shall be shown with al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi, also the cultivation of moral character and integrity.

My emphasis on their historical embeddedness is intended to disclose what eventuated from their intellectual and diplomatic practice once they encountered modernity, not simply to claim the validity of their knowledge because it is articulated from a space of exteriority. It is at this juncture that my appropriation of the notion of *Phronesis* into the realm of decoloniality becomes pertinent. It is premised upon the idea that the knowledge that emanates from such a hermeneutic vantage point is neither dominated by transcendental univocal rationality, nor by formulaic disciplinary conception of knowledge, nor by a disturbing epistemic subsumption of the Other but rather by rules that are locally aware of their historical embeddedness, by prospects whose main pursuit is not positivist certainty but rather understanding through a sense of tact, observation and practical wisdom. This is why I began with Gadamer whose astute critiques of decontextual reason and endorsement of *Phronesis* as a cardinal tenet of his philosophical hermeneutics is pivotal to this dissertation's methodology despite its blemishes which we aspired to overcome through decolonial hermeneutics.

One of the critiques that could be leveled against my conception of decolonial hermeneutics is that of relativism. The claim would be that if objectivity is forlorn in pursuit of understanding, a process which is wrought with 'prejudice' in the Gadamerian sense, i.e., preconceptions and fore-bearing, our claims to truth then are rendered moot because there would be various claims to truth around the same object and as such, we are at risk of falling back into the realm of relativism or perspectivism. This could be further supplemented by the claim that there will be no stable and objective basis for interpretation. If Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1989) showcases anything, it is that interpretation is more than a matter of historicistically, positivistically, or structurally interpreting a text, i.e., our claims to objectivity are underwritten by a renunciation of the belief that something can be *learned* from what is being studied because our epistemic concern becomes *knowing* not *learning* (1989, 301). The will to know overrides the possibility of ethical expressive dialogism which concerns both how we read the text within its historicity and in relation to other texts, cultures, civilizations and the world.

My point is that the idea of learning, which is endemic to the Gadamerian hermeneutical project (unsituated as it were), questions the asymmetric relation between the knowing and the knower. As such, decolonial hermeneutics proposes to change the content of the conversation and

not just the terms first by opting for a methodology which configures knowledge in the context of cross-cultural and cross-confessional encounters to be premised upon a learning which relocates interpretive agency within the contours of Selfhood before it enlarges the horizon of the subject to account for the different. This is not to say that there is an untainted and immaculate Self to be retrieved from the depths of history before we can engage with the different. After all, nothing could naively be believed to "have escaped the totalizing colonial remaking of the modern world and its epistemic violence" (Colpani et al. 2022, 10). It is rather to say that a conscious and self-reflexive hermeneutic inquiry into the Self, within its history and tradition, and in relations to its epistemic institutions can nuance our understanding of how the engagement of Moroccan Muslim ambassadors with Europe was underpinned by a specific understanding of the Self as it is reflected in the relation between cross-confessional relations in the early modern Mediterranean. The fact that Moroccan ambassadors travelled from a space deemed as exterior to modernity did not hinder their representational instances of the Other as one of castigation and categorical alterity. As this dissertation will delineate, their representations were kaleidoscopic and encompassed various aspects of Europe, ranging from political institutions to gender roles, rivalries, technology, infrastructure, history, social relations, festivities and the arts. Their mediations of such elements did not only showcase their decadence as some have argued (Matar 2005, Heimer 2008) or widen the gap between Islamdom and Christendom as others have argued (Zhiri 2016; Ammari 2018). It also demonstrated their agency to critically engage with such aspects and even repurpose them to serve other political ends and conceptual ethics of diplomatic conduct. Their encounter with the unfamiliar, especially in the case of al-Ghassani, al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi expanded their hermeneutic horizon through a process of learning which they utilized to reflect on the nature of diplomatic conduct and intellectual critique in foreign non-Muslim territories.[4] As this dissertation demonstrates, their encounter with foreignness constituted a significant element in how they formulated their vision of diplomacy across the Mediterranean.

3. The Islamic/ate in Light of the New Diplomatic History: Perspectives from the Global North and the Global South

[4] Given that al-Hajari live in al-Andalus for 25 years, and was a practicing Christian, and read in a variety of languages, he was familiar with the customs and traditions of the Europe.

The historiographical construction of Islamicate diplomacy and the formulation of its conceptual features obligates the rethinking of various conceptions and paradigms which have been imposed upon Muslim-Christian relations "not only by challenging the standard opposition between "East" and "West" or "Islamdom" and "Christendom" as two discrete cultural entities," but also by "unveiling how diplomacy has long been thought of as an essentially European activity" (Grenet 2015, 225). My use of the word Islamicate (and not Islamic), as coined by Marshall Hodgson's formulation in *The Venture of Islam*, is intended to de-homogenize and differentiate between the various ways in which Islamic outlooks were altered following various socio-political and religious contexts (Hodgson 1974, 59). Hodgson suggested that the term "Islamic" refers to things "pertaining to Islam in the proper, religious sense." The term Islamicate, on the other hand, describes things that "would refer not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non Muslims" (Hodgson 1974, 59).

While such formulation was premised upon the idea that the term accounts for non-Muslim contributions to Islam, the Quran recognizes Judaism and Christianity as adulterated forms of true Islam. It is particularly that diversity that renders something Islamicate. My use of the term Islamicate is not intended to relegate Islam to the realm of the individual spiritual practice, or separate religion from culture. Some of the experiences of Islam, and generally religion, are linguistic and as such historical. However, the Islamic phenomenon, to use Mohamed Arkoun's term, is how we manifest Islam in the world. Such manifestation is human and worldly, and lies within our historical domain as a discursive practice. Since it is historical, it is amenable to change and interacts with the temporal and spatial transformations of the world. My distinction between Islamic and Islamicate is a Spivakian strategic essentialism which utilizes the latter term to designate what eventuates from the interplay between human action and religion in an unremitting context of global changes. Additionally, Jackson Sherman captures the historicity of the term 'Islamic' as it made its presence within 'Western' academic circles. He advances that

> The Western provenance of the modern neologism 'Islamic' is perhaps best revealed in its tendency to connote both geography and ethnicity. 'Islamic,' in other words, connotes not simply that which is related to or a product of Islam as a religion but that which relates to

> a particularly non-European people in a non-European part of the world. In this capacity, it carries both descriptive and prescriptive force. (2005, 155)

To delink from the essentialist adulteration that such a term invokes in the academic imaginary, I opted for the term Islamicate, particularly to describe diplomatic ethics, so as to showcase that Moroccan ambassadorial ethics were the product of a conscious will, oriented by Islam, but materialized by human action through a relation to the sacred which is both hermeneutic and actionable, and as such historical and contingent. Uncovering the diplomatic input of Moroccan Muslim travelers to Europe and mapping out the ethical and conceptual prisms which guided their praxis of international affairs dislodges this dissertation from a gross pitfall; the anachronistic thinking that impose European ideals of international affairs and diplomacy on Muslim Moroccan ambassadorial accounts; and as such risks disregarding the Islamicate dimension of Moroccan diplomacy and the geopolitical and religious realities which underpinned its conception. It is worth mentioning here that my exploration of these travelogues is not intended to establish an insular relationship sustained by Muslim Morocco and a Christian partner, but rather to examine such an exchange of missives, the ransoming of captives, the signing of peace and friendship treaties and the establishment of reciprocal trade and commercial relations as efforts for triangulating the power spectrum which relatively ensured, at times, Moroccan autonomy and territorial integrity from falling to Ottoman expansionism, and at other times, to European imperialism.

The last few decades have witnessed formidable efforts to reinvigorate diplomatic history by departing from a narrow exploration of state-centric, high-level political interactions to encompass the multifaceted dimensions of social, cultural, and intellectual spheres within various courts. Previously relegated to the periphery of scholarly investigation, subjects such as the interpersonal acumen of individual diplomats, their literary compositions, and intricate web of symbolic constructs have progressively found their place within the domain of European diplomatic studies (Watkins, 2008; Hampton, 2011, Alloul and Auwers, 2018). The departure from rigidly political historical narratives has provided European diplomatic historians with the opportunity to contemplate the inherent adaptability of evolving bureaucratic systems in eighteenth-century Europe. This adaptability is underscored by the fluidity of customs, practices, and procedures. The emphasis on the Enlightenment underpinnings of European diplomacy has

generated the false image that diplomatic developments in this era were deliberate and well-planned reforms, overlooking the malleability needed in the diplomatic enterprise to respond to contemporary issues by rethinking pre-established practices (Black 2011, 89). These endeavors to acknowledge diversity and fluidity within the historical narrative of early modern diplomacy represent the initial stride towards dismantling the prevailing teleology of modernity, which has hitherto centered on an unchanging, state-centric political history. My dissertation joins the recent efforts to account for a connective diplomatic history across the Mediterranean which focused on the socio-cultural and religious practices that animated early modern diplomacies rendering the Mediterranean a space of overlapping influences and plurality (Talbot, 2017; Heinsen-Roach, 2019; White, 2018; Hershenzon, 2018).

This shift in focus unveils the diplomatic contributions of Moroccan Muslim travelers to Europe and the ethical and conceptual frameworks that guided their engagement in international affairs. It challenges the anachronistic tendency to impose European diplomatic ideals on Moroccan ambassadors' accounts and emphasizes the Islamicate character of Moroccan diplomacy. Instead of adhering to the oversimplified notions of 'Western' exoticism and Muslim "enchantment," this approach recognizes the role of these ambassadorial missions in shaping diplomatic nomenclature within Muslim contexts. As such, this study aims to depart from the paradigm of "communication crisis" (Grenet 2015, 243) and incommensurability in the study of international affairs. It aims to highlight the need to recognize the intellectual, cultural and religious complexities of early modern Moroccan diplomacy and its contribution to the broader world of diplomatic thought and cultural brokership (Krstic and van Gelder 2015, 97). It seeks to shift the focus from simplistic notions of Muslim decline in the face of 'Western' modernity to a more nuanced understanding of the overlapping intellectual and cultural landscapes that shaped early modern diplomatic practices (Hennings and Sowerby, 2017).

I situate my research endeavor within the theoretical framework pioneered by John Watkins (2008) as the "New Diplomatic History," and further fleshed out by Houssine Alloul and Michael Auwers (2018). Various studies have emerged since Watkins' call for "a multidisciplinary reevaluation of […] the study of premodern diplomacy" (2), which have moved beyond reducing diplomatic sources as means to other analytical ends, and focalized "the diplomatic practices that created those sources in the first place" (2). Tijana Krstic and Maartje van Gelder's introduction to the special issue of the *Journal of Early Modern History* (2015), posited that "diplomatic genres

and practices associated with a European political and cultural tradition, on the one hand, or an Islamic tradition, on the other, were not produced in isolation but attained meaning through the process of mediation and negotiation among intermediaries of different confessional and social backgrounds" (93). They have stressed the role that non-elites as well as mid and high Muslim officials played in the configuration of cross-confessional diplomacy across the Mediterranean. While they have called for a Mediterranean diplomacy which they envisioned as being the outcome of integrating "the history, historiographies, perspectives, and sources of the Ottoman Empire, the polities of Tunis, Algiers and Morocco, and various European states," (95) I call for an 'Islamicate diplomacy' to characterize the diplomatic input of Moroccan Muslim ambassadors to Europe and map out the ethical and conceptual prisms which guided their praxis of international affairs. I argue that such a denomination foregrounds the ambassadors' engagement with local Islamic jurisprudential and intellectual knowledge to articulate a distinctively diplomatic praxis that enmeshes diplomacy within the realm of ethical and moral responsibility.

Houssine Alloul and Michael Auwers have stressed that the New Diplomatic History would "surely benefit from more sustained interchange with postcolonial theory, which would mean not simply 'including' non-Western perspectives, but starting from them" (2018, 119-120). One of the first scholars to push for a consideration of Moroccan ambassadorial accounts is Nabil Matar. He de-archived and brought into light various Moroccan diplomatic accounts through translations, bibliographic entries as well as scholarly studies (Matar 2002, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2013, 2015). However, Matar's overarching vision of Moroccan ambassadors evokes them within frameworks of un/fathoming modernity, religious vituperation\tolerance, fascination/rejection and mis/representation of the Other, except for his discussion of the concept of '*Mahaba'* (love, affection) in the correspondence of the Moroccan ambassador Ibn Aisha and his brief reference to it in Qasim al-Hajari's account. He sees '*Mahabba'* as "the possibility, at least, of acceptance of, and possibly deep engagement with" the European counterpart; as a concept which came into being because of the "immediacy that outweighed past conflicts and present tensions—and led to enduring friendship…span[ning] religious and political difference" (Matar 2003, xxxiv). Yet, his discussion of such a concept still operates within the Self/Other enterprise, whereby the faculty of the eye and the gaze override its efficacy in navigating diplomatic affairs. In other words, in Matar's eyes, these ambassadors and envoys are connected by their ambivalent views of Europe more than they are connected by their efforts to formalize a diplomatic ethos which correspond to

their emic intellectual Mediterranean and local context. As such, it neglects "how different, often accidental diplomatic intermediaries shaped the tenor and practice of cross-confessional diplomacy" in the early modern Mediterranean (Krstic and Gelder 2015, 94).

While his focus on *Mahaba* as an affective acuity that guided Moroccan diplomatic practices brought our attention to the affective underpinnings of an enterprise which is usually designated as systematically rational, he designated such a concept as naïve for its belief in friendship and interpersonal relation instead of emulating the European model of "a state institution that dictated their [referring to European ambassadors] actions and strategies, irrespective of individual relations" (xxxiv). He still assumed the European model to be the yardstick against which Moroccan ambassadors were to be assessed; a perspective which obscured the host of "unexpected strategies of diplomatic mediation enacted by previously invisible or little-studied intermediaries whose actions are context-specific but shed important light on the origins and nature of early modern diplomacy."[5] Tijana Krstic has elaborately showcased that ambassadors did not need to be politically, religious or culturally 'hybrid' subjects to be diplomatic intermediaries (2015, 150). In the same vein, this dissertation argues that while operating from within their epistemological and religious contours, Moroccan ambassadors were able to construe an Islamicate diplomatic ethos which oriented their encounter with the Other in Europe. Their views provide valuable insights into both non-European diplomacy and the intersections of Islam and diplomacy.

Matar has reduced the manifestation of religion in Moroccan ambassadorial accounts to a camouflaging tirade utilized to construe an inflated Muslim superiority in the face of European Modernity. He concluded that between the 16th and the 18th century Moroccan ambassadors "did not know anything about the culture of diplomacy that had been developing in Europe and that determined the training of diplomats and the art of negotiations" (2020, 213). This dissertation deflates such a superficial position by highlighting how Moroccan ambassadors crafted their own ideals and ethics of diplomatic conduct which facilitated centuries of treaties and diplomatic

[5] This is by no means a comprehensive list of studies which shed light on the rich variety of different intermediaries whose practices shaped early modern diplomatic enterprise. Please consider: Mathieu Grenet, "Muslim Missions to Early Modern France, c.1610-c.1780: Notes for a Social History of Cross-Cultural Diplomacy," *Journal of Early Modern History,* vol. 19 (2015), pp. 223–44; Maartje van Gelder, "The Republic's Renegades: Dutch Converts to Islam in Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic Relations with North Africa," *Journal of Early Modern History,* vol. 19 (2015), pp. 175-198; John Watkins, "Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008): 1–14; Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

correspondence. While a brief look at Matar's oeuvre would surely testify to his familiarity with such knowledge, the fact Moroccan ambassadors had their own understanding of the diplomatic landscape and how it related to Islam and the position of the Sultan as both temporal and spiritual authority was not detected by his analytical radar because it did not converge with the European professionalization model. Several Moroccan historians opted for the same position. During his discussion of institutional stagnation, the Moroccan historian Abdullah Laroui designated early modern Moroccan diplomacy as misleading since it aimed for short-lived goals and did not truly deserve the label of diplomacy (2015, 244). Abdelmajid al-Qadduri provides a conceptual structure for understanding Moroccan diplomacy in the early modern era. However, the conclusion drawn in his *History and Diplomacy: Issues in Terminology and Methodology* is that diplomacy was not utilized as a means of achieving economic or political objectives. He sees Moroccan diplomacy as a fragmentary and unstructured instrumentalist maneuver in the body politic (Qadduri 2003, 269). Van Gelder and Krstic noted that despite the new methodological and theoretical insights, recent scholarship still focuses "primarily on cultural encounters and only secondarily on diplomacy" (2015, 102). However, a new wave of "post-Orientalist" studies have focused on "cross-confessional amity and fluidity of identities" (Krstic and Van Gelder 2015, 99) showcasing the ability of diplomatic intermediaries to cross religious and political boundaries. This has allowed recent scholarship to do away with essentialist and ideological polarities (East vs West) (Grenet 2015, 225) and facilitated the possibility of zooming in on inter-*Ummah* diplomatic practices which I invoke in al-Miknasi's critique of the Ottomans' discriminatory diplomatic praxis. This instance underscores the tensions which existed among similar confessional lines and fostered ground to critique Caliphal legitimacy and politicize issues of true belief and ethical praxis.

My designation of Moroccan diplomacy as Islamicate does not mean that it cannot be characterized as cross-confessional or Mediterranean. It is rather intended to respond to Mathieu Grenet (2015) and Joshua Whites' (2015) call against 'uniformity in Muslim diplomacy;' a point which will be undermined within an interconnected history of diplomatic thought in the early modern Mediterranean. These ambassadors developed their vision of diplomacy within a cross-cultural context while simultaneously embedding such a configuration within the intellectual and jurisprudential debates which centered on travel and territoriality in the Islamic Maghreb. It is such interaction between religious adherence and political interests which directed my attention towards using the term 'Islamicate' to emphasize the agential element in crafting diplomatic ethics in a

confessional and political framework. In this sense, this research venture sheds light on Moroccan Muslim ambassadors' participation and configuration of a cross-confessional Islamicate diplomatic culture. It contributes to the lively debate which was started by the practitioners of New Diplomatic History through tracing the formulation of Islamicate diplomatic ethos as theorized and embodied, beginning with Qasim al-Hajari in the late 16th and early 17th century until Uthman al-Miknasi in the late 18th century, highlighting the overlapping intellectual landscape in which such an enterprise was embedded in and oriented by an ethical praxis of encountering and corresponding across Mediterranean borders.

Additionally, ambassadors are absent from prominent studies which deal with Islamic intellectual history in the 17th and 18th centuries (el-Rouayheb 2015; Dallal 2018). These are critical interventions which enabled us to rethink the paradigm of decline in the early modern period. Yet, their abstinence from engaging diplomatic accounts might be due to the positionality of these subjects within the body politic, i.e., Sultanate, Caliphate, thus rendering their thought partisan, or simply for the fact that ambassadors were not seen by these studies as Muslim thinkers. Most of the Moroccan ambassadors belong to a scribal class usually instituted by the Sultan within a bureaucratic structure concerned with foreign affairs. Diplomacy intensified the role of this scribal class and expanded its profession from merely copying manuscripts to administrative work, such as drafting treaties, Sultanic letters, receiving foreign ambassadors and negotiating on behalf of the Sultan. As such, they began to configure themselves as the guardian trustees of Sultanic policy, assert their status as Sultanic administrators, and craft Islamically-inflicted diplomatic concepts which were instigated through their diplomatic praxis in Morocco and abroad. The intellectual and cultural views of these ambassadors are crucial to our understanding not only of non-European diplomacy but also of how Moroccan ambassadors envision the relationship between Islam and governance from within their local histories. Thus, they variegate our understanding of the different trajectories that international relations and diplomacy follow on a global level. Such perspectival diversification allows us to see beyond the Eurocentric modalities of Westernization, standardization, and permanent embassies as foundational elements of modern diplomacy toward more kaleidoscopic models of diplomatic praxis. It is at this particular juncture that diplomacy frees itself from the presumably top-down professionalization model to embrace a humane personalization model, in which mutual friendships, personal epistolary correspondence and engagements with various classes play a crucial role in the furtherance of diplomatic interests.

Chapter III: Itinerant Diplomatic Precedent: A Spanish Colonial Encounter with Native Americans within an Islamic Rubric, al-Hajari's *Text* and Context, 1611-1613

The Supporter of Religion against the Infidel 1611-1613 is a literary work in the genre of *Rihla* composed by the Andalusian Ahmad ibn Qasim al-Hajari in the 17th century. It is a summary of his original lost account *The Journey of Shihab to Meet the Beloved*. The latter revolves around his escape from the Inquisition in 1597. He traveled to the port of Santa Maria in Portugal, disguised as a Christian from Seville, and boarded a Portuguese ship, and claimed to be heading to the Moroccan city of Mazagan, which was under Portuguese occupation (Al-Hajari 1997, 110-111). There, he escaped with a group to Muslim lands and docked in the port of Azemmour in Morocco. His account depicted the stifling circumstances that compelled the Muslim Moriscos to confront Castilian authority resisting the forced conversion campaign by the Catholic church. It narrated how these conditions led to the eruption of their major revolt in Granada and portrayed the strategies they employed to evade the inquisitorial courts that targeted and subjected them to severe forms of punishment. He also described his journey in the Netherlands, particularly in Hague and Amsterdam between 1611-1613, followed by his visit to France and meeting with various Orientalist and Arabist scholars. He described the Hague and Amsterdam, and delineated his efforts with the French and Dutch to advance the cause of the Moriscos.

Al-Hajari's account is one of the paramount historical sources on the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain between 1609 and 1614 from the viewpoint of the Morisco Émigré community. It stands as an autobiographical narrative of his escape from Catholic Spain to Morocco, and his role as one of the translators of the Sacramento Lead Books which were discovered in Granada, Turpiana Tower (Drayson 2013, 134-140). It is also an unprecedented observational and firsthand record of the social, linguistic and cultural history of the Moriscos living in late 16th-century Spain, and their diaspora in the Islamic Maghreb and the Ottoman Empire. It is brimming with information about early modern encounters between the Islamicate world and Western Europe, providing us with how an Iberian Muslim intellectual perceived the social and religious world of Spain, France and Holland. It is also a Muslim-Christian polemical piece based on various debates with Christians and Jews across Europe (Koningsveld 1997, 11-59). This chapter makes use of the original Arabic and the English translations which were made

by P.S. Van Koningsveld, al-Sammarai, Gerard Wiegers (1997) and Nabil Matar (2003). My reference to both English versions highlights how their translations of some Arabic words did not consider their historicity within Islamic jurisprudential literature and as such obfuscated the meaning of the original.

My interest in al-Hajari's narrative resides in its diplomatic caliber within the context of international law as it was developing in 16th and 17th century Europe. I argue that al-Hajari utilizes Spain's colonial encounters in Mesoamerica, its infringements of treaties with the Muslim Andalusians, and its forays upon neighboring protestant powers as legal and diplomatic precedents which not only undermine Spain's sovereignty in the international arena but also legally justifies a cross-confessional alliance between various Mediterranean powers. Furthermore, al-Hajari's transference of Montezuma and Cortés' encounter to an Arabophone audience not only demonstrate the circulation of imperial episodes from the Atlantic to the Maghreb but also showcases how such episodes could be 'Islamized' and repurposed to serve other diplomatic and political ends which transcend religious and cultural incommensurability. Such transference unravels the Atlantic dimension of the Mediterranean Islamic world, particularly as it reminds us of the treaties and legal customs which developed as a result of Muslim-Christian relations within Iberian Christian dominions, and how they were transplanted to the Atlantic world as legal precedents through which Spain enforced its jurisdiction over native populations and indigenous lands.

My proposition of decolonial hermeneutics emphasized the primacy of exploring the premises of the Self within its own intellectual context before venturing into encounters with the Other. While such an approach might be prone to criticisms of insularity and pure authentic identities, al-Hajari exemplifies how, even when aspiring to focus on the Self, one cannot escape entanglements with other traditions as a necessary and constitutive part of the contours of selfhood. To clarify, al-Hajari's text cannot be detached from his intercultural and cross-confessional context given that: first, his *text* is rich with references to other texts which he read in multiple languages; and second, during the greater part of his active life, he was "to a certain extent part of two cultures: of Maghribi culture, the world of Islam, and of European culture, the world of Christianity" (Wiegers 1992, 90). Moreover, his and his community's disenfranchisement by Catholic Spain constituted a significant part of his intellectual activities and directed his diplomatic efforts toward advancing the cause of his expelled Morisco community. As such, this study will map out the

cross-cultural and intellectual context in which al-Hajari lived and wrote his account drawing on the texts which circulated during his life in Granada, Seville and Madrid as well as on the narratives which he referenced from the Islamic world. This instantiates how decolonial hermeneutics could be of value to study subjects who dwell in the intellectual border between Islamdom and Christendom.

Al Hajari chose to encapsulate such a complex intellectual atmosphere in the *Rihla*. The poly-generical composition of his account could only be categorized within such an Arabic literary genre. The *Rihla* in the Arabo-Islamic tradition was oriented by a religious proclivity towards performing *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina), and/or towards *Talab al-Iilm* (seeking knowledge) which takes a disciple on a learning journey through the centers of Islamic teaching (Newman 2019, 143-158). It was also a quest to wonder and ponder on God's manifestation in nature and the physical world. As such, the telos of travel necessitated certain poetics that were in synchronicity with the religious sanctity and unity which the Hajj or *Talab al-Iilm* represented in the imaginary of the Muslim *Ummah* (religious community). Around the 9th century, the *Rihla* genre succumbed to various environmental necessities which expanded its generical sphere to include geographical mapping of the physical world. The exponential development of intercontinental trade and commerce constituted fertile soil in which Arab geographic literature bloomed. As I. Y. Kratchkovsky notes in his multivolume Magnus Opus *Arab Geographical Literature*, the complexity of such a genre resides in its kaleidoscopic containment of various epistemological structures. It is rich in raw materials not only for geographers, but also for sociologists, economists, linguists, batonists, and historians of literature, science, and religion (1957, 16). This is also the period around which wanderlust became a prominent feature of the *Rihla* as epitomized in Ibn Fadlan's *Letters* (1959), Ibn Jubayr's *Travels* (1852) and Ibn Battuta's (1354, 2003) famous accounts of journeying toward the unknown.

While its early beginning in the world of Islam was associated with pilgrimage, quests for knowledge, the focus of the *Rihla* was not solely on personal experiences but also on intellectual and spiritual enrichment. It is different from 'Western' travel writing because the latter, especially during the colonial period, often emphasized exploration, adventure, and encounters with exotic cultures. While educational elements were present, travelogues in the 'Western' tradition were sometimes more driven by the exploration of new territories and the portrayal of the Other (Said 1978; Campbell, 1988; Kuehn and Smethurst 2008; Thompson 2011). As will be showcased in our

chosen corpus, *Rihla* narratives typically encompass a tapestry of personal experiences, observations, and scholarly reflections. Their tone could be didactic, and to showcase their literary and intellectual prowess, travellers often incorporated elements of poetry and engaged with philosophy in their accounts. 'Western' travelogues tended to adopt a more descriptive and sometimes sensational style. 'Western' travel writers often focused on the picturesque or unfamiliar aspects of foreign cultures, landscapes, and peoples (Warwick 1991).

Given the fact that many *Rihla* authors were motivated by religious reasons, their narratives often integrated discussions on Islamic practices, theological reflections, and encounters with fellow scholars in famous centers of Islamic learning. While some 'Western' travelers were motivated by religious exploration, many traveled for commercial, colonial, or scientific reasons, and sometimes 'Western' travelogues constructed Eurocentric renditions of other cultures, either serving colonial projects or succumbing to the commercial pressures of printing and publishing (Matar 2003, xxiii-xxiv). This is not meant to reiterate a categorical dichotomy between 'West' and 'East.' Of course, there were exceptions on both ends of the spectrum. It is simply to state that *Rihla* and 'Western' travel writing had different beginnings and were underpinned by distinct material conditions.

In the 17th century, the *Rihla* in Islamic Maghreb undertook a paradigmatic shift in terms of its purposiveness as well as poetics. It was a change elicited by global changes between Islamdom and Christendom which necessitated the extensive dispatching of Muslim envoys and ambassadors to Europe to establish good relations, sign treaties or ransom captives. Ambassadorial reports and travelogues further complexified the genre of *Rihla* through the interlacing of various genres. The latter became "an occasion to map complex connections among travel, theory, and knowledge rarely developed outside of the confines of Euro-American political thought (Eubem 2008, 15). The first account composed within the rubric of such global transmutations is by the Moroccan ambassador of Andalusian descent Qasim al-Hajari (d.1645) who was commissioned by the Moroccan Saadi Sultan Muley Zaydan to negotiate the release of some Moriscos who were captured along with their belongings by French corsairs after being falsely offered transit to Moroccan shores from Spain.

He was born c. 1570 in Extremadura and later lived in Seville and Madrid (Matar 2003, 6). In Spain, he mastered Spanish, and as a 'New Christian,' practiced the full range of Christian rituals while secretly retaining his Islamic faith (Matar 2003, 6). After his escape, he managed to be

received by the Moroccan Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur in 1599. Impressed by his erudite knowledge and multilingual capabilities, the Sultan made him his official secretary/translator (Garcia Arenal 2013, 93). Al-Hajari's account has been perused as a source of archaeological history in early modern Spain (Mercedes 2009), the history of Arabic studies in Europe (Jones 2020; Wiegers 1988, 2010). the political and cultural history of Muslims in Spain (Harvey 1964, 2005; al-Qadduri 2006), the translation of the Lead Books affair (Guerra 2008) and as a textual testimony to the unstudied enterprise of translation which characterized early modern Morocco (Gilbert 2020). His account was also explored as a manifestation of an early modern clash of civilizations (al-Shamali 2015), religious incommensurability (al-Khatib 2018), corrective religious polemics (Chachia 2015). Recently, the role of al-Hajari in the rise of early modern orientalism and his underappreciated contributions to the rise of oriental and Arabic studies in the European Republic of Letters has been investigated by Rasha al-Khatib and Oumelbanine Zhiri (al-Khatib 2018; Zhiri 2023). However, as far as this study is concerned, its exceptionality resides in shedding light on the burgeoning conventions of diplomatic profession in early modern Islamicate Morocco. I posit that al-Hajari's transplantation of Spain's imperial encounters with Native Americans to an Islamicate context not only points to Muslims' awareness of Spain's colonial expansionism in the Americas and internal European rivalries, but also showcases how such knowledge has been instrumentalized by al-Hajari to establish legal precedent indicative of Spain's political and diplomatic praxis.

1. Expansionist Encounters as Diplomatic Precedents: Montezuma/ Cortés in Light of al-Hajari's Account

Al-Hajari's only reference to Spanish America occurs in chapter ten, thus it by no means constitutes a main concern in his narrative. In fact, none of the above-mentioned studies reflect on such an aspect of al-Hajari's account, probably because of the brevity with which he evoked such information. It could even be argued that it stands as a misfit within the general make-up of his account. However, it was the conciseness of his invocation that struck me, particularly when compared with the detailed attention paid by al-Hajari to other aspects that he perceived as in need of elaboration to be understood by his readership. As such, while the main focus of this chapter will be on how such information was utilized to advance different diplomatic ends, this section investigates the conditions that enable a discourse in which such a concise reference could be

meaningful to an audience historically presumed to be unaware of European historical dynamics, let alone what transpired in the Americas. Various scholars have deflated such a historical inaccuracy, most notably and recently Giuseppe Marcocci who in his famous *The Globe on Paper: Writing Histories of the World in Renaissance Europe and the Americas* (2020), notes that from the mid-1500s to the early 1600s, there was a rising global recognition that various regions had histories worthy of documentation. He writes that "the discovery of America in particular made evident for the first time the existence of continents that had been mutually unaware of each other, and it ultimately led to a convergence of chronologies that until then had been separate" (5). Al-Hajari was living (probably reading) within this context, and his writing followed in its aftermath (1573-1641). It is not that the Islamic world had no awareness of Spanish imperial expansion in the Americas. In fact, Marcocci discloses that in the 16th century, a narrative that describes "Christopher Columbus's voyage, the penetration of the Caribbean, the conquests of Mexico and Peru, as well as the expedition of Miguel López de Legazpi to the Philippines" was penned in the Ottoman Caliphate "closely following the Italian translations of European writers who had published some of the earliest texts on Spanish America" (2020, 6). As such, this chapter is as much an inquiry into the texts and narratives which al-Hajari might have encountered around the time he lived in Spain, Morocco and during his travels in Europe, as it is about how he utilized such histories in different contexts to advance other political ends. The first pertinent condition which demands our attention pertains to who solicited the writing of such an account and why al-Hajari waited until 1637, twenty-four years after his journey to compose his account. Given that his original text was extensive, al-Hajari was asked by the Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Ujhuri al-Maliki to compose a summarized version of his narrative. He writes that

> several Muslim scholars asked me to compile a book about that [journey], but the work did not materialize until our blessed Shaykh in the country of Egypt-may God protect it!-viz. The great scholar whose learning is widely praised in various countries, Shaykh 'Ali ibn Muhammed called Zayn, son of the great scholar Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Ujhuri al-Maliki, ordered me [to do so] I compiled with his [order] by [writing] more than he had asked and I compiled the book in the form of a travel account which I entitled *Riḥlat al-Shihab ʹila Liqaʹal-Aḥbab* 'The Journey of *Al-Shihab towards the Meeting with the Beloved ones*.' (1997, 77-78).

Al-Hajari might have been aware of his readership and some of the circles in which his account could have circulated. The briefness suggests that he presumed his readership to be familiar with the reference. Otherwise, he would have elaborated on such information like he did when he explicated certain topics as varied as the Dutch Revolt (1997, 220), detailed geography of the Nile River (175), French and Dutch marriage customs (167), the Ten Commandments (165-171), cartography and the ethnic and racial demographic diversity of the world (204-206) among others. It is evident that he recognized when he needed to further explain and when he assumed that his audience might have had some knowledge about what he was referencing. While such a point remains a matter of speculation, it is relevant at this point to reflect on why al-Hajari composed his account at that particular historical juncture. His *Kitab* was penned in Arabic with the intention of engaging a scholarly audience well-versed in the nuances and structures of Arabic literary discourse. Oumelbanine Zhiri illuminates some of the underlying conditions and tensions that prompted such a compositional venture. She notes that the linguistic landscape in which al-Hajari wrote his *Kitab* "is usually described as one of diglossia, that is with a high and low variant. *Fushā*, also called Classical Arabic […] is learned through formal education and is the language of most Arabic literature […] and '*āmiyya* is reserved for colloquial oral communication." (2023, 88). Al-Hajari, however, wrote in a form of Middle Arabic which was produced through "the interaction between the high written form and the low spoken mode" (88). Zhiri notes that "he would have found Classical Arabic beyond his reach" (89), since the "prestigious *Fushā*" was acquired through rigorous study of religious sciences and highly indicative of erudition and linguistic literary mastery which was the mark of the *ulama* class which refers to Islamic scholars or religious authorities who possess expertise in Islamic law, theology, and jurisprudence. They play a significant role in interpreting religious texts, issuing legal opinions (*fatwas*), and providing guidance on matters of faith and practice within the Muslim community.

Al-Hajari consciously distanced himself from such a learned class and designated himself as "the interpreter of the Sultan of Marrakesh" (al-Hajari 1997, 155). Before reaching this point, al-Hajari described the dangerous inquisitional atmosphere in which he learned Arabic, and the fear of his relatives about his safety in case he was caught and subjected to harsh punishment. His fast and impressive acquisition of Arabic at the age of ten, Zhiri notes, is explained by what she perceives as "the hallmark of Hajarī's representation of his life," which is the "juxtaposition of the

practical and the otherworldly" (2023, 90), i.e. the secular and the religious. The former pertained to how learning Spanish first accelerated the learning of Arabic for al-Hajari, and the latter relates to his acquisition of Arabic in one day, a miracle which he credits to "a divine benefaction and to success granted by God" (1997, 257). As the above-mentioned bloc quote indicates, al-Hajari composed his account in Egypt. 17th century Egypt. Nelly Hanna observes that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Egypt, there was a notable proliferation of prose literature composed in Middle Arabic, characterized by a fusion of classical and colloquial linguistic elements (2003, 130-132). This is attributed as one reason which could have eased al-Hajari into composing his account long after his experiences in Europe.

Another important dimension which is worth reflecting on is the fact al-Hajari was requested to compose his account by a well-established '*alim,* "the Shaykh 'Ali ibn Muhammed al-Ujhuri al-Maliki" (al-Hajari 1997, 77). Al-Hajari acknowledged that he was not a part of class of learned religious scholars. He humbly admits that "when I am in the presence of the scholars of our own religion, I am not able to talk about the [religious] sciences" (155). As such, it could be advanced that al-Hajari's compositional venture was his way of showcasing his intellectual entanglements in epistemic rubrics that extend beyond the purview of Arabophone contexts. Undoubtedly, such a form of secular knowledge was secondary and limited in opposition to religious knowledge. However, despite al-Hajari's strife to ponder the benediction bestowed upon him by God, whether in his miraculous escape, impressive linguistic acquisition, or visionary and revealing dreams, it seems to me that al-Hajari's self-proclaimed detachement from the learned '*Ulama* class is counterweighed by a kaleidoscopic epistemic complexity which constitutes the fabric of his account (as will be discussed in the upcoming sections) and his multifaceted complexion as a cultural broker, diplomat, an intellectual and a committed member of his diasporic community reveals another dimension of worldly knowledge whereby the secular rubs against the spiritual in various ways which bear their mark on the vicissitude of epistemic production. As such, my concern in this chapter pertains as much to al-Hajari's use of knowledge about European imperial history as to the intellectual landscape in which he was writing. In other words, I will inquire into what was being read and published about the Americas and the notion of sovereignty around the time al-Hajari lived in Spain and after his escape to Morocco evoking various Spanish intellectuals who engaged with the notion of non-Catholic sovereignty and Indigenous

populations. What was being read at the time? What narratives could have he encountered in Granada, Seville and Madrid?

The presence of indigenous populations in Spain could not have passed unnoticed by al-Hajari who was an active member in Spanish society given his involvement in the translation of the Parchment of the Torre Turpiana (1588) and the Lead books of Sacromonte (1595) which were discovered in the valley of Paradise near Granada in the late sixteenth century (1997, 89). This allows us not only to map out the intellectual landscape in which al-Hajari constituted himself as an erudite intellectual but also how such a wealth of knowledge had been utilized by al-Hajari to advance certain political and diplomatic ends. These are the premises of the Self from which decolonial hermeneutics begins to shed light on a subject whose religious disenfranchisement in Catholic Spain had unintended consequences which allowed al-Hajari to venture back intellectually and diplomatically into Europe and delineate his own understanding of European history, its imperial ambitions, religion, customs and transfer it to an Arabo-Islamic context. Such a decolonial hermeneutical reading counters the proposition that the Islamic world was unaware of Spain's imperial actions in the 'New World' and provides a preliminary insight into the presence of certain news about Amerindians in Islamic contexts.

Al-Hajari's rendition of Spain's imperial encounter with Native Americans focuses on the violent scene which took place in Mexico between king Montezuma and Hernán Cortés. Al-Hajari utilized his personal experiences as well as his multilingualism to present us with a Mediterranean landscape when Spain as a global power was constantly being challenged on multiple fronts; by Native American dissidence in the New World, Protestant nations in Europe and the Ottoman Empire. He displayed a thorough knowledge of diplomatic treaties, protocol and law conventions of the early modern Mediterranean world. Within the context of Ottoman advances in Vienna, al-Hajari writes,

> Every Christian Sultan is terrified by the bellicose Sultans of Islam defending the Religion who are waging war for the Sake of the Lord of the Universe viz. the noble and great Ottoman Turkish Sultan […] Thus, the kings of the Christians deem it proper to maintain friendly relations. Every one of them sends his ambassador to reside on a permanent basis in Constantinople in order to arrange for peace and goodwill with them. However, they [..] do not send an ambassador to any Infidel for permanent residence in their country. It is true

> that the Sultan of Spain—i.e., the country of Al-Andalus—wanted to send an ambassador to reside [with them] like the other Christian kings, but they did not accept him. [This was], because of the enmity against Islam they had experienced from him. [another reason for not accepting the ambassador] was his treason in the past towards the Sultan of the west Indians in the City of Mexico called Mutashuma [Moctezuma], when they brought him a present and killed him. [a third reason] were the treaties they concluded with the Andalusian Muslims when they took their lands, which they broke afterwards. [Then, there is also the fact that] when he ordered the Andalusians to leave his country, he took away the children under the age of ten years or so of all those who were known to be leaving for the territory of the Muslims. [In addition, there are other [abominable] facts said of them like the conquest of the city of Milan. No one is more hostile and obnoxious towards the Sultans of the Muslims than the Sultans of Spain. (1997, 208-209 [English]; 126-27 [Arabic])

The above quote makes various historical references which are indicative of Spanish praxis in diplomatic relations dealing with other non-Catholic nations. His rendition of the conquest of Mexico by Hernan Cortés undergirds the Ottoman's refusal to accept any permanent residence from the Spanish Crown. The Spanish narratives depicting such an encounter describe the meeting between Montezuma and Cortés as a scene when the indigenous people and their land were divinely destined to be under the dominion of Spain and the Catholic Church (Merrim 1996, 58-62). When the Aztec rebellion erupted, the Spanish forces retreated for two years only to initiate a siege of the capital Tenochtitlan during which the detained Montezuma was killed in 1520. The Spanish version of the story recounts that while Montezuma was held as a willing hostage by Cortés' conquistadores, he attempted to persuade his people to cease their revolt against the Spaniards (Merrim 1996, 72), and his people stoned him to death because he betrayed them (Beezley 2011, 196). Most of the Spanish narratives construct Montezuma's death as a consequence of the internal conflicts and tensions within the Aztec Empire rather than attributing it directly to Cortés or his conquistadores. Montezuma's demise was represented as the result of his own people turning against him or as a result of a violent altercation between the Aztecs and the Spanish conquistadors which was used to further justify Spanish colonial presence in the Americas.

Cortés' invasion of Mexico took place against the orders of the Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar, the first governor of Cuba (Merrim 1996, 72). As such, he conducted his colonial venture while being a wanted fugitive. In an attempt to circumvent the status of an outlaw and convince the Spanish King Charles V of his triumphs and capabilities, Cortés extolled his 'virtues' claiming that he was the one to inform the indigenous prisoners of Montezuma's death (71). He sought to justify his actions and establish himself as a loyal servant to Charles V, particularly as the king's approval meant that the possibility of upscaling his position to the viceroy of a New Spain could become a reality (73). Obviously, Cortés was not interested in faithfully recounting what took place during the conquest. His concern was to present a lopsided perspective on historical occurrences, aiming to legitimate and exalt himself before the Crown's authority.

Al-Hajari's brief reference insinuates a different historical perspective on the encounter between Montezuma and Cortés. A perspective which was underpinned by his cross-cultural and interreligious intellectual context. While it was brief, and is apparently unaccounted for in current scholarship, my reading necessarily integrates it into that second literature which does not entertain the possibility that brevity could insinuate depth and familiarity rather than mere superficiality. From a decolonial hermeneutical perspective, it is his escape of the Inquisition and displacement across the Mediterranean shore which furnished his perspective as a subject who had been targeted not only for his belief but also for how his faith tainted him racially despite having been born along with his fathers and forefathers in the Iberian Peninsula. Aligning his vision with the disenfranchised was not coincidental. Either he was familiar with other sources which depicted such a violent episode or this is an instance that testifies to the circulation of imperial encounters in the Americas within Islamicate contexts in the early modern period. Was al-Hajari aware of Hernan Cortés' letters from Mexico? Did he encounter any of Bartolomé de las Casas's works which were published in Seville where al-Hajari dwelled prior to his departure to Morocco? Was such knowledge accessible within Islamicate geographies? Among Moroccan's accounts of ambassadors and travelers to Europe, references to 'the land of the indies' or 'America' are brief and do not extend beyond invocation of the gold and riches brought from the Atlantic (Matar 2003, xxxvi). However, al-Hajari's reference to such a paramount historical scene may either suggest that he had encountered different renditions of the 'New World' prior to his escape to Morocco (1599-1600), or point out to the circulation of Spanish accounts in Maghrebi contexts. It seems that he might have been acquainted with sources that diverge from the official imperial discourse

about Cortés and Montezuma's encounter. His statement "when they brought him a present and killed him" (al-Hajari 1997, 208) challenges colonial accounts and connotes a breach of international conventions of law which pertain to ruling authority and political sovereignty, aligning his voice with native renditions of how Montezuma was killed (Durán 1880, 50), particularly the "Nahua [which] state that he was murdered by the Spaniards" (Schwartz 2000, 157). Matthew Restall has showcased that the 16th and 17th centuries witnessed the proliferation of various depictions of Montezuma's death (Restall 2018).[6] After sifting through a colossal bulk of historical scholarship from Spanish (European and indigenous sources), he concluded that "Montezuma's murder by the Spaniards is thus logical and expected in the context of the mass execution of all the *tlahtoque*" (Restall 2018, 320). Al-Hajari's brief comment then must not be taken lightly as his reference suggests that he might have been exposed to a plethora of sources from which he could form such a position.

It is worth considering the life of al-Hajari prior to his escape from Spain in 1599 at this point. Unfortunately, the "information about his life in Spain is very scarce" (Wiegers 1992, 97), except for his indication that he lived in Seville, Madrid, and Granada. In the sixteenth century, the wealth generated from the conquest of the Americas altered Seville from a small Andalusian port to a thriving international metropolis. Writing in 1571, the Sevillian economist and Dominican friar referred to Seville as "a hub for all merchants from around the globe because, in truth, while Andalusia and Lusitania used to be the farthest reaches of the earth, since the discovery of the Indies, it has become a midpoint. Therefore, everything that is best and most highly valued in the ancient world, even in Turkey, comes to Seville to be transported to the New Territories" (De Mercado 1571, 20). It was in fact the richest and most populous city in Spain. However, its affluent brilliance was completely dependent on Spain's colonial exploitations in the Indies rather than local industries (Pike 1961, 5). While many Spaniards sailed to the 'New World' from its ports, many indigenous peoples arrived in Spain and appeared at the Royal court in 16th-century Seville. As the Guadalquivir River received the Fleet of Indies from New Spain, today Mexico, annually, news and stories about the so-called New World must have traveled with the waves of fleets and people who crowded Sevillian ports, particularly as Seville occupied a paramount role in "the

[6] In chapter six of his astounding book *When Montezuma Met Cortés: The True Story of the Meeting That Changed History*, Matthew Restall maps out the five versions of Montezuma's death in Spanish, quasi-indigenous and indigenous accounts of the Conquest of Mexico.

foundation and maintenance of these transatlantic networks. In Seville, Andean travelers had to deal with officials of the *Casa de la Contratación* and prepare for the return voyage or the journey across the region of La Mancha to the king's court" (De la Puente 2018, 86). Many Spanish and Portuguese subjects established businesses in which they provided important contacts for the Andeans assisting them in making their arrangement and navigating their way through unfamiliar territories (86). Contacts with indigenous peoples were a matter of everyday life which assuredly led to the exchange of stories and news about the Americas. Furthermore, some of the descendants and offspring of Montezuma made their way to Seville and Madrid for legal purposes, particularly in relation to issues that pertain to royal titles, inheritance, and the division of Montezuma's estate. Many claimants appeared before the royal courts and resorted to Spanish law and customs to maintain and ameliorate their standing throughout the colonial period. Some of them managed to acquire titles of knighthood and nobility in Mexico and Spain, where some of them decided to reside permanently.[7]

Around the time al-Hajari lived in Madrid, transatlantic affairs of indigenous people were common news among the Spanish population, particularly as many of the Mesoamericans who ventured into Spain since the 1540s appeared in the royal courts to press for legal claims (Chipman 2005, 4). The Royal and Supreme Council of the Indies, which was founded in 1520 to oversee the king's American possessions, was moved into the ground floor of King Philip II's royal residence in 1561 when he chose Madrid to be his permanent home. The king's court was 'bustling' not only with officials but also with indigenous people about matters of "*justicia* (justice), *gracia* (privilege, grace), and *gobernación* (governance)" (7). Al-Hajari's thinking about issues of justice and international affairs must have been already a part of his world before departing to Morocco, particularly since the cities in which we can trace his presence were frequented with "Andean visitors [who] petitioned for what they thought they deserved based on prevailing notions of kingship, subjecthood, and justice, negotiating a place within the interlocking legal and political communities that the monarchy comprised" (7). The presence of indigenous peoples in Spain must have constituted a significant part of the social world in which al-Hajari found himself. Encounters with indigenous peoples, from the "native commoner entrusted with delivering birds of prey for

[7] See Donald E. Chipman's intriguing study *Moctezuma's Children: Aztec Royalty under Spanish Rule, 1520–1700*, (University of Texas Press, 2005.) His book provides an astonishing historical record of the principal heirs of Moctezuma II across nearly two centuries.

courtly entertainment to the Inca prince who spent the rest of his days amid titles, pensions, and other royal favors" might have led to conversations and news-sharing which, given the breadth of al-Hajari's scholarly interest, must have piqued his curiosity. Sixteenth-century Madrid became a common destination for Andean litigants and since the 1540s "indigenous subjects began to appear before the king and his itinerant court through the voices of public and private procurators" (81). The visibility of Andean subjects in Spanish royal courts must have been a phenomenon that could not simply pass unnoticed in a society whose economic basis was furnished by the transatlantic generation of wealth from American natural resources. Al-Hajari's encounter with such peoples could provide a basis for his alignment with non-imperial renditions of the Montezuma/Cortes historical episode.

Moreover, by the late sixteenth century, the descendants of the Granadaian Nasrid emirs, the Aztec, and the Inca rulers resorted to the same strategies to prove their blood purity and highlight their families' exemplary services to the Spanish Crown through disclosing evidentiary documents, as they aspired to acquire noble status and secure rights to their ancestral lands (Cook 2020, 173). Karoline P. Cook highlighted how descents from kings, such as Tesifón Montezuma "allowed individuals to claim noble status despite having non-Christian ancestors, and he followed a pattern well established by the Morisco nobility," (175) which al-Hajari must have been aware of, given his concern for his community, whether those who were dispersed or chose to remain in Spain, as crypto-Muslims.

Additionally, Bartolomé de las Casas' *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552) and the final format of his multi-volume *History of the Indies* (1561) were both circulating widely in 16th-century Spain. As it was published in Seville, al-Hajari might have encountered Las Casas' *Short Account* in one way or another particularly as it also was published widely in 16th- and 17th century Europe, in various translations, which started with Dutch in 1578, during the religious persecution of Dutch Protestants by the Spanish crown, and were followed by editions in French (1578), English (1583), and German (1599). We can draw some parallels between al-Hajari's position on the Montezuma/Cortes episode and how Las Casas rendered such an encounter in *Short Account* which documented the mistreatment of and atrocities committed against the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The elements of treason and betrayal after displaying good will are highlighted in both of their depictions. Las Casas recounts that at the time when Cortes' expedition reached the city of Mexico

> Montezuma himself came out to meet them, carried on a litter of gold and surrounded by the entire court. He escorted them into the city to the great houses where he had directed they should be lodged. Yet that same day, or so I am reliably informed by a number of eyewitnesses, *the Spaniards seized the great king unawares by means of a trick* and held him under armed guard of eighty soldiers, eventually putting him in irons. (Las Casas 1992, 48. My emphasis)

Al-Hajari and Las Casas demythologize the first encounter with Native Americans by representing it not as a moment of evangelic victory over a land of heathens but rather as a treasonous act of deceit and murder against a "great king" (46) for Las Casas and a "Sultan" for al-Hajari. While both of them perceive such an act as an illegitimate seizure of a legitimate sovereign, al-Hajari's invocation of such an episode also frames it as a breach of diplomacy and law. This could be surmised from its position within his text. Firstly, it was preceded by a reference to the Ottoman Caliphate's rejection of Spanish diplomatic representation, when he penned that "It is true that the Sultan of Spain—i.e., the country of Al-Andalus—wanted to send an ambassador to reside [with them] like the other Christian kings, but they did not accept him" (1997, 208). Secondly, it was succeeded by the infringement of *legal* and *political* decrees issued by Catholic Spain to Andalusian Muslims in 1492 which he cites as one of the direct reasons for rejecting Spain's diplomatic representation in Constantinople, writing that the third reason for such a situation was "the treaties they concluded with the Andalusian Muslims when they took their lands, which they broke afterwards" (1997, 209). Last but not least, it was followed up by al-Hajari's reference to Spain's "conquest of the city of Milan" in Italy and rounded up by stating that "they [the Spanish] harm Muslim Sultans without [the latter] realizing it, by their power and wealth" (1997, 208). Such a successive rendition of events clearly references the political and illegal nature of Spanish practice. His mention of the power and wealth of Spain insinuates the colossal riches which Spain generated from its imperial expansions in the Americas making her a global power in the sixteenth century.

Evoking such a historical scene in line with Spain's imperial dereliction in Europe as well as in relation to the Muslim Andalusians underprops the repetitive nature of its actions. This is particularly true as "the seizure of the Mexican leader, even a hospitable one, was a treachery to

be sure, but a tactic that had already been used effectively against other indigenous leaders in the Caribbean" (Schwartz 2000, 127). Cortés's betrayal of Montezuma – which implies his irrecognition of non-Catholic sovereignty – his eagerness to subdue new territories for the Catholic monarchs, Christianize native populations and loot the rich resources of the Americas all are implied as undercurrent features of Spanish diplomatic praxis. As such, the religious basis that underpins Spain's justificatory discourses of conquest and Catholic triumph in the New World are laid bare as superficial mythologies that mystify the vicious nature of imperial expansion and dispossession. Al-Hajari's brief comment is also emblematic of the fiction upon which the legality of Spain's occupation of Mesoamerica rests. It particularly undermines the premise that what transpired in the 'New World,' unfolded through the peaceful rendering of power, not violence and destitution. Similarly, Las Casas's delineation of the Montezuma/Cortés' encounter also questioned the legal and religious foundations upon which Spain's atrocities in the 'New World' were masqueraded as the unfolding of God's will in a *Terra Nova*.

Las Casas recounts how Cortés' expedition not only repeatedly wiped out whole villages in Mexico as in other provinces but also that "several leaders among them, [were] burned alive." (51). He then proceeds to portray such atrocities as acts of betrayal not only to the natives but to 'true Christians' themselves. He wrote

> It should be recalled that the pretext upon which the Spanish invaded each of these provinces and proceeded to massacre the people and destroy their lands – lands which teemed with people and should surely have been a joy and a delight to any true Christian – was purely and simply that they were making good the claim of the Spanish Crown to the territories in question. At no stage had any order been issued entitling them to massacre the people or to enslave them. Yet, whenever the natives did not drop everything and rush to recognize publicly the truth of the irrational and illogical claims that were made, and whenever they did not immediately place themselves completely at the mercy of the iniquitous and cruel and bestial individuals who were making such claims, they were dubbed outlaws and held to be in rebellion against His Majesty. (Las Casas 1992, 52)

Las Casas' account highlights the justificatory discourses which legitimized the Spanish conquest and conversion of Mesoamerican populations and questions the ethics of the just war

tradition which Spaniards evoked to undermine the authority and sovereignty of indigenous populations. In the context of international law, Las Casas perceived the claims made by the Spaniards as 'irrational and illogical,' and advanced, as Francesco de Vitoria (1975, 52), that the indigenous resistance was "a defensive action and a just one" (52). If we accept the stipulation that al-Hajari might have encountered Las Casas's account before his departure to Morocco, then Las Casa's argument that "the first principles of law and government that nobody who is not a subject of a civil power in the first place can be deemed in law to be in rebellion against that power," (53) renders al-Hajari's invocation of the murder of the Aztec 'Sultan' and 'great king' Montezuma within the context of international affairs a crime against the crown, i.e. an instantiation of *Lèse-majesté*. While *Lèse-majesté* and treason both fall within the category of criminal offense directed towards a state authority or the state itself, the context in which al-Hajari's critique unfolds not only criminalizes the act but also indicates Spain's failure to recognize the *summa potestas* of non-Catholic nations and the dignity of Montezuma as a head of state despite international law. The Ottoman rejection of the residency of the Spanish ambassador came into effect only after they 'ascertained' or 'verified' that what transpired between indigenous populations and the Spaniards actually took place. A word that has been left out from Van Koningsveld et al.'s translation is the Arabic word "تَحَقَّقُوا," which denotes 'to ascertain,' 'to verify,' 'to prove,' (Hava 1899, 127) providing a contrast to the fictitious unverified claims of the Catholic Crown against the Mesoamericans.

The 'unverified' claims of the Spaniards about Mesoamericans delegitimize their presence in indigenous lands and violate the conventions of international law. The king (Sultan, Ruler, Sovereign) embodied the state, and any onslaughts on the majesty "were assaults against the monarch in his public personality and, as such, against all his wards who constituted, beneath him, the nation" (Kelly 1981, 270). Al-Hajari's subtle reference to Montezuma as "the Sultan of the west Indians" (1997, 208) is pertinent here as it underscores that Montezuma and his nation were sovereign, a point which Las Casas also emphasizes in his short history when he states that

> Any reasonable person who knows anything of God, of rights and of civil law can imagine for himself what the likely reaction would be of any people living peaceably within their own frontiers, unaware that they owe allegiance to anyone save their natural lords, were a stranger suddenly to issue a demand along the following lines: 'You shall henceforth obey

a foreign king, whom you have never seen nor ever heard of and, if you do not, we will cut you to pieces.' (Las Casas 1992, 53)

Las Casas, as al-Hajari, recognizes the *summa potestas* of Montezuma and his people by recognizing their frontiers, their right to self-determination, by noting that submission under duress diverges from the conventions of international law in which "such a recognition of suzerainty has no standing in law whatever, any such prerogative obtained by menaces from any people anywhere in the world being invalid" (53). Within the context of the just war tradition, the Spanish claim that after discovery, indigenous populations were considered to have lost some of their inherent sovereign powers does not stand. The seizure of Montezuma "barely a week after the Spanish entry into Tenochtitlan" (Schwartz 200, 156), diverges from the conditions which legitimize the waging of war on other nations. Various Spanish scholars strove to demarcate how the Spanish Empire should have conducted itself in relation to Native populations. The Spanish Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian Francisco de Vitoria advanced that "the aborigines undoubtedly had true dominion in both public and private matters, just like Christians, and that neither their princes nor private persons could be despoiled of their property on the ground of their not being true owners" (De Vitoria 1975, 119). He believed in the intrinsic dignity of man, a dignity that was desecrated by Spain's policies in the 'New World,' reiterating the aforementioned reference to *Lèse-majesté* as an offense against the dignity of a sovereign head of state. After the news about massacre and plunder had swept over all Spanish dominion, Vitoria could not but question how the Spanish conducted their imperial policies in the Americas, noting that "so many princes evicted from their possessions and stripped of their rule, that there is certainly ground for doubting whether this is rightly or wrongly done'" (Scott 2000, 105).

In addition to Las Casas and Vitoria, other scholars and theologians from the School of Salamanca (16^{th}-17^{th} centuries), such as Francisco Suárez, called for intercultural cohabitation and argued that all entities have the same right for equal sovereignty (Suárez 2012, 287). This pinpoints the heterogeneity of Spanish thought about the status of the Americas and its native populations. It also underscores the deliberateness of al-Hajari's choice to align his voice with the Amerindians. The Salamancan scholars also emphasized the innate dignity of human beings and proclaimed the right to self-government, both of which were denied to the Indigenous Americans as well as to the expelled Andalusians who had been in the Iberian Peninsula for more than 700 years. To reinvoke

Mignolo's formulation that the Americas was not Europe's Other but rather an extension of the European Self, such instances which were varied and developed within an international legal framework problematize the homogeneity of the decolonial discourse in relation to how the Americas were represented in 'Western' thought.

The philosophical and legal scholarship of the School of Salamanca falls within the long tradition of just war theory as it develops in the wider context of Christian thought (Campbell 2022, 80). Various theologians from their tradition denounced the havoc wrecked upon indigenous communities in the 'New World,' highlighting that the proposed 'noble' objective of Christianizing the natives does not justify the means by which Spain materialized its foreign imperial policies. In his letter written in 1534 to Arcos on the Spanish conquest in Peru, Francisco de Vitoria posited that neither the indigenous people nor their rulers "had at any time or in any way injured the Christians, or committed any other act for which war might justly be waged against them" (Scott 2000, 80). In addition to Vitoria and Las Casas, Francisco Suárez also concurred that the *ius gentium* encompasses all human beings (Alves 2009, 59). As such, Diego de Covarrubias maintained that "war can only be justified if it aims at safeguarding the universal principles of the *ius gentium* in the international arena" (61). Thus, it was evident that recognizing the sovereignty of other nations' political authority, whether it is embodied by a sultan or a king, was inseparable from the upholding of a just international order which demands the applicability of its covenants as it pertains to human beings not their professed faith or lack thereof. Particularly since the Salamancan Scholars generally upheld that religious differences do not constitute a basis to waging a just war (63).

In the wider European context, the 17th-century Dutch jurist and philosopher Hugo Grotius maintained in his *On the Law of War and Peace* that war was justifiable only if a country faces an imminent threat and that the use of force must be proportionate to the threat (Neufff 2012, 83). His work, among many others, provides a framework for evaluating the moral and ethical justifiability of warfare, including conquests. The first principle upon which wars or conquest could be waged is a just cause. The Spanish Crown framed their conquest in the 'New World' within missionary rhetoric which propounded that their aim was to spread Christianity and save indigenous souls. However, as we have delineated in the historical chapter, such colonial expansion was only carried out after Spain established its religious and political dominance expelling the Jews and inaugurating waves of Muslim expulsions which was to culminate in 1608. Al-Hajari's invocations

of these cases do not differentiate between what befell the Muslims and the Amerindians as both are indicative of how Spain relates to non-Catholic nations. His invocation of treason is specific because when his fellow Andalusians were expelled and boarded French ships to cross to Moroccan shores, he referred to their robbery as follows: "the majority of them were the Frankish maritime navigators, who were hired by the Andalusians and their wages were paid with the understanding that they would safely and securely transport them to the lands of the Muslims; yet each captain *betrayed* them in his own ship" (1997, 76). He differentiated between betrayal, which he used to describe such a situation, and treason which he reserved for what happened to Montezuma because he understood the semantic intricacies of each term. Betrayal refers to the act of being disloyal or unfaithful to someone who trusted you or relied on your support. The emphasis pertains to violating the expectations and trust of someone who believed in a reciprocal and genuine connection. Treason involves the betrayal of a country or sovereign, typically through acts of espionage, sabotage, or aiding an enemy during times of conflict. It is a legal and political term often associated with actions that threaten the security, integrity, or interests of a nation. It is a serious offense with legal consequences. While both betrayal and treason involve breaches of trust, betrayal is a broader term encompassing various interpersonal relationships, while treason specifically pertains to disloyalty to one's country or sovereign, often with legal implications, which is exactly the sense in which al-Hajari invokes the term given that his travel to Europe to advance the cause of the Moriscos happened within a political and diplomatic context.

As such, both al-Hajari and Las Casas disclose the gap which fissured the decreed political and religious discourses from the actual praxis of the conquistadores when they encountered Mesoamericans and the Spanish authorities, and when they dealt with the situations of the Muslims and the Jews who "hid themselves among the Christians more than the Andalusians did" (al-Hajari 1997, 189). Concerning the elements of proportionality in just war theory, Las Casas underpinned that "it is no exaggeration to say that one could make a whole book – and a book that would stagger not only contemporaries but future generations also – out of the atrocities, barbarities, murders, clearances, ravages and other foul injustices" (54), perpetrated by the Spanish expeditions in the Americas. Las Casas' position further corroborates al-Hajari's invocation as they both established Spain's actions as an illegitimate onslaught on a legitimate political authority and on a nation whose forefathers were born in the Iberian Peninsula and were living there for at least 600 years after the first generation. They had their own sovereignty and many Christians and Jews lived

safely under Islamic rule for centuries. While the concept of sovereignty was not fully developed in the 16th century, it still carried significance, particularly as the murder of a legitimate ruler was viewed as a violation of their sovereignty and an affront to the notion of political authority which the Spanish violated with the Muslims and Protestant powers too (al-Hajari 1997, 208). Al-Hajari resorted to the history of international affairs and Muslim-Christian diplomacy to delegitimize the imperial discourses of the Spanish Crown and instrumentalize its project to establish a union of cross-religious and cross-cultural cooperation. The transplantation of such an episode to a Muslim context is only realized after al-Hajari maps out the global outreach of Spanish political and religious aspersions, i.e., its imperial activities in the Americas and in Europe, which started with the gradual expulsion of the Jews and Muslims ever since 1492, allowing him to disclose the legal fictionalities which underpinned Spain's expansionist project in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. As such, it also undermines its claims to religious authority over the reconquered al-Andalus. Al-Hajari noted that the Moriscos, even those who embraced the Christian faith, were expelled from Spain because it was not only a matter of religion. The Spanish "imposed a harsh penalty on whoever manifested any Islamic practice: they even burned some of them (al-Hajari 1997, 78). When the Moriscos persevered and kept practicing their faith secretly, "[Philip II] … felt no longer safe from them. Thus he did not engage anyone of them for warfare, which kills a lot of people. He also prohibited them to mount the sea lest they should run away to their own co-religionists" (226). Al-Hajari's translation of the legal edict by Philip II and its religious concern over the un-assimilability of the Moriscos into the Catholic fold is laid bare by his insight into the latent reasons behind the expulsion. He wrote that

> The sea also claims many [Spanish] men. In addition, there are many priests and monks among the Christians who have no offspring because they forsake marriage. But among the Andalusians, there were no priests, monks, or nuns. All of them married, so that their number, as well as that of their children, increased, also because they did not participate in warfare or seafaring. This, I think, caused him to expel them, because they would become more numerous in the length of time. (al-Hajari 1997, 226)

Al-Hajari notes that it was the concern over the disproportionate presence of the Moriscos and the Spaniards which motivated the edicts of expulsion. Such concerns were supplemented by

the Spanish authorities' apprehension over the Moriscos' correspondences with the Moroccan Sultan and the Ottoman Caliphate, the enemies of Spain. As such, similar to the claims of Christianization of the indigenous populations in the Americas, the religious discourse espoused by Spain over Muslim presence was a camouflage of political concerns which were translated into imperial projects of treason and dispossession. At this point, Las Casas and al-Hajari intertwin in their insight into the artificial religious justification: which in Las Casas' words "entitl[ed] them to massacre the people or to enslave them [Amerindians] (1992, 52); and in al-Hajari's rendition "imposed a harsh penalty … [and] even burned some of them [Moriscos] (1997, 78).

Another dimension which is worth our consideration is al-Hajari's reference to Montezuma as a 'Sultan' and not a 'king.' The term 'Sultan' is distinct from 'king,' even though both refer to a sovereign ruler. 'Sultan' is particularly restricted to Muslim countries as it refers not only to political legitimacy but also religious authority (Kassis 1999, 65), in contrast to the term 'king' which is used in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Read within the broader concerns of the text, al-Hajari's designation of the Aztec King as Sultan Islamizes him, and by extension, renders Spain's betrayal as a legitimate cause for coalition within the context of Islam. It aligns Montezuma with the other Muslim and Christian rulers and subjects who were wronged by Spain's global political affronts and treacherous diplomatic praxis. While such a gesture might be interpreted as al-Hajari simply catering to his readership, he as well as his successor al-Ghassani used the terms prince and king to other rulers, sometimes even when referring to Muslim rulers such as "king of the Turks" (al-Ghassani 2003, 168). As such, Islamizing the deceived and murdered Montezuma can also be seen as an Islamically-legitimate invitation for the Ottoman Empire to right the wrongdoings committed by Spain in the Americas.

Given the wealth which was flowing from the Americas into Spain, the 'New World', as well as the Indian Ocean became pressing problems of existential threats to the Ottomans. While the latter was not yet a naval power, and reaching the Atlantic coast of Europe merely through conquest did not look realistic, the Ottomans envisioned North Africa's Muslim countries to be the only viable routes to reach the Atlantic Ocean to start their global expeditions (Garcia-Arenal 2012, 10-13). They started several strategic projects in the 16th century which allowed them to annex Syria and Egypt during the reign of Sultan Selim I the Grim, and Libya, Tunisia and Algeria during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Morocco, which was an ally and a powerful Sultanate in its own right, was interested in counterbalancing Spain's incursions upon its territorial

sovereignty but was not too enthused about becoming yet another Ottoman regency. Thus, through a series of diplomatic ventures and demonstrations of strength, they impeded Ottoman access to the Atlantic Ocean, shattering the dream of sailing to the New World (El Moudden 1992, 179). Al-Hajari's Islamization of Montezuma rekindles the Ottomans' dream if not through the Atlantic, then at least through the Indian Ocean where the Portuguese were establishing colonies that rivalled and threatened the Ottoman-controlled Red Sea and Persian Gulf routes.[8] As will be demonstrated in the next section, al-Hajari's invocation of the Dutch and English in light of his overarching plan to establish a union of the wronged against Spain's imperial illegitimacy unravels his historical awareness of the 16th-century European political landscape and the deliberate configuration of a strategic plan which takes into account Europe's religio-political rivalries as a basis for a political alliance between the Protestant powers and the Islamic world.

2. Ottomans, Andalusians and Protestants in Light of al-Hajari's Account

Now that we have inquired into the intellectual context in which al-Hajari was writing, with a particular focus on the Americas in the wider and heterogenous context of late 16th and early 17th-century European thought, this section will tackle al-Hajari's rendition of the other 'wronged Sultans.' Al-Hajari invoked the edicts of expulsion of Muslim Andalusians toward the end of chapter ten, providing a translation of one of them which he prepared for the Moroccan Sultan Moulay Zaydan (al-Hajari 1997, 231). The violent scene from the Americas is juxtaposed with the violation of the treaties and decrees whose tenets "allowed [the Andalusians] to stay in their houses, estates, and inherited properties," "live under their government and rule," ensured that nobody would be allowed "to take away their mosques or minarets or muezzins […] nor shall they interfere with their ways and customs," that they shall "be respected and treated well by Their Highnesses and their ministers," that "no Moor shall be forced to become Christian against his will" (Cowans 2003, 16-17). However, they were all breached and violated by Catholic Spain. Al-Hajari witnessed such contraventions before escaping from Spain. He writes

[8] For an in depth exposition of Ottoman expansionist aspirations consider Casale, G. "The Ottoman Discovery of the Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth Century: The Age of Exploration from an Islamic Perspective." *Seascapes, Littoral Cultures, and Trans-Oceanic Exchanges Conference Proceedings* (2003), 98-102; Emilsen, W. "Calvin on Islam." *Uniting Church Studies* 17 (1) (2011), 69-85.

> I dealt with the situation of the Muslims among the Christians after they had forced them to embrace their religion. They were in fact serving two religions: the religion of the Christians openly and that of the Muslims in secret. The infidels imposed a harsh penalty on whoever manifested any Islamic practice: they even burned some of them. This was their situation, as I witnessed it during more than twenty years before my departure from it. (1997, 78)

Al-Hajari's reference to the treaties "which they broke afterwards" (1997, 208) historically and legally enmeshes Spain's ambassadorial praxis within an enterprise of diplomatic improbity which repeatedly, and across various geographies, proves to be unworthy of credence and legal representation. Catholic leaders, particularly the archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros and King Philip II (al-Hajari 230-231), had advocated for a policy of forced conversions, which soon aggravated the Andalusians and led to the eruption of revolts in the Alpujarras region. Spanish forces crushed the revolts and Andalusian Muslims were left with two choices, either to convert or emigrate. Those who converted became known as the Moriscos, but many of them kept their Arabic customs and speech, and secretly practiced Islam. Antagonized by such persistence, other decrees demanding the adoption of Christian ways were enacted in 1566 leading to new revolts which were also crushed, and the rebels were dispersed all over the country. By the 1600s, high levels of Christian intolerance fueled by the desire to dispossess Moriscos from their lands culminated in a call for total expulsion (Cowans 2003, 145). In 1609, the Monarch, having lost his territorial dominions in the Netherlands, sought to divert the countries' attention by the final Decree of Expulsion of the Moriscos.

Al-Hajari performs a rhetorical linking, within a legal and diplomatic rubric, between the breach of treaties signed between Andalusians and the Catholic Crown, and the disenfranchisement of Montezuma, mentioning them successively within a political context which undermines Spain's sovereignty over al-Andalus and by extension the Americas. Both experiences are intended to decorticate the divine and mythical aura which espouses Spain's reconquest and imperial ambitions. Such decortication takes place through al-Hajari's accentuation of the schism between theory and praxis within Spain's legal and diplomatic economy. Al-Hajari's quote also points out the volatile nature of diplomatic dispatches in the early modern world. Diplomatic conduct at the time was categorically reliant on the goodwill of both sides. By emphasizing the scission between

the discourse of the Catholic fold and ambassadorial practice, al-Hajari exhibited Spanish diplomatic ethics to be nothing more than a façade for the unquenched thirst for domination and conquest. Additionally, his reference to "the conquest of city of Milan" (1997, 208) invokes the history of the city as a battleground between the French Kingdom and the Holy Roman Empire which ended with France's defeat by Spanish Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Then, it was made part of Habsburg Spain and the Duchy of Milan became part of the Spanish Empire. It seems that al-Hajari was aware, as was his successor Abdel Wahab al-Ghassani,[9] of the international affairs of 17th-century Europe. A brief reference to "the conquest of Milan" pinpoints how the early modern European scene was a battleground dominated by the rivalry of France and Habsburg Spain and the Roman Empire.

Evoking such historical details should be read within al-Hajari's overarching diplomatic hope for a global union which is to bring al-Andalus back to the adobe of Islam, namely between the Netherlands, the Ottoman Empire and the Saadian Morocco. He invokes the Ottoman's rejection of Spanish ambassadors as a historically significant moment that proudly showcases who has the power to demarcate the confines of diplomatic exchanges and legitimacy. From the middle of the 15th century, Rome was the fulcrum of European diplomacy. However, the Sack of Rome (1527), the Reformation and Spain's encroachments upon the Italian Peninsula altered the contours of European diplomacy (Fletcher 2015, 2). The rise of the 'Resident Ambassador' as an institution in European history is traced back to this period. Garret Mattingly observes that "all independent European states maintained permanent diplomatic representatives with all other powers in the sphere of their interests, and the right to send and receive embassies began to be considered a test of sovereignty" (Mattingly 1937, 423). To this end, the Ottoman's refusal to accept Spain's permanent diplomatic representation is invoked by al-Hajari as an act of delegitimizing Spain's sovereignty not only within the economy of international relations but also over the land of al-Andalus, the Andalusians and the indigenous populations of the Americas.

The strategic juxtaposition of various historical instances from Spain's international practice suggestively highlights Spain's ambiguated use of religious discourse and diplomatic register to camouflage its imperial ambitions. Such discursive concealment is laid bare by al-Hajari not only to underscore the treasonous repetitive tendency of Spanish imperial and diplomatic practice but also to use such illegal ventures to bring together those wronged by Spain into an

[9] See the next chapter.

alliance which al-Hajari envisions to bring down Spain to its knees. The 'betrayed' king of the Aztecs, the 'wronged' ruler of Italy, the 'dispossessed and expelled' Andalusians constitute the wronged 'Sultans' which under the power of the Ottomans and the protestants of the Netherlands could "capture Spain" (al-Hajari 1997, 226). Firstly, al-Hajari noted that the Dutch exhibited goodwill toward Muslims by "rescuing more than three hundred [Muslim captives who were put in] an enormous ship and the people of the Netherlands sent them as a gift to the Sultan of Marrakesh" (225). The latter happened during The Eighty Years' War or Dutch Revolt (c.1566/1568–1648) when "seven Islands [referring to the Union of Utrecht 1579]", rose "against the Sultan of al-Andalus [Philip II of Spain] […] but he was unable to suppress them so that he was forced to surrender them" (220) thus establishing the Protestant-majority Dutch Republic in 1588.

Secondly, al-Hajari saw the protestants as sharing a similar polemical attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church. His approach was premised upon the idea that the popes in Rome "have either misunderstood, ignored, or falsified" (Matar 2003, 6), the religion of Jesus. Similarly, he noted the same polemical tendencies of a "great scholar […] called Luther, as well as another scholar called Calvin" (al-Hajari 1997, 220). He described how "each of them wrote his view of the corruption and the deviation from the religion of our lord Jesus and the Gospel that had come about in the religion of the Christians" (220). Al-Hajari's insistence on showing how Spain deviated not only from diplomatic conventions but also from "the religion of our lord Jesus" is further underscored when he pinpoints how even "the people of the Sultanate of the English also follow this doctrine [Protestantism]. There are also many of them in France. Their scholars warn them about the popes and the worshippers of idols. They tell them that they should not hate the Muslims because they are the sword of God on his earth against the worshiper of idols" (220). Al-Hajari's exposition of Luther and Calvin's efforts religiously aligned Protestant Netherlands and England with the Muslim world whose key players on the global landscape were Saadian Morocco and the Ottoman Empire.[10] The transposition of such ideas into a Muslim Maghrebian context

[10] While al-Hajari might have been familiar with Luther and Calvin, it seems that his focus on commonality rather than incommensurability corroborates the hypothesis that there was a strategic and deliberate filtering of information which was to be included and highlighted in his account. After all, he only pronounced the doctrinal corruption which both Protestants and Muslims ascribed to the Catholic faith, ignoring the diversity and sometimes conflicting protestant views of Islam. For instance, Martin Luther compared Muslims to Catholics writing that "Muslims are cruel and slaughter Christians, while Muhammad advocated conversion by force rather than persuasion, hence, Catholics are no better" (81). Friedrich Ulrich Calixt "maintains the Pope persecutes non-Catholic Christians more than the Turks" (81). For an in-depth exposition of Protestant views of Islam, consider Karabela, M. *Islamic Thought Through*

might have been intended to instruct his fellow embittered Andalusians, and by extension Arabophone Muslim audiences, that the Christians who expelled them from their homes and robbed them of their history are not the same as the Christians of these countries, particularly since the embittered "Moriscos attacked Christian shipping, seldom distinguishing between Spanish Catholics and British Protestants" (Matar and Maclean 2011, 10). Al-Hajari's emphasis on the differences between the Catholics who ousted the Moriscos and the Protestants who were a powerful and potential ally aligns with the early modern context of the Muslim Mediterranean when Euro-Christians sailed to the harbors of Islamic countries carrying commercial goods and tales about their lands, and different versions of the Christian faith. For instance, as Matar and MacLean insightfully note "Protestant Britons were free to travel into the Ottoman and Safavid Empires at a time when they would not have been as safe travelling into Spain or other Catholic countries with anti-Protestant ideologies" (15). During this period, Protestant Britain was frequently signing several commercial and diplomatic treaties with sultans and rulers in North Africa. The backdrop which undergirded al-Hajari's vision as an ambassador underpinned his vision not only of European internal affairs but generally of Muslim-Christian relations across the Mediterranean world.

His historical understanding of European internal affairs in the early modern period will be further clarified once we consider his brief comment on the Dutch Maritime power after his reference to the Dutch revolt against Spain. He writes that "because of their ships, they [the Dutch] are stronger at the sea than all the other Christians" (al-Hajari 1997, 220). Such a brief reference should be read in light of his meeting with Prince Maurice "in the City of the Hague, where the house of their prince [Maurice of Nassau] and the *diwan* are found" (220). Al-Hajari's comment suggests that he was familiar with how the Dutch Republic under Maurice of Orange made astounding triumphs, which covered various Northern and Southern lands, against a strained Spanish Empire. Such victories established the country's position as powerful (and a possible ally), and led to the attainment of diplomatic endorsement from France and England. His mention of the

Protestant Eyes. (London: Routledge, 2021). As for Calvin, he stated that "these three -Jews-papists and Turks- in changing order, were like three imposters who deviated from the truth" (79). For further discussion of Calvin's views on Islam, see Emilsen, William. "Calvin on Islam." *Uniting Church Studies* 17 (1) (2011), 69-85. Such views are not merely theological but also correspond to the context of the fifteenth and sixteenth century when the widespread fear which haunted Europe was being overturn by the Ottoman Empire. The Turks were making great military advances in the continent and the possible demise of Christendom became a haunting prospect. Al-Hajari's foregrounding of commonalities rather than divergences should also be read within his instrumental use of religious and political discourses to advance diplomatic interests.

English also insinuates that he might have been aware of the Anglo-Dutch efforts, as embodied in the Ten Years (1588-1598) when the *stadtholder* Maurice of Nassau, as well as the English general Francis Vere, were able to weaken the Spanish Empire in favor of the Dutch (Markham 1888, 21). They were victorious over the Spanish and managed to bring under their dominion Habsburg-occupied territories which Spain was never able to conquer again. Maurice of Orange's most memorable years were 1591-1597, in which his efforts acquired several geopolitically paramount cities, some of which were deemed impenetrable (Hillgarth 2000, 210).

The late 16th century witnessed the proliferation of the Dutch Republic's efforts to build mutual relations with the Muslim world, particularly Morocco and the Ottoman Empire which shared a common animosity toward Habsburg Spain (Moor 1996, 127). Al-Hajari travelled to the Netherlands after the Treaty of Friendship and Free Commerce (1610) solidified Moroccan-Low Countries relations through the diplomatic efforts of the Moroccan Sultan Mulay Zaydan and the missives which were exchanged between Morocco and the Netherlands. The efforts of various ambassadors such as the Jewish Samuel Pallache, and the Andalusians Hamu ben Bashir (Wiegers 1996, 405; Heisen-Roach 2012, 43),[11] Ahmad ben Abd Allah al-Hayti al-Maruni (Moor 1996, 128), among several others, crystallized the Moroccan-Dutch relations so much so that when the Netherlands sent three warships to the Saadian Palace shores, Philip III of Spain used such military correspondence as part of his justificatory discourse to dispossess and displace the Moriscos in 1609 (Wiegers 1996, 405). Al-Hajari was also able to travel freely in the land of the Flanders due to such a treaty. During his visit to the city of Hague, al-Hajari had the chance to visit Prince Maurice of Orange four times, who "welcomed [him], uncovered his head, took me by my hand and made me sit down with him" (1997, 225). Al-Hajari writes

> Then he said, "If we can reach an agreement with the leaders of the Andalusians, and send them a fleet of large ships that they can board with our soldiers, can we not conquer Spain?"
>
> I said, "The Andalusians cannot agree to that without the permission of the sultans in whose lands they settled after their expulsion."
>
> He said, "If we can reach an agreement with the sultan of Marrakesh and if we communicate with the Grand Master"—I mean the great sultan, the sultan of Islam and

[11].Heisen-Roach noted that "Bachir's appointment signaled Zaydān's recognition of the Dutch Republic as a sovereign state and his sincere wish to forge a Muslim Protestant front against Spain" (43).

religion [Ahmad I]—"we can all join against the sultan of Spain, defeat him, and conquer his land."

I said, "This is a great enterprise if it could be realized. But there is some uncertainty. O that such an agreement could be reached and the [combined armies] conquer the land of the Andalus; may God return it to Islam." (al-Hajari 2003, 37)

The conversation depicts the possibility of an alliance that would bring the Netherlands, Morocco, the Ottoman Empire and the Andalusian Moriscos under the union of a common foe, Habsburg Spain. Such an alliance emerges in al-Hajari's account as a legally political enterprise that is legitimated through Spain's breach of international law and duplicitous diplomatic praxis. Princes Maurice's proposition of a treaty that involves the Moroccan Sultan Mulay Zaydan, the Grand Ottoman Sultan Ahmed I and the Andalusians is complemented by al-Hajari's above-mentioned exposition of the Protestant Reformation. As such, Spain is undermined on two fronts, religious and political sovereignty. It is worth noting here that al-Hajari's discussion of the compatibility of Islam and Protestantism on certain tenets and the alignment of their vision of the Roman Catholic Church had already been precedented by various discussions and exchanges between Moroccan ambassadors and the Dutch scholars and officials. A case in point would be the Morisco Ahmad ben Abdallah al-Hayti al-Maruni who was in the service of Mulay Zaydan as well. During his embassy to the Dutch Republic, he also met with Prince Maurice of Orange who requested from him an exposition on the Islamic views of Jesus. Preferring not to give an impromptu answer, after returning to Marrakech, he composed a letter in Latin and sent it to the prince in 1611. His composition relied on the work of another Morisco physician and polemicist in the Saadian court, Muhammad Alguazir (García-Arenal, 2001, 211). On the one hand, as Gerard Wiegers purports, exchanges with Moroccan ambassadors, particularly al-Hajari, greatly contributed to the development of Islamic studies in the Netherlands as exemplified by the great scholar Thomas Epernius who became professor of Oriental Languages at Leiden University in 1613.[12] On the other hand, such exchanges also bore on the development of diplomatic ethics in the Islamic context of Morocco, showcasing that while aiming to advance diplomatic interests in

[12] For a thorough rendition of the exchanges between the Saadian Court and the Dutch Republic and the contributions of Moroccan Morisco ambassadors to the study of Arabic, Islam and sciences, consider Wiegers' article in *Romania Arabica*., "Learned Moriscos and Arabic studies in the Netherlands, 1609-1624."

the Maghreb, Moroccan ambassadors had to navigate the complex relationship between the religious and the political, not only on a regional level (pertaining to the Moroccan-Ottoman relations) but also on a global scale (referring to Spain's violations of international law). Such navigations eventuated in al-Hajari's mobilization of transatlantic histories and contemporary European affairs to advocate his proposed alliance which made use of the schisms that existed between different and often antagonistic powers in the Early Modern Mediterranean world.

We can also read al-Hajari's representation of Spain's breach of treaties and international law as they relate to the Andalusian Muslims and Spanish imperial practices in the 'New World' within the context of the Black Legend. As Walter Mignolo et al. highlight, the Black Legend owes its genesis to the simultaneity of various Spanish violent intrusions upon the world.[13] Las Casas' descriptions of Spain's violent expansion in the Americas constituted a core element in the Dutch (also of the English, Flanders, and German) propagandist onslaughts during the Eighty Years' War (Keen 1969, 710) from 1578 to 1648. His *Short History* was reprinted more than thirty three times in the Dutch Republic, surpassing the combined total of reprints in all other European countries (Schmidt 2001, 97).

It seems that al-Hajari's historicization of the period from1492 until the time of composing his narrative in 1637 is not coincidental because it parallels two important historical periods; the first being the Spanish Golden Age which lasted from 1492 to roughly 1648; the second being the period which witnessed the Hispano-Dutch War and the Anglo-Spanish War, two historical events when anti-Spanish sentiment reached its zenith with the Protestant Revolutionary propaganda. While the Black Legend was inspired by real atrocities which took place during the Spanish colonial project in the Americas, exaggerations and misrepresentation were constantly utilized in Protestant propaganda. However, al-Hajari's depiction neither exaggerates nor misrepresents the actual reality of Spanish imperial politics. This does not deny his selectivity but rather emphasizes his awareness of such historical realities and his ability to filter through, mobilize and repurpose their telos to serve distinct political ends. While anti-Spanish sentiment in the Islamic world was

[13] "The Black Legend owes its own genesis to the course of three simultaneous events: the expulsion of the Moors and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula; the so-called discovery of America and the domination and exploitation of Indians and African slaves; and the privileged position in which Christianity found itself to create a classification in which Christians were one of the groups classified and, simultaneously, possessors of the privileged discourse that created the classification." Greer, Margaret R., Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, eds. *Rereading the Black Legend: the Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, (University of Chicago Press, 2019), 2.

already widespread due to the raw and unprocessed abominations which befell the Andalusian Muslims, al-Hajari supplemented Spain's unlawful deeds towards Muslims with its European and Atlantic infringements. Such supplementation informed the Arabo-Muslim world of the consequences of the religious schism between the Spanish Empire, then the bastion of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Protestant powers represented by the Dutch and the English. The religious alignment of the latter with the Muslim world was contrasted by al-Hajari's rendition of Spain's global violations which are implied in his account as reflexive of Spain's moral character, one that is tainted by deceit and disrespect of international conventions.

Additionally, when al-Hajari embarked on his journey, the Saadian Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur and Queen Elizabeth had already established extensive political and economic relations. The 16th century witnessed the emergence of "a new world order driven by commercial rivalry, diplomatic intrigue, military alliances, counter-alliances, and religious reconfigurations […] bringing British ships and travellers into Tangier, Alexandria, Mocha, and Hormuz" (Matar and Maclean 2011, 13). Anglo-Moroccan relations were solidified not only through the several diplomatic missions which strengthened diplomatic and commercial relations and maritime security but also through a Morocco-British alliance against Philip II of Spain (13). The conflict between Protestant Britain and Catholic Spain shifted the usual routes of British merchants towards alternative markets and harbors in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. As Matar astutely underscores, "Britons migrated and emigrated to Islamic North Africa decades before they started their Great Migration to North America after 1629" (22). There were even serious correspondences between Queen Elizabeth and Sultan al-Mansur about joining forces to conquer Spain and some of its overseas colonies (de Castries 1905, 143-145).

The presence and untethered mobility of Britons had been facilitated by diplomatic correspondence between the Sultan Mulay Abdelmalek (1575–1578) and Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) which resulted in decrees issued by the Sultan facilitating the Britons' trading activities and ensuring their safety in Moroccan shores. Such decrees also paved the way for "Elizabeth and the Sa'adi Sultan Ahmed al-Mansur (1578–1603) to strengthen the economic and political links between their two countries" (Ben Sghir 2004, 13). Al-Hajari's awareness and rendition of Spain as the common denominator between various Muslim and European powers, and his envisionment of an alliance between Morocco, the Netherlands and the Ottoman Empire is reflective of his mind in diplomacy and of how Morocco navigated the protean arena of

international affairs in the early modern period. Even though his discussion with Maurice of Nassau does not evoke Britain directly, his reference to the protestant Reformation in Britain is underpinned by a history of British presence in Morocco which from 1588, when the English defeated the Spanish Armada, shared anti-Spanish attitudes with Moroccans and Flanders. Matar notes that after Britain triumphed over the Spanish, anti-Spanish sentiment was so ubiquitous in Morocco that "an exultant mob of French, Dutch and Moroccan men joined the English group and marched at the house of the Spanish representative/interpreter, intent on breaking into it" (Matar and Maclean 2011, 14). Shortly after, a group of Marrakech-based English merchants stormed the streets, "shouting and drinking and carrying with them a large banner on which they had painted Queen Elizabeth triumphant over King Philip II" (14).

These instances reflect that Moroccans were not only aware of European affairs but also partook in celebrating them, sharing sensibilities and attitudes towards their common foe. Additionally, during the early modern period, Barbary States were seen as "far more cosmopolitan than one could find in most of Europe," due to extensive religious and ethnic diversity (Majid 2015, 437). Merchants, ambassadors, renegades, captives, doctors, spies, sailors, priests and friars from all over Europe resided in Moroccan cities and the Sultan's court. The circulations of news, materials, images, rivalries, religions, and treacheries must have been a fundamental part of border crossing and mobility. It should be emphasized again that Al-Hajari's particular references to Britain, the Netherlands, and the Ottoman Empire must be understood as corresponding to a Maghrebi context whose episteme had been shaped not only by such cosmopolitanism but also by Spanish and Portuguese incursions upon Moroccan shores as well as the recent expulsion of the Andalusians from Spain. These historical occurrences are impregnated with political and religious undertones that allowed al-Hajari, and by extension Moroccan diplomacy, to marshal a set of terminologies that orbit around Spain's international breach of law against the Aztecs, Muslims and Protestants, linking its expansionist ideology and theological justificatory discourses with repetitive diplomatic perfidy and untrustworthiness.

It is also worth noting here that his focus on the notion of treason and by extension the irrecognition of non-Catholic sovereignty necessarily implies loss of trust as a categorical tenet of international affairs. The Moriscos who chose to remain in the Iberian Peninsula lived in a Spain characterized by an inexorable zeal to forcibly Christianize them. Given that the Moriscos were of Muslim origin, Spain realized that it was impossible to establish a categorical certainty about their

faith (Christina 2015). As such, they became the epitome of the notion of untrustworthiness in Spanish society. The Moriscos who were doctors could not keep practicing their profession because they were suspected of deceit under the premise that they might poison old Christians. Reliability and trustworthiness were determined by religious affiliation and ethnic purity (Garcia-Arenal 220-221). The purity of blood was fundamentally determinant of how Spanish society operated, and who was allowed to pursue or be certain things, and who was not. Al-Hajari portrays Spain as unworthy of the ethics which it tries to ascertain in the converted Andalusians. Spain's quest for certainty and trustworthiness is undermined through the series of global traitorous affronts on indigenous Americans, Muslim Andalusians and protestant Europeans. Through al-Hajari's marshalling of different terminological economies, the latter three distinct populations are amalgamated under a common coalition which surpasses any religio-cultural divide.

An instantiation of al-Hajari's mobilization of different, and sometimes even dissonant, cultural, religious and political economies is his following invocation when he was discussing the scene of Montezuma's encounter with Cortés, the Ottoman Empire's abstinence from sending an ambassador to Spain on a permanent basis, and the refusal to accept such residency from Spain. He writes "may God make them [Ottomans] victorious and make their kingship last forever and place their Christian and Infidel enemies under their feet" (1997, 208). When such a statement is pondered within his overall diplomatic vision, the dogmatic and exclusionary undertones which exude from his terminological choices become evidence of his considered diplomatic enosis of all the powers which were wronged, in one way or another, by Spain. His adjuration to God to make the Ottoman victorious over the Spaniards is imbued with an overarching political telos which transcends religious differences and cultural incommensurability, thus rendering political interests as an axis around which an alliance may be formed and diplomatic precedence may be set.

The use of Spain's global diplomatic misdeeds in the Americas, in Europe and in relation to the Andalusian Muslims, across an extended historical period establishes an international diplomatic record which justifies al-Hajari's intended alliance and renders Spain's sovereignty as a sanctimonious duplicity that uses religious apologetics to justify imperialist aspirations. The ingenuity of al-Hajari is that his vision of such an alliance is not only Islamically sanctioned so as to appeal to the Ottomans but also appeals to the principle of international law of nations. In light of Covarrubias's expounding of just war theory, he distinguishes between three essential forms of armed conflict. Al-Hajari's proposed coalition of the wronged falls within the category of the

bellum vindicatum, i.e., "war aimed at the avenging of wrongs suffered." (Alves and Moreira 2009, 61).

In this regard, we can see that while attempting to rewrite the history of the Spanish conquest from the perspective of its betrayed and subjugated adversaries, al-Hajari is mobilizing different traditions, from international law to imperial history to solidify the basis of his agenda, and religiously and legally sanction its premises in the eyes of multicultural international community. It is an intellectual venture whose implications question the very basis of the doctrine of discovery through which imperial powers laid claim against geographies, material assets and the rights of indigenous populations (Miller 2010, 820). Furthermore, throughout this revisionist venture, he solidifies the precepts of political praxis by regulating the lecit and illegitimate conventions of diplomatic conduct. Thus, al-Hajari's utilization of the geopolitical expansionist history of Spain and the invocation of its diplomatic delinquency corresponded to his present which was determined by the crisis of the expelled Andalusian Muslims, the religious schism as well as the power shifts which characterized Europe and its imperial interests. After all, the fact that he was not only familiar with but also transported the Montezuma/Cortés episode to an Arabophone Muslim context strongly suggests his familiarity with Spanish narratives about the Americas and the legal debates which surrounded such an unprecedented historical event.

Furthermore, the context in which al-Hajari was writing had been characterized by a proliferation of epistemological exchanges and the circulations of texts and ideas across borders. His *Kitab* is rich with references which he read in Spanish, Portuguese, Latin and Arabic. Al-Hajari describes documents, texts, maps and globes that he consulted, and which made him aware of the progress of the exploration of the world by Europeans, especially in America and Asia (1997, 205-207). His account discloses some of the different texts and authors which he engaged with prior to his escape to Morocco in 1599. In a letter he wrote to the Moriscos of Constantinople, he mentions the *Descripción General de Africa* (1573) by the Spaniard Luis del Marmol (Weigers 1988, 38). In the Netherlands, he was keenly interested in the expeditions of cartographer and discoverer Willem Barentsz, and mentioned "the story of the six men" referencing Barentsz's three expeditions (1594-1596) to reach the Indies by way of the North Pole (al-Hajari 1997, 229). While referring to the Manichean depictions of the planet, he seems to have consulted Rodrigo Zamorano's *Cronologia y reportorio de la razon de los tiempos* (1594) (170). He also quoted from Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's *Iḥyaʾ ʿUlum al-Dīn* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) to justify

his lie to the archbishop of Granada, Don Pedro de Castro about where he learned Arabic because "the Christians kill and burn everyone on whom they find an Arabic book or about whom they know he reads Arabic" (88). While describing his involvement in the translation of the Arabic relics and parchment discovered at Torre Turpiana in 1588, and the Lead Books of Sacromonte 1595, al-Hajari consulted the lexicographer Abu Nasr al-Jawhari's *Sihah* (91) and Muhammad al-Idrisi's geographical magnum opus *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraʿ al-Afaq*, noting that the latter "was one of the books produced in printing by the Christians" (96).

In addition to Las Casas' accounts, Cortes' *Letters*, Bernal Díaz del Castillo's account was also available around the time al-Hajari was still in Spain. Del Castillo, as Cortes, aspired to legitimize the conquest by referring to how other tribes which had been subjugated by the Aztecs implored them to save them from Montezuma; begged them with "such tears and sighs that Cortés and those of us who were present took pity. In addition to telling how Montezuma had subjugated them, he said that each year they demanded many of their sons and daughters for sacrifice and others to serve in their houses and fields" (Del Castillo 2012, 59). It is through such rhetorical maneuvers that Montezuma was rendered a tyrant and unjust ruler and as such amenable to be overthrown by Christian justice. Al-Hajari's alignment of his voice with Las Casas and the non-imperial representation of the Conquest of the 'New World' should be understood as a deliberate and educated choice in a context teeming with conflicting views on the nature of conquest and the justifying conditions which underpinned its unfolding. The conscious transportation of such an episode to an Arabophone Mediterranean audience discloses the Atlantic dimension of Mediterranean diplomacy, and the mobilization of discrepant histories to underprop different political ends.

As for the period post 1599-1600, al-Hajari became the royal interpreter of the Moroccan Sultan Moulay Zaydan in 1608. In his service, he translated not only diplomatic documents but also scholarly works, including an astronomical text by the Jewish astronomer Abraham Zacuto entitled *al-Risala al-Zakutiyya* (1470-1478) (Zhiri 2013, 8), and a French universal geography (al-Hajari 1997, 175) titled *les Etats et les Empires du Monde* (1614) by Pierre Davity. His account references the work of the Portuguese traveler Pedro Teixeira who recorded his travels in the Middle East and India entitled *Relaciones de Pedro Teixeira d'el origen, descendencia y succession de los Reyes de Persia (1610)* (207). He also rendered into Arabic an artillery book by Ibrahim ibn

Ahmad ibn Ghanim al-Andalusi, entitled *Kitab al-Izz wa'l-Manafi.*[14] Ibn Ghanim was born in about 1570. After being expelled from Granada as a Morisco, he settled in Seville where he became keenly intrigued by seafaring (Harvey 1959, 68). L.P. Harvey indicates that Ibn Ghanim "sailed with the silver galleons to the West Indies, and seems to have picked up the art of gunnery from the troops carried on these ships" (68), while Wiegers advanced that he "sailed to the West Indies [already] as a master gunner" (1992, 110). Cortés' conquest of the Mexican Aztec Empire (1519-1521) took place around fifty years prior to Ibn Ghanim's venture into the 'West Indies.' Even if we assume that al-Hajari had encountered neither the work of Las Casas nor Cortes' letters or Del Castillo's history, the circulation of such an episode might have partly been imparted to him by Ibn Ghanim, who seems to have spent a considerable period in what he refers to as the "distant Western Indies," or at least through its circulation as an episode of Spanish Catholic material and spiritual triumph over the 'heathens of the New World.' As James Brown Scott noted, "the reports of the missionaries, describing not only the spiritual but the material conquests beyond the seas, doubtless passed from house to house, especially in Spain, so that the conduct of the conquistadores became a matter of common knowledge" (Scott 2000, 78). Tenochtitlán, which was later rebuilt as Mexico had unprecedented success as the capital of the viceroyalty of Spain. In the span of thirty years, a university and a cathedral were built and the first printing press house in the Americas was established. By the 1550s, the population was so diverse that the Indigenous populations outnumbered the 8,000 Spaniards and the 5,000 enslaved Africans of diverse origins (Palmer 1976, 119).

On the one hand, the eminence of a victorious venture could not have gone without echoes and news about what transpired in the New World circulating in Spain during al-Hajari's earlier life as a new Christian. On the other hand, as Scott pointed out "the reports and protests which came from their missionaries on the conditions resulting from the conquest became not merely common knowledge but common property" (Scott 2000, 78). It seems that the medial as well as the intellectual landscape in which al-Hajari lived before his escape was wrought with heterogenous and conflicting discourses about the nature of Spain's imperial practices in the Americas. What remains a matter of certainty is that al-Hajari chose to align his voice with non-

[14] Ibrahim ibn Ahmad ibn Ghanim al-Andalusi wrote an influential artillery manual based broadly on Luis Collado's *Plática Manual de artillería* (1592): *Kitab al-izz wa'l-manafi lil-mujahidin fi sabil illa b'il-madafi* (*The book in which one seeks triumph and advantage when fighting against the infidel with military stores*)

imperial renditions of the Americas, and to disseminate such a historical encounter in the Arabo-Islamic world.

His account displays a kaleidoscopic knowledge, the bulk of which was neither available nor accessible to his co-religionists in Morocco whose epistemological purview was generally tethered to the linguistic borderlines of the Arabic language. The subtle Islamization of the Montezuma/Cortés scene might have also been inspired by the striking parallelism with which Hernán Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, and others described what they witnessed in the Americas. In the 1520s, Cortés described Mesoamerican temples as mosques, built in Moorish style (Cortés 1908, 162). The Spanish conquistadores drew parallels between Iberian Muslims and America's native populations. They mapped out the unknown lands of the Americas and its indigenous inhabitants in relation to what they were familiar with in Europe. This meant mobilizing the institutional, terminological and representational repertoires (sartorial, religious and territorial concepts) which accumulated the centuries-long Iberian so-called "Reconquista," to the uncommon and newly conquered lands in Mesoamerica. Anthony Pagden has demonstrated that Spanish renditions of the capital city of the Aztecs, Tenochtitlan, were commensurate with the accounts of the Conquest of Granada. He posits that since the only political model known to Cortés was the Reconquest, "Moctezuma had to be treated in his narrative as a Muslim ruler would have been" (Pagden 1971, xii).

Cook noted how many Spanish conquistadores "referred to the sacred structures as mosques and drew parallels with the North African towns many of them had encountered on previous military campaigns" (Cook 2016, 167). She highlighted how Spanish soldiers' mistreatment of Amerindians reminded them of how Muslims were treated by Spanish conquerors (167). Sixteen years after al-Hajari composed his narrative, Antonio Tello wrote his chronicle of the conquest of New Spain and Nueva Galicia describing the parallels between how the Spanish oriented its policies towards North Africa and the Ottoman Empire and the indigenous populations in the Americas.[15] Byron Ellsworth Hamann explored two inquisitorial investigations which took place in the 1540s, one involving the Moriscos in Valencia and the other Native Americans in Mexico. He foregrounded a multitude of local practices and debates which demonstrates that the

[15]See Tello, Antonio. *Libro Segundo de la Crónica Miscelánea, en que se trata de la conquista espiritual y temporal de la Santa Provincia de Xalisco en el Nuevo Reino de la Galicia y Nueva Vizcaya y descubrimiento del Nuevo México*. No. 5311. " La República literaria," de CL de Guevara y ca, 1891, pp. 84-125.

social history of the colonized Mesoamericans and the displaced Moriscos are entangled through parallelisms that stretch across the early modern world.[16] Al-Hajari's use of the Montezuma/Cortés encounter is underpinned by such historical parallelism. It suggests that the multilingual subjects of Muslim North Africa might have been familiar with occurrences in Mesoamerica. Whether through direct encounters with works about the Americas, with indigenous people, translations or through the circulations of news and tales about the so-called 'New World,' Maghrebian populations seem to have been also engaged in using faraway non-Muslim imperial experiences to advance the interests of the Muslim world in the international landscape.

3. A Note on Ethical Concerns

The question of ethics, in theory and praxis, is central to the upcoming chapters and my discussion of al-Hajari so far might have implied some ethical concerns. However, since this preoccupation will be brought up again and again concerning different issues, I thought it would be crucial to lay the foundation for those concerns that emerge in distinct guises while emanating from the same ethos: al-Ghassani's in light of Mulay Ismail's concern with truth and promise; al-Ghazzal's consideration the ethical basis of the diplomatic enterprise; al-Miknasi's engagement with the ethical fortitude of the Muslim diplomat; and al-Hajari's nuanced attention to ethics vis-à-vis his profession as an interpreter/translator before he escaped from Spain and during his tenure in the Sultanic court of Mulay Zaydan.

When al-Hajari was still in Granada, the minaret of the mosque of Granada was pulverized by the Spanish Catholic authorities in order to be replaced by a cathedral. Within the walls of the mosque's old minaret, a box was found, containing a large parchment written in Arabic and the Spanish language used in al-Andalus. Along with the parchment, a small veil of Saint Mary and the bones of Stephen were discovered. Al-Hajari writes that the minaret

> was called "Turpana." […] The Spanish text was deciphered. In order to read the Arabic parts [of the text], they summoned al-Ukayhal al-Andalusi, who was a licensed interpreter, for the pious shaykh al-Jabbis, as well as for other aged Andalusians who knew how to read Arabic. The priest ordered them to translate the contents of the parchment from the Arabic. Each of them [had to do so] individually, though sometimes he would bring them together.

[16] See Hamann, Byron E. *Bad Christians, New Spains: Muslims, Catholics, and Native Americans in a Mediterratlantic World*. Routledge, 2019.

> However, they did not succeed in grasping it completely. The archbishop had learned to read Arabic as well. (1997, 84)

Up until this point al-Hajari was still hiding his expertise of the Arabic language in fear of being" sentence[d] and burn[t] to death" (96) as it was the case of many Andalusian Muslims who hid their faith and chose to stay in their country as 'New Christians.' One of the priests who was learning to read Arabic used to accompany the aforementioned shaykh al-Jabbis, and on a certain occasion, they were reading an Arabic book to another priest. Al-Hajari was in their company, and as the former priest was reading, the group "hesitated at the correct reading of some words." Al-Hajari said to them: "'maybe it means this!' they discovered that it was true," (88) and the priest asked him to assist in translating the Arabic sections. As expected, in a situation where the 'wrong' expertise could lead him to be burnt at the stick, al-Hajari was apprehensive and in fear of punishment. Therefore, after agreeing to help the archbishop, he lied about his ancestry:

> You should know, my lord, that I am an Andalusian from al-Hajar al-Ahmar. Our spoken language there is in fact Arabic. Then I [also] learnt to read Spanish. Later on I went to Madrid -the residence of the Sultan- where I found an Andalusian man, a medical doctor from the country of Valencia whose name was X. He taught me to read Arabic which was easy for me because of my being an Arab by origin. Then he asked me: "Where is your teacher, the physician [now]?" I answered: "He died— may God have mercy upon him— some two or three years ago". But everything I told him as an answer to his question, about the physician from the country of Valencia, was a lie. […] Thus I protected myself from their evil by lying. (89)

After such a lie, al-Hajari invoked the position of the Muslim polymath Abu Hamid al-Ghazali on the issue of lying and ethics. He noted that al-Ghazali advocated for a situation where it was acceptable to lie to protect someone from harm. He suggests that if an upright person is being pursued by someone with ill intent, it is permissible, and even commendable, to mislead the pursuer about the direction the person took. This is justified as it serves to safeguard the individual from harm. Al-Hajari implied that even those who typically speak truthfully may find themselves compelled to lie in certain circumstances where it is deemed permissible (91). The principle of

committing trivial "sinful" acts in pursuit of the greater good will be central to the last ambassador to be discussed in this dissertation; al-Miknasi who advanced that the pursuit of *Maslaha* (the common good) in international affairs outweighs the trivial matters which could hinder the pursuit of peace through diplomacy. As will be shown, his engagement with religion within the realm of diplomatic conduct was attuned to the contextual contingencies which necessitate the use of rationality to materialize the greater good while still operating within the spirit of Islam. The second ethical element that could be deduced from al-Hajari's account, and which is also paramount to al-Miknasi's exposition of the epitomic Muslim diplomat, is the issue of un/faithfulness. Whereas al-Miknasi focused on testimony as an ethical venture, al-Hajari brought the issue of un/faithfulness within the rubric of his profession as a translator/interpreter to the Sultan and as a diplomat. In many ways, al-Hajari's account insinuates various themes which will be relevant to the ambassadors which follow him. The act of translation in this context raises questions about hermeneutics, inter-religious dialogue, and the ethical relationships involved in encountering the Other. Al-Hajari's first part of his account delineates his translation venture and provides ample examples of his concerns. Al-Hajari was summoned by the archbishop after displaying his expertise in front of him. He writes:

> When I came he gave me the parchment and told a learned priest who was very famous among them, called Rayah: "Sit with him and write down what he tells you!" At the top was written: "The mysterious book of the evangelist John concerning the destruction of the universe". Then, at the beginning of the writing, it said: "In the name of the venerable and *multabibah* essence!" At this point I needed a dictionary in order to understand the meaning of *al-multabibah*. The priest gave me the book of al-Jawhari in two volumes. I understood that the word *al-multabibah* was taken from *lubb al-shay'*. Therefore, [the expression just-quoted would] mean: "the plain and pure essence which was neither composite nor mixed." (90-91)

After detailing the translation process which he utilized to translate the parchment, al-Hajari recounts that the translation of those who preceded him, "among whom there were people more learned than [him]self, […] had read the word *al-multabibah* as if [the line in which it figured actually read:] "In the name of the venerable threefold (*al-mutallatah*) essence". This, however,

was misleading, because the letters of *al-mutallatah* are five, whereas those of *al-multabibah* are seven" (92). While al-Hajari's translation reveals his ideological commitment to the religion of Islam and Islamic culture, particularly as it relates to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, his translation was still the correct one. The archbishop who "was extremely pleased with [his] translation because he knew that it was truthful," gave al-Hajari three hundred riyals and a translation license which rendered al-Hajari famous even ten years after the event when he was pointed at by Christians on the streets who recognized that "he is the man who understood the parchment which was found in the tower" (90). As a translator, al-Hajari navigated diverse cultural values and had the choice either to submit to or resist the dominant values of Catholic Spain.

Translation involves ethical choices, and al-Hajari was implicitly called upon to demonstrate fidelity or betrayal in their work. It was explicitly so as well. As an ambassador/interpreter in the Moroccan Sultanic court, he reproduced a copy of the parchment for the Sultan al-Mansur al-Dahbi. He recounts that the parchment contained eschatological remarks that would befall the Christians in the city of Rome which will be captured by "al-Sharqi" (The Easterner). Al-Hajari interpreted the latter to be the "Sultan of the Turks" (95). He recounts that as he was preparing a translation to the Moroccan Sultan "[On that occasion] one of his commanders said to me: 'Why do you not change the *qaf* to *fa*, so that it reads *al-sharif* [which refers to the Moroccan Sultan instead of al-Sharqi which refers to the Ottoman caliph] will take hold of the City of the Sea? The Sultan would be happy by this!' I said: 'God willing, I shall not change anything!" (97). This is an instance that divulges the ethical caliber of al-Hajari. From the title of his work, and throughout the entirety of his account, he clearly positioned himself as a Muslim in a Christian land. However, such positionality where religion occupies a fundamental space, did not impede his engagement with the other nor did it adulterate his view of the Other even in questions of belief. While he debated the Trinity with Christian scholars, he still remained faithful to his profession which as far as he was concerned still operated within the larger rubric of Islam as a domain of knowledge from which relational ethics of dealing with the Other could be deduced. Al-Miknasi will supplement such a view by probing into the permissibility of unethical acts within non-Muslim territories, laying out Muslim diplomatic ethics in foreign non-Muslim contexts, and supplementing his views by using Quranic verses. This is a pivotal axis around which the upcoming ambassadors will revolve; i.e., the rendition of Islam as a domain of knowledge that is

historical, and as such contextual and contingent. The following chapters pursue this line of thinking at the intellectual as well as at the diplomatic level.

4. Conclusion

Within the entangled history of the early modern world, this chapter showcased how al-Hajari instrumentalized his awareness of Spain's colonial ventures in the Americas to serve different political ends. He transported the encounter between the Aztec King Montezuma and Cortés to an Arabophone Muslim environment and established the unfolding of such a historical scene as a legal and diplomatic precedent which later became the axis around which a religiously and legally justified concordance could be founded. Such an interaction between the Atlantic and the Islamic world is reminiscent of how various legal practices which regulated Muslim-Christian relations in the Iberian Christian kingdoms were often invoked as legal precedents for various Spanish political maneuvers intended to assert jurisdiction over indigenous peoples and geographies (Cook 2020, 183).

Al-Hajari complimented such instrumentalization with his cognizance of European power differentials to narrate a history of cross-cultural encounters in which the Atlantic could be Islamized, and the Andalusians, in his figure, emerge as Muslim subjects competent of navigating the entangled geopolitics of the early modern Muslim and Mediterratlantic worlds. The study of Iberian Christians and their imperial ventures in the Americas must account for the Iberian Muslims and Moriscos who continued to live in the 16th-century Iberian Peninsula. At the time, Iberian Catholics and Muslims were all part of the same imperial world, witnessing and taking part in its various manifestations. As such, the circulation of Spanish imperial activities in the Americas and the reception of such images in Islamic contexts is worth considering particularly as the utilization of such endeavors in different contexts to advance other causes, diplomatic, religious, political, or otherwise, sheds light on the entanglements of the early modern world and attests that the Mediterranean was connector rather than a divider; a zone of porousness brimming not only with commercial, maritime, and military activities but also with news and stories about faraway geographies.

Al-Hajari's narrative testifies to the overall characteristic of the early modern world, namely political scheming and diplomatic intrigue which was materialized through the activities of diplomatic envoys who, in various instances, desacralized religious boundaries following the

motto ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend,’ and thus being able to invoke various cultural and legal traditions and histories to build bridges driven by realpolitik. While the discursive inventories of the early modern world speak of the ‘Mohamaten Moor’ and the ‘infidel Turk,’ al-Hajari’s diplomatic rencontres portray the Ottoman Empire and Morocco as powerful entities, heavily engaged in the power games and fluctuating alliances in Europe (2014, 137). In the 16th and 17th centuries, Spain and the Habsburgs seem to have been the nucleus around which diplomatic and political alliances between England, the Dutch Republic, France, the Ottoman Empire and Morocco were crystallized. Diplomatic, commercial and military interests eclipsed the sacrosanctity of religious and cultural boundaries. Al-Hajari’s acquaintance with such power games construed his mind in diplomacy and demonstrated his ability to navigate across faraway geographies and interlace different histories under the prospect of a shared purpose.

Chapter IV: Al-Ghassani's Khaldunian Reading of Spanish Modernity and the Burgeoning of Islamicate Diplomatic Ethos

This chapter sheds light on the diplomatic mission of ambassador Mohamed ben Abdel Wahab al-Ghassani to 17th-century Spain entitled *The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive 1690-1691*. My choice of al-Ghassani to follow al-Hajari's chapter is not only for chronological considerations but also due to the fact that while both invoke the Americas, al-Ghassani's evocation pertains to how Spain's imperial ventures fundamentally altered the sociological fabric of modern Spanish society. As such, in al-Ghassani's account, the Atlantic is powerfully present in the Mediterranean, animating the socio-cultural, political and economic life of Spaniards. Additionally, while both were writing in the 17th century, unlike al-Hajari, al-Ghassani was the first Arab of Andalusian descent to visit Spain in the second half of the 17th century. His intellectual inquiry into Spanish modernity is nuanced and insightful despite the fact that he was writing in a context still haunted by the violent memories of dispossession that befell his ancestors.

Bearing a Sultanic letter from the Sultan Mulay Ismail (reign 1672-1727), Mohamed Ibn Abdelwahab al-Ghassani al-Andalusi al-Fassi ventured on a mission to Spain to ransom captives and retrieve Islamic books seized from Muslim libraries in Andalucía and others stolen from the Sultan Mulay Zaydan (1603-1627) as he was trying to relocate his manuscripts from his capital to another city due to internal political instability.[17] His account was composed in a Mediterranean landscape characterized by political instability and colonial expansion, particularly in Hispano-Moroccan relations. Yet, Mulay Ismail's Morocco was re-conquering its occupied territories and solidifying its geopolitical and religious status on the international scene. His rule marked a paragon for Moroccan power. He created a strong army, originally relying on the Arab tribes of Guich and on the Slaves of Bukhari (*Abid al-Bukhari*), black slaves who were brought from West Africa. This military corps was loyal only to the Sultan and facilitated his materialization of a more stable and more absolute authority over Morocco.

[17] In 1612, a Spanish fleet captured a French ship whose stolen cargo included the entire manuscript collection of the Sultan of Morocco, Muley Zaydan. Soon, the collection made its way to the royal library, El Escorial, transforming the library into an important repository of Arabic books. See Hershenzon, Daniel. "Traveling Libraries: The Arabic Manuscripts of Muley Zidan and the Escorial Libraries." *Journal of Early Modern History* 18 (2014): 535–58.

As to the conditions which underpinned his compositional venture, al-Ghassani was the first Arab to compose an account about modern Spain. his account was to become almost a template to his successors. His interest in the 'history of the present' of Christiandom and Muslim-Euroean relations will be further fleshed out in the upcoming sections. The political framework in which he composed his *Rihla* could be delineated as follows: al-Ghassani's embassy represents a new direction for Morocco's foreign affairs with Europe. it was a part of a series other embassies which were dispatched by Moulay Ismail beginning in January 1682, when the ambassador Mohamed Temim led an embassy to France to encourage the French to ransom their captives in Morocco. The embassy successfully negotiated their release as part of a treaty, among various other conditions (Benhada 2005, 16). In 1698, another embassy, led by Admiral Abdullah bin Aisha, arrived in Paris to deepen Franco-Moroccan ties and to request that Louis XIV send Arabic manuscripts available in French libraries (17). To England, Sultan Moulay Ismail sent an embassy led by Mohammed bin Hadou al-Attar to discuss matters related to the English imperial incursions and occupation of Tangier in 1678 (17).

In the first chapter, I argued that Morocco's encounter with a Europe which was underpinned by an imperial caliber accelerated the number of embassies dispatched to Europe to offset some of the damages incured by European attacks on Moroccan territories or manupilate certain powers against each other. All of the above mentioned embassies were to some extent linked to the pressures exerted by European countries on Morocco, through their military campaigns on some of its borders and their attempts to take advantage of the difficult situation that Morocco was experiencing in the second half of the seventeenth century. If we accept the premise that al-Ghassani journeyed into Spain from a country located in modernity's exteriority, then from a decolonial hermeneutical perspective, his account becomes pertinent to us for two inter-related ventures relevant to the study of modernity and the early modern Islamic Maghreb. First, it will demarcate the boundaries of Spanish modernity, and access its premises within its historicity and civilizational context, by using Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history. As such, it discloses an epistemological engagement which developed in parallel to the European imperial domination of the world since 1492. It is an endeavor whose telos is to shed light on local and indigenous knowledge which might have preceded, developed in tandem with, dialectically, or in geographies of faraway proximity from Europe. Yet, it has been left out of history, and silenced within human canons of intellectual thought. Second, his encounter with Spain demonstrated the burgeoning

moments of Islamicate Moroccan diplomatic ethics; a formation which drew on local debates about territoriality and travel as well as on historical diplomatic precedents, among various other acuities, to construct a diplomatic practice endemic to the Moroccan Maghrebian context. Using a decolonial hermeneutical approach, this chapter draws on Khatibi's conceptual frameworks to identify that space of 'silenced exteriority,' and Linda T. Darling's notion of borderline to identify its condition as a space of overlap and interfusion, this study aspires to showcase the porousness of the intellectual and diplomatic enterprises in early modern Morocco.

1. A Decolonial Reading of the Decline Paradigm

We have discussed in the introduction to this dissertation how the paradigm of decline evokes the phenomenon of modernity, which has come to define Europe since the 16th century, and has often been contrasted with a narrative of Islamic history that is marked by a perceived descent into decadence, deterioration, and decline. This perspective has deeply influenced European interpretations of Islamic cultural history since the 19th century (Von Hees 2017, 11). Throughout this period, the analysis of Muslim communities has remained inexorably intertwined with the prevailing notion that "Muslim discontent with the West can be attributed to a psychological response to the 'decline' of Islam" (11). Such a declinist paradigm does not limit itself to the military, technological, and economic spheres but usually sees the conditions of the latter as necessarily determinant of the intellectual rubric of the Islamic world.

This part unearths al-Ghassani's attempt to provide a socio-historical analysis of 17th–century Spain in his text *The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive.* It argues that al-Ghassani's utilization of the fourteenth-century sociologist, philosopher, and historian Ibn Khaldun's cyclic historical epistemology to analyze Spanish society represents an endeavor to make sense of Western modernity from within the local and indigenous premises of Islamicate historiographical thought. Within the hermeneutic rubric of my decolonial approach, al-Ghassani's use of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history to unpack Europe in light of the convulsive and deteriorating epistemic, economic, political, and cultural structures of the Muslim world instantiates an epistemic option of a Muslim intellectual dwelling in the so-called modernity's exteriority and recoursing to Islamic heritage to fathom the phenomenon of modernity as it manifested itself in the material as well as the epistemological realities of the Maghreb.

When al-Ghassani travelled to Spain, he travelled underpinned by a Morocco which still had not forgotten what Spain did to its coreligionists, the Andalusians and the Moriscos. Al-Ghassani might have particularly felt the angst of such a past because he was, as his last name indicates "al-Andalusi," a descendent of an expelled Andalusian family. Additionally, he was writing within an episteme in which religious phenomenology had been the natural hermeneutic prism of the day, i.e., the experiential aspects of the external world were filtered through a religious prism, and as such any description of material externality occurred in terms consistent with the orientation of the worshipper. While such an orientational philosophy towards the external world might be considered predisposed towards a certain tradition, religion or culture, it still permits us to construe how an early modern Muslim subject attempted to fathom the modern material reality of a nation which had persecuted, tortured, burnt and expelled his ancestors. In fact, he was appreciative of various manifestations of Spanish modernity and was sometimes even "dazzled" by it. Yet, similar to his predecessor al-Hajari, al-Ghassani wrote in the aftermath of a political and cultural crisis which cannot be discounted from his work as a diplomat and as a writer. Additionally, al-Ghassani was also attentive to French military campaigns on the Southern Mediterranean noting Charles V's expedition against Algiers in 1541, as well as the attack he launched in order to take Tunis in 1543. He opted for Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history to decorticate Spanish modernity and unravel the conditions which underpinned the rise of a modern Spain with an imperial caliber. What eventuated from such an attempt is a nifty and insightful analysis of Spanish culture and societal change in light of its relations with contemporary European powers and expansion into the New World.

Nabil Matar designated such an attempt as a confrontational instance, oriented by a zealous pride in the glory of the Islamic past invoked against the grandeur of contemporary Spanish modernity. He also argued that such an endeavor eventuated in al-Ghassani's religious condemnation of Spain to conceal the decline that saturated the Islamic Maghreb (Matar 2008, 130). From a decolonial hermeneutical approach, the concept of decline emerges as an epistemological bias, whereby certain intellectual ventures that deviate from the standards of modernity are deemed as regressive and reactionary. Through my exploration of al-Ghassani's critical engagement with Spain, I also raise the question of whether political, economic, and military decline necessarily presupposes intellectual decadence. While it can hardly be denied that the intellectual landscape develops in interactions with other spheres of knowledge and power,

does the intellectual enterprise retain some form of autonomy from the so-called decadence of the socio-political and economic reality? How do we account for al-Ghassani's intellectual and diplomatic vigor within an age rendered as degenerate?

Any attempt to answer these questions compels us to rethink the concept of decline, and disclose its contextual and epistemic demarcations. When Bernard Lewis writes that "Europeans at one time or another have studied virtually all the languages and all the histories of Asia. Asians did not study Europe. They did not even study each other unless the way for such study was prepared by either conquest or conversion or both" (1993, 123-124); or that "the Muslim world, proud and confident of its superiority, and possessing its own internal communication by land and sea, could afford to despise the barbarous impoverished infidel in the cold and miserable lands of the North" (1982, 4); or that the "Muslims in general had little desire or incentive to venture into Christian Europe, and indeed the doctors of the Holy Law for the most part prohibited such journeys, except for a specific and limited purpose," (2002, 37) he seems to be insisting that the Western European thirst for knowledge about other communities and societies is not only uniquely driven by impartial intellectual curiosity but also unmotivated neither by ideological nor religious purposes. It also advances that the Islamic world not only lacked such psychological curiosity but was incapable of such idiosyncratically European phenomenon, as if the only epistemological basis that matters as veracious knowledge is that knowledge of and about Europe (Said 1978, 96).

The oeuvre of Nabil Matar has largely deflated many of the Eurocentric presuppositions which Lewis's work generalizes over the Islamic world. His de-archiving and editing of various texts from the libraries of the Islamic world provided the Global South with new voices and venues to balance out the 'decadence' which has been generally imposed on the Muslim world. However, his exploration of al-Ghassani's account fell short vis-à-vis its merit as a critical intellectual engagement with European modernity, and not simply a religious diatribe against the Christian Other. Matar is the first to associate al-Ghassani's insights and Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history. He juxtaposed al-Ghassani with two other Arabic thinkers of the 17th century arguing that these thinkers "refused to concede decline and instead declared the *nasr* (victory) of their *deen* (religion) of Islam over Europe," a perspective which neither the Ottomans nor the Spanish entertained (2005, 51). Matar noted that "al-Ghassani was unique in Magharibi historiography in employing Ibn Khaldun's seminal theory on the rise and fall of dynasties" (75). Yet, he argued that al-Ghassani opted for Ibn Khaldun because the latter's philosophy could only end in an imminent

decrepitude, and as such al-Ghassani would ensure the symbolic triumph of his religion (72). However, as will be demonstrated in the following sections, al-Ghassani's insightful observations had parallels in Europe. European thinkers noted some of the same observations which al-Ghassani extracted from Spanish society. Whether they were aware of each other remains a matter of probability. Yet, the parallelism testifies to the veracity of al-Ghassani's intellectual engagement with Spain, since his observations, which Matar presumed to be religiously motivated, were also shared by a group of Spanish reformist thinkers known as the *Arbitristas* who operated from an epistemic rubric different from al-Ghassani's.

Matar's designation of al-Ghassani's effort to fathom Spanish modernity through Khaldunian philosophy of history as a failed endeavor of confronting decline by overriding political realities through religious explanations, lays bare the implicit yardstick against which al-Ghassani's analysis was judged *a priori*. From a decolonial hermeneutical perspective, al-Ghassani's intellectual vigor emerges as being assessed in terms of his capability or incapacity to fathom Spanish modernity. His astute critique of how modernity changed the sociological fabric of Spain through its colonialist underpinnings was relegated to the background as a result of assuming modernity to be the yardstick against which his intellectual venture was to be evaluated. I use decolonial hermeneutics to provide a corrective reading which commences from al-Ghassani's use of a philosophy endemic to the Islamic Maghreb to critique and delimit the contours of 'Western' modernity as the basis of valuing/un-valuing non-western knowledges.

Arguing against the Eurocentric disregard for local Islamicate knowledges as being either driven by religious vituperation or an ignorance-driven superiority in the face of the unknown, this chapter evokes decolonial hermeneutics as an alternate mode of analytical praxis which delinks from the dichotomous logic where those who are rendered as being exterior to Western modernity are either doomed to embrace and imbibe it or remain in the crevices of timelessness and unhistoricity. Khatibi's Other-Thought (2019) is brought into a conversation and complemented by Linda T. Darling's spatial 'borderline paradigm' to showcase that what modernity demarcates as 'silenced exteriority' is a space from which Europe's interiority can be critically assessed and approached by subjects who dwell in the borderline. As will be advanced in the next section, al-Ghassani's Khaldunian analysis of Spain and the *Arbitristas*' assessment of Spain's economic and political situation underpin the overlapping parallelism which characterized the early modern Mediterranean world. Thus, this critical endeavor shall instantiate al-Ghassani's venture to

scrutinize Spain through a Khaldunian philosophy of history as an intellectual exercise from within epistemic realities outside the lines of recognizability and legitimacy set by 'Western' modernity. As such, through re-constructing al-Ghassani's serious engagement with Spanish modernity, I hope to contribute to the solution proposed by Anibal Quijano in the face of modernity/coloniality, that is to the furtherance of the trajectory of "epistemological reconstitution" (2007).

1.1. Al-Ghassani and Ibn Khaldun

Although al-Ghassani's narrative has generated historical inquiries on both shores of the Mediterranean, the bulk of these studies remained limited to a binary representational enterprise whereby al-Ghassani is either read within a body of works about Europe or usually deemed as a nostalgic and vituperative work (Martín-Corrales 2020, 140-150; Peres 1937; Granara 2002, 45-50; Matar 2005; Beck 2015, 285-286; Martens 1929, 580-82; Stanley 1867). Most of these works explore al-Ghassani's narrative in relation to Muslims' effort to ransom captives or retrieve stolen Islamic manuscripts, but fail to pinch out the unique singularity which characterizes his text. While this part will explore al-Ghassani's intellectual encounter with modern Spain, the second part of this chapter will investigate the diplomatic merit of his text in light of Sultan Mulay Ismail's Islamic geopolitical vision in relation to his Christian neighbors.

Al-Ghassani's opting for Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun could be historically sketched out by highlighting some parallelism between the two. Ibn Khaldun was born in Tunis on May 27, 1332, to an upper-class family who had left Seville, in 1248, due to the fall of the city to the forces of King Ferdinand III of Castile after a long siege, to escape the Catholic conquest of Andalusia. His family had witnessed the rise and fall of Muslim power in southern Spain. Ibn Khaldun received a comprehensive education covering a wide array of subjects, including Aristotelian physics and philosophy, mathematics, religion, geography, and poetry, under the tutelage of esteemed scholars of his era. Despite the tumultuous political landscape of the fourteenth century, he began his professional journey as a seal bearer, gradually ascending to roles of political authority. His career expanded to encompass positions as a statesman, ambassador, and jurist, with responsibilities spanning across cities from Fez to Granada. However, feeling disillusioned with the prevailing political atmosphere, Ibn Khaldun retreated to the Salama Fort near Constantine in 1375, where he spent four years in seclusion. Emerging from this period of introspection, he penned his seminal work, the *Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, which

stands as one of the most profound historical studies of his era (Rosenthal 2015, 20-25). His engagement with Aristotelian philosophy and other intellectual traditions of his time reflects the interconnectedness of global knowledge networks and the circulation of ideas across cultural boundaries. However, such knowledge was not 'exterior' to the Islamic world. Muslims, as well as various non-Muslim subjects under Islamic rule, played a crucial role in translating and preserving knowledge from a wide range of sources, including Greek, Indian, Persian, and other civilizations. This period of translation and cultural exchange occurred at a time when many classical works from antiquity were at risk of being lost in Europe due to various factors, including political upheaval, religious intolerance, and social instability.

One of the best known centers of translation during this period was the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikmah*) in Baghdad, established during the Abbasid Caliphate in the 8th century. Under the patronage of Caliph al-Ma'mun and subsequent rulers, the House of Wisdom became a hub of intellectual activity where scholars from diverse backgrounds collaborated to translate and study works from Greek, Syriac, Persian, Indian, and other traditions. Muslim scholars such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Thabit ibn Qurra, and al-Kindi were instrumental in translating Greek philosophical and scientific texts into Arabic. They worked alongside Christian and Jewish translators, as well as scholars from other religious and cultural backgrounds, who contributed their expertise in languages and knowledge of classical traditions, leading to various innovative advancements in medicine and philosophy (Ibn Sina/ Avicenna), pioneering algebra and algorithmic methods in mathematics (al-Khwarizmi), preserving Aristotelian philosophy in various translations (al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazali), and harmonizing philosophical and scientific knowledge with Islamic theology and worldview, creating a distinctive synthesis that reflected the cosmopolitan ethos of the Islamic world.

In the medieval Islamic world, the type of comprehensive education Ibn Khaldun received was characteristic of the broader Islamic educational system. Islamic scholars of that era were expected to pursue a broad and interdisciplinary education that encompassed not only religious studies but also the sciences, mathematics, philosophy, literature, and other fields of knowledge. This holistic approach to education reflected the Islamic belief that all branches of knowledge were interconnected and ultimately led to a deeper understanding of the divine. There was a flourishing of scholarship and intellectual activity, with scholars often being polymaths who excelled in multiple disciplines. This era saw significant advancements in various fields, encompassing

diverse fields as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and literature. Scholars like Ibn Sina, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Ibn Rushd epitomized this tradition of polymathic scholarship, making groundbreaking contributions to a wide range of disciplines. Islamic education emphasized the pursuit of knowledge as a religious duty (*Fardh 'Ayn*), with the belief that acquiring knowledge was a means of seeking closeness to God and fulfilling one's moral and intellectual potential. This worldview fostered a culture of intellectual curiosity, innovation, and openness to different sources of knowledge. Ibn Khaldun's expansive education and engagement with various intellectual traditions can be seen as part of a broader tradition of Islamic scholarship that valued interdisciplinary learning and the exploration of diverse perspectives. His philosophical outlook and approach to historical analysis were shaped by this rich intellectual heritage, which encompassed both Islamic and non-Islamic sources of knowledge.

In his Magnum Opus, he presents us with a cyclical reading of the rise and fall of civilizations analyzing the factors and the conditions which underpinned such a pattern. Both Ibn Khaldun and al-Ghassani composed their works within a volatile backdrop, witnessing societal transmutations which inspired and marked their perceptions of the world around them. Ibn Khaldun wrote his Magnum Opus in the context of the party kings' wars that were tearing apart al-Andalus. Al-Ghassani penned his account in a background still reeling from the memories of violence and dispossession which befell his fellow Andalusians. Both experiences are consequentially connected as the former inaugurated the fissures and conditions which led to the fall of Granada, and culminated in the Decree of Expulsion (1609).

The viability of al-Ghassani's choice of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy resides in the conditions which underpinned the episteme, in the Foucauldian sense, in which they were writing. Both wrote in an age in which worldly phenomena were dominantly explicated in religious terms, through divine wisdom. Yet, both believed in the proposition that the observer must deduce sociological insights from actual human exchange. In this sense, while still operating within an Islamically-inflicted context, they both understood that what drives world history is human action not only providential interference.[18] Furthermore, both were the product and inheritors of an Islamic Mediterranean outlook. What renders their position 'Islamicate' and not Islamic is the fact that

[18] For a detailed exposition associating Ibn Khaldun's philosophy with an Islamicate cosmopolitan historical view, see "the Example of Ibn Khaldun," in Lawrence, Bruce B. *Islamicate Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Vol. 20 (John Wiley & Sons, 2021).

their heritage was constituted through an intersectionality which amalgamated Jewish, Christian and Muslim influences, while also being commercially and historically connected to Asia. Their intellectual labor is Islamicate as it makes a difference between religion, on the one hand, and the overall society and culture associated historically with religion, i.e., between religion as theology, dogma, and as a phenomenon.

My reference to al-Ghassani's and Ibn Khaldun's work as Islamicate showcases their ability to bridge the gap between the worldly and the spiritual, attending to the debates which were endemic to their environment while engaging with other nations and material transmutations which animated their world. This is not to be mapped out into a linearity, driven by a Hegelian dialectic until it synthesizes in some idealist historical formation. As will be demonstrated in the next subsection, al-Ghassani's engagement dwells in the borderline, both diplomatically and intellectually. He presents us with what Abdelkabir Khatibi conceptualizes as "Other-Thought," i.e., his thinking "is based on the spatial confrontations between different concepts of history" (Mignolo 2000, 67). Mignolo's border thinking echoes al-Khatibi's 'Other-Thought' which emerges as a critical intervention in local and global debates. Such an intervention belongs to both sides and neither of them because it is not driven by a Hegelian dialectical teleology but rather by a borderline spatial configuration (Mignolo 2019, 6). Khatibi posits that "the thought of the 'we' to which we turn no longer stands and no longer moves within the circle of (Western) metaphysics, nor according to the theology of Islam, but at their margin—*a margin on alert*" (6). This vigilant margin is what I have aspired to shed light on through my proposition of decolonial hermeneutics, as an interpretive praxis whose epistemological productivity rethinks the territorial notion of planetary and nativist consciousness through historically entangling and disentangling local debates with global designs and *vica versa*.

If Spain was located in a historical teleology which had been oriented by a developmentalist telos towards freedom and rationality, then al-Ghassani's Khaldunian historical dissection of Spain, from an Islamically-animated context, was an intellectual attempt "located at the border of coloniality of power in the modern world system" (Mignolo 2000, 67). Diplomatically, "Other-Thought" emerges as al-Ghassani was keen on accounting for "different local histories and their particular power relations are taken into consideration" (67). The second part of this chapter attends to such concern by showcasing how al-Ghassani's formulation of

Islamicate diplomatic ethics accounted for local jurisprudential debates as well as a tradition of diplomatic precedents which started with his predecessor Qasim al-Hajari.

Thus, as will be presented throughout the following sections, al-Ghassani's intellectual and diplomatic labor is the product of an episteme that was becoming conscious of the changes and power differentials on the global and local scene. His opting for Ibn Khaldun was not arbitrary but rather a conscious choice of an epistemology, nurtured in an Islamic context, and projected upon the world to fathom other nations. The ensuing development of Islamicate ethics of diplomatic practice drew on the debates and ideas which animated early modern Moroccan relations with Europe. The next chapters will showcase how al-Ghassani's successors were also concerned with the formulation and refinement of such ethics in relation to the immediate political and diplomatic realities of the 18th century. Al-Ghassani's account is an intriguing display of an actor aware of various Islamic and non-Islamic traditions in the early modern Mediterranean. As such, I invoke his account not only as a part of a "counter or different stories," but rather as bringing "forward […] a new epistemological dimension: an epistemology of and from the border of the modern/colonial world system," (68) whose loci of articulation emanates from a borderline; a space where the local rubs with the imperial, generating intellectual and diplomatic insights which testify to the entanglements of the early modern world.

1.2. Al-Ghassani's Khaldunian Reading of Spain

Al-Ghassani opened his account with the purpose of the mission which we referred to earlier. He writes during his journey: "I saw there wonders of wonders, things that stun the mind and dazzle the intellect. So, I recorded some of [those sights] on these sheets of paper so that they would not be lost, and I wrote them down for fear of forgetfulness" (al-Ghassani 2003, 118). The account was written as a diplomatic report for the Sultan as well as "to all the brethren who may consult them" (57). Al-Ghassani's journey started from the straits of Gibraltar on 19th October 1690. It was the place from which Tariq Ibn Ziyad entered Spain in the 7th century initiating Islamic rule for about eight centuries until 1492. Al-Ghassani's encounter with such a place was not as expected. He wrote

> The Gibraltar anchorage is spacious, with a wide gulf, at whose entrance stands a strong fort built in the best of manners. It contains equipment and cannons, since it is the residence

> of the patrol guards and their families. It dominates the whole anchorage and its wall extends across the foot of the mountain connecting the fort to the city: it is around one mile long and terminates in the city at the edge of the sea. (119)

Al-Ghassani witnessed how detached Gibraltar was from its description in Islamic historical accounts. It became an impregnable fortress with a military garrison unremittingly directed towards the Moroccan shore where the attacks were expected to come from. Yet, surprisingly, the attack came across the English Channel when Britain occupied Gibraltar only fourteen years after al-Ghassani's journey, in 1704. When he reached the city of Cadiz, al-Ghassani wrote that it "is a big city to which travelers and traders come from every region. Christians come to it from every nearby village and city to buy and sell and conduct business" (121). It was the city where he had his first encounter with Muslim captives "men, women, and children who rejoiced and pronounced the witness, praying for the Prophet, God's prayer and peace be upon him" (129). While al-Ghassani abstains from detailing the conditions of those captives, they must have been living in dire misery. Cadiz at the time was the hub of traders and travelers. It was so because Cadiz was one of the main ports from which gold was flowing into Spain from the New World creating a state of affluence and welfare that made the Spanish reject menial labor. Al-Ghassani was attentive to the manifestations of wealth which, while it might have created a state of well-being, still deteriorated the social conditions that allowed for such material flourishment. For instance, he highlighted how France, which was an enemy of Spain, established commercial relations with the Ottomans, another rival of Spain. He writes:

> the French are a people of trade and commerce, and most of their trade is in the Istanbul area. Traders and commercial agents have a special place in the eyes of the French despot […] For all these years, these traders had been members of his court and entourage, and, unlike kings of other nations, he used to assist them in all that promoted their trade and commerce, which brought considerable revenues to him. Among the Spaniards, and unlike other people, the trader is considered nothing, as a result of which the number of Spanish traders has declined. None are found traveling for purposes of trade, except those who are going to India [America]. Most of the traders and commercial agents in Spain are English, Flemish, Genovese, or others (168).

Al-Ghassani's focus on such 'decline' is not coincidental. He is approaching such a phenomenon through Khaldunian eyes. A contemporary of al-Ghassani, Savary des Bruslons wrote in his first volume of *Dictionnaire universel de commerce* (1723) that all the merchandise for Spain and Spanish America were transported by French, English, and Dutch vessels, as well as those of a few other Northern European countries (Des Bruslons 2018, 237). With a sociological scrutiny of group dynamics, Ibn Khaldun argued that *asabiyyah*, or group solidarity, is a core constituent when it comes to the political ascent of a new civilization. He further posited that sedentariness is a malady that characterizes life in urban cities and leads to the proliferation of luxurious habits as a ubiquitous lifestyle, thus slowly gnawing at the *asabiyyah* and fueling the conditions for the collapse of civilization. Al-Ghassani perceived the abstinence of Spaniards from doing trade and commerce as an indication of a weakened *asabiyyah*, and the opening of the space for other European powers which were rivaling Spain in its colonial aspiration in the New World, as a sign of a society infected by sedentariness and setting up itself for inevitable decline. His astute insights had the same alarming echoes in Spain. In the late 16th and 17th centuries, a group of reformist political economists, known as *Arbitristas*, were substantially concerned with the decline of the economy of Spain. Basas Fernández underscores that in *Arbitristas* literature, Seville and Cadiz, being two cities that were brimming with exports and imports from Europe and the Americas, were cardinal targets of their scrutiny. Fernández advances that even in the 17th century, French and Flemish traders of linens, and Genoese and Florentine merchants of silks dominated Spanish ports (Fernandez 1994, 132-33).

Al-Ghassani's mention of foreign traders indicates Spain's dependency on foreign producers and its paralyzing impact on Spain's urban economy and society. The *Arbitristas* perceived such an issue as detrimental to the revival of the country and focused their attention on the country's lack of commercial skillfulness, its inability to produce locally manufactured goods, (which partially stemmed from their disdain for work), and a set of defective fiscal policies. The *Arbitristas* outlined specific reforms aimed at reversing Spain's perceived decline. Most of the programs of reform that they forwarded to the King proposed regulations pertaining to royal expenditure, the termination of sale offices, the overhauling of the tax system, concessions for agricultural laborers, the irrigation of dry lands, and making rivers navigable, etc. The *Arbitristas* believed that only through such measures could Spain's productivity be increased, "its commerce

restored, and its humiliating dependence on foreigners, on the Dutch and the Genoese, be brought to an end" (Elliot 1989, 231).

Writing in the 1650s and 60s, a contemporary of al-Ghassani, the Franciscan friar and *Arbitrista* Francisco Martinez de Mata lamented in his *Memoriales y discursos* the conditions of circular flow of production and consumption in Spain, and directed his critique towards foreign merchants who thrived at Spain's undivided attention to keep the colonies, while Spanish populations were at the mercy of foreign producers (1791, 149-145). While it may seem that al-Ghassani and the *Arbitristas* arrived at such insights through different lanes, determined by different intellectual climates, it is actually not so. Both were perceptive of a fundamental change in the social dynamics of Spain's urban society. On the one hand, al-Ghassani "had no Arabic sources about Europe" (Matar 2005, 74). As such, his engagement with Spain was based on keen observation and first-hand experience. This is a core Khaldunian principle pertaining to the proposition that "historical information" must not be accepted "in its plain transmitted form" without a "clear knowledge of the principles resulting from custom, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization" (Ibn Khaldun 2015, 57). Historians must account for "the principles underlying such historical situations, […] compare them with similar material, […] probe [Them] with the yardstick of philosophy, with the help of knowledge of the nature of things, or with the help of speculation and historical insight" (57). Such emphasis on empirical observation as a basis of generating and accessing the validity of knowledge diverges with the approach advocated by orthodox Muslim scholars "who believed that all important knowledge is contained in the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the pious predecessors" (Idrissi 2013, 45). On the other hand, the *Arbitristas* "shared a common faith in empiricism, compiled detailed information on each problem before devising a solution" (Andrien 2008, 219). Driven by a spirit of empirical observation, both came to parallel deductions while operating from within divergent epistemological centers.

Historians now testify to the validity of al-Ghassani's and the *Arbitristas'* keen insights. Spain's ascendency to be a global power began by conquering the last Islamic dominion of Iberia, inaugurating colonial expansion in the Atlantic through Columbus' voyages, and establishing imperial settlements in North Africa, Portugal, and Italy. The decline of Spain in the late seventeenth century is still considered a historical shock. In its age of grandeur, Spanish troops ravaged parts of France, Italy, and the Low countries. In its age of decline, Spain was about to be

ravaged by the French, the Dutch, and the English (Stein 2000, 6). Eventually, Holland, England, and France replaced Spain as global powers and al-Ghassani was already deducing some of the conditions which substantiated Spain's decline and created a power void in European politics for emergent powers like France and Great Britain to fill. Spain's colonial expansion abroad diverged its attention from the political, social, and economic apparatuses at home. The exploitation of the Indies and its effect on Spain's societal development constituted one of the main axes around which the *Arbitristas* leveled their analysis, critiques, and solutions. Jaime Vicens Vives notes that thinkers such as "Cellorigo (1600), Pedro de Valencia (1605), Fernandez de Navarrete (1616), and Caxa de Leruela (1627)" (Vicens 2015, 452) astutely perceived how the large profits generated by the exploitation of the indies incepted a series of social problems which branched out from the same sources. Al-Ghassani also conceived of such essential change in the social dynamics of Spanish society using a Khaldunian approach.

The Khaldunian cycle of civilizational rise and fall proceeds as follows: in the early stages of their development, societies are characterized by a nomadism which is solidified by social cohesion or "group feeling," that he calls *asabiyyah*. The latter is a collective sentiment that brings individuals together, builds ties between them, and connects their emotional and symbolic unity. It also forces people to fight for their place in the world and venture into the outside world to seize territory and build a socio-political community. As these nomadic people usually exist on the fringes of an already existing civilization, the *asabiyyah* brings them together to conquer decadent and sedentary civilizations by way of infiltration, and thus impact the preexisting cultures in various ways. The newly constituted society begins an expansionist project whereby borders are pushed through conquest to bring under its dominion more and more people, and as such enlarge the sway of its civilization.

Gradually, a new civilization is created which brings together traits from nomadic conquerors and those conquered enriching the civilizational scene through the building of new cities and developments in intellectual, educational as well as material life. As wealth and power grow, a gradual but inevitable weakness begins to permeate the hearts of the citizens. As the new civilization settles down into the wealth and the intellectual advancements that it has generated, its needs become far removed from the driving force *asabiyyah* which underpinned its ascendency. People become sedentary and luxuries become necessities. Nomadic and traditional values are undermined and citizens start preferring luxury to work abstaining from the axes which thus far

have supported the maintenance of civilization. The ubiquity of wealth and material affluence become the incentive for other nomadic tribes growing on the frontiers of the newly established civilization. Decadent urbanity becomes undermined by new nomads and the cycle begins again (Ibn Khaldun 2015, 180-186).

In light of Ibn Khaldun's insight, Al-Ghassani identifies the incentive of Spain's rise to superiority and the social ills which started to unravel as a result of such ascendancy. He writes that

> by capturing these Indian [American] lands with the abundance and wealth that is brought from them, the Spanish people have become now the richest among the Christians, enjoying the highest income. But opulence and urbanization have overcome them, for it is rare to find one of them who trades or travels to other countries for the purpose of commerce, like other peoples from among the Christians, such as the Flemish, the English, the French, the Genovese and others. Furthermore, they refuse to take the manual professions that the lowest and meanest outcasts take and they see themselves as superior to other Christians. (al-Ghassani 2003, 144)

Al-Ghassani identified the decadent sedentariness which ibn Khaldun attributed to over-urbanization and the decay of *Assabiyah*. He engaged with the socio-economic implications of the wealth generated by colonial expansion in the New World and how it was changing the societal fabric of Spain in the early modern period. He perceived the socio-economic alterations as eventually not boding well for the dominion of Spain. The affluence which Spain witnessed from the 1500s led to the disintegration of the *Assabiyah* between the Spaniards. As such, the social crafts and jobs which were carried out irrespective of their menial societal status became burdens that the prosperous Spaniards strove to avoid. Such avoidance meant that products were either produced by the 'outcasts' as al-Ghassani points out or exported from abroad. Seventeenth-century Spain did witness a substantial increase in imports whereas exports were much reduced (Drelichman 2005, 350). Even the provisioning of the Indies fleet was dependent upon foreign importers (Vicens 2015, 419). Al-Ghassani observed the sentiments of superiority which accompanied the ubiquity of wealth among the Spaniards, and noted the attitudinal shift which

pertained to what was known as 'mechanical occupations,' stemmed from a prideful indolence. Such attitudes could be discerned in Alfonso Nunez de Castro when he penned in 1675,

> let London manufacture those fine fabrics of hers to her heart's content; Holland her chambrays; Florence her cloth; the Indies their beaver and vicuna; Milan her brocades, Italy and Flanders their linens . . . so long as our capital can enjoy them; the only thing it proves is that all nations train journeymen for Madrid, and that Madrid is the queen of Parliaments, for all the world serves her and she serves nobody. (Qtd in Vicens 2015, 416)

Al-Ghassani referred to the increasing number of the French in Spanish ports who "constitute the highest number among those who perform these base jobs in the lands of Spain" (al-Ghassani 2003, 145). French migratory flows to Spain started at the end of the 15th century, and were occupying positions as peasants, herdsmen, and small artisans (Vicens 2015, 421). They were particularly needed as farmers to recuperate for the gap in crop production generated by the expulsion of the Moriscos. They also "carried out the humblest trades, those which repelled the minds of the natives" (412). Al-Ghassani's reference to the foreigners occupying various menial professions in Spain evokes their prejudicial status to Spain's interest. The *Arbitristas* leveled various complaints against the foreigners' monopolization of "almost all the great maritime traffic, especially that carried on with the Indies" (422). While the French were amassing large sums of money doing manual labor, "the majority of the Spaniards see themselves as part of the government or the army: they refuse to work in industry or trade in order either to be viewed as members of the nobility or to be able to bequeath [a title] to their descendants if they themselves fail to get one" (al-Ghassani 2003, 145).

Al-Ghassani provides us with an excellent Khaldunian insight into the character of the Spanish people at the time. Ibn Khaldun argued that when the society's members revel in the well-being and abundance bestowed upon them by the ruling dynasty, they "grow up too proud to look after themselves or to attend to their own needs. They have disdain also for all the other things that are necessary in connection with group feeling [Assabiyah]. This finally becomes a character trait and natural characteristic of theirs" (Ibn Khaldun 2015, 186). Al-Ghassani noted the pride with which the Spaniards perceived certain professions, and their eagerness to be associated with the nobility or the army. He also highlighted some of the ways and excuses which the Spaniards

concocted, just to avoid doing trade and commerce. "Whoever wanted to raise their social status and join the class of nobility, without trading in neighboring countries, they join the army fighting against Muslims." Once he "secures in his hand proofs and documents of his service, cooperation, and effort […] He thus attains status, just like those who have ancestry or those who have money and connections. This is a custom of the soldiers who covet the status of nobility" (al-Ghassani 2003, 196). Spaniards of the 17th century refused to exert any effort into affairs that they considered plebeian. As such, the widespread sedentariness compelled them to find fraudulent ways to circumvent menial professions creating what the Spanish historian Jaime Vicens Vives identified as "the mania for nobility" (Vicens 2015, 418). Al-Ghassani writes that if someone could not inherit their father's title "count, duke marquis or some of the lower titles," he can provide a document proving that he "performed honorably […] regardless of whether or not he had done anything at all. He requests a title or a stipend to improve his conditions" (al-Ghassani 2003, 170). As Vives states, "it is not surprising that the poor commoner of the 17th century should have pinned all his hopes on changing his status and going over to the other camp by purchasing a patent of *hidalguia*, or minor nobility" (Vicens 2015, 417). The contempt of the Spaniards for trade and commerce was underpropped not only by a stigma of social dishonor (416), but also by its association with the Moriscos and Conversos who were designated by the Spanish population as untrustworthy due to their Muslim and Jewish ancestry.

Al-Ghassani disclosed the inegalitarian society which Spain represented at the time, noting the monumental gap between the rich and poor. His focus on the class of nobility was meant to underscore the excessive effects of urbanity on society and the socio-economic divergences it created between rural and urban areas and populations. He accentuated how citizens who perform menial crafts were not allowed to "ride in coaches in the city of the despot"; how any hope of joining the government or the nobility or generating some upward social mobility is incumbent upon quitting such jobs unless one is "a very rich merchant who does not use a weighing balance or sit in a store—like the rich merchants who have large businesses and the enormous wealth that allows them not to buy and sell in stores and markets" (al-Ghassani 2003, 145). Al-Ghassani also perceived the racial obsession with 'purity of blood' which characterized the class of the nobility in light of the Inquisition trials which were still taking place at the time. He posits that

> those who attain this status [nobility] are very Old Christians who can count back seven grandfathers, and for whom other Christians would attest that they have known their fathers and grandfathers, or had heard from others and from old people that so and so is from the Christian lineage of so and so, and that he is a descendant of a Christian back to the seventh grandparent. None of them can be suspected of having any blemish or tinge of Jewishness; otherwise, he is a non-Christian. (145)

Al-Ghassani portrays some of the anxiety that was looming over Spain vis-à-vis the notion of purity and ancestry and which led to the expulsion of the Jews and Moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula. It was an anxiety that arose from the belief that some nobles, of deceitful and mixed origins, were exploiting the bestowed privileges of the aristocratic class through fabricating lineages. Those fraudulent subjects were creating genealogies that did not belong to them by birth and as such exploiting the nobility system to gain upward social mobility. Suspicion interpenetrated the totality of Spanish society, particularly "suspicion toward the crypto-Christian, 'bad blood,' the spy, the marauder, the businessman who laid his hand on too many ducats" (Vicens 2015, 423). Proving that one has a Christian ancestry that goes back to the seventh grandparent shows that the nobility was aspiring to create a sealed class of privileged subjects, untainted neither by the racial impurity of Jews and Muslims nor by the menial sector of traders and merchants who, by virtue of acquiring wealth, might be able to sneak into the class of nobility. Al-Ghassani's analysis of the nobility unraveled that their main concern was the maintenance of their affluent and luxurious lifestyle even if the materialization of such ends was realized through duplicitous means. Such insight evokes the sedentary stage of civilization that is marked by a shift from labor which serves the necessities of life to labor which renders luxury and affluence as necessities of life (Ibn Khaldun 2015, 413).

Ibn Khaldun and al-Ghassani did not overlook the life-altering well-being generated by wealth accumulation and its positive impact on the demography of societies. Al-Ghassani appreciated several manifestations of modernity which he assessed as being useful and magnificent. He appreciated the widespread availability of *Funduks* (hostels) and restaurants depicting how they regulated and assisted travelers to plan their travel efficiently (al-Ghassani 2003, 136). He wondered upon the magnificence of the Escorial and the learning of sciences and philosophy (182). He enjoyed the music and the wonderful ceremonies in the Plaza (158) and was

taken aback by the "countless hospitals in Spain" and the modern medical care system. He wrote that "one wishes, given their convictions and gentle manners and humility, that they had been on the straight path [of Islam]. For in their good manners, they are the best among the religious orders. But God guides whomever He chooses to the straight path" (159). He was stunned by the efficiency of the postal system and the newspapers which provide the readers with many items of news, but "there is always exaggeration and inaccuracy stemming from [the desire to satisfy] people's curiosity" (160).

His spirit of intellectualism generated visionary insights for a Muslim of Morisco-decent living in the 17th century, and still reeling from the experience of dispossession which befell the Andalusians. Such a spirit also characterized his interactions with the Catholic church' dignitaries, and facilitated the debates which he undertook with '*Ajami* priests and friars'[the Spanish clergy] who held a historically significant and powerful grip on how Spain oriented itself towards the non-Christians (176-179). He was also fascinated by the Convent and wrote from an anthropological perspective about the lifestyle of nuns, their "customs" and "ascetic life," and various "orders" (133-135). He insightfully analyzed the figure of Carlos II as a royal authority, traced back his genealogy in detail and contrasted him with the kings of the Hapsburg dynasty. He noted that Carlos II "has not traveled anywhere, nor has he led an army nor waged war. He likes the sedentary life and does not ride horses or any other animals. Instead, he always rides a coach with his wife and goes out to his hunting fields in his coach. He always goes to church and worships in accordance with all their rites" (153). He acutely predicted that his death will lead to a war of succession, noting that "if this despot, Carlos Segundo, dies without an heir to the throne of Spain, the throne will pass to the son of the French despot by right of his mother. Or by war" (172). The war proved to be a struggle between the two Houses of Habsburg and Bourbon to determine which dynasty would rule over the riches of the Spanish empire.

Al-Ghassani's insight was that too much urbanity generates social ills which have several societal manifestations and civilizational repercussions. One of the social maladies which he encountered during his journey was the widespread corruption of the "senior jurists" of the Inquisition. He noted that "anybody who has a trace of Judaism" is bereft of their "money, property and all his possessions." He was attentive to the fact that the power of the Inquisition outplayed that of the king, noting that "none can challenge the tribunal [Inquisition] or accuse [its members] of falsehood or avarice; so the members look for any reason and means to pounce on and destroy

[their victims]. None can effect the release of anybody in their hands, not even the king himself." (150). None "can talk badly about the friars or malign or accuse them of evil even if they personally witness their misdeeds" (135). If any of the accused did not abjure their belief in Judaism, then "they burn him without permitting any intercession for him" (150). The poor among the Spaniards started regarding such opportunities as a means of generating some income or revenge. Their classes' misery seems to have enlarged their appetite for such ceremonial public events. Plummer posits that

> these events were planned weeks in advance, and to garner the required number of victims, the Inquisitors would declare open season for accusations of treason and heresy. For the settling of scores, this was the time. Trials were usually pro forma; the accused were considered guilty from the start, and confessions were often induced with torture. (2020, 191)

Al-Ghassani witnessed the accusation of one of the king's officials "who oversaw the collection of the king's revenues" during his visit to Madrid. "They pounced on him, his wife, children, family, and servants, and threw them all in jail. They seized all his money and all his household property. They are still in jail despite once having large amounts of money" (al-Ghassani 2003, 151). While abstinence from menial jobs characterized the affluent classes and their sedentary lifestyle, the rest of society succumbed to corruption. False accusations became ways of making a living. Ibn Khaldun saw that civilizational disintegration and corruption as "the result of painful and trying efforts to satisfy the needs caused by their (luxury) customs; (the result) of the bad qualities they have acquired in the process of satisfying (those needs); […] immorality, wrongdoing, insincerity, and trickery, for the purposes of making a living in a proper or an improper manner, increase among them" (Ibn Khaldun 2015, 430). If as Ibn Khaldun purports, "sedentary culture is the goal of Bedouin life" (428), then whether in poor or rich classes, corruption interpenetrates the societal fabric of the urban city. On the one hand, the poor in pursuit of attaining sedentariness will face "many requirements for which (a man's) income is not sufficient" (429). As such, opting for duplicity becomes unavoidable to facilitate upward social mobility. On the other hand, the rich who aspire to fence off their dominion and ensure its longevity resort to underhand measures as well as engaging in the forging 'pure' genealogies and the false

accusations of 'impure' ancestry. Whether rich or poor, aiming to maintain or attain a luxurious lifestyle, Ibn Khaldun writes, "the soul comes to think about (making a living), to study it, and to use all possible trickery for the purpose. People are now devoted to lying, gambling, cheating, fraud, theft, perjury, and usury" (430). In addition to noting the transmutations which befell urban cities, al-Ghassani was also perceptive of the societal changes that characterized Spanish society, carefully reporting the bedouinism which saturated many towns, and the deteriorating conditions of many agricultural landscapes. He was acute to the demographic changes which affected Spain after the expulsion of the Moriscos, the majority of whom were handy "craftsmen," "farmers," and "tillers" (al-Ghassani 2003, 125).

As al-Ghassani was traveling through towns and cities, he contrasted the Bedouin basic lifestyle with the opulence of the city lifestyles echoing the Khaldunian dialectic of Bedouinism/Urbanity. Civilizational dynamics were one of the cardinal subjects of Ibn Khaldun. He focused on the socioeconomic rift which the transition from migratory to sedentary societies elicit in human history. While noting the civilizational glamour generated by such a shift, he pondered on the problem of unbridled urbanization and its cultivation of social and economic imbalances as a result of deteriorating cities and forlorn rural regions (Ibn Khaldun 2015, 128). While passing through several towns and cities, al-Ghassani picked up on their socio-economic conditions. He noted the "old urban ruins" of the city of Jerez, "some of its walls have survived but most have been destroyed: the Christians did not bother to build walls nor fortifications, except for cities near the sea, such as Cadiz, and Mount of Conquest, which is well-fortified and has a not-too-high wall because it faces the sea" (al-Ghassani 2003, 125). He surmised that such focus on the cities near the sea for purposes of fortification and the reception of Imperial riches lead to the negligence of many towns and villages. He commented on Lebrija as a city "close to bedouinism. The remains of its outer wall have also been destroyed" (125). When traveling through the city of Marchena he observed that it became "close to bedouinism" and was filled with "ruins of old urban dwelling," noting the void which rural migration elicited in the Spanish countryside (127). In fact, it is not only the forlorn conditions of the countryside that prompted such migrations, but also the allure of wealth and domesticated city lifestyle because "even in 'ordinary' years […] population drifted from smaller villages towards towns and cities" (Parker and Smith 2005, 20). Six miles from Madrid, al-Ghassani observed the effect of the migration flows noting that "the urban population of this city of Getafe, as well as of all other big cities in Spain, moved to Madrid"

(al-Ghassani 2003, 141). Upon encountering such scenes, he pondered upon the "peasants," "farmers," and "tillers" who still populated such dilapidated places noting from time to time that they were "mostly from the remnants of the Andalus" (131). Such a ponderance reminds us that the expulsion of the Moriscos "deprived agriculture of the most skilled manpower it possessed" (Vicens 2015, 423). In Lebrija, he wrote that "some of the Andalusians revealed to us their affiliation by discreet signs because they could not talk except secretly. Most of its population look like they are from the remnants of the Andalus" (al-Ghassani 2003, 131). As his retinue reached the region of Mancha, particularly a village called Torre de Juan, he penned that its "inhabitants lean toward bedouinism;" and that the region of Mancha "is rough, mountainous, rocky, and full of difficult paths. There are withered trees and dried river beds because this region, called Mancha, is very arid" (135).

Al-Ghassani was also a keen observer of the glamour of urbanization. When his retinue reached the city of Ecija, he wrote that

> we saw a beauty and splendor we did not see in any other city in this country. Ecija is situated in a depression near the river called Genil. The Christians still call this river by its accustomed name. It is a big river that descends from Gaudix [Wadi Ash] and from Genil from the mountains and the region of Granada. There are countless parks, gardens, orchards, mills, and various kinds of agriculture near this river. Nowhere else in this country did we see a place more spectacular. The city, with its gardens, parks, and residences, sits on the bank of the aforementioned river, like a firmament of moving planets. (127)

Al-Ghassani did not resort to Ibn Khaldun "to deflate the apparent glory of what he saw" (Matar 2005, 75). While he engaged in a meticulous analysis of urbanity and bedouinism, he did not favor the latter over the former. He made sure to highlight the features of both manifestations in pursuit of mapping out the socio-economic changes which transformed Spanish society in the seventeenth century. Just like he described the ruins and the under-populated rural towns and villages, he wondered upon the "numberless gardens, orchards and vineyards" of Cordova which was "a big and prosperous city, full of artifacts" (al-Ghassani 2003, 129) and on the outskirts of which "there are countless farming lands and stables to breed horses. Christians consider the horses

of Cordoba and its regions the best in all of Spain" (130). He was stunned by the "excellently built" bridges of Madrid that was "very spacious, with beautiful buildings, and a large population" (141). Matar rightfully notes that "al-Ghassani was unique in Magharibi historiography in employing Ibn Khaldun's seminal theory on the rise and fall of dynasties" (Matar 2005, 75). However, his analysis was not a disingenuous attempt to override Spain' civilizational glamour with religious superiority (52) nor was it an announcement of "the imminent implosion of the Spanish dynasty" (75). Rather his analysis encapsulated the highly domesticated life which the process of urbanization prompted in cities and its positive and detrimental effects on rural developments and city-dwellers lifestyles.

For instance, the contrast which al-Ghassani drew between the rural Mancha region which was "a very large region, six-days walking, a rough and stony area producing nothing but wormwood and other dry plants", and the region of Andalusia which while it was urbanized, its "inhabitants have not exerted themselves in building canals and drawing water, and all their farming is therefore done without irrigation—except what we have heard about in Granada and its regions, where water flows and runs in every place" (al-Ghassani 2003, 130), is meant to display important changes which were taking place in Spain. The desertion of rural areas which led to their dilapidation, the wastage of fertile lands due to people's abhorrent view of menial labor, the decadence of the affluent city dwellers and their unremitting pursuit of wealth which is partly responsible for the demise of Spain as a global power in the following centuries. The Hapsburg rule was extremely inegalitarian. Spain's taxation system was mandated disproportionately upon the impoverished part of Spanish society with the nobility being exempt from taxes. Spanish society determined high societal status to be proportionate to the free leisurely time one enjoys. Thus, work that needed manual labor was undignified for the nobility (Lehfeldt 2008). The contempt of commerce and trade by the aristocracy and its association with distrusted Moriscos and Conversos further exacerbated the socio-economic conditions of Spain. Al-Ghassani was right when he surmised that "the abundance and wealth brought from these lands [America], […] have overcome them [Spaniards]" (al-Ghassani 2003, 140). Now, several historians posit that Spanish over-dependency on external resources from the New World undermined the incentives to venture into labor which stimulate internal self-sufficiency, domestic production, and the will to create a healthy tax bureaucracy (Lynch 1992; Terry Lynn 1997).

Al-Ghassani resorted to an analytical approach germane to his episteme. Implementing the Khaldunian philosophy of history to Spain was a viable choice for al-Ghassani not "only because

the decline applied to a Christian rather than a Muslim state," (Matar 2005, 75) but rather because Spain was a nation not run by *sharia* law. As such, socio-economic ills which would have just been *Haram*, or Islamically prohibited remained open for discussion and analysis within Christian dominion. It is also due to a Khaldunian principle stated in the *Muqaddimah*: "It should be known that differences of condition among people are the result of the different ways in which they make their living" (Ibn Khaldun 2015, 161). On the one hand, Al-Ghassani understood that the wealthier a society gets, the more civilized it becomes, and the more its quality of life enhances. On the other hand, the more affluent a society gets, the more sedentary and high-maintenance it becomes, and such a continuum runs along altering luxuries into necessities, generating abhorrence for craftsmanship and manual labor, inciting rural migration, and engendering socio-economic and political maladies which evidently plagued Spain in the 17th century.

2. Islamicate Diplomacy: The Burgeoning of Moroccan Diplomatic Ethos

The first part of this chapter attended to Jeremey Black's plea that the study of diplomacy should not be solely located within the developmental structure of international relations but also in relation to its merit as a site of intellectual thought (Black 2010, 9). This part dovetails the previous sections by showcasing how the development of diplomacy and intellectual thought in early modern Morocco interplayed within the same emic epistemological framework. Such an interplay occurred within the complex contours of the Arabic *Rihla*. As we illuminated in the previous chapter, in Morocco the purpose of *Rihla* shifted paradigmatically. Traveling to holy sites and the compilation of geographic descriptions of commercial, social and political metropolitan centers were outnumbered by narratives of diplomacy and intellectual exchanges. The geographic proximity of Morocco to Europe, the history of border-crossing which characterized their history ever since the establishment of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula, and the independence of Morocco from Ottoman expansionism in the Mediterranean, led to the creation of a different type of literature known as ambassadorial travel writing (Idrissi 2013, 30). It was a change that underscored Moroccan efforts to navigate the power differentials between Europe and the Ottoman Empire as well as a change which epitomized the porosity of diplomatic ventures and intellectual activity particularly as those chosen for such missions were men of letters, *faqihs* trained in various sciences of the time. Of course, this transmutation added to the religious and commercial purposiveness of *Rihla*, a secular political dimension, which generated various jurisprudential and

theological debates about journeying to the 'House of War.' Here, al-Ghassani's account reiterates Abdelkabir Khatibi's "Other-Thought" in his view of diplomacy. His vision of the enterprise of diplomacy, as a global practice of international affairs, accounts for local histories and Islamic jurisprudential debates which underpinned such enterprise, particularly those concerning travel and territoriality.

Despite being commissioned by the Sultan, Al-Ghassani's title *The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive* is a subtle justificatory formulation that was meant to fend off the potential theological criticism around journeying to the 'House of War.' Al-Ghassani's resort to justificatory language is also evidenced in his prefatory when he wrote the following:

> PRAISE BE TO GOD who made possible the sojourn of minds and ideas in the gardens of histories and news, and who expanded the hearts to make choices, and to wander in lands and regions […] We praise the Almighty for what He has said about travel, which fills notebooks and tomes, and we thank Him for uncovering through travel the secrets of wonders and the wonders of secrets. […] He [Ismail], may God preserve him, sent me to the land of the *ruum* to bring back the captives of Islam, and to search in the Andalusian libraries for books of jurisprudence that the Muslims had left—so I could enjoy the guaranteed reward with him, may God preserve his glory. [This mission was] the first blessing that I received from his highness. So I went, with God's help, to those lands, with his honored permission and command, sheltering myself under his majesty and glory. (al-Ghassani 2003, 118)

Al-Ghassani's quote points to the shadow of the *Ulama* (religious scholars) which was cast over all Muslim subjects venturing into non-Muslim lands. The debate over territoriality in the Islamic tradition started from the 8th century, dividing the world into 'House of Islam' and 'House of War,' and setting various limitations and conditions which permit or prohibit travel to the latter. Throughout Muslim history, jurists have had lively debates over such a dualistic conceptualization of the world and over what renders a particular territory 'Islamic.' Other scholars have expanded such a territorial dualism to account for other categories or subcategories (Albrecht 2018, 48). The Maliki school of jurisprudence, which pertains to al-Ghassani's case, presented various views on the issue of traveling or residing in non-Muslim lands. Some objected "arguing that this would

force them to submit to non-Muslim laws" (65), while others "allow temporary stays on condition that Muslims were safe and hoped to prevail, one day, over non-Muslims" (65) Another group advanced that Muslims were permitted to reside in non-Muslim lands as long as they "did not fear enticement away from [their] religion," suggesting that such cases should be tackled individually to determine whether travel is allowed or not (65). This became a more pressing issue for Maliki jurists whose reaction toward the fall of al-Andalus rendered their position resolute and uncompromising (66). Established jurists advanced that even short journeys for the purpose of trade were impermissible (Abou el Fadl 1994, 142).

What deserves our attention here is that the views of Maliki scholars disclose how political reality influenced their legal and ethical positions. As Abou El Fadl argues, Maliki "theological doctrines" became "combined with political polemics because, for most Mālikīs, choosing to reside in a non-Muslim land was a religious and ethical decision as much as a political one. […] Making the political decision to favour non-Muslim territory is the ultimate unethical act" (163). While al-Ghassani's time was still saturated by the memories of loss and displacement, a new political reality obligated the rethinking of theological positions and ethical concerns. This was the age of empire, diplomacy, and statecraft. An age when the political economy of maritime and corsair activities mobilized captives as a currency of advancing political and diplomatic concerns. Al-Ghassani's title is further underpinned in his prefatory by stating that travel was a way of unraveling "the secrets of wonders and the wonders of secrets" in God's creation. He followed it directly by stating that he was commanded by Sultan Mulay Ismail, the religious and political authority of Morocco, to venture into "the land of the *ruum* to bring back the captives of Islam." He forthrightly posits that he went into Spain "with his honored permission and command, sheltering myself under his majesty and glory" (al-Ghassani 2003, 118). Al-Ghassani understood that a new world order was emerging where advancing international affairs could only be facilitated through diplomacy. Nonetheless, the decision of the Commander of the Faithful should not only be framed as a diplomatic gesture but as one particularly concerned with the faith of those under his sovereignty and religion. His statements reveal the attitudinal shift which the Moroccan palace adopted toward its European partners. The invocation of ransoming the captives was al-Ghassani's maneuver of circumventing the ethical concerns of Maliki jurists by drawing on the political economy of ransoming captives as an ethical Islamic activity. Ransoming captives is a highly recommendable act in Islam. It is also a phenomenon which brought Jews, Christians and

Muslims into a dialogic and reciprocatory relationship, one which was incumbent upon mutual understanding and trust (Hussein 2011, 55). Ransoming furnished the way for commercial and diplomatic relations between Muslims and Christians. As such, the development of Moroccan diplomacy is interlinked with the ransoming economy not only as a political activity but also as an ethical one. My reference in the title to Islamicate diplomatic ethics becomes lucid here as it manifests in al-Ghassani's use of an Islamic convention to further solidify the basis and justify the praxis of diplomacy in early modern Morocco. Moreover, al-Ghassani's use of Khaldunian philosophy of history should also be read in this light because it bestows upon his narrative an authoritative cultural capital which Ibn Khaldun stood for in Islamic history. Whether intellectually or diplomatically, al-Ghassani's encounter with modernity drew on an emic epistemological framework, one which is Islamically oriented yet aware of worldly political demands. His diplomatic praxis attended to the political changes of the early modern world which created novel issues. His use of Ibn Khaldun to decorticate a country which is not run by Sharia law also corresponded to the novel material and imperial reality of Spain. This showcases the interconnectedness of the intellectual and diplomatic as it presented itself in al-Ghassani's narrative.

Additionally, the debates in the Islamic world over territoriality had also other implications on the development of diplomacy as an enterprise of modern statecraft. M. S Anderson argued that in the 17th century, a diplomatic schism characterized Europe whereby a severance between "Western" states existed. In some of these states, "permanent diplomatic representation was well rooted and […] diplomatic relations were active and more or less continuous." However, in other peripheral, "less developed ones—the Scandinavian countries, Poland, Russia and in the west Scotland and Portugal — […] diplomacy was less important and diplomatic organization more primitive" (Anderson 2014, 27-28). Anderson's position is that what uniquely distinguished the history of diplomacy is its progressive unfolding towards the systematic configuration of residential representation. The implication is that whatever falls out of such lines of conformity might be considered trivial and unworthy of scholarly attention. If we accept the premise that medieval and early modern period diplomatic theory was dominated by religion (Watkins 2008, 2), then a Muslim subject could not stay permanently in a country outside the house of Islam

because it would be considered unreligious.[19] Additionally, most of the diplomatic exchanges in the medieval and early modern periods do not conform to Anderson's criteria, yet "they still had an impact on the shifting political, economic, religious, and cultural fortunes of European peoples and the emergence of national self-consciousness" (Watkins 2008, 4).

Furthermore, within similar lines of epistemological bias, Bernard Lewis posits that "Muslims, in general, had little desire or incentive to venture into Christian Europe," except to "ransom captives …[or] purchase supplies in times of shortage" (Lewis 2002, 37). Lewis's argument not only reinforces the metanarrative of Muslims' lack of psychological curiosity towards non-Muslim cultures, but is also oblivious to the political and diplomatic ethics which characterized some European states in their relations to non-European countries. For instance, one of the paramount reasons which rendered Muslims suspicious of assigning permanent ambassadors to foreign countries was showcased in our discussion of al-Hajari in the third chapter when he depicted the historical scene of the Ottoman Empire rejecting to give permanent residency to a Spanish ambassador, and listed some of the cardinal reasons for such rejection. Being aware of Spanish expansion in the New World, the triumphant narratives which paint Hernán Cortés as the champion who conquered the Aztec Empire and declared Mexico to be part of New Spain in 1519, al-Hajari invoked Cortés' case for what it was, a case of treason when the Spanish "brought him [Montezuma II] a present and killed him" (1997, 207). His invocation of such a treacherous scene was to be understood as a legal precedent against which Spanish diplomatic praxis was to be assessed. Additionally, he also evoked the case of the Treaty of Granada in 1492 which theoretically guaranteed a set of rights to the Andalusians, including religious tolerance, the election of their representative, and fair treatment in return for their surrender and capitulation. However, the treaty was abrogated specifically by the effort of Philip II and Cardinal Francisco Ximenez de Cisneros who decided to force Muslim inhabitants to be baptized, and burnt their Arabic books. This demand sounds like a trivial procedure, but under Catholic and Inquisitorial law, it entailed serious legal consequences for its victims. Additionally, in 1525 Charles I of Spain issued an order of forcefully converting all Muslims of Aragon to Christianity even though most

[19] However, as mentioned at the beginning of this section and as Sarah Albrecht illuminated, "Muslim scholars have continuously debated and redefined this territorial paradigm in response to, and in interaction with, particular historical experiences." (2018, 1). Sarah Albrecht, *Dar Al-Islam Revisited: Territoriality in Contemporary Islamic Legal Discourse on Muslims in the West*, (Brill: Leiden, 2018). Also see Lewis, Bernard. "Legal and historical reflections on the position of Muslim populations under non-Muslim rule," *Journal institute of muslim minority affairs,* Vol. 13, no. 1, 1992, pp. 1-16.

of them received little or no instruction in Catholic dogma and catechism.[20] Al-Hajari's invocation of Spanish treasonous diplomatic praxis sheds some light on the Islamic world's refusal to establish permanent ambassadors in countries that fall outside the House of Islam.

In his account, al-Ghassani also noted that "if it is their intention to stay for long […] It is the custom of the *ajami* [Christians] kings to send to their fellow kings messengers, called ambassadors, who serve as intermediaries among kings in regard to correspondence and other matters." However, "as for those who arrive from other [non-Christian] nations, they reside in that mansion until they depart—as was the case with the Turkish delegation that came to Spain, as it was said, forty years ago" (al-Ghassani 2003, 140). From al-Ghassani's comment, it seems that the reputation of Spanish diplomatic praxis was still lingering within Muslim consciousness almost a century after al-Hajari's embassy. The Ottoman Caliphate, which was knocking on the doors of Vienna in Eastern Europe and whose sovereignty reached the borders of Morocco in the Southern Mediterranean, still refused to establish long-residential ambassadors in Spain. Associating such refusal with psychological disinterestedness or religious superiority is an epistemological bias that stems from a reductionist claim, namely that knowledge about European diplomacy, politics, culture, and history constitutes the only true epistemic basis against which the veracity and aptitude of other knowledges is to be accessed.

After retrieving the coastal cities of Tangier and Larache, Sultan Mulay Ismail sent al-Ghassani to Spain with a letter in response to the one King Carlos II had sent him concerning "one hundred Christian captives (including six priests) who had been seized at the liberation of al-'Araish by the 'soldiers of Islam'" (al-Ghassani 2003, 113). Al-Ghassani was chosen by the Sultan because he was "an Islamic Faqih [scholar] and excellent scribe" (Ibn Zaydan 1990, 77). He was selected for such a mission because his ability to access Islamic books was trusted by the Sultan, ascertaining that he would bring the right manuscripts back to the Sultanic library. Al-Ghassani emerges in his narrative as a literary erudite, an intellectual whose avid knowledge of Islamic and European history is exemplary for his time. In his introduction to the Arabic manuscript, Nuri al-Jarrah designates al-Ghassani's writing as faithful and bereft of any fabrication (al-Jarrah 2002, 12). His character showcased immense tolerance in a period characterized by dogmatic conflicts between the world and the West, and when even Christians could not escape the fanatic zealousness

[20] See Benjamin Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos: Juan de Ribera and religious reform in Valencia, 1568–1614*. Vol. 124 (JHU Press, 2006).

of the Inquisition (13). This tolerance is evident on numerous occasions, as he often highlights the noble morals of the Friars hoping that their manners would lead them to the right path (Benhada 2005, 34).

Mulay Ismail's letter demarcated two important issues. The first was the exchange of fifty Christian captives with five hundred Muslim captives. The second is the ransoming of another fifty Christian captives with five thousand "Islamic books, select and authentic, that are stacked in the libraries of Seville, Cordoba, Granada, and other cities and villages, as our servant chooses, copies of the Qur'an and others" (al-Ghassani 2003, 114). Then, Mulay Ismail stated that "should there not be enough books," replace them with "Muslim captives, in whatever condition they are, and from whatever country they are […] woman and the boy, the adolescent and the aged from among our subjects as well as from among others" (114).

The Sultanic letter also invoked the historical and legal precedent of Spanish diplomatic praxis in relation to the Treaty of Granada, which listed sixty articles all of which were violated, and forty thousand Muslims were deceived (Tazi 1983, 108). Such evocation indicates that the sense of grievance and deceit still had an immediate manifestation in Moroccan circles, too. In fact, evoking terminologies such as "truth," "giving your word," "keeping your word" have been shown by Nabil Matar to be ubiquitous within Mulay Ismail's letters to European Kings (Matar 2020, 104). Ethical categories such as deceit or faithfulness in European-Muslim history were constantly used in the composition of Moroccan diplomatic correspondence with Europe. Al-Hajari's quote predated Mulay Ismail's letter, yet it made reference to the same and even more legal and diplomatic precedents from Spain's treasonous diplomatic history. Both Mulay Ismail and al-Hajari's terminologies are indicative of an ethical dimension that needed to be reinforced by referring to Spain's undiplomatic historical precedence. Deceiving and killing Montezuma, breaching the treaty with the Muslim Andalusian, incursions upon Italy and Low countries, Mulay Ismail's ethical terminologies are all mobilized as constituents of Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy which drew on worldly history while being aware of the intricacies of its Islamic context. The Ottomans' refusal to accept a residential Spanish ambassador exhibits that the Muslim world was aware of European imperial expansionism in the New World as well as Europe's internal conflicts and religious schism. This showcases that leveraging or drawing upon historical and legal precedents constituted a core element in Moroccan diplomatic praxis. This entangled context also reinforces the fact that "the historical coexistence between the expulsion of the Jews and the Moors

from Spain and the "discovery" of America" were landmarks for "modernity/coloniality" (Mignolo 2000, 49). However, from a decolonial hermeneutical standpoint, we can disclose that within the spatial contours of coloniality, i.e., within those dwelling in exteriority, such landmarks were invoked and *agentially* instrumentalized to advance diplomatic and political interests. As such, we can see that intellectually and diplomatically, Morocco's engagement with Spain in the 17th century rearticulates "the exterior borders by giving new meanings to the colonial difference" (50). While originating from the same historical axis, the contestation of coloniality was as diverse as the contexts from which it emanated, and the leverages which were available to the agential actors. As such, the articulation of modernity in the Islamic Maghreb followed a different logic, an "Other-Thought" than that of other nations which allow us to problematize the homogeneity of the colonial and some nativist decolonial discourses that, as we have noted in chapter one, do not differentiate between the geopolitical realities and the encounter with modernity/coloniality in the Islamic Maghreb and the Americas. While some of the Moroccan port cities were colonized by Spain, Mulay Ismail's Morocco had a powerful and different standing vis-à-vis its relation with Spain, compared to the experience of other countries in the Mediterranean as well as the Atlantic.

As far as freeing the Christian captives, Mulay Ismail's letter articulated clearly that after careful deliberation with the *Ulama* (Islamic scholars) of his court, it became evident that their status was captives of war. As such, they were not to be released freely without ransom. While the letter carved out the religious contours of diplomatic exchange stating that "we can't go against our Shari'a (law), which is the basis of our religion," it also included terminologies and attitudes which point to Moroccan Islamicate diplomatic thought in the early modern period. A terminological spectrum emerged where religious missions were interlaced with political realities, and jihad\crusade mentalities were circumvented by commercial interests on the Moroccan part. On the Northern part of the Mediterranean, while France and various other European nations had gone a long way into secularizing their diplomacy, Spain only reached such a stage until the second half of the eighteenth century rendering any relations with a Muslim nation as primarily driven by a crusader mentality, i.e., despite engaging in exchange of captives with Muslim powers, the prospect of peaceful co-existence was unfeasible for the Catholic monarchy, particularly as it held strongly to the notion of *Res Publica Christiana* (Windler 1999, 751-753).

Before shedding light on some of the exemplary manifestations of Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy, let us consider the context in which al-Ghassani traveled to Spain and the state of

Moroccan-Spanish relations in the age of Mulay Ismail. The Sultan was an exemplary ruler. Under his crown, the army was modernized, and all the principal mountainous and coastal cities were fortified. He began uniting his kingdom by regaining three paramount Spanish and English-occupied ports (Maamora in 1681, Tangiers in 1684, and Larache in 1689) and besieged the Spanish settlement of Ceuta from 1694 to 1727 (Tazi 1983, 105). His army consisted of more than one hundred and fifty thousand men, equipped with the latest technological and military arms, and his officers learned to combine artillery with infantry effectively. He established economic and commercial channels with various European countries which actually destabilize the geopolitical potency of Spain in the Atlantic as well as the Mediterranean (Beck 2015, 288). In fact, the power of the Sultan extended to the sub-Saharan nations where he cultivated military and political relations which were not only to inflate his armies but also to give him commercial monopoly by controlling the navigation of maritime activities. Despite his austere and volatile character, the Sultan had "a lively mind for philosophic discussions, a fascination with architecture, and a love for animals and horses in particular" (Plummer III 2020, 12). The intellectual landscape during his reign was experiencing a blooming effect from the bulk of books that his court was collecting and translating, from east and west, in all spheres of knowledge (Ishrakhan 2013).

Al-Ghassani's embassy embarked from a strong and renovated Morocco undergirded by various military triumphs, territorial unity, and internal political stability. He ventured into Spain supported by a powerful Morocco. As Lauren Becks informs us, Spain was economically insecure in light of Moroccan international flourishment (Beck 2015, 294). Yet, the language of the Sultanic letter, and of al-Ghassani himself still expressed an attitude that unearths a novel orientation in Moroccan diplomatic protocol. When al-Ghassani and his retinue reached Madrid, they were given twelve days to rest before having their audience with the king. Then, the Aleppan Christian translator of the Spanish palace approached al-Ghassani asking about the Moroccan protocol in such situations. Al-Ghassani writes:

> when the twelve days had passed, the count who was responsible for us came to tell us that his great one was preparing for the meetings. He inquired about our protocol of salutation so he could convey it [to the court], for he had not met before with any of our religion, may God almighty elevate it. We told him that we had one way for saluting those of our religion, and another for saluting those who were of a different religion. The latter salutation was

the following, "Peace be on the follower of guidance"—with nothing added to it. (al-Ghassani 2003, 143)

Al-Ghassani utilized the same Quranic verse which opened the Sultanic letter addressed to Carlos II, "Peace be on the follower of guidance."[21] He wrote that the translator left "wondering about the salutation he had never encountered before" (al-Ghassani 2003, 142). Eight years after al-Ghassani, Mulay Ismail sent the Moroccan ambassador Ibn Aisha to France to meet members of the French courts with letters that open with "peace to him who follows divine guidance and walks in the way of righteousness and finds truth" (143). Moroccan diplomacy was drawing upon rich Quranic teachings and the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) diplomatic ventures from the burgeoning moments of the Muslim Empire. The Prophet Muhammad addressed "Heraclius, the ruler of the Byzantines" opening his letter with "Peace be upon him who follows the right path."[22] Such a salutation was considered the proper conduct of address to the 'people of the book,' showcasing the inclusive spirit of Islamicate diplomacy even in times of political and military ascendency. Even though the word diplomacy as such did not appear within the Islamic terminological repertoire, rules of diplomatic conduct and peacebuilding had been endemic to Islam ever since the Treaty of Hudaybiyya in 628 (Habash 2013, 170). Even in times when Moroccan ships were seized by the French and all its sailors sent to the galleys, Mulay Ismail, furious as he was, still addressed a letter in August 1684 to King Louis XIV opening with "Greetings to him who follows the path of guidance and rejects the path of evil" (Matar 2020, 102). Here, the potential of Khatibi's "Other-Thought" becomes lucid and elaborate. While its epistemological yield has been demonstrated in al-Ghassani's intellectual venture, its ethical input resides in demarcating the limitations of modernity, which subalternized Moroccan diplomatic praxis, and of the dogmatic theocracy which interpreted Islam in exclusionary terms, disregarding the diversity which animated the history of the Islamic Maghreb. Mignolo renders the latter as a space characterized by "an epistemic irreducible difference," i.e., "a geohistorical location that is constructed as a crossing instead of as a grounding" (Mignolo 2000, 69; 2011c). Such an understanding renders the pigeonholing of the history of Maghreb unfeasible because such a space

[21] Qur'an Verse (20:47)
[22] The whole letter can be found in Khan, Majid Ali. *Muhammad, the final messenger*. (Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1980).

necessitates a kind of pondering which take into consideration the diversity of its historical process, which in the case of Moroccan diplomacy did not only encounter Europe but also extended its spiritual authority to other Muslim powers, such as the Ottoman Empire.

The Sultanic letter as well as al-Ghassani did not specify that the captives must be Moroccans. Rather, they emphasized that as long as they were Muslims, they were to be ransomed. King Carlos II ordered his officials to start collecting them and they "started looking for captives and gathering them together […] he was sending out to all regions for captives" (al-Ghassani 2003, 154). As we will see in the next chapter, in 1776, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah's ambassador Mahdi al-Ghazzal was sent to Spain to ransom 100 captives all of whom were Algerians. While such a gesture might be read as humane and within the spirit of Islam, it must also be read diplomatically and geopolitically. Mulay Ismail specified that the captives could be "from among our subjects as well as from among others" (114). Lauren Beck points out that "this sort of homecoming surely became part of a series of similar celebrations because Mawlay Ismaʿil deliberately sought out the redemption of slaves, irrespective of their nationality, on numerous occasions" (Beck 2015, 295). Mulay Ismail was referring to the Algerian and Ottoman captives who did not fall within his political sovereignty but do fall under his religious authority as the Commander of the Faithful. Such a move discloses to the Spanish as well as to the Ottomans, the Moroccan "Other-Thought" in international affairs and political expansion in the 17th century. Prior to al-Ghassani's embassy, in 1683 an alliance of armies between several European countries was inflicting a detrimental attack on the Ottomans who were defeated in Vienna and had since then been pushed "out of Hungary." The coalition also "liberated Belgrade and most of Serbia, and conquered large parts of Transylvania" (Plummer 2020, 201). However, at the time of al-Ghassani's mission, he reported some of the news circulated in Spanish newspapers about the Ottomans. He writes the following:

> news has arrived this hour that the king of the Turks, may God assist him, has gathered large numbers [of troops] and is intent, with God's help and will, on the city of Vienna, which is the capital of the German [Emperor] and his seat of government. They report in their [newspaper] publications this month that the vizier of Sultan Suleiman appeared with his force consisting of 125,000 fighters and was joined by the army of the Tatar [Hungarians], consisting of 80,000 fighters. They happened to reach a location used by the

> forces of a captain in the service of the emperor, who had 6,000 fighters. The Tatar fought the forces of the aforementioned captain and captured 4,000 of his followers, and killed many. Only a few escaped, not worthy of being counted. (al-Ghassani 2003, 168)

By retrieving captives irrespective of their nationalities, Mulay Ismail was reviving the position of Morocco, and himself as the Commander of the Faithful, on the international and Islamicate Mediterranean scene. Given that the "Ottoman emissaries never bothered to ransom Arabs in this period (Matar 2020, 194), the Islamic quest of Mulay Ismail which al-Ghassani hinted at in his account might have been the retrieval of captives (Turks and Algerians, both of whom were within the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty) as a gesture to open cooperative doors between two influential Muslim powers. It is also a gesture that de-homogenizes Muslim identities. It differentiates the variegated subjectivities and diplomatic praxis of the Moroccans from the Ottomans, a point which will be discussed in details in Uthman al-Miknasi's embassies in chapter six. Writing the cultural history of the Maghreb, should "on the one hand […] listen to the Maghreb resonate in its (linguistic, cultural, political) plurality, and on the other, only the outside rethought, decentered, subverted, diverted from its dominant determinations, can allow us to go beyond unformulated identities and differences" (Khatibi 2019, 23). The outside is not necessarily the Christian other because "Other-Thought" is an interventionist assessment of imperial politics that homogenizes, and a nativist dogma which essentializes identities, geographies and histories.

Another core element in Moroccan diplomacy, which is tied to ransoming captives, was the retrieval of Islamic manuscripts. The Islamic books requested by al-Ghassani generated a raging discussion in the Spanish Palace. Those Islamic books are a significant part of the Arabic collection stored in the Escorial, and their retrieval represented a cardinal axis in Moroccan-Spanish relations for generations.[23] The Spanish "claimed that the books had been burnt," and al-Ghassani wrote that "we saw the place that had been burned in the libraries and we saw how the fire had damaged them and the church extensively" (al-Ghassani 2003, 185). The Spanish king's advisors "warned him that surrendering the books would potentially arm the ambassador and his

[23] For Instance, the Spanish utilized such books as gifts to open diplomatic correspondence between Spain and Morocco. In 1766, the Spanish J. Juan came back with the Moroccan ambassador Mahdi al-Ghazzal to meet the Moroccan Sultan bringing with him 100 released captives and many Islamic books. See Landry, Travis, ed. 2006. *The Fruits of the Struggle in Diplomacy and War: Moroccan Ambassador Al-Ghazzal and His Diplomatic Retinue in Eighteenth-century Andalusia*. Bucknell University Press.

people with knowledge from which Spaniards could otherwise benefit," and as such "they devised a strategy 'that none of them would be given and instead he would be told the excuse that they were lost, and then the Moors would receive money in their stead'" (Beck 2015, 294). Al-Ghassani stood firmly by his Sultan's demand, and since the books were not to be disclosed by the Spanish, he requested the 1,000 captives. He wrote that "they tried to reduce the number from a thousand, but found no way of doing so and could not but abide by the command […] they started looking for captives and gathering them together" (al-Ghassani 2003, 154). Carlos II had to order all the governors of his kingdom to fetch captives even from outside the Iberian Peninsula to fulfill the huge number demanded by the Moroccan Sultan. Since most of the captives were either Muslim Algerians or Turks, recovering them could afterward lead to their fealty to the Sultan or at least cultivate strong relations with other rulers of the Muslim world. The Spanish were apprehensive that Mulay Ismail's gesture would open the gate to Moroccan-Ottoman cooperation particularly since the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire was demarcated at the Moroccan borders.

Furthermore, such cooperation might have haunted Spain because it could retrieve not only the Spanish settlements within Muslim lands but all Christian settlements within Muslim dominion. In fact, Moroccan diplomacy utilized such exchanges with various other European nations which were at odds with Spain. As Beck insightfully noted, "the premise for these exchanges could transform into stronger political relationships, such as the ones Morocco enjoyed with England, France, and the Netherlands, which then made an alliance with Spain less desirable" (Beck 2015, 292). Within such context, al-Ghassani aspired to invigorate a paradigmatic shift that situated Morocco in international affairs as a strong and strategic contender; a partner which could negotiate from a position of power. Through the recontextualization of Muslim-Christian relational legal precedents within a world driven by realpolitik, and expanding the Moroccan diplomatic horizon through leveraging European nations' internal enmities, al-Ghassani's narrative depicts a historical metamorphosis in the Western Mediterranean scene when Muslim Morocco inaugurated a novel era of diplomatic praxis between Europe and the Islamic World. In fact, in 1682, nine years before al-Ghassani's embassy, Sultan Ismail sent his ambassador Mohamed al-Tamim to encourage France to send delegations to Morocco for ransoming French captives from its shores. A treaty was signed between the two countries and one of its focal aims was the exchange of captives. The goals of this embassy reached further fruition when in 1698 ambassador Ibn Aisha reached Paris to solidify Moroccan-French relations and re-emphasize the covenants of the signed

treaty. Ibn Aisha also took this chance to ask for Islamic manuscripts from Louis XIV (Caillé 1951).

Al-Ghassani's embassy was an absolute success. He managed to free the 1,000 captives with the King's permission to keep any material belongings made during their captivity. In fact, it was an ambassadorial mission that brought prestigious triumph to the Sultan as well as to al-Ghassani, and from which I aspired to sketch out some of the burgeoning diplomatic ethos that characterized early modern Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy. The latter was developed in tandem with what al-Ghassani witnessed in Spain, how he was received himself, and the news which circulated in Spanish newspapers. For instance, he wrote about an official in Carlos II's palace called Carlos de Castillo. He noticed that his profession was solely limited to receiving ambassadorial delegations which arrive from Muslim and other countries. Oumelbanine Zhiri noted that such specialization might have shocked al-Ghassani because "his own work in the external relations of Morocco was not his only function in the government" (Zhiri 2016, 976). Al-Ghassani was meticulously attentive to European diplomatic culture, noting every glamorous reception they received and recording the protocols that preceded his audience with the king. He was aware of the work of foreign residential ambassadors "including one from Germany and another from England," and the diplomatic issues which the Englishman caused due to falling "in love with a woman who became pregnant" and converting to Catholicism (al-Ghassani 2003, 162). He wrote about the residential diplomats of "Valencia [Venice] and Portugal" who "settled with their children and wives," and the French diplomat who left Spain "when conflicts and war started between various Christian nations" (162). In an age characterized by Crusade/Jihad mentality, Mulay Ismail's insistence on dispatching a Moroccan embassy to Spain and the latter's reception of al-Ghassani and retinue must be read as a precedent that demonstrated how diplomatic praxis might override essentialist political theories of incommensurability while still retaining religious integrity for both parts. While theoretically it seemed unachievable, practical procedures of Muslim-Christian relations were evolving through diplomatic dispatches between Islamdom and Christendom.

I have aspired to showcase using a decolonial hermeneutical approach how the valuable information which al-Ghassani provided in his account showcases his historiographical tendency of attempting to understand the European other from and within its contemporary history. Such detailed historical breadth was needed for Morocco to orient its foreign policies toward European

nations. In her study of al-Ghassani, Zhiri criticized previous studies for merely comparing his account to those ambassadorial texts which followed in his suit. She preferred to read al-Ghassani's "text and context" as "inscribed in a contact zone, a liminal space of circulation and contestation, exchange and confrontation, that had prevailed for many centuries between North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula" (Zhiri 2016, 967). She designated such a space, following Andrew Hess, as the "archetypal Mediterranean frontier" (967). The word frontier is further emphasized in her study as a "barrier" (975), and as a "conflictual border between civilizations" (976). As I hope to have shown so far, in the early modern Mediterranean, Moroccan-Hispanic encounters were undergoing a spatial transition from 'frontier paradigm' to what Linda T. Darling articulates as, a 'borderline paradigm.' She understands the frontier to be a dividing mechanism, "a line [...] whose purpose is to delineate one population and set of conditions from another', 'an inimical place, defended by forts and armies.'" Borderline is a space of overlapping and blending (Darling 2012, 54). Whatever lays "outside the frontier is dwelling in a space of exteriority, a space characterized by a void of the conditions which render civilized life possible such as wealth, culture, agriculture, administrative institutions, literacy, cities etc…" (55).

Hess' concept of the archetypal frontier stands as monolithic citadel and implies an insular rigidity which, as shown through al-Ghassani's intellectual and diplomatic engagement with Spain, was not categorical. Despite the violent memories of his dispossessed ancestors, al-Ghassani appreciated the glamour and beauty of Spain, its clean cities, its modern social services, and diplomatic decorum. In light of his account, Hispano-Moroccan relations were gradually infiltrating the boundaries which were "frozen in a defensive posture" (Hess 2011, 55) and as such aligning with Darling's borderline paradigm. He was always inquisitive and intrigued by technology, religion, history, politics, economy, and diplomatic culture. While the insertion of foreign words and transliterated terms points to the technological differences between the two countries, it also insinuates the meticulosity with which al-Ghassani wanted his analysis of Spain to reach his Moroccan readers, showcasing the role of diplomacy in dismantling the metaphor of the unremitting dogmatic frontier between Islamdom and Christendom. His work evinces none of the vituperations which were almost endemic to modern European travel accounts and ambassadorial reports about Spain at the time (Zhiri 2016, 982). Additionally, al-Ghassani's intellectual parallelism with the political-economic thought of the *Arbitristas* further corroborates the borderline paradigm as a space of porosity; a space in which considered empirical observations

yield overlapping intellectual insights in spite of the differences of epistemic backgrounds, religious and political affiliations and diplomatic interests.

His understanding of Spain privileged contemporary history with peppered condemnations which were generated by the deteriorated mosques that turned into churches, inquisitional memories, and whatever reminded him of the historical tragedy of his people. While the crusade mentality dominated 17th-century Spanish diplomacy, Spain still needed to establish treaties with Southern Mediterranean states to fend off the chaos that characterized its relations with other European powers. Read within Mulay Ismail's geopolitical vision, al-Ghassani delivers to us an "Other-Thought," where the Mediterranean stands as a connector rather than a divider, a space where creedal differences can be circumvented through realpolitik and commercial interest, and where it can also orient diplomatic encounters across the Mediterranean.

3. Conclusion

In his evaluation of ambassadorial embassies from the Islamic world to Europe, Bernard Lewis dismisses Ottoman ambassadorial reports as superfluous and praises Moroccan ambassadors' depth and seriousness. He confessed that "the reader of the Moroccan and Ottoman Embassy reports of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cannot but be struck by the superior quality of Moroccan reporting of Europe" (Lewis 2001, 119). He considered al-Ghassani to be "a man of intelligence and discernment," and regarded his account to be "of quite extraordinary interest" (118). Matar noticed that "al-Ghassani had a great memory and eye for detail, both historical and contemporary" (Matar 2003b, 458). Such judgments may be contributed to al-Ghassani's astounding interest in European affairs, which transcended the limited focus of influential figures and events to reflect upon social, economic, and political change in Europe. Additionally, al-Ghassani wrote about socio-cultural festivities and sports such as ice-skaters who pass "as quick as lightning," (al-Ghassani 2003, 155) hunting, and dancing balls (154-55). He noted down how the inheritance of the crown erupted the enmity between Spain and France and recorded as many religious events as he could including Lent fasting, Mass (161-162), and Easter festivities (176). He wrote about the history of the break between the Catholics and the Protestants (172) as well as contemporary occurrences, the death of the Roman Pope, and the church's procedures of replacements (160). He reflected on the possible outcomes of the alliance between the French and

the Ottoman Empire (168), and provide a few succinct passages on the Bloodless Revolution of 1688 (165).

Al-Ghassani seized the opportunity of a diplomatic mission to showcase his intellectual erudition demonstrating his political, literary and intellectual acuities. I approached al-Ghassani through decolonial hermeneutics and located him in the borderline because his critical encounter with Europe was coterminous with his correspondence to local Islamic debates about territoriality and the purpose of travel to the 'House of War.' The epistemological weaving of an empiricist spirit with a religiously inflicted consciousness animated his analytical and critical stances. His dwelling in such interstitial space also allowed him to use the experience of encountering Spain as an opportunity to generate and formalize a diplomatic ethos that correlated to his Islamically-inflicted context as well as to European modernity; a line of thought which will be further fleshed out in the upcoming two chapters with al-Ghazzal's and al-Miknasi's embassies. Voicing out his perspective from the space of coloniality is not only intended to disclose a truth which has been buried by imperial epistemology, but more importantly to demonstrate the working of decolonial thought as a critical intervention in modernity, coloniality and nativist decoloniality.

Al-Ghassani sought information not only in Spain but in countries that he understood to be vital in Moroccan-European relations, highlighting not only their contemporary affairs but also their history and religious formation. As an intellectual, al-Ghassani encountered Spanish modernity with a Khaldunian spirit which questioned the cardinality of affluence and material lifestyles to the betterment of societal well-being. He perceived, and rightly so, the connections between the colonial wealth generation from the New World and the socioeconomic and demographic transmutations which befell Spanish society. While he lamented the lost Islamic Spain, with its past glories, he still observed modern Christian developments, the beautiful cities, the efficient social serveries, the magnificent palaces and hospitals which were "quite large and clean, offering residence of bed, food, drink, and pastries, and attendants who serve the sick" (158) and whose medical staff displayed "good manners" (159).

He coupled his intellectual engagement with Spanish modernity with a diplomatic mind keen to absorb as well as filter the knowledge information he acquired during his journey through his Islamic background. He represented a phase in which Moroccan diplomacy was still figuring out its ethos and the international landscape of Muslim-Christian affairs, leveraging certain legal precedents and European nations' relations to build up on them and bend the diplomatic scale

towards Morocco's interest. His account exemplifies the porousness between intellectual ventures and diplomatic engagements. It demonstrates for al-Ghassani that understanding the phenomenon of modernity necessitated the utilization of local knowledges to percolate its colonial and material manifestations. Such an understanding left us with a journey that remains the first fascinating Arab-Muslim account of 17th-century Spain in an era of European colonial expansion, societal transformations, and international affairs.

Chapter V: Re-thinking the Landscape of International Affairs: al-Ghazzal's Islamicate Diplomatic Thought in Light of His *Rihla* (1766-1767)

In comparison with al-Hajari and al-Ghassani, the Moroccan ambassador Ahmad Ibn al-Mahdi al-Ghazzal and his successor Uthman al-Miknasi who will be the focus of the next chapter, travelled to Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century and composed a *Rihla* entitled *The Result of Reasoned Judgement in Diplomacy and Jihad 1775-1776*. The diplomatic concerns which animated the seventeenth century were further accentuated and nuanced in terms of diplomatic nomenclature as well as the intellectual engagement with local jurisprudential traditions. Al-Ghazzal was a Moroccan jurist, politician, diplomat, and writer. He worked as a scribe for Sultan Mohammad ben Abdullah, and was his ambassador to the King of Spain between 1766 and 1767. The success of al-Ghazzal's diplomacy made the King of Spain Carlos III ask him to mediate for him between the Sultan of Morocco and the governor of Algeria to exchange prisoners with him. Al-Ghazzal succeeded in materializing such an exchange and supervised the exchange process of 1,600 prisoners between the two countries in 1768.

The Moroccan ambassador was appointed by Sultan Moulay Mohammad bin Abdallah (r. 1757–1790, also known as Mohamed III) to negotiate the conditions of a peace treaty and the release of Muslim captives held in Spain. He was also commanded to salvage as many Islamic books as possible. Al-Ghazzal had arrived in Spain a year earlier, in 1766, to negotiate either a lasting truce or a permanent peace between the two countries. Finally, in 1767 Jorge Juan went as ambassador to Marrakesh together with the Moroccan ambassador, and the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Commerce was signed. Al-Ghazzal's career is usually parochialized to the fact that he was dismissed by Sultan Mohamed III in 1775 due to a fabricated error in the above-mentioned drafted treaty which nearly led to a war between Morocco and Spain.

It appears that the city of Melilla was on the brink of falling into the hands of the Moroccans (Fernández Rodríguez 2017, 29). With the commitment of British subsidies and material support for a conflict against Spain, Mohammed III gathered a force of 30,000 to 40,000 soldiers along with formidable artillery in 1774, initiating the siege of Melilla (Rezette 1976, 42). The Spanish King Carlos III hastily corresponded with Sultan Sidi Mohamed ben Abdullah, reproaching him for violating the terms of the Treaty of Peace signed between both parties The conditions of this

treaty, which were negotiated on the Moroccan side by al-Ghazzal, clearly stipulated that peace would prevail between the two kingdoms by land and not by sea. However, the Spanish king claimed that the Arabic version of the treaty in his possession stated that peace was to be established both by land and sea. It seems that the Arabic-speaking Spaniards altered the Arabic text by changing the word 'not' by 'and' which in Arabic could be done by simply removing one letter (Kitlas 2022, 3). The Sultan believed that such a grave mistake stemmed from al-Ghazzal's excessive brevity and imprecision in wording, which the Spanish found easy to alter. Despite such an incident, al-Ghazzal's role in forging Moroccan diplomatic praxis is vital. This chapter aspires to shed light on his role in configuring Moroccan diplomacy by reinvigorating the diplomatic and conceptual nomenclature that developed in his *Rihla* to 18th-century Spain.

The aim of this chapter is to foreground a praxis of non-Western diplomacy by approaching a certain segment of the diplomatic universe that has been heretofore overlooked, and one could argue it is also more than ever pertinent to the effort aimed at understanding geopolitical and cultural impacts on governance in contemporary diplomacy (Cornago, 2013). Such an endeavor challenges the prevailing tendency in diplomatic studies scholarship to interpret 'non-Western' practices through a predominantly Western lens, and hence lays bare the way in which the formation of modern diplomacy within the rubric of Western Enlightenment,[24] as a systemic component of the professionalization of state-craftsmanship, depersonalized the praxis of diplomacy and denuded it of the cultural and historical specificity necessary for the understanding of 'non-Western' diplomatic ventures. Particularly in this respect, an Arab Muslim ambassador from the Islamic world in 18th-century Spain. Understanding the history of diplomacy as a European-based continuum of diplomatic development until it culminated in the global encompassment of modern diplomatic thought, Jeremy Black tells us, is "an insufficient guiding principle of analysis," (Black 2010, 8) as it overlooks the way diplomacy was thought about in the 'non-Western' conceptual frameworks. Additionally, within the context of al-Ghazzal's account, this chapter utilizes decolonial hermeneutics to critique the underlying bifurcational structure that underpins Western teleological histories of 'lumping' diversities of cultures and civilizations into the past under the banner of pre-modern.

[24] I am not using the historical category of 'the Enlightenment' only to designate a particular geography and history but also in terms of its historical significance as the grand narrative through which Europeans and Americans manufacture their own historical self-image in the service of 'Western history,' and where the centrality of reason overrides the 'unreason,' the 'distinct,' The different,' the so-called 'Other'.

My approach is premised upon the idea that any discussion of Islamicate societies necessitates a recognition of the contingencies and differences inherent in regions and continents, schools of jurisprudence, ethnicities, times of ascendancy or decline, moments of independence or colonial domination (as with the Ottoman and later Western domination of the Mediterranean), ascendant Islam or Islam in minority (Matar 2003, 35), and as such it accounts for the problematizations that have been historically decisive and divisive. In this chapter, I attempt to support that thesis by focusing on al-Ghazzal's conceptual and linguistic configurations of diplomacy, a venture which is germane to the ways in which Islam has been interpreted and practiced by different countries with different agendas and global impact. Both of these points are embodied in the local concept of *Mahaba*[25] which oriented 18th-century Morocco in its praxis of international affairs. The complexity of the concept of *Mahaba* abides in its ability to nurture a cross-cultural and cross-confessional climate where political realities outweigh cultural and religious adversity. Otherwise stated, it does not entertain retrospective indulgences as much as it engrosses in as well as expedites contemporary political actualities.

1. (G)localizing through Decolonial Hermeneutics: al-Ghazzal's Venture

The discussion that I offered at the beginning of this dissertation concerning the question of the Other and the epistemological bias of rendering modernity, without coloniality, as the yardstick against which Moroccan Muslim ambassadorial accounts are assessed will be further nuanced in relation to al-Ghazzal's account, as it was written in the 18th century, which in 'Western' historiography designates the period when the Enlightenment became the metanarrative that could render the world intelligible through categorical reason, disembodied rationality and empiricism. In *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, Bernard Lewis wrote that "the Renaissance, the Reformation, even the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment passed unnoticed in the Muslim world" (2001, 184). Undoubtedly, Lewis references the Enlightenment as a signifier to the totality of European intellectual history, and as synonymous with the development of reason, secular liberalism, democracy, professionalization of state-craftsmanship and the seat of modernity. To dismantle the audacious insularity with which he designated 'Western' civilization and escape the Eurocentric logic through which he viewed the world, local histories of international affairs and diplomatic encounter as al-Ghazzal's must be written not only to showcase how the Muslim world did notice

[25] It is the Arabic word for loving, friendship or amity.

the historical leap of Europe into modernity but also interacted, adapted, inter-fused, reformulated and rejected some of its aspects, from within its own epistemic realities. In doing so, the Muslim world as a historical category will be unhomogenized and set free from parochialist essentialisms. In this chapter, I aspire to showcase how historical reductionism van be transcended using decolonial hermeneutics which mandates the writing of parallel local histories that begin from within the epistemic contours of the Self to disclose the polyphony of voices that have been overlooked by teleological histories and consequently fertilize a soil to cultivate a decolonial space, where Muslim intellectuals and diplomats can relate to knowledge as subjects rather than always being rendered as objects to be epistemologically contained and categorized. As P.C. Ingham posits, "contrapuntal 'difference' demands a kind of conceptual/methodological polyphony, a field in which…the 'historical thickness' of the colonial encounter opens up into a variety of 'distinct' particulars" (2003, 54). It is one of these particulars that this chapter aspires to bring forward, especially in relation to the local, cultural and religious elements with which al-Ghazzal inter-fused with his diplomatic practice, thus carrying out a local 'way of doing' that evades the protocolary of 'Western' modernity.

When dealing with 18th-century narratives of diplomatic encounters between the Islamic world and Christendom, the radicality of difference does not as much stem from religion as it does from the disparity generated by the European leap into modernity which in its gradual rise to power undermined the dominion of the Church and shifted its center from a theo-political to an ego-political configuration of the world (Grosfoguel and Meilants 2006, 4); a world where discourses of reason and rationality played a major role in reforging the hierarchical structure of the world from the register of infidels and 'people with the wrong God' to the nomenclature of savagery and primitivity (4). Indifferent to the coloniality of European modernity, Bernard Lewis claims that such development did not ignite any curiosity in the Islamic world. He writes that "[t]he Muslim world, proud and confident of its superiority, and possessing its own internal communication by land and sea, could afford to despise the barbarous impoverished infidel in the cold and miserable lands of the North" (1957, 4). Lewis seems to have excelled at imagining the world as consisting of insular civilizational blocs that are not only impenetrable but oppositional. The religious incommensurability that Lewis ranted about when he posited that "the world was divided into two, the *Dar al-Islam*, the House of Islam, in which Islamic government and Islamic law prevailed, and the *Dar al-Harb*, the House of War, in which infidel rulers for the time being remained in power"

(1993, 47), implies that even when Muslims did cross, intellectually or physically, into the other side of the Mediterranean, religion hindered the processing of the so-called House of War. It is precisely here that al-Ghazzal's diplomatic philosophy becomes pertinent as it showcases how a Muslim intellectual in the 18th century utilized his islamically-inflected intellectual rubric to generate a particular conceptualization of Islamicate diplomacy, which he envisioned as operating within what Peter Kitlas, building on the Hanafi scholar al-Mawardi's conceptualization of Islamic territoriality, rendered as *dār al-ʿahd* (land of treaty) (2022, 24) or as Sarah Albrecht translates it "the Abode of the Covenant" (2018, 192). Al-Ghazzal's specificity in relation to his predecessor al-Ghassani resides in the fact that al-Ghazzal could historically be situated in relation to the Enlightenment ideals of reason and rationality as a basis of re-configuring the body politic, whereas al-Ghassani's encounter with Spanish modernity was still oriented by the centrality of Christendom as a religio-political philosophy. While both of them travelled to Spain, they did so within two different epistemes, which will be evidenced in their disparate intellectual concerns despite operating within the broader context of Moroccan diplomacy.

In *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*, the African writer and literary critic Ngugi Wa Thiong'o analyses Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and George Lamming's *the Castle of My Skin*, concluding that while Conrad critiqued the empire from within its expansionist center, Lamming launched his onslaught from the center of resistance. Thus, establishing a plurality of centers where Manicheanism was structurally disentangled. Wa Thiong'o states that

> the problem arises from the tendency to see the local and the universal in mechanical opposition; and the relativity of cultures in a temporal ground of equality almost as if cultures within a nation and between nations have developed on parallel bars towards parallel ends that never meet, or if they meet, they do so in infinity. (2004, 44)

In the same spirit of Wa Thiong'o', it is my contention that shedding light on al-Ghazzal's travelogue to Spain in the 18th century conceptualizes knowledge not as universally established by a transcendent subject but as universally construed by historical subjects who relate to knowledge agentially, i.e., as subjects concerned with the epistemic conditions of their situatedness both locally and in the modern/colonial hierarchal structure of the world. My formation of decolonial hermeneutics bestows upon this critical inquiry a political and ethical dimension. In the process of

constructing a narrative or formulating a theory to vocalize a silent voice in the history of Islamicate diplomacy and international affairs, I fathom that my loci of enunciation as an understanding subject problematizes my position and my assumption of the truth. However, such a problematisation is the primal catalyst for my belief that other narratives, theories, and critical formulations have the right to claim that very truth. As Walter Mignolo puts it, "while the understanding subject has to assume the truth of what is known and understood, he or she also has to assume the existence of alternative politics of location with equal rights to claim the truth" (1995, 15).

The very idea that I am using the terms 'Western'/'non-Western' to talk about what is, in essence, a global practice should give pause. Rather than having one 'diplomacy', a decolonial-inflicted hermeneutics suggest a multiplicity of 'diplomacies', as some have suggested (Cornago, 2013). Al-Ghazzal's voice needs to be injected into these multiplicities as a diplomatic adventure that by endeavoring to make sense of Western protocols and forms of state-craftsmanship in 18th-century Spain, critically accessed and re-configured them with (at the time) a newly emerging, Islamicate cultural economy and political praxis. In other words, it conferred upon Western diplomatic praxis a cultural aura that escaped the universalist modalities undergirding the formation of Western diplomacy within the context of the Enlightenment. As Jeremy Black articulated, "the challenge of the 'worldwide' includes not only the need to discuss non-Western notions of diplomacy but also to consider encounters with Western concepts" (2010, 9). Al-Ghazzal's understanding of the changing global conditions of international affairs was channeled toward rethinking the situatedness of diplomatic praxis within the contours of Islamic jurisprudence.

2. The Political and Diplomatic Context of al-Ghazzal's Embassy

Sultan Mohamed III was adamant on strengthening the Moroccan coasts and protecting them from foreign threats. He was determined to reclaim what remained of them from foreign occupation. When he ascended to the throne, the country was in political and economic disarray. He understood that if Morocco were to realign itself on the global political scene, it had to establish solid internal foundations such as the reorganization of the military, the modernization of the administrative and financial governance, and the founding of a centralized religious apparatus under an Islam that could unify the state politically (Landry 2017, 3).

As soon as he assumed the throne, he allocated funds for defense and began inspecting the northern borders. He resolved to fortify Tangier and establish a military presence in Martil. He then turned his attention to the occupied city of Ceuta (al-Nasiri 1997, 8-9). However, its formidable fortifications by the Spanish convinced him of the impossibility of its recovery with the 'modest' military resources available to the Moroccan army. He averted his gaze from it and instead focused on its borders. He entrusted the Anjra tribe with appointing a group of marksmen to guard it, providing them with assistance (al-Rabati 1986, 171). Then, He ordered the construction of ships in Tetouan and then returned to the cities of Sale and Rabat, issuing orders to ship captains to build vessels and intensify maritime activities against European enemy ships. Subsequently, he traveled to Marrakech and wrote to European merchants in Safi, requesting them to procure the equipment for the aforementioned vessels from their homelands, encouraging them to compete in acquiring these supplies (172).

The result of these measures was the bombardment of the city of Sale in 1765. This bombardment inflicted significant losses on the residents' properties. Shortly thereafter, in an act of violent aggression, the French fleet bombarded the city of Larache, reducing it to ruins in the same year (al-Nasiri 1997, 21). They rained down thousands of heavy shells upon the city, destroying its buildings and mosques leading terrified inhabitants to flee to safer places. Subsequently, French sailors ventured into the Valley of Al-Lakous with the intent to sabotage the Sultan's ships that were present there. However, the Moroccan fighters managed to significantly weaken their adversary by killing three hundred French sailors. They later redeemed themselves with substantial financial compensation and seized eleven boats, capturing fifty captives from their fifteen-ship fleet (al-Nasiri 1997, 26). Following this victory, the Sultan was able to negotiate with France on equal terms and concluded a peace treaty with them on 18 March 1767. Additionally, the Moroccan forces managed to liberate the major Atlantic port city of Mazagan (El Jadida) after a severe siege. As a result, the Portuguese were compelled to surrender, and the city was reclaimed on March 10, 1769 (Harakat 1994, 199). The retrieval of Mazagan encouraged the Sultan to exert efforts towards the liberation of the city of Melilla. At the beginning of 1771, he embarked on an attempt to reclaim this city and besieged it with the army, surrounding it with cannons and catapults, and continued to bombard it for days (al-Rabati 1986, 170). He made a second attempt to retrieve it in 1774. As the city was about to be captured by the Moroccans, Carlos III sent a letter

to Sultan Mohammad III reproaching him for breaking the treaty which, as mentioned above, was drafted by al-Ghazzal and forged by the Spanish.

On the other side of the Mediterranean shore, the monarch Carlos III came to the throne finding Spain in dire conditions as well. He had to face increasing national debt, crop shortages, soaring prices on basic goods, the church's unchecked authority and the domination of the French and the English on the global scene (Landry 2017, 4). On both sides, strategically fostering good international relations that would facilitate trade and political alliances was inevitable if both countries were to get back on track again. In this tumultuous context, the coming of the Moroccan Sultan Sidi Mohamed ben Abdullah to the throne could be seen as the era when the burgeoning of a progressive worldview that aspired to carve out a space for Morocco on an international level, and simultaneously crystallize the state internally, was taking place. This explains why diplomacy and international affairs represented a priority. The Moroccan Sultan was aware of the international atmosphere and the colonial aspirations of European states. However, the focus on the figure of the Sultan usually mystifies the contribution of Moroccan individual ambassadors to the conceptualization of Moroccan diplomacy and the advancement of its interests on the global scene. Al-Ghazzal was also aware of the global transmutation that befell his era and emphasized the role of diplomacy in navigating the landscape of international affairs using piracy and the exchange of captives as currencies to establish diplomatic relations.

This awareness is reflected even in the titles of the three travelogues that were written during the 18th century, two of which will be discussed in the next chapter. For the first time, the word "المهادنة" (Al-Muhadana) which represented what diplomacy stood for in Muslim contexts,[26] was used in the title of al-Ghazzal's account *The Result of Reasoned Judgement in Diplomacy and Jihad (1775-1776)* indicating the need as well as the urgency to keep up with the language as well as the new world order that the global scene was ushering into. The words used by al-Ghazzal for his original Arabic title *Natijat al-Ijtihad fi al-Muhadana wa al-Jihad* bears several translations, some of which, for instance, are lost in Abdulrahman al-Ruwaishan's English rendition *The Fruit of Struggle in Diplomacy and War*. This issue will be tackled in section four of this chapter. Still,

[26] This term bears various shades of meaning and could be translated as follows to: reconciliation, compromise, mediation, concession, agreement, negotiation, settlement, truce, pacification, amicable resolution. I understand that diplomacy is a complicated word to describe 18th-century Moroccan efforts in international affairs because the word has a Eurocentric undercurrent which could be traced back to the ideals of the Enlightenment. However, the shades of meaning of *al-Muhadana* refer to the ends which diplomacy pursue in the global arena of international affairs and as such I opted for it.

the vigorous interest in diplomacy and state-craftsmanship steered away from the overarching nostalgic tincture that characterized all prior diplomatic missions to Spain. Moroccan forms of statecraft and diplomacy inhibited an ethos, a specificity that developed in parallel to European international relations and foreign policies. However, unlike European diplomacy, I postulate that Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy embodied two complimentary tendencies. The first one was the humanism of the actual travel, and the spontaneity of the encounter with all ranks of people (state and non-state actors), working through issues and problems that come up in the process of trying to make sense of a new environment; a diplomatic practice which was further adopted by his successor al-Miknasi. Second, a form of statecraft which is culturally specific as it escapes the prescription of rigid bureaucracy where a state subject is sent to fulfill a mission where he or she as a subject has no autonomy in how it unfolds.

Additionally, despite the unremitting material and moral support of the Sultan Mohamed III to the Ottomans, Moroccan Islamicate diplomatic praxis as it is exemplified by al-Ghazzal and the Sultan himself, distinguished itself even from its Ottoman counterparts in certain elements which, for instance, pertain to the political economy of ransoming captives. As we have mentioned before, this will be further discussed in the next chapter when al-Miknasi reproaches the Ottomans for ransoming only Turks and leaving other Muslim prisoners. Prior to al-Ghazzal's embassy, after receiving a letter from Muslim captives in Spain informing him of their dire living conditions, Mohamed III sent a letter to Carlos III, responding as follows:

> I say to you: that in our religion of Islam, we cannot neglect the prisoners and let them stay in the shackles of captivity. There is no reason that one appointed by God to lead and preserve security should ignore them. Neither does your religion- as we suppose allow you to leave your people in captivity with us, when you have the opportunity and ability to free them, and especially when you have Muslim prisoners, as well as goods, to trade for them. Truly, there is no room for negligence from either side, and war is a competition in gains and concessions. (Al-Ghazzal 1980, 39)

While the letter evokes religion as the axis around which ransoming captives took place, as we have seen with al-Ghassani before, the enterprise of redeeming captives was a political economy whereby they were invoked as currencies which initiates and facilitates diplomatic

relations between Morocco and Europe. This does not deny the religious and ethical significance of ransoming captives but it supplements it with a worldly political aura summed up in Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah's statement that "war is a competition in gains and concessions" (al-Ghazzal 2017, 52-53; Arabic 1980, 39). The concessions pertain to the realm of diplomacy which the Sultan invokes as the venue in which a truce can be reached between neighboring nations. Al-Ghazzal notes that the appeal of such a proposal led the King Carlos III to begin "to speak of the matter of peace making with some of his subjects, until the rumor of a truce spread across the land of the Spaniards" (2017, 53). In a gesture of goodwill exhibited by the Spanish king, which the Sultan perceived as "out of sincere, heartfelt service" he released what was readily available from the captives and sent them to Morocco. The Moroccan Sultan also released Spanish captives and sent two friars, along with other gifts, as a sign of goodwill noting that once the truce is decreed, he will also release Christians from other nations so that "by this kind act, [Carlos III] might have special recognition among other nations" (54).

The Sultan was projecting his diplomatic philosophy on his Spaniard counterparts. The efforts of the Moroccan Sultan to end captivity did not differentiate between Muslims from different nations. In another letter sent to Carlos III, he informed him that "in this interest is further proof of what we initially communicated to the *Taghiya*[27] [tyrant: referring to the king Carlos III], that a Muslim with us one of a kind, whether he be from our nation or a country of strangers" (al-Ghazzal 2017, 55). The significance of the Sultan's position resides in its geopolitical and religious demarcation of the Moroccan sphere of influence in the Islamic world vis-à-vis the Ottoman Caliphate. Most of the captives who were redeemed by al-Ghazzal were Algerian subjects under the political and religious sovereignty of the Ottoman Caliph. However, when the Sultan, as Commander of the Faithful, one who is as concerned with the religious integrity of his subjects as with their political standing, ransoms Muslim captives irrespective of their political status, it demarcates Moroccan diplomacy in the international sphere as particularly distinct from European as well as Ottoman influence.

At this stage, we can conclude that the Moroccan model of Islamicate diplomacy was guided by principles that included justice, fairness, and the protection of the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The Sultan's initiative of using the political economy of ransoming as a means

[27] *Taghiya* which literally translates to the tyrant, was a common way of characterizing Christian rulers in Moroccan travelogues and histories of other nations.

of establishing and advancing diplomatic interests, showcasing goodwill, and facilitating negotiations, was driven by an Islamic spirit of *Maslaha* (Common good, welfare) and respect, as it could be gleaned from the Sultan's almost scornful address to the Spanish king Carlos III. He wrote the following:

> The trouble at hand is from your lack of understanding about the Muslim prisoners you have. You fail to distinguish between the scholar with his knowledge and the uneducated in his heedlessness. You could do so, and create a separate area for the scholars, as well as give them respect and protection [so that] … no one would inflict harm on them or take away their rights. We are doing the same with friars that have been captured, […] We do not burden them with servitude, nor do we deny them care. For what reason, then, do you fail to respect the high-ranking among the prisoners you hold, and why do you not care for the bearer of God's book, despite the fact that these prisoners are distinguished from the rest in the eyes of God? (al-Ghazzal 2017, 53; 1980, 39-40).

The excerpts from the Sultan's letter highlights the ethical duty to protect prisoners, especially those who may hold valuable knowledge or have a significant role in society. Diplomacy and international relations should involve safeguarding the rights and well-being of prisoners, ensuring that they are not harmed or denied their basic rights. It underscores the importance of not discriminating against prisoners based on their background or beliefs. In the context of diplomacy and international relations, it suggests that all individuals, regardless of their religious or cultural affiliations, should be treated fairly and with respect. Even in the prisoner-of-war situation, the Sultan emphasized that those who bear 'God's book' whether Muslim scholars or Christian friars should be differentiated from other classes of society. This also undergirds an ethical commitment to cut across the religious divide in pursuit of upholding and recognizing human dignity. This is not meant to overshadow the efforts of al-Ghazzal under the figure of the Sultan but rather to showcase the diplomatic and political context in which al-Ghazzal formulated his diplomatic philosophy, one which was driven by working towards peaceful resolutions of conflicts.

3. **Al-Ghazzal's Diplomatic Philosophy**

As a first instance of al-Ghazzal's diplomatic mind, it is worth evoking how he managed to get himself to preside over the Moroccan embassy to Spain. He was appointed at the beginning as the retinue's scribe and ordered not only "to record what [he] heard, saw, apprehended and learned on this fortunate expedition," but also "to narrate all that [he] witnessed of the cities and villages; and to make sense of all that [he] observed during [his] stay and journey" (al-Ghazzal 2017, 55). The Sultan appointed his maternal uncles, 'Amara Ben Musa and Mohamed ben Nasir as ambassadors who were to be the main representatives of the Sultan in Spain. However, al-Ghazzal seems to have been apprehensive about the diplomatic caliber of the Sultan's uncles. As such, when they reached Gibraltar he wrote a letter to the Sultan, stating:

> I want you to inform the Commander of the Faithful that these two men [referring to the Sultan's uncles] have no knowledge of the laws of the Christians, and I fear the consequences of this matter. Therefore, my Master, do not hold me responsible for their actions, as I am innocent of that. (al-Zayani, 1992, 398)[28]

The first gesture we get of al-Ghazzal's mind for diplomacy was the way in which he got himself chosen to preside over the ambassadorial journey to Spain. The Moroccan Sultan chose his uncles who were high-ranking military officials. Al-Ghazzal observed them and he was apprehensive that their unfamiliarity with Christian laws and customs might hurdle the success of the mission. Consequently, he wrote to the Sultan to inform him of his apprehension, and in so doing he was appointed to preside the journey (al-Ghazzal 1980, 9). The Moroccan court historian Abu al-Qasim al-Zayani noted down the Sultan's response, writing: "By God, he [referring to al-Ghazzal] spoke nothing but the truth. I regretted endorsing them over him. I only considered their rank and overlooked other means. Write a letter to the Spanish tyrant and tell him that I have directed my scribe, Ahmed Al-Ghazzal, as an ambassador" (1992, 398). Such attentiveness to details, intellectual savvy, and the urgency to take action were necessary for the success of the mission. Al-Ghazzal's action testifies to the space of agential practices in which the Moroccan ambassador could intervene as long as their vision aligns with the *Maslaha*, the common good of the country. It is also his candidness that speaks against the general tendency of Moroccan as well as 'Western' historians to parochially tether Moroccan diplomatic efforts to the figure of the Sultan

[28] Translations are mine until noted otherwise.

as the sole harbinger of diplomatic affairs. He showcased a strong confidence in his knowledge of the 'Christian laws,' ensuring the Sultan of his ability to be the cross-cultural agent to materialize Moroccan diplomatic interests.

Additionally, al-Ghazzal's vision of diplomacy is premised upon the primacy of knowledge and experience over rank even if it is from Sultanic kin. As we have noted before, al-Ghazzal's mission, despite the translation issue, was a success. However, his mission, and that of his predecessors and successors are usually read as a form of *ad hoc* diplomacy. Randomness and individual exceptionalism are always invoked as the undercurrent of the Moroccan diplomatic corps. Al-Ghazzal sheds light on another dimension as he was being prepared to venture into Spain. he writes:

> When the time for departure had arrived, and the need for saying farewell had come, the Sultan carefully informed him [al-Ghazzal] of what his work would be in the land to which he was traveling. He ordered him to fulfill his duty and explained the charge to him letter-by-letter, part of this mission being what has already been mentioned of the affair of the captives. He also reviewed his message to the Spanish in phrase, meaning, and implication, in exhaustive detail and description. Some of this instruction was on how he should greet the tyrant and converse with him in an appropriate fashion, according to custom and what the Islamic way dictated, in speech and deed, in receiving and giving. Taking care of the issue of the captives was the foremost matter, of course, and a sure benefit. Anything other than that was to be sought merely as circumstances allowed. (2017, 56; 1980, 44)

The paragraph testifies to the insubstantiality of the *ad hoc* argument. Al-Ghazzal invokes the thorough briefing with which the Sultan ensured his preparedness, going through the objectives of the mission 'letter by letter.' The Sultan personally reviewed the letter that would be conveyed to the Spanish authorities both in Arabic and Spanish. This suggests a meticulous approach to diplomacy, with a focus on the wording, meaning, and implications of the message to ensure it conveyed the Sultan's intentions accurately. More importantly, there is an emphasis on an Islamicate form of etiquette and protocol pertaining to how al-Ghazzal should greet and converse with the Spanish authorities in an appropriate and customary manner. This attention to diplomatic protocol underscores the importance of maintaining respectful and culturally sensitive interactions.

The paragraph rounds up with offering al-Ghazzal a space of leeway where his autonomy and his savviness could be exercised depending on the circumstantial realities which he could encounter in the lands of the Spaniards. This demonstrates a degree of flexibility in diplomacy, recognizing that diplomatic missions may need to adapt to changing situations or opportunities.

Irrespective of such nuances, the Moroccan historian Abdullah Laroui stated that Moroccan diplomacy, "in view of its futile and ephemeral aims, was hardly deserving of the name" (2015, 244). This idea stems from the vision that the Moroccan diplomatic cadre was not akin to the European Enlightenment model, with its emphasis on disembodied rationality and the secularization of the body politic. Al-Ghazzal's diplomatic mission actually testifies to the affective acuities needed to further diplomatic interests. It steers away from the 18th-century European professionalization model by drawing on conceptualizations of *Mahaba* and Friendship as cardinal to the advancement of diplomacy. The 18th-century European professionalization model of diplomacy placed a greater emphasis on reason and rationality. This period, which corresponded to the Age of Enlightenment, witnessed a shift towards more systematic and reasoned approaches to diplomacy. The emerging diplomatic practices were influenced by Enlightenment ideals that promoted reason, scientific inquiry, and rational decision-making, downplaying the role of personal relationships and affectivity in advancing diplomatic relations (Constantinou et al 2016, 14).

While al-Ghazzal also emphasizes the use of *Ijtihad* (reasoned judgement) as indicated in the title of his account, he also underscored the centrality of affective acuities and cultivating a salubrious relational environment with various levels of state as well as non-state actors. In one of his communications, the Franciscan Bartolmé Giron, who was elected by the monarch Carlos III to meet the Moroccan Sultan, wrote about al-Ghazzal that "his dignified manner, that captivates those that see him, and even more those who speak with him, clearly indicates the nobility of his origin" (Qtd in Landy 2017, 7). Matar seems to have been the first to note the role of *Mahaba* in Moroccan diplomatic philosophy. In his study of the 17th-century Moroccan ambassador to France Ibn Aisha, he propounds that at a time when European diplomats were being trained as diplomats in the secular body politic, Moroccan diplomacy still believed that "personal familiarity would override political differences" (2015, 63). It is at such instances that decolonial hermeneutics becomes pertinent to highlight the epistemological biases which underpin such scholarly ventures. While Matar did notice that the Moroccan and European Ambassadors operated from within

different epistemic and intellectual traditions, he inattentively foregrounded the primacy of the European diplomatic model as the epicenter against which Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy was to be critiqued and rendered as naïve for its belief in friendship and *Mahaba* instead of emulating the European model of "a state institution that dictated their [referring to European ambassadors] actions and strategies, irrespective of individual relations" (63).

Al-Ghazzal embodied Matar's concept of *Mahaba*, and after he delivered his speech to the Spanish monarch, he said to him "god requite you with good for this fair speech of yours. Our hearts have been eased and our minds have grown comfortable because of your pleasing talk, which is born from a wise and unerring mind" (2017, 127) After all, al-Ghazzal was able to negotiate a treaty with Spain, the most difficult country because of the large number of Muslim captives held there (Matar 2015, 27). The particularity of the concept of *Mahaba* resides in its capacity to cultivate a space inspired by religion but driven by politics. Al-Ghazzal associated such a concept with the Prophet Muhammed saying "there is in kindness to every soft kidney a good deed and a reward from God" (2017, 65). The Eurocentric rendition of al-Ghazzal would proceed as follows: coming from a conservative Muslim society regulated by the Maliki School of Islamic law which is a strict jurisprudence desiring to resuscitate Medinan practices that are deemed uncorrupted and seen as remaining as they were in the Prophet Muhammad's days, al-Ghazzal would be expected to pour his utmost opprobrium and denounce the Christians, particularly the Spanish because of what they did to the Moriscos just two centuries ago from the time when he travelled to Spain. Additionally, at that time Spain was Morocco's archenemy especially because of its military encroachment and occupation of coastal cities and strategic ports. However, al-Ghazzal displays a nuanced understanding of the new world order in the 18th century. Aware of the pressure which the Moroccan jurisprudential class was pushing on the Moroccan Sultan to attack and reclaim Ceuta and Melilla, al-Ghazzal writes, in a very diplomatic style:

> if an Islamic state were to try to fight them for Andalusia and the mastery of the Iberian Peninsula, it would be barred from that by reality and *Sharia;* as for reality the verdict of God is surely decreed by fate, and he is far above the possibility that anything in his realm could cross his will. As for *Sharia*, "Had there been many gods, instead of God, in the heaven and earth, they would have been corrupted." The multitude of rulers among the

> Muslims, the vying of some of them with others, and the pursuit of mere greed and fancy, all this leads to ruin, annihilation and defeat in war (2017, 113).

Al-Ghazzal draws a weighty distinction between reality and religion insinuating unequivocally that realpolitik is the language of the new world order where the success of diplomacy is predicated upon fostering commonalities not opposition. He supported the diplomatic policies of Morocco in relation to its Christian European neighbors by invoking *Sharia*, whose authority looms large over all Islamic jurisprudential schools. The Maliki jurists of Morocco were questioning the decision of the Sultan of resorting to diplomacy. However, the Sultan came to such a decision after he realized the futility of his effort to achieve the desired goal of reclaiming the city of Melilla, leading him to despair at the possibility of liberating the northern frontiers. Consequently, he considered the pursuit of war in this context to be futile and ignorant, and believed that waging war would only result in harm to Islam without any tangible gains. Thus, he prioritized the wiser choice of disengaging from conflict. It was a shocking but realistic acknowledgment of the significant disparity between Morocco and Spain in both military and technological aspects. To this end, the Sultan chose to abandon the principle of war and confrontation with Europeans. Instead, he directed his efforts towards normalizing political and trade relations with them, within the framework of a policy of reconciliation and compromise. This was achieved through the negotiation of comprehensive treaties containing meticulously specified terms.

Moreover, al-Ghazzal's critique of other Muslim rulers is subtly woven to distinguish Moroccan diplomatic praxis from them, where the so-called clash of civilization is relegated to the background, and a new register emerges to explain the contemporary order of Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy. The Christian in this context is not merely a person with a religious identity, but also a European whose contemporary modern state of affairs and civilizational standing is not a sheer product of conflictual religious history. Al-Ghazzal embodied the *Mahaba* as a state that is not only of affective dimensions but also of practical diplomatic conduct. Even when he was in Ceuta which was under Spanish occupation, he interfered on the behalf of the Spanish to soften the Moroccan fighter's heart not to attack the Spanish herdsman and cattle brazing close to the Moroccan pastures (Al-Ghazzal 2017, 64). Whenever he was taken by an amicable gesture, he would say "God…may guide them to Islam" (77). Overwhelmed by the constant amounts of great

crowds that came out to meet them at each stop "on horses, in carriages, and on foot," he always made sure to describe them, and most importantly to ponder the significance of such instances showcasing his appreciation as well as inflating the reverence that he had been associating with the love of the Spanish for the Moroccan Sultan. After seeing huge groups of people coming out to meet them, he wrote: "we can conclude from that phenomenon that the Spanish people are of the heart of one man, their tyrant [meaning Carlos III] and that this man is absorbed in every way in our Master, may God aid him, with his heart and with his being. The seen can indicate that which is inside, unseen" (83).

Al-Ghazzal ascertained to engage with the Spanish and inquire into their various social classes. He makes sure to attend to and act diplomatically towards all official and non-official actors even at the expense of his own comfort and out of fostering the *Mahaba* ties. After a very 'tiresome' and 'wearisome' excursion to entertain al-Ghazzal and his retinue, and show them historical sites which were populated by Andalusian Muslims, they were extremely exhausted. However, on their way back "all the people who were present there gathered around us, and we did not get rid of them without much effort and fatigue because of their excitement and eagerness to meet us, to exchange greetings with us, and to welcome us" (91). The figure of the state subject who is commissioned to fulfil a mission, which he or she as a subject has no real influence on in terms of how it turns out, does not figure out in al-Ghazzal's character. Additionally, what seems potently recurrent in his travelogue are relational dynamics that may constrain actors or usurp agency. They are represented in a way that displays leniency, malleability and serenity in situations that may encroach upon the religious and cultural background of the ambassador. For instance, the latitude accommodated to European women at the time rattled Muslim travellers to the West. However, none of the Muslim travellers in the early modern period described and engaged with European women as openly as al-Ghazzal did. He marveled at their demeanor in which "beauty ruled their features," (79) applauded men and women dancing together as "the height of chivalry, and a way to fulfil the duty of honoring guests who are respected," (71) enjoyed the plaza where their "seating was unmatched for its beautiful women and girls," (76) and unapologetically commented on two girls' singing and beauty saying "I have never heard or seen better than these two in voice and in appearance," (77) and "the girl began to sing in a voice that stunned the minds of those present" (149). These instances where women mingled with different men freely, sat next to them, and sang in front of them, were rendered by Muslim travellers to be immoral but al-

Ghazzal understood that he was in a different society with particular social norms, and that such a "practice is a forgone conclusion and unquestioned" (63). These are the instances that he had in mind as he was composing his letter to Mohamed III asking to replace his uncles. These are the Christian customs and laws that al-Ghazzal perceived as crucial assets to be within the armor of the Moroccan diplomat.

It is important to keep in mind the conservative society al-Ghazzal was coming from, and the authority he represented. He was sent by the Sultan Sidi Mohamed ben Abdullah who was not only a king but also a Commander of the Faithful, a leader who claims lineage from the Prophet Muhammed, who rules by the Divine's Will and who falls upon his shoulder upholding the values of Islam. The ubiquity of such instances in his account are not only relevant culturally but diplomatically as well. The fact that he represents such encounters openly reinforces his diplomatic vision which renders knowledge, and more importantly respect, of other nations' customs as a cardinal diplomatic trait to the advancement of diplomatic relations. When the retinue reached Algeciras, high ranking officials as well as many people came to visit them at their dwelling. It was a custom of the Spanish to introduce their ladies and beautiful daughters to the visitors. One of the judges asked al-Ghazzal "which lady among those gathered here pleases you? And which one among them is finer and more beautiful than the rest?" Al-Ghazzal, in such an unenvied situation, answered poetically and diplomatically "this gathering, or divan, is a garden, and the women that are within are different forms of roses—and people have, in what they love, a variety of preferences" (2017, 66). Diplomacy in the al-Ghazzalian sense understands that the art of advancing a cause without unnecessarily inflaming passions involves an understanding of the many facets that characterize societies different from our own, elements that if not handled from within the host culture's perspective might undermine agreement and stoke conflict. Hence, he engages in what David Wellman conceptualizes as the politicization of "religious culture" which comes into play "in the use of religious symbols or language by a national government or other actors to convey particular meaning or justify supposedly secular actions to its own general populace or other international actors" (Wellman 2004, 1).

Diplomacy is an element of representation of an authority, of its values, its monarch or Sultan and its culture and the diplomat is a pivotal actor in this process. The great value attached to reputation, protocol, decorum and the relational dynamism of al-Ghazzal need to be read within the context of a slowly evolving *modus vivendi* of diplomatic relations wherein new regulations

and modes of conduct acquire a new cultural tincture and reveal a newly emerging political outlook in relation to diplomacy and international affairs. His political praxis also unfurls insights into what Wellman identifies as the hermeneutic of the land or the "Ecological Location" (Wellman 2004, 2) where the countries in dialogue both operate from an axis of communication and bridge-building. In so doing, al-Ghazzal could identify common ground for cooperation that are cross-cultural and cross-confessional as they translate across differences of nationality, religion, and culture while at the same time catering to the shadow of the Sultan over the mission. Such perspective articulates a local specificity, a cultural 'way of doing,' living and interacting which stemmed from his belief that "there is no doubt that the tongue of a man will be a clue to his mind" (al-Ghazzal 2017, 62). This approach which underscores the importance of observation and communication cultivated and made al-Ghazzal aware of his positionality in relation to the Spanish. On an endnote, he wrote "we are your guests, with no say in anything. Therefore, what you see appropriate, and what is custom of yours, we will not ask you to forgo. It will not be onerous of us. They smiled at our answer, with smiles exceedingly wide" (66).

While al-Ghazzal might not fall within the Eurocentric contours of modern diplomacy as endorsed by Matar, he had a nuanced understanding of the international landscape and the need for a new diplomatic *modus vivendi*. In the second half of the 18th century, and with this strong desire for a leaning towards peace, Morocco entered into approximately forty treaties regulating relations various European nations during the reign of Mohamed III. This demonstrates the diplomatic vitality and profound belief in the policy of open door to the European world as a strategic choice to strengthen the foundations of the country. The Moroccan Historian Abdelhadi al-Tazi documented Moroccan diplomatic ties with strong European countries like France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, the Dutch Republic, Austria, Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, Venice, Tuscany, the Republic of Ragusa, Malta, Monaco, Prussia, Hamburg, and other European nations (1988). Furthermore, Sidi Muhammed ben Abdullah sought to establish relations with the emerging United States of America, with Morocco being the first Arab and Islamic country to recognize its independence from Great Britain. The Sultan did not exclude any Christian nation from his diplomatic relations, including the Russian Empire, ruled by Empress Catherine the Second, which persistently opposed the Ottoman Empire, engaged in wars against it, and seized Islamic territories from it (209). Nevertheless, in his 1782 letter to the Empress, he emphasized the peaceful diplomatic relations that Moroccan ambassadors established with Russia (210). Al-

Ghazzal travelled from a Moroccan diplomatic context already attentive to the transmutation of the modern world, and his distinctiveness from a European model does not discredit him but rather sheds light on other forms of diplomatic conduct which have been deemed pre-modern or *ad hoc*.

It seems that affective acuities such as *Mahaba* and friendship managed to materialize Moroccan diplomatic interests on multiple fronts. It has been assumed that the Mediterranean countries – the Norther Christian shore and the Southern Muslim shore – perceived the political, strategic, economic, or cultural considerations to be inconsequential and beneath the gravitas of upholding the Crusade/Jihad Weltanschauung (Lewis 1995, 115; Armstrong 2001, 36). Historians claim that the notions of crusade and *jihad* framed the attitudes governing any relations between the two Mediterranean shores, between Christendom and the Islamic world. Bernard Lewis writes that "[b]etween the two there is a morally necessary, legally and religiously obligatory state of war, until the final and inevitable triumph of Islam over unbelief" (1988, 73). Such incommensurability portrays relations between Muslims and non-Muslims as being based on a constant state of war that will only cease to be in the (unlikely) event that Muslims eventually achieve global domination. As Lewis does not provide any historical context for this assertion, he gives the impression that this dichotomy is to be understood as a stagnant, unalterable paradigm, unaffected by historical developments. As we have noted in chapter two, scholars of the New Diplomatic History have showcased that beyond Christian-Muslim conflicts in the Mediterranean, relational, cross-cultural and cross-confessional diplomatic networks connected the two sides and were essential for ransoming captives, negotiating peace treaties and circulating knowledge across borders.

In the same vein, through affective and intellectual means al-Ghazzal's actions testify to the fading away of this imagined impenetrability as it transpired in al-Ghazzal's climactic moment is his meeting with King Carlos III. After a long and tiring journey, al-Ghazzal's retinue reached the city of La Granja. On the second day, the Spanish minister of state informed al-Ghazzal of the details concerning his meeting with the king and al-Ghazzal wrote: "I begin thinking about how I would address the tyrant upon meeting him- about what would be appropriate by custom and Islamic law. I rehearsed the words that I wanted to say without any omissions, and imagined in thought that I was entering to see the tyrant" (2017, 126). As they were approaching the entrance of the Royal Palace, al-Ghazzal noted that among the crowds were courtiers of all ranks and ambassadors from different nations witnessing the Moroccan retinue as they make their way to

meet the king. Al-Ghazzal found the king standing, his friars on the right side and ministers on the left. Pleasantries were exchanged through the interpreter and al-Ghazzal informed the king of the hospitality with which he was treated and of the high esteem in which he was held in the eyes of the Moroccan Sultan "considering your agreement with the obeyed decree and your love among the Muslims" (127). Al-Ghazzal noted that his replies rendered the king at ease "as was our intention," and noticing that the king has been standing for more than 15 minutes, he spoke to the interpreter stating:

> "Ask him to grant us permission to leave, for I have grown concerned for him, because he has been standing for so long with us. Ask him also to forgive us for the fatigue caused by having to meet with us, which necessitated such a long time on his feet. After all, the character of rulers is not like that of ordinary people." He was charmed with our way of speaking to him on that account, and also happy. He began to laugh and to look at those who were present, as if he wondered at what he had heard and as if he had seen that which had never occurred to him. And he said: "God requite you with good for this fair speech of yours. Our hearts have been eased and our minds have grown comfortable because of your pleasing talk, which is born from a wise and unerring mind." (2017, 126)

This is a moment in which al-Ghazzal's diplomatic mind becomes apparent as he seized the opportunity, out of his autonomous will, to render his meeting with the king, in the presence of all the dignitaries a situation of ease. He intended to make the king feel at ease and impress him with his eloquent speech so much so that the king retorted as al-Ghazzal was departing that "we have never seen the likes of these Muslims and what they possess of acumen, good sense and distinction" (128). Before leaving, al-Ghazzal asks the king for a favor of giving his minister the full authority to negotiate the terms of the treaty with him: "this is so that no onerous burden should fall on you concerning the recounting of the terms. We cannot accept burdening you in that way." Al-Ghazzal observes that the king "grew even happier because of that" (128).

Apart from the affective change that he notices in the King's demeanor, this request has a diplomatic merit in relation to al-Ghazzal's diplomatic praxis in the court of Mohamed III. In his thorough study of al-Ghazzal's diplomatic letters with foreign counterparts, Peter Kitlas discerned a thought pattern pertaining to how al-Ghazzal "asserts his authority from among the wide array

of actors and intermediaries" at the Sultan's court. Al-Ghazzal advanced that diplomatic correspondence should be carried out between ambassadors and 'courtiers,' not directly Kings and Sultans, so as to "standardize a diplomatic practice centered around the Muslim ambassador's continuous relations with foreign courts" (2022, 24). His artful speech to the Spanish King was intended to put him at ease but his request to have the Spanish minister full authority to carry out negotiations should be read within al-Ghazzal desire to institute a standardized diplomatic protocol where the ambassador attains a space of autonomy, still within the contours of the country's benefit, to influence diplomatic ends. His request could be further illuminated in light of his last letter, sent after the mission had transpired, to the Spanish minister reminding him that "it is the *wuzarā'* (ministers) who are responsible for relations between kings. Accordingly, if there are good relations between the *wuzarā'* then relations between kings will also be favourable. At the same time, any souring in relations must be blamed on the *wuzarā'* since kings are only able to express goodness and achievement" (Kitlas 2022, 17). Knowing that the discussion of the terms of the treaty was going to be heated and long, al-Ghazzal understood that it was logistically unfeasible to hope for constant audiences with the king because the protocol necessitates a long process before one is granted such requests. As such, al-Ghazzal's speech showcases to the Moroccan diplomatic cadre, the areas in which the Muslim diplomat could exercise his agential savviness and claim diplomatic authority to expedite the process, which in fact still took five weeks to settle down on a common ground with the Spanish minister. Read in light of his letter, it seems that al-Ghazzal was concerned with solidifying the agential contours in which diplomats emerge as agents of state responsible for keeping friendly political relations. While his account underscores such agential spaces, it also sheds light on other elements that he perceived to be necessary to the development of diplomatic conduct, particularly as it relates to strategic silences and absences.

The ease with which al-Ghazzal describes the negotiations should be questioned. It is presented as if his words were categorical authority over the Spanish. My emphasis on instances that display the decrepitude of the notion of incommensurability should not simplistically obscure the fact that there were instances where al-Ghazzal expressed his vituperation or dislike, especially in relation to what the Spanish had done with what he called 'the remnants of Islam'; such as turning mosques into cathedrals and churches or not taking care of sites that still bear the marks of Quranic verses. When the Spanish were seen by al-Ghazzal to be hostile to Muslims, and to had destroyed their culture and usurped their possessions, al-Ghazzal poured on them his vituperation.

However, when they were helpful and generous, he praised them with sincere gratitude. It is worth following al-Ghazzal's precept that "the seen can indicate that which is inside, unseen," and inquiring into the diplomatic relevance of what is absent. He stated that he will not fall into "the pitfall of chronicles, which is the inflation of their works with repetitions of the reports of those who preceded them." He relied on personal observations and inquiry about the measurement of distances, historical information, the number of churches and plazas, and the travel time between one location and another. A degree of pragmatism emerges throughout his account when he criticized those who "rely on transmission, and they bring news of that which is impossible—what the mind will not credit as possible." He stressed "what one has experienced first-hand" instead of "redundant retelling of matters word for word, and a parroting which he saw as bringing no benefit" (2017, 57).

However, on other occasions, when he was invited to witness bullfighting for instance, he wrote: "at nightfall, those gathered there went their many ways. We spoke words of approval regarding their sport when asked, for the sake of their sensibilities, but our real feelings were contrary to that, for humans are not allowed, neither by Islamic law nor by nature, to torture animals" (2017, 73). This, and many other occasions, tested al-Ghazzal's diplomatic character. In his introduction to the English translation, Travis Landry notes that al-Ghazzal "remains curiously quiet with respect to the harsh travel conditions, especially after leaving Elche on the return through southeastern Spain, when the rain was so heavy and the mud so deep that the roads were, at times, impassable" (2017, 21). While such silences could be interpreted as intentional, not to deflate the grandeur of the Sultan which al-Ghazzal has been inflating throughout his travelogue, they also sheds light on his diplomatic character. Restrain is a critical aspect of the diplomatic character as it plays a significant role in shaping the effectiveness and success of diplomatic efforts.

Al-Ghazzal's vision of the diplomat necessitates the exercise of restraint in their words and actions to prevent the escalation of conflicts particularly when the ambassador encounters cultural or religious difference and otherness that need to be mediated diplomatically generating a schism between personal sensibilities and the benefit of the country. This is essential for maintaining the dignity and respect of all parties involved in diplomatic interactions, regardless of divergences or disagreements. It is worth noting that al-Ghazzal did not lapse into the "sentimentalism or heightened subjectivity found in European travelogues of the same era" (Landry 2017, 21). As a diplomat, he fathomed that his role was to unremittingly emphasize the commonalities and the

mutuality of interests and benefits of both countries. Diplomatic negotiations aim to achieve specific objectives, whether it is resolving conflicts, advancing economic interests, or promoting cultural exchange. Restraint ensures that diplomats stay focused on these objectives rather than getting side-tracked by emotional reactions. while *Mahaba* might have facilitated how al-Ghazzal oriented himself in diplomacy, his other affective undercurrents had to be tamed as well so as to ensure the avoidance of escalation. This tendency has been epitomized by al-Ghazzal's frequently used phrase, "so we could not but consent."

4. "Al-Manfa'a" and the Jurisprudential Debate: A Ghazzalian Exercise in Reasoned Judgement

I have made brief references to how the debate around waging war and diplomacy generated pressure from the Moroccan jurist class concerning the decision not to attempt to recover occupied Moroccan territories from a position of weakness. Al-Ghazzal's *Rihla* unravels his critical engagement with these debates by reformulating core concepts in the Islamic legal and jurisprudential tradition, particularly since as noted above, in addition to being a minister and a diplomat, he was also a jurist. Our discussion should start with the title itself. As I noted earlier, the translation offered by Abdulrahman al-Ruwaishan, from *Natijat al-Ijtihad fī al-Muhadana wa al-Jihad* to *The Fruits of The Struggle in Diplomacy and War*, leaves other shades of meaning unaccounted for due to the liberal nature of such a rendition. The word '*al-Ijtihad'* literally refers to reasoned judgement. It is a fundamental concept in Islamic jurisprudential and legal tradition, and it plays a crucial role in the development, interpretation, and adaptation of Islamic law (*Sharia*) to the changing circumstances of the Muslim community (*Ummah*). '*al-Ijtihad'* particularly refers to the principle of independent legal reasoning and interpretation. It allows Islamic jurisprudents (mujtahids) to adapt the principles of Sharia to contemporary issues and contexts. This adaptability is essential to ensure that Islamic law remains relevant and applicable to changing times, empowers scholars to deduce legal opinions and solutions to new issues. This problem-solving ability is crucial in addressing complex and novel challenges faced by the Muslim community as it prevents the law from becoming stagnant or overly rigid, which would hinder its practical application.

The second word that needs our attention is *al-Jihad* which was translated as war. The pressure exercised by the jurists was not just to wage war but holy war, justifiable on a religious basis to defend and liberate Morocco's occupied territories. According to Islamic legal principles,

any form of armed conflict, including defensive *jihad*, must be based on a just cause. In this case, resisting the Spanish occupation of some Moroccan coastal cities was justifiable because it aimed at regaining sovereignty, protecting the rights and well-being of the local population, and preserving Islamic values. In Islamic tradition, the declaration of *jihad* and its conduct typically requires authorization from a legitimate Islamic authority (Shah 2013, 343). This ensures that the decision to engage in armed conflict is made with due consideration and in accordance with Islamic principles. The Sultan Mohamed III also exercised his reasoned judgement, considering the military might of Morocco at the time, and decided to abstain from waging *jihad* which was not beneficial to Islam. However, this has generated negative attitudes towards him from the jurisprudential class (Harrak 1989, 281-282). Al-Ghazzal, despite being a part of his jurisprudential council, had a different vision of how the Sultan ought to fend off the jurisprudential pressure to wage *jihad* by opting for *al-Manfa'a,* the greatest benefit to the Muslim *Ummah* (community), for whose materialization the Sultan also has a religious obligation. Being aware of the global landscape of international affairs, his text unravels a 'Ghazzalian paradigm' whereby the Sultan is suspended between the otherworldly and the worldly, the religious and the political. The political reality of Morocco in the 18th century was viewed by al-Ghazzal as one that necessitated peace and diplomacy. However, he still envisioned the Sultan as the authority responsible for defending Morocco against colonial incursions. Al-Ghazzal offers his understanding of *jihad* as follows:

> Praise be to God, who has obligated *jihad*, legislated it, and purchased with it the souls and wealth of the believers, promising them paradise. We praise Him, exalted is He, in the manner deserving of those who *jahada* (struggle) for His sake. […] We bear witness that there is no deity except God, alone, without partner. This testimony comes from one who knows that Heaven lies beneath the shade of swords, and of those who bared their arm in the battle against the polytheists, in obedience to the command of God and in pursuit of what is ordained and described. Furthermore, the spirit of *jihad*, its essence, and its significance, its considered meaning and wisdom, is premised upon the Caliphs and Imams managing its affairs and crucial matters, as well as their responsibility to tend to the *Uhmmah* directly. They contemplate its matters with discernment and employ their intellect for the *al-Manfa'a* (benefit) of the believers, both in the present and in the future. They

confront the challenges posed by the enemies of God with jihad and show compassion to His servants. (1980, 33)

The first paragraph in al-Ghazzal's account invokes terms and concepts that foreshadowed how he proceeded to formulate Moroccan Islamicate diplomatic philosophy. He located the *jihad* in secondary position to *al-Manfa'a*. He propounds that *jihad* is only legitimate if it is 'considered' and its repercussions are deeply pondered with discernment and intellect. However, the ultimate goal of *jihad* is to bring about *al-Manfa'a* (benefit) to the Muslim *Ummah*, in the present and the future. Al-Ghazzal's opening paragraph evokes Quranic and jurisprudential terminologies which discloses his supposed audiences, the jurisprudential class, a group of religious elites. He evokes one of the central tenets of *jihad* in light of Moroccan 18th-century realities, pertaining to authorization and leadership in the Islamic tradition. The commencement and execution of *jihad* usually necessitate approval from a credible Islamic authority (which al-Ghazzal invokes as 'caliphs and imams' and which insinuates the position of the Sultan Mohamed III, as the temporal and spiritual authority in Morocco). His invocation not only emphasizes that such a choice to enter into armed conflict must be thoughtfully considered and in alignment with Islamic principles but also locates the ability to take such a step within the legitimate political and legal rubric of the Sultan as one responsible for the benefit of the Muslim community, particularly as the Sultan bears the title of the Commander of the Faithful. In this sense, *jihad* becomes more of a matter of temporal authority than it is a religious duty; one that is oriented by the pursuit of diplomacy and its ability to generate peace and benefit.

Al-Ghazzal's diplomatic vision, which heeds peace and the benefit of the *Ummah* as categorical tenets of how he understands *jihad* in light of 18th-century Moroccan reality, becomes more concrete when he juxtaposes his diplomatic thought with snapshots from the Sultan Mohamed III. During the negotiation of the possibility and the jurisprudential status of a truce, the Sultan stated that

> *Jihad* has been obligated by the Book and the Sunnah, and its rulings have been established by the legislator [referring to the prophet Mohammad], peace be upon him, and his tradition. We do not ensure peace for the enemies of God, nor do we make peace with them unless they say, 'There is no god but God.' If they do not say it, they shall be fought fiercely,

as ordained in the Concealed Book, or they shall pay *jizyah* while they are in a state of submission. (1980, 35)

Al-Ghazzal invokes such a quote to showcase how the Sultan's temporal authority and the present contextual circumstances of Morocco necessitate that the religious obligation of *jihad* be circumvented by "what is necessitated presently by the Islamic *Maslaha* (welfare) and confirmed by *al-Manfa'a* (the common benefit)" (35). After careful deliberation, al-Ghazzal notes that the Sultan could not but pursue diplomatic peace. He frames the pursuit of *al-Manfa'a,* which will be brought about by a truce, as equivalent to the *Jizyah*, which was a form of tribute or protection tax paid by non-Muslims (known as *dhimmis*) to the Muslim authorities. In return for paying the *Jizyah*, non-Muslims were granted protection and allowed to practice their own religion and maintain their property. He writes that "certainly, it [truce treaty] assumes the position of the *Jizyah*" (35). Al-Ghazzal's diplomatic vision disentangles the status of a possible peace treaty from its concessive undertones and locates it within the realm of *jizyah* noting that his vision is legitimated by Shari'a and Islamic principles. He continues that "the treaty was concluded among several nations under the firmest rules and the most secure foundation, all in accordance with the legal (Shari'a) and considered principles. This results in *Manfa'a* [common benefit] for Islam and leads to complete *Maslaha* [welfare] in both the immediate and distant future, both in private and public matters" (35). The fact that he juxtaposes *Maslaha, Manfa'a* and *Jizyah* is paramount as it constitutes different interlinked parts in the totality of the diplomatic praxis. The *Maslaha* encompasses both sides of the truce and in this sense, capitulation is not concessive but rather mutually beneficial as it generates peace between two nations. In this regard, al-Ghazzal construes legitimate spatial contours in which the Sultan as well as his diplomats are the actors who bring about al-*Manfa'a* needed to advance in the landscape of 18th-century international affairs.

The religious legitimacy that al-Ghazzal bestows upon this venture renders the justificatory maneuvers which his predecessors opted for unnecessary as his framing of diplomacy within the temporal and legal rubric authorized by the Sultan, and oriented by *Maslaha* and *Manfa'a*, roots Moroccan diplomatic praxis within the jurisprudential tradition itself. Thus, rendering any justifications superfluous. As Kitlas rightfully pointed out, al-Ghazzal rethought the conflictual insularity presumed to be definitive of the relation between Islamdom and Christendom by "recognizing the possibility of a third space: the *dār al-ʿahd* (land of treaty)" (2022, 24). Al-

Ghazzal's nuanced understanding of the landscape of international affairs necessitated the displacement to a third space where diplomacy looms large in terms of its capacity to materialize peace and mutuality of benefit in political engagements. It was also a space incepted by the global transmutation and shifts of power which made it obligatory to amend the rhetoric of incommensurability and opt for more sustainable *Modus Vivendi*.

Nonetheless, al-Ghazzal still needed to ensure the Islamic sovereignty of Mohamed III in the international landscape. *Jizya*, as we have noted before, obligates a tax to be paid by non-Muslims to the Muslim authorities. Invoking a scene which we have noted at the beginning of this chapter, pertaining to how the Spanish treated Moroccan captives without differentiating between learned scholars and the uneducated, showcases how al-Ghazzal reformulated the 'payment.' Noting the adamant desire of Carlos III to seek peaceful means (1980, 39), al-Ghazzal considered the Spanish king's initiative to open up diplomatic relations and seek a truce through a surreptitious way by sending correspondences from Muslim captives who belonged to different social classes as the *jizyah* which needed to be paid. As such, the *jizyah* as a religious obligation within the realm of the Muslim ruler necessitated his concordance; an adherence which al-Ghazzal accentuates as emanating from a position of power by noting the eagerness and unwavering willingness with which King Carlos III sought peace from Morocco after witnessing the impenetrable fortification of the Moroccan Atlantic port city of Essaouira which was "unlike any of its kind." Al-Ghazzal noted that "there was no precedent for it, and one could not find its equal among both foreigners and Arabs. It had two gates, one facing east and the other west. The pirates embark from it whenever they please without needing a pleasant breeze or a gift" (1980, 38). Moreover, after seeing that the French were also seeking diplomatic relations with Morocco, the Spanish king "could not but seek a truce for his country […] stating: 'we are more deserving of reconciling Muslims than others, and our conciliation guarantees all that is good.' He pondered this within himself, thinking about it days and nights, how he should knock on the door, and whether he would be answered when he speaks" (39).

Framing Muslim-Christian diplomacy in this light was al-Ghazzal's way of expanding the rubric in which Moroccan diplomats could carry out their engagement with foreign powers, justify their (sometimes) long stays in Christian countries, and more importantly furnished the way to the presence of foreign consuls in Moroccan territories. Prefacing his *Rihla* with such an argumentative introduction, where he reorients the legal and jurisprudential basis of *jihad* by

drawing on other conceptual acuities was not a convoluted and lengthy diversion from the main topic of his narrative. It was rather a fit of jurisprudential artistry clothed in the less rigid but more kaleidoscopic ligatures of the *Rihla* genre to establish the epistemic basis from within the Islamic legal tradition in which seeking diplomatic relations and treaties with foreign powers becomes a re-enactment of an old Islamic convention, i.e., *Jizyah*. In so doing, *al-Manfa'a* and *al-Maslaha* to the Muslim *Ummah* became the aegis under which Islamicate diplomacy from the Moroccan point of view oriented its foreign policy toward its Christian and foreign counterparts.

5. **Conclusion**

As we have noted in section three of the second chapter, the shift from a political to cultural history of early modern diplomacy has opened new and fertile venues of investigation, particularly in relation to Muslim missions to Europe which has long been overlooked by Western historiography (Windler, 2002; Dakhlia and Kaiser 2013; Dakhlia and Vincent 2011). This chapter tried to recover one of the historical narratives that developed in relation to as well as in interaction with the global modern international landscape of the 18th century, specifically in relation to the practice of diplomacy as emblematic to one form in which such modernity figured out and claimed the exclusivity of the diplomatic enterprise as a European venture. Al-Ghazzal's account, I have argued, compels us to rethink the agency of actors in encounters and to reject the *topos* often implicit in secular historiographies that religious affiliation inhibited political relations.

I have aspired to locate the centrality of al-Ghazzal as an active and flexible actor in the theorization of Islamicate diplomacy and through his successful venture which brought about the signing of the Peace Treaty of 1776 between Morocco and Spain. Decolonial hermeneutics figures out in its highlighting of multiple aspects of al-Ghazzal's diplomacy, rendering his *Rihla* as a center, and al-Ghazzal as a protagonist, deserving of critical exploration and integration into the history of diplomatic thought and international affairs in the 18th century. Al-Ghazzal succeeded in ransoming 100 captives as well as acquiring 300 Islamic manuscripts. His role as a diplomat extended to establishing peace treaty negotiations even between the Spanish monarchy and the rulers of Algiers and Tripoli which would lead to similar treaties of peace, something considered paramount in the al-Ghazzalian attempt to redirect *jihad* toward the pursuit of al-*Maslaha* and al-*Manfa'a*.

The fact that *Mahaba* undergirded the praxis of Moroccan diplomacy and international affairs should not blind us to the fact that the repeated assaults on Spanish fortifications of el-Huceima and Ceuta and the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain were always lingering in the narratives of Moroccan ambassadors. Nonetheless, in the Morocco of the Sultan Sidi Mohamed ben Abdullah and in al-Ghazzal's diplomatic vision, such a background was not regarded with retrospective artlessness but with a view of realpolitik, responding to the international climate of the 18th century where political motives and reasons of state favored negotiations to a much greater extent than had previously been acknowledged. Therefore, we must not underestimate the flowing correspondence and the desire for negotiation that developed between Morocco and Spain.

I stressed that diplomacy as it was understood in the European Enlightenment model is detached from the cultural and historical acuities needed for a proper understanding and appreciation of al-Ghazzal's undertaking in the world of international affairs. In this, I hope to have enriched the historical rubric of the Mediterranean by integrating al-Ghazzal's voice as an actor driven by a willingness to negotiate, not to fight. He has demonstrated that the negotiation of cultural difference to further the cause of diplomacy is predicated upon the diplomat's competence to translate beyond this difference; a point which will be further detailed with his successor al-Miknasi, the protagonist of our next chapter.

Chapter VI: Ethicizing Diplomacy: Ibn Uthman al-Miknasi's Islamicate Diplomacy across the Mediterranean Basin (1779-1783)

Both al-Ghazzal and Ibn Uthman al-Miknasi served under the Sultan Mohamed ben Abdullah, and operated within his unprecedented vision of Muslim-Christian relations. While al-Hajari's and al-Ghassani's narratives display an astute concern for intellectual exchange and critical engagement, al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi supplement such concerns with an intentional outlook on their profession. As we have noted in the previous chapter, al-Ghazzal was insightfully concerned with the enterprise of diplomacy and its legal and jurisprudential status. This chapter aspires to sketch out al-Miknasi's journey of configuring the figure of the formulaic Muslim diplomat and the ethics which ought to orient their diplomatic praxis. Al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi travelled to Europe within a distinct 18th-century political episteme marked by the contours set by the open-door policy which Morocco exhibited through carrying out negotiations with several European states and the signing of numerous commercial and friendship treaties and pacts (Laroui 1977, 278). Under the reign of Mohamed III, Morocco witnessed monumental permutations, particularly in relation to its foreign policy toward European states. The Sultan had a reformist proclivity which reformulated how Morocco oriented itself not only towards its local communities but also vis-à-vis its political and commercial European allies. Despite achieving political sovereignty, the Moroccan Alawite were still facing a two-pronged challenge: the imperial interests of Europe and the political dissidence and rivalries between several princes fighting over the Moroccan crown, especially after the death of the Sultan Mulay Ismail (Gilson-Miller 2012, 8). Mohamed III's reign was one of the finest periods of modern Morocco initiating "a new age in Moroccan history" (9). His foreign policy aspired to generate an equilibrium between "the national ambitions implicit in his Sharifian ideology and his more realistic desire for peace" (Laroui 1977, 278). He managed to wrench back various European-occupied cities and fortified several ports. The philosophy of the Alawite regime, as reformulated by Mohamed III, "did not command; it negotiated—both with foreigners and with the local authorities, using the army only to hasten negotiations" (297).

With a decolonial-inflicted hermeneutics, the previous chapter has endeavored to address a fundamental question: in light of the well-established and standardized European diplomatic structures of the 18th century, did Moroccan ambassadors merely replicate the European international order, or did they actively shape their own diplomatic practices in response to the

evolving global dynamics of the international arena, while remaining attentive to their intellectual and religious milieu? While the answer is positive for both al-Ghazzal and al-Miknasi, I interpret their accounts as distinct responses to the same question. While al-Ghazzal was concerned with legal and jurisprudential underpinnings of Moroccan diplomacy, al-Miknasi's significance lies in his deliberate emphasis on ethical principles in the sphere of diplomacy. As he embarked on his diplomatic mission to Europe, accompanied by an entourage of four figures: al-Tayeb Ben Jelloun, al-Tuhami al-Bnay, Mohammed al-Mir al-Slaoui, and Abdelkrim Ben Qrich, al-Miknasi perceived their inappropriate behavior not only as a detrimental representation of Muslims in Christian territories but also as an educational opportunity. The argument put forth is that al-Miknasi actively sought to define the role of the Muslim diplomat by critically examining the conduct of his own ambassadorial retinue and fellow Ottoman ambassadors. He portrayed them, either as negative examples to be avoided or as models to emulate, in order to delineate the proper code of conduct that should govern Muslim ambassadors. Within the framework of the New Diplomatic History, al-Miknasi emerges as a diplomatic agent who reimagines diplomatic practice as an ethical enterprise, thereby establishing the parameters of diplomatic agency from a Moroccan Islamicate perspective.

From the misdeeds of his contemporaries, al-Miknasi derived a set of ethics that he conceptualized as integral to the character of a diplomat. These ethics encompassed core principles such as truthfulness, faithful witnessing and testimony, *Maslaha* and cultural sensitivity as fundamental components of diplomatic conduct. As such, similar to al-Ghazzal, al-Miknasi also introduced innovative concepts that upheld the sanctity of religion while adapting to the changing global political landscape and regional dynamics of his time. These concepts intricately weave diplomacy with moral responsibility and established *Mahaba* and *Maslaha* (welfare and public interest) as guiding principles for ethical and political behavior. Al-Miknasi's narratives encapsulated these ideals within a framework of interpersonal relations, cross-confessional engagement, and interactions within the broader Muslim community. In this context, diplomatic practice transcended its traditional boundaries to become a platform for acts of ethical and moral conduct, drawing inspiration not only from Islamic principles of engaging with others but also from the immediate historical backdrop of specific geopolitical and cultural realities in the early modern Mediterranean.

1. Ibn Uthman al-Miknasi

Al-Miknasi traveled to Spain (1779-80), Malta, the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily (1781-83), and the Ottoman Caliphate (1785-88). He established strong friendship ties with the Spanish court of Carlos III which furthered the interests and cooperation of Hispano-Moroccan relations. There is not much information preserved about al-Miknasi, except for some news in *Al-Turjmana al-Kubra* [The General History] by Abu al-Qasim al-Zayani (1734-1833), and in *Itḥafa Aalam al-Nas* [A Presentation of Luminous Men with the Most Beautiful Reports of the City of Meknes] by Abd al-Rahman Ibn Zaydan (1878-1946), and in *Al-Istiqsa li-Akhbar duwwal al-Maghrib al-Aqsa* [The Investigation Book of the News of the Farthest Maghreb Countries] by Ahmad ben Khalid al-Nasiri (1835-1897), as well as the three travel accounts he produced during his service in the Sultanic court. The court historian and diplomat al-Zayani was a contemporary of al-Miknasi. He also was dispatched on diplomatic missions to the Ottoman court and managed governmental initiatives aimed at consolidating tribal allegiance under central Sultanic authority. His literary works encompass various historical narratives chronicling the trajectories of the Ottoman and Alaouite dynasties, leaving behind fifteen works in the field of history and geography. However, al-Miknasi rarely features in his oeuvre. This lack of information about him is attributed by the Moroccan historian Muhammad al-Fasi to the enmity that al-Zayani harbored toward al-Miknasi, and as such he did not leave any record either of his merit or of his significant contribution (al-Fasi 1965, 20). The Polish traveler Jan Potocki (1761-1815) in his work *Journey to the Empire of Morocco* expresses great admiration for this ambassador, whom he considers one of the greatest scholars of Muslim culture and with whom he shared many afternoons in Madrid (Potocki 2014, 27).

Although not formally 'trained' in diplomacy, al-Miknasi held the position of *Katib* (scribe) at Mohamed III's court, before working his way up through various state positions until he became Sultan's expert in foreign affairs. His upbringing equipped him with a thorough Islamic education, making him proficient in the Quran and the Prophetic tradition (Hadith and Sunnah). His proficiency earned him a prestigious role in Mohamed III's court, initially serving as responsible for the royal library, and eventually leading to a successful career as an ambassador (al-Fassi 1965, 12). A noteworthy aspect of his professional life was being entrusted to manage Morocco's foreign affairs during the reigns of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah (1757-1790), Mulay al-Yazid (1790-1792), and Mulay Sulayman (1792-1822). He also dealt with two Spanish kings, Carlos III (1759-1788) and Carlos IV (1788-1808).

His first mission to Spain was encapsulated in a *Rihla* entitled *Al-Iksir fī fikak al-asir* [The Elixir Liberating the Captive]. He presided the Moroccan delegation and was successful in ransoming 122 Algerian captives and solidifying Moroccan-Spanish relations through signing the Treaty of Aranjuez 1780; a treaty which ensured peace and established strong ties of trade and diplomatic cooperation. This account presents us with an accumulative intellectual composition documenting how a Moroccan fathomed and perceived 18th-century Spain during the reign of Carlos III. After successfully achieving the ends of this mission, he was appointed as a minister (vizier) of foreign affairs (al-Fassi 1960, 12-13) and dispatched on another mission to Malta, Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, entitled *Al-Badr al-Safir li-Hidayat al-Musafir ila Fikak al-Asra min Yad al-'Aduw al-Kafir* [The Traveling Full Moon Guiding the Traveler to the Liberation of Captives from the Hands of the Infidel Enemy]. He was sent by Sultan Mohamed III to free 613 captives, one of whom was another Moroccan ambassador, Mohamed al-Hafi, and to persuade the Maltese to accede to the treaty of amity signed with the Spaniards in 1780. He also was given full latitude by the Sultan to negotiate the recovery of a Moroccan boat captured by the Neapolitans. Both of his ambassadorial accounts provide us with valuable information on the conditions and transmutations of the 18th-century Mediterranean basin and the role of Sidi Mohamed ben Abdullah in alleviating the tension related to some of the most conflictive political economies between the Muslim and Christian world, the ransoming of captives and piracy. It also showcases his efforts in generating peace by establishing commercial pacts and political treaties that protected state interests, ensured friendly relations, and managed the chaos erupted by the violent corsair activities that plagued the Mediterranean for centuries. All of this significantly contributed to the establishment of peace and security in the Mediterranean (al-Tazi 1988, 130).

Furthermore, al-Miknasi's accounts display a concern for crafting core ethics of conducting diplomacy.[29] Similar to al-Ghassani and al-Ghazzal, al-Miknasi's conceptual ethos developed within a context where religious and jurisprudential debates around travel and residence in non-Muslim lands were still poignant. Al-Miknasi's narratives also reveal how jurisprudential prohibitions were circumvented by generating concepts that both attended to the sanctity of religion as well as to the pressing global political and regional alterations. However, his concepts

[29] Here I fathom ethics to be the orientational praxis that concerns itself with inquiries pertaining to how one should or should not act in the world as well as in relation to others. See Makdisi (1985, 47); Reinhart (1983).

tie diplomacy with ethical obligation and establish *Mahaba* and *Maslaha* (welfare, public interest/utility) (Afsaruddin 2013) as orientational bases for ethico-political conduct. In his narratives, ethics as a praxis of orienting oneself toward the Other becomes the pith of diplomatic conduct. The formation of al-Miknasi's diplomatic conduct drew on Islamically inflicted affective, intellectual, ethical, and historical precedents to formalize diplomatic concepts and navigate international relations across the Mediterranean basin. It is at this particular juncture that ethics are revealed to be closely related to politics because "both attempt to develop collective desires and bring them to bear upon those not yet within the fold" (Russell 2009, 6). Al-Miknasi's ethico-political convergence will be fleshed out throughout the coming sections.

1. Islamicate Diplomacy: Between Theory and Praxis

In the second half of the 18th century, the two massive projects which were prioritized by the Sultan of Morocco Mohamed III were the expansion of port cities to accommodate international trade and the strife to jettison the political economy of Muslim and Christian captivity (Matar 2015, 6). The latter venture necessitated the development of a bureaucracy of diplomatic caliber and adroitness to facilitate negotiations, the signing of peace treaties, and commercial and friendship pacts. He dispatched ambassadors and envoys to England, Denmark, Sweden, Venice, Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Malta, Sicily to inform them of the captives within his dominion and initiate their exchange (6). He also took this opportunity to establish friendly and commercial relations and sign treaties that ensured Europeans' safe conduct in Moroccan ports. He was concerned with the maltreatment of captives and urged European nations never to enslave women, children, and the elderly; he also suggested a time limit of no more than one year for captivity and that freeing captives should be on a basis of equality, one Muslim for one Christian (Haman 2002, 17-18). Under his authority, around 3,000 Muslim captives were freed, most of whom were not Moroccans (Gozalo 2006, 287). However, despite all his efforts, Spain, Italian city-states, and Malta persisted in capturing Muslim captives and ships from both Morocco and the Ottoman regencies (Cerqua 1993, 221). Meanwhile, European sailors who suffered shipwrecks near the Moroccan coast often fell prey to the lawless tribesmen, only to be ransomed by Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah, who sought to repatriate them to their respective nations (Matar 2015, 7).

Within this context, al-Miknasi was dispatched to Spain (1779-1780) and Malta, Naples, and Sicily (1781-1783) to negotiate the freedom of captives who mostly were Muslim subjects

under Ottoman sovereignty. This section argues that al-Miknasi instantiates how a Moroccan Muslim ambassador claimed diplomatic authority and endowed himself with the responsibility to configure the ethics of diplomatic praxis and reflect on the figure of the Muslim diplomat as he traverses cultural, religious, political, and territorial boundaries across the Mediterranean basin. I particularly build on Peter Kitlas's brilliant study about al-Miknasi's account in light of Sultan Muhammad III's sovereignty, in which he argued that al-Miknasi's account provides a vivid rendition of how Muhammad III, alongside the religious and political elite in Morocco, skillfully distinguished between the notions of 'temporal' and 'spiritual' sovereignty. Kitlas posits that such a distinction consolidated Sultan Muhammad III's power across various spheres, in relation to Spain, Ottoman-Algeria, and the Sublime Porte in Istanbul (2015, 170). I argue that such differentiation also expanded the domain of diplomacy to accommodate intellectual engagements and encounters with European modernity without any categorical severance between the religious and the secular. The encounter between religious steadfastness and the pressing needs of an expanding secular modernity was navigated by al-Miknasi through developing a complex set of diplomatic ethics which were crafted from and bore the mark of a new *modus vivendi*. He invoked Islamicate conceptual frameworks and expanded their operative praxis to encompass religious and worldly concerns. Windler has argued that "a history of intercultural diplomacies must, in fact, move beyond culturalist stances and focus instead on the analysis of these social practices" (4, 2018). Al-Miknasi had a conscious concern with ethical diplomatic praxis, particularly in his endeavor to demarcate the figure of the epitomic diplomat using the social-cultural practices of his ambassadorial retinue as well as other Ottoman diplomats as either culprits or exemplars to map out the proper diplomatic conduct. This focus on the socio-cultural praxis has been shown by Tracey Sowerby and Jan Hennings to a play a pivotal role in delineating the operational mechanics of "diplomacy" during the early modern era. In this historical context, diplomacy emerged as a pragmatic and adaptable tool, often serving as a makeshift solution due to the absence of a universally clear and modern definition (2017, 2). In light of such an absence, al-Miknasi sought out to define diplomacy and articulate its ethics for those who shall follow in his professional footsteps.

Such a preoccupation was manifested firstly through the title of his second account written about Sicily, Naples and Malta titled *al-Badr al-Safir li-Hidayat al-Musafir ila Fikak al-Asara min Yadi al-'Aduww al-Kafir.* The title explicitly states that his composition is intended to guide the

traveler venturing into foreign non-Muslim lands. Furthermore, it is also evident from the beginning of his and his predecessors' accounts when they espoused that they were writing for the benefit of their community. Al-Ghassani noted that he composed his account "to all the brethren who may consult them" (57). Al-Ghazzal emphasized the empiricism of his account so as not to "fall into the pitfall of chronicles, which is the inflation of their works with repetitions of the reports of those who preceded them" (57). In other words, he presents his work as an experiential account intended to save others who may follow him in the diplomatic profession from the "redundant retelling of matters word for word, and a parroting, when what is said has already been made known by an eyewitness, as far as is allowed by ability and circumstances" (57). Such predecessorial and communal awareness is also evidenced in the formulation of their accounts' titles. Al-Miknasi's title of his first account to Spain *Al-Iksir fi Fikak al-Asir* [The Elixir in Ransoming the Captive] clearly alludes to al-Ghassani's text *Riḥlat al-Wazir fi Iftikak al-Asir* [The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive]. Matar notes how the Moroccan royal court kept earlier accounts of al-Ghassani and al-Ghazzal, "which al-Miknāsī read and quoted extensively" (Matar 2015, 10). These instances not only showcase the trajectory in which al-Miknasi locates himself and his text but also pinpoints collective experiential precedence, where knowledge produced in diplomatic ventures is consciously circulated amongst a group of diplomatic cadres, and its inception is intended to guide and instruct. If "the defining dynamic in the history of foreign relations was precisely the absence […] of formalized and agreed rules," (2017, 2) then al-Miknasi and his predecessors' strife to define the contours and practices of Islamicate diplomacy from a Moroccan standpoint are indicative of a slow and gradual emergence of an interconnected diplomatic culture; a development which characterized early modern Mediterranean diplomacy in Europe (Windler 2018) as well as in the Ottoman Empire (Sowerby and Markiewicz 2021).

Furthermore, I hope to have shown so far that what corroborates their interconnectivity as a group of state agents is an Islamicate diplomatic and intellectual ethos which they shared among themselves for two pertinent acuities: first, to map out the ethical contours of diplomatic praxis within the Islamicate Mediterranean and as such generate the ideal characterization of the Muslim diplomat; second, as a means of fending off jurisprudential critiques which relate to territoriality and the venture of travel in Islamic law. In other words, their intellectual justification of diplomatic encounters in foreign, non-Muslim geographies was essential to both, advancing the diplomatic enterprise and generating a lively intellectual debate that rethought the boundaries demarcating the

nature of travel. The latter justificatory engagements also constitute a significant point around which their consciousness as a group of ambassadorial agents became an interconnected economy. The relevance of underscoring how they positioned themselves as state agents resides in highlighting how Muslim ambassadors managed to justify their practice by inscribing worldly political concerns within contemporary theological debates which centered around journeying to the 'House of War.' Shedding light on such a historical episode further corroborates and concretely specifies Leon Carl Brown's plea to avoid two surreptitious pitfalls of understanding political philosophy in the Islamic world, namely that of parochializing all forms of agency purported by Muslims to an *a priori* Islamic stimulus; and insulating the political epistemology of Muslims from any religious or cultural influence (2000, 74-75).

Al-Miknasi, like his predecessors, was neither a *'alim* (Islamic scholar) nor a diplomat in a body of secular government. As such, while operating within a government structure, ruled by a Sultan who bears the titles of Commander of the Faithful and Caliph, and in relation to a body of *'Ulama* (Islamic religious scholars), the burden always fell on them to enroot their authority and frame practice in intellectual and religious language to be able to justify their praxis in such a complex network of power differentials. Therefore, their attention was directed towards the influence of Islam in the realm of international politics, and they demonstrated the sagacity of Muslim ambassadors in navigating international affairs through employing their autonomous reasoning to justify and interact with legal fatwas derived from the Quran and Sunnah (Islamic tradition).

The most common way Moroccan Muslim ambassadors used to justify their diplomatic venture in the 'House of War' was by alluding to a *Maliki* jurisprudential precedent that allowed Muslims to venture into Christian lands for ransom purposes. After the expulsions of the Moriscos from al-Andalus, many established Maliki jurists posited that even short ventures for the purpose of trade were impermissible (Abou el Fadl 1994, 142). While jurists following different Islamic jurisprudential schools disagreed with this depending on the historical and political situation, ransoming captives was a common point of agreement in most of the Islamic legal schools except when there was a chance that the funding could further aggression or conflict against Muslims. As such, Muslim ambassadors to non-Muslim territories always ensured making references, especially in the title as well as the preamble of their composition, to Quranic verses which praise travel, to highly-regarded Muslim scholars which bestow upon their works a significant cultural

capital, or to how the Sultan's concern for captivity which insinuates issues of conversion and not living up to the title of the Commander of the Faithful. Such references constituted the justificatory basis by which the genre of Ambassadorial *Rihla* begins its unfolding.

2. Al-Miknasi's Maqamat: Ethics and Politics

Al-Miknasi's narrative showcases that one of the teloi of the *Rihla* is to educate and to showcase the literary merit of its composer. Thus, it is as much instructional as it is pedagogical. In addition to being a jurist, al-Miknasi was a man of a prolific literary writer and a poet (Ibn Zaydan 1990, 160). He opted for a literary poetic Arabic genre known as *Maqama* (Plural: *Maqamat*) which is a style of rhymed prose to round up his account. The significance of this literary style is its suitability for satirical, critical and instructional composition (al-Sulami 1992, 265–274).

He composed four *Maqamat,* each of which deals with the misdeeds of his diplomatic retinue who as we have noted earlier were al-Tayeb Ben Jelloun, al-Tuhami al-Bnay, Mohammed al-Mir al-Slaoui, and Abdelkrim Ben Qrich. These *Maqamat*, which provide us with a deep insight into al-Miknasi's diplomatic mind which received little attention from scholars who shed light on his accounts. Matar designates them as a denouncement of his friends' behavior during their sojourn in Malta and Naples (Matar 2015, 23). He frames al-Miknasi's *Maqamat* in a culturalist framework concluding that the "uncouth behavior" of his delegation is the reason why "the Maltese cursed Islam and the Muslims," and why al-Miknasi designated them as "barbarians," a word usually used by Europeans to refer to the inhabitants of barbary, the region from which al-Miknasi ventured into Europe (Matar 2015, 24). He recently further framed al-Miknasi, along with al-Ghassani and al-Ghazzal, in the argument of (dis)enchantment with modernity positing that after encountering the various manifestations of European modernity, they "could not come to terms with them… They returned as they had left, insisting that they had not been challenged by what they saw among the 'infidels,' that all they had encountered had confirmed for them the superiority of their religion" (2020, 208-209). I proposed decolonial hermeneutics to counter readings which in their attempt to illuminate actually obfuscate; interpretations which are still tethered to Manicheanism rather than entanglements and overlap. I hope to have deflated such an argument through my previous discussion of al-Hajari, al-Ghassani and al-Ghazzal. As for al-Miknasi, in Matar's estimation, the actions of his diplomatic retinue and his critical commentary on them became symptomatic of a cultural clash, a reading which, while insightful, still does not reflect on

the relevance of such exposition in relation to diplomatic enterprise, i.e., its proper conduct and etiquette. It is also, as showcased through chapter five, the reading in which he prisoned al-Ghassani, adding religion as an inhibitor of his understanding of Spanish modernity. Malika al-Zahidi also read al-Miknasi's denunciation of his retinue in relation to his condemnation of certain aspects of Christian Europe concluding that being critical of both sides is reflective of his intolerance of certain improper behaviors irrespective of the culture from which it emanates (al-Zahidi 2013, 75). While she did mention that al-Miknasi's *Maqamat* sheds light on the characteristics which the Muslim diplomat ought to have, it remained a passing mention without any further exploration.

While this chapter recognizes the intercultural dimension of al-Miknasi's criticism, the *Maqamat* bear other ethical and political acuities which unravel them as intellectual exercises; one that draws on Islamic jurisprudential and legal literature, and Quranic verses, particularly in relation to the ideal character and proper codes of conduct. The first ethical issue which he tackles in his first *Maqama* is that of testimony/bearing witness. He evokes such an issue within a legal framework of what was known in 18th-century Morocco literally as the "Justice Counsel" which was oriented by a plan that corresponds in common law jurisdictions to the legal section that deals with testimony and bearing witness, among many other legal issues.

The background in which the Justice Counsel was invigorated is significant as it sheds light on the implications that al-Miknasi had in mind once ambassadors engage in unethical practices within diplomatic contexts. The rapid development that European countries were experiencing, as witnessed by Moroccan diplomatic and commercial expeditions, as well as indications of military and economic imperial expansion on the horizon, prompted the Alawite sultans to seriously consider plans for administrative, political, and economic reform. The aim was to make the country capable of occupying its place among the new world powers and protecting it from the risks of Western occupation and domination. This reform required the establishment of internal security and the strengthening of the military apparatus to protect it, repel foreign military ambitions, and organize and develop the state's finances to meet the needs of social, administrative, and scientific reform to strengthen the pillars of the state and facilitate its functioning. Thus, Sultan Mohamed III laid the groundwork for these reforms to lift Morocco out of the chaos and division that followed the death of his father, Sultan Moulay Ismail, and his efforts were directed towards the military establishment and the religious institutions (Kenbib 2011, 15-16).

To restore the trust of the people in authority, the Sultan started reforms which were intended to spread justice among the population throughout the entire kingdom. As such, he established a new system of justice in which the judiciary has been simplified and made more widely accessible through a demystification of the legal practice (Gilson-Miller 2012, 10). The task of monitoring the decisions of judges was entrusted to the jurists in order to protect the people from their oppression and to prevent them from following their own whims. This was also to limit their arbitrary rule in matters that concern people's lives, safety, dignity, and property, taking into account the weak and poor groups such as vulnerable women and orphans (Harakat 1994, 104).

Within this context of new reforms, the Justice Counsel developed requiring witnesses to be present in certain transactions between people, such as debt, marriage, and so on. It was established to receive testimonies, regulate transactions between people, document them, and testify to their validity. Men were appointed to carry out this task and were called witnesses or *'aduls*,' as it is still the case in Morocco. The latter word comes from the root word '*adl'* which denotes justice. Their profession was testimony and making sure that justice was met, which is a plan that had always been under the jurisdiction and supervision of the judiciary. Therefore, performing this profession among people required permission from the judge or the '*adil'* (another word which comes from the root word '*adl'* meaning a supervisory role in the judiciary), and it was required to have knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, as well as being fair and trustworthy, in order to undertake these tasks. If the qualities of justice were not witnessed in those who trusted with such a responsibility, they were not eligible for this profession and if they harmed someone, they would lose their qualification for it (Ibn Khaldun 1998, 260-61). Al-Miknasi was aware that this system was prone to be manipulated by corrupt officials, and many who were not qualified enough to practice it. Within the service of Mohamed III, al-Miknasi must have witnessed the Sultan's efforts to reform this, emphasizing the importance of authenticated witnesses in the issuance of testimonies and ordering not to take their testimonies in many matters that indicated invalidity, unless the testimony was registered by a judge and with his approval (al-Amrani 1996, 387).

Al-Miknasi's invocation of his friends' misconduct within a diplomatic mission is reflective of his vision of the craft of the diplomat and diplomatic conduct. He induced from the misdeeds of his injudicious companions the ethical codes and characteristics which ought to orient "the intelligent person, who travels in countries, and meets various peoples" (Matar 2015, 22). He

titles this section "A Conclusion I named, Breaking the Customs of Divergent Witnesses to Conceal Testimony in Exchange for Frequent Bribery."[30] This is the title of a story that recounts how his four companions, who had witnessed the captives' ransoming process, abstained from testifying about al-Miknasi's payment to skim off some of the money intended to redeem the captives in Malta. His four companions reasoned that if they delayed their documental testimonies as to how much money had been paid to ransom each captive until the end of the process, they would be able to embezzle any excess funds by inflating the numbers of the money paid for each captive, and as such be able to accommodate the excess amount left after completion (al-Miknasi 2013, 206-211). Al-Miknasi's *Maqamat* is a satirical story of his companions' specific unbecoming actions peppered with denunciations of greed and fraudulence. He wrote about those who "when invited to do what is right, refuse and turn to deceitful behavior until they are granted bribes for it" (206). Those who

> pretend to be ascetics, yet they are the most covetous of people and their hearts are full of the desire for profit. They have dressed themselves in the garb of righteousness but their words are adorned with falsehood, which some are deceived by and see as a mirage. They have filled pages and books with their lies and deceptions, and they do not accept any reproach or blame for their own desires. They act as if they do not expect to be held accountable by Allah, and they are among those who have made their religion a burden, living a life that is unsatisfactory. (206)

The pretension which al-Miknasi associates with the veneer of righteousness is evoked as belying a core element of Islam, namely the common morality which the Quran extends to all nations irrespective of their faith, as a source of social and ethical proper conduct. After such a castigatory rendition of his companion which established the binary rubric in which they were to be judged, i.e., righteousness and vice, he enmeshed such a rubric within the larger framework of justice discussed above by outlining the characteristics of those who ought to practice such a profession. He describes the Justice Counsel as

[30] All translations are my until noted otherwise.

> The profession of the virtuous, the pious and righteous. Those who safeguard territories, acquire properties, and possess gardens, meadows, erected buildings, and towers. They are entrusted with the administration of all affairs in the world, while enduring the hardships of eloquence, refining their speeches and expressions. I am an expert in this matter, renowned in knowledge, and abundant in modesty. My reputation is remembered in cities and towns. (206)

Al-Miknasi emerges after such a definition as the judge who was wronged and betrayed by his companions within the same professions. Locating himself within the legal and religious contours of the Justice Counsel as an 'expert and renowned' figure meant that it was not only he who was betrayed by the misconduct of his delegation but also the Sultan Mohamed III, who trusted those pretentious diplomats, and whose efforts to set the country straight on a path towards justice was jeopardized by their actions. In fact, al-Miknasi outrightly states that "they humiliated everyone who had even an iota of faith in their hearts, … [including] our master and leader, the Commander of the Faithful… who took a path of firmness and vigilance that no one else did. He tested matters with a sound mind, and through his trials, he taught us the truths. He authorized the signing of the decrees, and commanded that it be published and spread, and discussed in the assemblies" (207). His reference to the decrees evokes the series of reforms that Mohamed III instituted and circulated throughout Morocco, notifying judges and *ulama* of the new laws that were meant to strengthen the judiciary system and deflate the power of those who pretend to be righteous but their actions show otherwise.

Another concern that al-Miknasi invoked within this context pertains to how his retinue's actions jeopardize diplomatic relations and trust with their Maltese hosts. He feared that the Christians may have started to distrust making any pacts or establishing diplomatic relations with Muslims. For

> had they done that in the land of Muslims, the harm would have been lessened and the wound would have healed. But when we were in Malta, they did it, and Allah is our witness along with the angels. If you ask, "What about the lands of the Christians? How can they accept the testimony of a Muslim?" I say that Muslim traders approach them for buying and selling, and engage in legal cases and transactions with the Christians. In this way, the

> Christians bear witness against them, knowing that their testimony is not valid against Muslims. (207)

In al-Miknasi's understanding, their misconduct not only undermines the internal judiciary system of Morocco, along with the Sultan's efforts to reform it but also diplomatic relations with the Christians and by extension the image of Muslims in the Christian world. For him, diplomacy must be premised upon an 'ethical contract' that neither diverges from the spirit of Islam nor intends treachery toward other nations which profess a different religion and conduct their business according to different laws. Being among Christians does not negate the ethical principles of Islam which take truthfulness and oaths to be central to the relationships between Muslims and Christians. Al-Miknasi pointed out that merchants from both communities respect each other's oaths knowing that the basis for such trust is not religious but legal. While one must orient oneself religiously, relations with other nations must be oriented on a religious and legal basis both of which take trustworthiness as central to their unfolding. Otherwise, opening the realm of diplomacy to such adulterations would sully the whole diplomatic enterprise. Within this context, al-Miknasi emerges as the judge who was appointed by Mohamed III in the Justice Counsel to oversee the actions of *aduls*, ensuring that their conduct is ethical, legal and furthering diplomatic interests. Accordingly, al-Miknasi presents us with an ethical formation which while might have been inspired by a religious basis, was still unfolded as a rationally derived ethical formation inspired by everyday economic activities. As such, we can see that it is not only divine legislation that underprops ethical conduct but, sometimes, the derivation of orthopraxy is inspired by mundane behavior as it transpires in everyday human interactions, particularly in relation to other nations which may not share the same religion as a legislative power. Nonetheless, al-Miknasi was deceived by their pretensions and as such "their evil has extended to these innocent people [Christians], while calamity strikes both the wicked and the righteous (207).

Al-Miknasi locates himself within the righteous camp by pinpointing how their "evil has extended to innocent people." They also tried to convince him to join their unbecoming plot when Abdelkarim Ben Qrich approached him saying "I suggest that we bring the ransom payment and the revered agreement now, tally up the amount of money paid for it, but we do not record the testimony immediately until the payment is completed and the enemy is deterred, so that we may all bear witness" (209). When al-Miknasi realized their injudicious plot, he responded saying:

"look at whom you deceive and upon whom you prattle with your sophistry. Your error and misguidance have become clear. Your arrow missed the target and your lance hit the pit. You have resolved your misery with an even worse fate" (209). He rounded up this section with immensely significant and contextually pertinent quotes from the Quran

> O you who believe, be upholders of justice - witnesses for Allah, even though against (the interest of) your selves or the parents, and the kinsmen.[31] And God said: O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety.[32] And He said: And do not conceal what you have witnessed, for whoever conceals it, his heart is sinful.[33]

On the one hand, Al-Miknasi's use of the Quranic verses in relation to his crafting of diplomatic ethics provided a Islamically-based form of orthopraxy to his diplomatic cadre for proper personal conduct. On the other hand, it also constituted the basis from which he rationally extricated relational ethics for intercommunal and inter-faith encounters. It seems that what is being advanced by al-Miknasi significantly pertains to the tensional relationship between religion and politics; a relation which has proven to be dichotomous in the history of 'Western' culture (Church vs State). What deserves our attention here is al-Miknasi's rendition of politics and religion as interdependently constitutive; in the sense that while both aspire to generate order and practical orientation, one in relation to the divine and the other the polis, both are core constituents of the same human reality. While diplomacy is envisioned to be the generation of order and stability between nations in the world of politics, the religion of those nations impinges upon such a world. If both elements are premised upon the harboring of the good for the community, then the dichotomy dissolves when the agent, the diplomat, or whoever is carrying out the act, does so according to the legal and ethical norms which concern both parties. Such a formulation enables religion and politics to fend off the isolationist and insular premises (worldly vs. otherworldly) which undermine their potential to benefit and influence each other, in theory, and praxis. It is not

[31] Quran 4, 135; trans. Mufti Usmani, 153.
[32] Q 5, 8. Ali Yusuf, 99.
[33] Q 2, 274; trans. Abul Ala Maududi 49.

that al-Miknasi envisions them to be indiscriminate or monistic, rather he sees that if both entities claim to be in pursuit of the *Maslaha*, then the unfolding of both across the border should be governed by mutually-extracted ethics which enmesh them into a form of orientational praxis rather than sequestered entities. It is within such a context that the practitioners of New Diplomatic History could speak of an integrated and interconnected history of Mediterranean and cross-confessional diplomacy.

Moreover, concealing testimony includes not giving evidence and abstaining from stating facts to which one bore witness. The Quranic commandment states in these verses that irrespective of one's political and affective states, which might be characterized by enmity, peace, hatred or whatever, bearing witness should always be carried out ethically. The circumstance of being in a Christian country, whether in a state of enmity or peace does not render moot justice and righteousness as ethical values that should govern diplomatic conduct wherever it is pursued. The first '*Maqama'* along with the specific Quranic verses which al-Miknasi uses to construct his case against his companion is indicative of the larger Moroccan bureaucratic body in which he locates the diplomat, as a subject driven by ethics that are Islamically-inspired irrespective of the political or circumstantial context which the ambassadors might encounter. As such, the conceptual basis from which al-Miknasi configures diplomatic ethics is clearly Quranic yet its practicality corresponds to worldly political issues. The political is manifested in jeopardizing the mission of ransoming captives through self-interested imprudence which his companions exhibited in Malta. The religious is embodied in his attempt to map out the caliber of the ideal diplomat within an Islamically-inspired schematization. Such a bi-dimensional vision is realized under the premise that envisioning religion and politics as necessarily dichotomous presents itself as a universal truth to obscure its situatedness within a specific historical moment.

Throughout the rest of his *Maqama*, al-Miknasi categorically insisted on the act of unadulterated witnessing as a necessary ethic to be existent in the diplomat. The implication that his delegation sullied the Quranic commandment is further supplemented by a treacherous precedent he extracted from the history of Ben Qrich's family, to whom belongs one of his companions. Various members of Ben Qrich's family, who were based in the city of Tetouan, had official positions in the judiciary of Morocco, particularly during the reign of the Sultan Mohamed III. Al-Miknasi indicated that under Abdelkarim's authority, people were "killed […] with his wickedness […] just like the case of Hajj Mohammed Tamim, the leader of Tetouan" (208). The

Moroccan historian Mohamed Daoud recounts that during the 1750s, various accidents occurred which led the leader of Tetouan al-Haj Mohammed Tamim to take legal action against the perpetrators. It happened that one of them was from Ben Qrich's family, and they were all put in jail. The families of the perpetrators conspired against Tamim and murdered him (1959, 294). Al-Miknasi invoked Abdelkarim's shady history to corroborate the latter's proneness towards misdeed as well as to unravel its repetitive proclivity to betray the Sultan's trust; first by killing Tamim who was appointed by the Sultan himself, and second by attempting to steal from the Sultan's money intended for a highly praised Islamic cause, ransoming captives. Sowerby and Markiewicz have stressed that the selection of a diplomat to serve at the Ottoman court was a meticulous process, requiring a thorough assessment of their social standing, prior political or diplomatic acumen, linguistic proficiency, and deportment (2021, 9). Al-Miknasi's diving into the histories of his retinue to assess their caliber as diplomats insinuates his concern with setting up a standardized process of appointing diplomats which moves beyond their social rank or familial filiation to the Sultan. We have noticed in the previous chapter that al-Ghazzal had such concerns too when he asked the Sultan to replace his uncles in presiding the retinue lest they jeopardize the diplomatic mission.

Al-Miknasi rounds up his denunciation with a few poetic lines which reflect on the untrustworthy nature of their deeds:

> I seek refuge in God, from people who become old before they age,
> Who stoop and bow with pretense, beware of them as they are sly. (al-Miknasi 2013, 209)

Since they were so brazen as to try convincing al-Miknasi to join their plot, he reasoned that it was futile to confront them directly lest such concoctions become widespread knowledge about Muslims in Europe. To address the situation reasonably, he proceeded as follows:

> I sent a message to the *al-Taghiya* [tyrant] and requested from him to send me someone from his court and the guards of his Porte who could oversee the counting and handling of this money. He sent me someone trustworthy who showed both firmness and commitment to safeguarding the money, and obeying the commands of the tyrant without disobedience. (210)

It is worth noting here that despite referring to the Christian ruler as a tyrant, a word connotatively derogatory, al-Miknasi locates the potency of trust and faithfulness on the Christian side. He did not showcase any change of temper towards his Christian hosts. In fact, he commended their trustworthiness and vigilance noting that those subjects obey the commands of their ruler without any malicious intent, like the Moroccan bureaucrats. This stance contradicts claims of religious insularity and instead aligns with the confessionalization model, exemplifying how during times of crisis and diplomatic negotiations, the convergence of cross-confessional and political considerations takes precedence over religious affiliation. This perspective reconsiders the concept of loyalty as something that evolves in response to the "proliferation of ever-new lines of religio-political differentiation" (Krstic and Van Gelder 2015, 101). It also implies that al-Miknasi recognized a lawful and ethical foundation in Mediterranean diplomacy, where ambassadors forged diplomatic relations deeply rooted in cross-confessional understanding, while also being underpinned by a reliable legal and ethical basis.

Al-Miknasi hoped that the presence of a bureaucratic overseer from the Christian side would discourage his companions from pursuing their deceitful machinations. However, his hopes were in vain as he relates

> When they approached completion and realized that they might despair, some of them revealed that they should conceal testimony in the rest of the documents, and the hidden truth within became evident, which was the work of foolish apostates, "*And We found most of them not true to their words; and indeed We found most of them disobedient*."[34] (al-Miknasi 2013, 210)

Al-Miknasi's castigation of his companions' behavior was not only a betrayal of the Sultan but also of the Quran itself. He refers to them as foolish apostates, denounces their actions, and invokes a verse from the Quran which pertains to the forgery of their words and imprudent transgressions. They transgressed against the Islamic ethics of diplomacy, and as such threw any of their deeds during the mission into a suspicious light. Al-Miknasi purported that "concealing testimony is the height of immorality, and it is worse than giving false testimony" (210). From his

[34] Q 7, 102; trans. Ahmed Raza Khan (n.d), 143.

Maqama, we can glean his vision of diplomatic conduct. The fact that his delegation could not be entrusted eventuated from their inability to keep up one of the basic covenants of diplomacy, namely that of objective witnessing and faithful documentation. Documentation and record-keeping played a crucial role in the European professionalization model of diplomacy during the 18th century. This emphasis on documentation was a manifestation of the broader intellectual trends of the Enlightenment, which championed reason, transparency, and systematic approaches to governance (Zonova 2007, 12). Characterizing Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy as *ad hoc* does not stand in light of al-Miknasi's account that displays a comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding of how diplomats were expected to maintain clear and comprehensive records of diplomatic negotiations, discussions, and agreements. He understood that written documents ensured that there was a precise understanding of the terms and conditions agreed upon by the parties involved, and criticized his retinue for their proposed fraudulent plans. As such, in his eyes, they desecrated a diplomatic ethos that was to undermine the Sultan's reformist efforts, undercut the mission of ransoming the captives and paint Muslims in a negative light.

3. Al-Miknasi's Configuration of the Diplomatic Figure

The latter concern is further accentuated in his second *Maqama* which deals with Tayeb Ben Jelloul. Al-Miknasi noted that Ben Jelloul displayed a sign of gracelessness which he believed to reflect negatively on the Sultan. Ben Jelloul wore unbecoming clothes and tattered footwear. He was voracious and exhibited signs of gluttony when their hosts invited the delegation to banquets and grandee events (al-Miknasi 2013, 211). Al-Mikansi notes that "when our master (may Allah support him) appointed you, you became affiliated with him. Therefore, every good deed or other (action) that you do is attributed to him. This is a land of enemies, so adorn yourself with the blessings and support that God has bestowed upon you through our master's hands (212). The ethical dimension of such formulation rests on the premise that one should not only bear the responsibility of their actions, but also of how such actions reflect on their community. It pertains to the principle of regarding responsibility beyond oneself to be an extension of the concept of moral agency. Immanuel Kant believed that individuals have a duty to act in such a way that their actions could be willed to be universal principles (2018). Since al-Miknasi was concerned with configuring the figure of the diplomat as a representative not only of the Sultan but of a whole bureaucratic class and his fellow coreligionists, he seems to have been advancing that diplomats

are not only responsible for their actions, but also for the way their actions contribute to the shaping of their professions, its values and the image of Muslims as a whole. It is a stance driven towards a community-based ethos of responsibility particularly in its commitment to the *Sittlichkeit* (the ethical life/order), which manifests in al-Miknasi's attempt to connect individual ethical praxis with the concept of general rights. As such, he reflects on the necessary caliber and acumen which the ambassador should possess:

> Whoever traverses the Christian lands should have a noble character, cultivated in prosperity, and high aspirations, be dignified, and not be swayed by the Christian ornamentation that may deceive them. Despite this, they should be the ones with the upper hand, and their generosity should extend to both the great and small. They should leave every mouth and tongue gaping in their praise, and their words and actions should be governed by laws. They should maintain relationships with both the elevated and humbled, and should consider the rank, status, and position of the people they meet. They should give each person their due right without belittling anyone or giving someone more than they deserve. Otherwise, they should stay in their own land and not go beyond their homeland. (212)

Al-Miknasi maps out the ethics and characteristics which the Muslim diplomat must embody when venturing into foreign lands. In addition to being poise, composed, and attentive to the unfolding of their actions and practices lest they reflect unfavorably on their community. In a similar vein to al-Ghazzal's emphasis on the ambassador's awareness of 'the laws of the Christians,' al-Miknasi also advanced that Muslim diplomats should correspond with both high and low classes and heed that their actions do not transgress the laws of the lands in which they traverse. Sowbery and Hennings emphasized that "the familiarity with the sociocultural codes of one's interlocutor, which was acquired through sustained exchanges (that were not directly associated with political negotiation), formed another important prerequisite for successful diplomacy" (2017, 10). Al-Miknasi's vision was premised upon the realization that the success or failure of international affairs depended on whether the representative of each nation had enough wit to choose the right course of actions that run in accordance with the socio-cultural context as well as the laws of different nations. Interestingly enough, al-Miknasi used the word *law* and not

Shari'a; a significant word choice as it unravels that he envisages it to be necessary that whoever travels to non-Muslim lands must be aware of and respect the laws and customs of other nations, be it secular, cultural or Christian as long as they do not tarnish their integrity and are intended to further the interests of the *Maslaha* engendered by the diplomatic mission as whole. The embodiment of such a vision obligates a certain measure of adaptive thinking to facilitate diplomatic negotiations. Al-Miknasi empirically gleaned such an orientational praxis from the misconduct of his retinue, never failing to point out the hypocrisy and the dissonance which saturates their actions.

He recalled various instances in which what was being professed by his retinue and how their actions unfolded was in dissonance. He relates how Ibn Jelloul used to steal oil from lamps designated to light the doors and the toilets. The servants of their dwelling noticed the frequent disappearance of the oil and al-Miknasi assumed the role of a detective and brought his retinue together, concluding and verifying from the smell of Ibn Jelloul's clothes that "He who was showered upon from the sky of humiliation with every downpour and drizzle" (al-Miknasi 2013, 217) is the culprit. Since "the dispatcher is known by the dispatched," (217) al-Miknasi was keenly concerned with how his retinue's action reflected on the Sultan as well as on the image of the Muslim community and how such actions might affect the diplomatic mission itself. He writes:

> From his own downfall and the omen of his humiliation, it was known that he used to sit shamelessly exposed in a window, in a disheveled appearance and a dilapidated garment. People would gather to witness his disgrace and his exposed private parts. A painter painted him on a canvas and plastered them on walls in high places so that every seller and buyer in the market could see it. Its news spread throughout the city, and Christians started to come and gather to witness it, like a festive occasion, due to the strangeness of that circumcised shape and the vileness it contained. I feared that it would spread throughout the country and remain a scandal for Muslims among the people. So, I resorted to a trick to bring it down and discard it. I gave the painter a reward on the condition that he never repeats what he did in secret or in public. (218)

Al-Miknasi is not a theoretical ethicist. His concern with how individual behavior may bear on communal bodies is intertwined with his unaltering position which renders faithful testimony

and proper conduct as the axis around which diplomats should practically orient themselves. He emphasized multiple times that "his [Ben Jelloul] disdainful acts, besmirched and insulted anyone who belonged to Islam" (219). Juxtaposed within the realm of diplomacy, al-Miknasi's detailed recounting of such disgraceful and shameful incidents instantiates the practicality of his positions. His astute concern with nuancing every instance and delineating its potential influence upon the mission testifies to his vision of testimonial trustfulness and cultural sensitivity in the realm of diplomatic affairs. Despite his focus on the religious, the symbolic and the cultural, diplomacy in al-Miknasi's oeuvre is still focused on the "real-world outcomes in the realm of politics," (Sowerby and Hennings 2017, 3), yet within an ethical framework. Read in this light, his denunciation of his companion which had made use of Quranic jurisprudential corroboration can be seen not merely as a vituperative diatribe but rather as an envisagement of proper diplomatic *Weltanschauung*; a worldview which disregards the premise that contextual religious incompatibility justifies behavioral imprudence. The ambassador should act gracefully and intelligently irrespective either of the status of the interlocutor or their religious context. The implication of such a position that adopts transparency as a cardinal ethos and al-Miknasi enmeshes and corroborates his vision through a Hadith from the prophetic tradition, namely that "Whoever conceals his testimony when he is called to give it is as one who bears false testimony."[35] As such, faithful testimony becomes an ethic that impinges upon the political realm of international affairs and on how an individual orients him/herself religiously, through their faith toward God, and politically through their ethical conduct toward the Other. Al-Miknasi's insistence on such a formulation renders it of pivotal necessity vis-à-vis the profession of diplomacy in the Islamic world.

During their stay in Malta, al-Miknasi was invited to a banquet. He recounts that

> just as you [referring to Ibn Jelloul] did in Malta when the Christians invited us to an honorable gathering which they celebrated on our behalf, I called upon you and brought you with me. The Christians welcomed us by carefully selecting their food and abstaining from wine, which they did not present at their table in our presence. The only thing objectionable was the silver utensils they used for eating, as it was their custom of nobility. We had no choice but to comply with them, as the matters of ransoming Muslim captives were in their hands. I committed this forbidden act in pursuit of fulfilling what we hoped

[35] Kanz al-Ummal, no. 17723

> for. […] Then you refused to sit at that table, objecting that eating from silver is forbidden. It is truly astonishing to witness these people. They are like those who asked Abdullah bin Umar about the prohibition of killing lice and fleas, to which he responded, "Who are you?" They replied, "We are from the people of Kufa." He then said, "You killed Hussain ibn Ali, and yet you inquire about the blood of fleas." (248)

In this excerpt, al-Miknasi not only highlights the hypocritical stance of some of his companions but also clearly discloses his ethico-political vision of diplomacy. He envisions the relationship between ethics and diplomacy, and by extension politics to be as follows: while ethics should inform political decision-making, political action within diplomatic settings necessarily involves compromises and considerations beyond individual moral judgments. As such, it could be reasoned that his vision of the realm of politics is premised upon the paramountcy of balance between ethical ideals and practical considerations. Al-Miknasi propounds that ethical principles should orient political praxis, but such a praxis may obligate trade-offs that must be attended to when it pertains to the pursuit of the greater good for the community as a whole. As such, in the excerpted scene, al-Miknasi saw the principle of adaptability and contextual savviness to be paramount in such diplomatic situations. E. Natalie Rothman has pointed out that any effective courtly, including diplomatic, communication inherently assumed that the involved parties possessed the capacity to identify specific structural dis/similarities, thereby implying that elements of social order could be compared, harmonized, and transcended (2015, 250). For al-Miknasi, the ambassador's ability to intelligently read off the setting and understand the permissibility of committing an objectionable deed in pursuit of a higher purpose is cardinal to what characterizes a diplomat and his ability to translate across socio-cultural and confessional boundaries. His invocation of Ibn Jelloul's dishonorable acts before relating such a story highlights the unlawful and hypocritical precedence that al-Miknasi conceptualized from the beginning of his *Maqamat*, namely the idea of rendering ethical praxis as a subject of affective volatility rather than a matter of diplomatic interests which gear towards the *Maslaha* (common good). He was willing to commit a small objectionable religious transgression such as using silver utensils because of the honor that his Christian hosts exhibited toward his retinue by not serving alcohol during the banquet, and so as to ascertain that the ransoming of captives does not get jeopardized due to such trivialities. He not only conceptualized but embodied his ethics by epitomizing the essence of

successful intercultural engagement to further diplomatic interests, and in so doing he discredited the diplomatic status of his retinue.

Al-Miknasi's ethical praxis is not a preordained set of universal principles particularized to a specific instantiation; rather, he, and by extension the ambassador, ought to interpret their situation in light of the broader ethos of *Maslaha*, and the religio-political backdrop in which he has to pinch out a maneuvering space of compromise. As the passage indicates, the undercurrent of such malleability is manifested in his remarkable ability to navigate diverse cultural and religious landscapes, adjusting perspectives, behaviors, and strategies to cope with unfamiliar customs and norms while still being steered by an interest in the public welfare of his community. Al-Miknasi clearly indicated that the capacity to flexibly respond to changing circumstances empowers diplomats to navigate complex political environments and shifting power dynamics. Since the diplomatic matter of ransoming was still within the power of the Maltese, he seems to be urging an ethos in which ambassadors adeptly shape their approach to suit the ever-evolving demands of international affairs, demonstrating a willingness to compromise without compromising his core values. Such diplomatic finesse engenders trust, fosters cooperation, and facilitates the pursuit of *Maslaha*, i.e., mutually beneficial outcomes in a rapidly changing international landscape. This ability to translate across boundaries allows us to think about how al-Miknasi defined the boundaries of and the connection between the entities he translated across. The in/commensurabilities he aimed to emphasize are ethically embedded in practices that he believed to be geared toward *Maslaha*. This also articulates the ideology through which he aspired to navigate between religious obligation and diplomatic practices.

The ethical relevance which can be deduced from al-Miknasi's vision can be stated as follows: given that his ethics are underpinned by his Islamic belief, any laws which eventuate from the latter must be universal in their application, political or otherwise. Yet, al-Miknasi's above-mentioned instance highlights that certain conditions impose limits on such a universal application and render certain laws particularized formulations of universal ethical norms. He attributes the identification of such un-normative occasions to the practicality of intelligence, on whose shoulders rests the evaluation of particularities that could be contravened to accelerate the process of attaining communal and higher interests, i.e., ransoming the captives. The generation of such a hermeneutic space, where political and ethical praxis is not merely predetermined metaphysically but rather in regard to reasoned judgment and the practicality of the situation could not have taken

place in a setting where rules of conduct are entirely ossified and exempted from any further hermeneutic reckoning. This not only undercuts the *ad hoc* arguments advanced by Laroui and Matar against early modern Moroccan diplomacy but also undergirds al-Miknasi's intellectual situatedness in relation to the Muslim intellectual tradition and the space it allocates for creative hermeneutics and transformative praxis. It is an assumption which is acted out, applied, embodied, yet not *stated* so as not to limit it within a demarcated theoretical ligature that could stifle interpretive and practical creative intelligence. In his ethical philosophy, not serving wine at a table full of Muslim guests should be interpreted as a sign of veneration in a context where wine has religious connotations. Since the banquet was held in his and his retinue's honor, objecting to the silver utensils on a religious basis became an unethical act despite its religious validity because it abrogates "the matters of ransoming Muslim captives." His retinue's remonstrance unraveled their unethical propensities not only because it contradicted their knavish deeds but also because it implied, that is *stated* and as such limited the creative and intelligent leeway in which religion and politics converge so as to facilitate human conduct.

Matar notes al-Miknasi's emphasis that "the intelligent person who travels in countries, and meets various peoples, ought to abide by their codes; otherwise, he will be blamed and held in derision" (2015, 22). He concludes based on such emphasis that al-Miknasi's *Maqamat* embody a vituperative castigation of his companions' hasty behavior, the purpose of which was to highlight that "sometimes the failure in international affairs was not a result of the falsity of the religion of the European hosts, but of the antisocial and appalling behavior of the Arab-Muslim visitors" (22). What Matar seems to have missed is that throughout his account al-Miknasi associated intelligence with ethics, subordinating religious difference to a socially aware pragmatism driven by practical reasoning within the framework of ethical conduct. His assessments of certain acts as being ethically 'good or bad' involve storytelling and a historicization that establishes whatever act is being denounced as not an anomaly but rather as an act underpinned by repetitive tendencies. Matar further posits that "the role of ambassador in early modern Moroccan diplomacy was temporary, governed by one single goal: signing a treaty or ransoming captives. There were no institutions in North Africa that prepared future emissaries for negotiating social and cultural differences in the 'lands of the Christians'" (20). In light of decolonial hermeneutics, the epistemological basis of such a statement is surreptitiously biased. The implication of such an argument is that Moroccan diplomacy was a mercurial style of individualized diplomacy, with

neither a collective vision nor a systematic bureaucratic body, adopted by non-European nations in the early modern Mediterranean world. Evoking such a formulation against the Enlightenment narrative of a modern bureaucratic state configured within a secular systematized body of actors who are linked by a set of pre-determined diplomatic praxes (such as permanent residential embassies), as well as an international rubric of epistemic production, any other form of diplomatic practice which does not align with such a model is automatically labeled as un-modern and erratic. Al-Miknasi's text unravels that there was a general concern with solidifying and particularizing the ethical and practical modalities of diplomacy using Islam as an axis of theorization and practical orientation. Through an Islamicate-political prism, Moroccan actors generated their own vision of diplomatic praxis which attended to their local specificity and political interests while also heeding the global transfigurations which swept over European states in the 18th century. Their own system of diplomatic imperatives cannot be dismissed based on their in/commensurability to a European ideal because it stems from an ethical formation whose roots reach deep into their indigenous intellectual and cultural traditions. Yet, its encounter with the culturally unfamiliar, generated in some instances through understanding, a measure of growth which expanded the zone of the familiar.

4. Expanding the Zone of the Familiar through Diplomacy

Sowerby and Hennings argued that focusing on individual actors provides an opportunity to reevaluate the evolution of diplomacy and concurrently furnishes valuable perspectives on how diplomatic envoys effectively exercised political influence and cultivated an understanding of unfamiliar cultural settings by adeptly assimilating into local forms of social interaction (2017, 8). The scenes that exemplify such a transformative process can be gleaned from al-Miknasi's hermeneutic rendition of his encounter with the singing and dancing *damat* and the perceptual growth which took place between his first and second journeys. The *damat* is al-Miknasi's term for "women of high social rank, who wanted to welcome us with music and dance. For them, such was the height of hospitality and so I found no alternative but to go along and watch what they were doing, just for their sake" (al-Miknasi 2015, 50). In his Spanish journey, which was his first journey to Europe, al-Miknasi perceived the unfamiliar scene of women dancing and mingling with men as a manifestation of how his hosts were "expressing their joy" (93), and showcasing "the height of hospitality" (104). When he and his retinue reached the city of Gineta "all the city

dignitaries came, men and women, bringing musical instruments, a high sign of hospitality. They asked our permission to enter the house with their instruments and women *ḍāmāt* to dance, as is their custom" (148). On the one hand, al-Miknasi understood that the dancing *damat* was a Spanish custom, performed to showcase hospitality and celebrate his embassy. On the other hand, when a judge "came swaying among his followers […] walked over to a virgin whose beauty dominated the whole assembly […] danced with her in his arms, his feet nimbly shuffling, totally heedless of the people who were there" (148), al-Miknasi retorted "how shameful! May God rebuke them and humiliate their audacity" (148). Christian Windler underscored the indispensable quality of adaptability within diplomatic circles. He highlighted the necessity for diplomatic actors to exhibit remarkable flexibility when navigating the disparities in norms that traverse cultural boundaries. This flexibility proves essential not only in facilitating effective cross-cultural communication but also in fulfilling their roles as ambassadors who represent their own society's values (2017, 256). Al-Miknasi perceived the *damat* scene through two prisms. The first pertains to the cultural norm of his hosts, noting how such festivities were expressive of joy and veneration, "as was their custom when they wanted to show hospitality" (150). The second hermeneutic filter relates to al-Miknasi's religio-cultural projection, which saw these acts as "showing neither discretion nor embarrassment," and as such he rendered them as a display of "indecency and debauchery" (150). The instances in which he exhibits a cultural understanding of such festivities outnumbers the few scenes in which he engaged with them from within his own religio-cultural sphere. Given that this was his first encounter with such customs, al-Miknasi's mind attended to both the diplomatic as well as the religious dimensions of his mission. Rendering the festivities as a sign of hospitality and welcome satisfies the diplomatic element, and interpreting some of them as inappropriate gratifies any religious conjecture from the Sultan's court. Thus, understanding in diplomatic contexts seems to be already ensconced in an ethical basis; a basis which, as has been highlighted above and is going to be demonstrated below, associates intelligent understanding with malleability, particularly within a diplomatic and cross-cultural context.

As for the second journey, al-Miknasi seems to have expanded his hermeneutical understanding of such events. After having wondered through Christian lands and learned about their customs, he displays a different form of understanding. Since diplomacy inherently involves interactions across different cultures, misunderstandings often lurk beneath the surface of diplomatic exchanges. Nevertheless, as Sowerby and Markiewicz argue, actors from distinct

normative systems could construct mutual comprehension of diplomatic procedures through ongoing diplomatic engagement and experience (2021, 18). Becoming acquainted with the diplomatic milieu, whether through a prolonged residency or multiple special missions to the same court, often played a pivotal role in fostering these shared understandings. These could be gleaned from the ceremonies and encounters that al-Miknasi experienced after having been acquainted with European diplomatic culture. In Sicily, he was invited to a night at the opera. He noted that men and women were "in the most splendid of clothes;" and "a girl stepped forward and began to sing, alternating with a man: they were pure wonder" (205). In Syracuse, al-Miknasi joyfully enjoyed the festivity held in their respect, where men and women danced and singed together, "for that was one of their customs that could not be changed. They spent the night in jollity, totally oblivious to the goings and comings around them" (258). When he was invited to attend the theatre, he wrote "I found that difficult to accept but then I realized that the people were doing everything to entertain us and to celebrate the glory of our master, the victor, our imam. So, I thought it best to accommodate them and not to act contrary to their practices. Otherwise, they might say things that could be offensive for which we would be to blame" (237). It seems that al-Miknasi has acquired an understanding that the advancement of diplomacy necessitates an attentiveness to the laws and heedfulness of the practices of other nations. His attention to the diplomatic language of the Sicilians, as expressed through symbolic communications within festivities and ceremonies assisted al-Miknasi in apprehending distinct cultural norms. He displays an astute form of hermeneutic understanding which is intricately linked to his praxis. The practical furtherance of diplomatic interests is tied with an interpretive understanding that is ethical; ethical in the sense that it is cognizant of the religious weight engendered by his position in the court of the Commander of the Faithful, and of the political weight which is also animated in the figure of the ruler as a political authority. While such restraints may be seen as adulterating his proclaimed ethics, as the above-mentioned scenes demonstrate, al-Miknasi's ethical praxis is not static but rather evolving in proportion to his practical experience in diplomacy and cross-cultural encounters; it is framed by concerns that are both faith-imbued and historical; it is oriented by a concern for the diplomatic profession as well as the collective entity of Muslim mis/representation in Christian lands and the effects which unethical behavior might engender between Muslim-Christian corporeal affairs.

5. Islamicate Diplomatic Ethics in the Context of Captivity

Al-Miknasi embodied his philosophy of ethical imperatives. During his first journey to Spain, he traveled in a religio-political context underpinned by the Sultan Mohamed III's larger project of jettisoning corsair activities and ending Muslim and non-Muslim captivity. Such a project was intended not only to establish peace in the Mediterranean but also to initiate and solidify economic ties with European nations. He ventured into Europe following the mistake discussed in chapter five, made by ambassador al-Ghazzal during the negotiation of a treaty between Morocco and Spain. He managed to free 122 Algerian prisoners and succeeded in signing the Treaty of Aranjuez on May 30, 1780. This treaty established a new foundation for Moroccan-Spanish relations based on peace, trade, and diplomatic cooperation. Additionally, he gained the friendship and admiration of Spanish statesmen, which remained strong until the end of his life. Al-Miknasi wrote about everything he encountered during his journey in Spain, from the smallest details concerning Catholic religious institutions and rituals, the Pope and the position of the Jews in Spain, to descriptions of Spanish economy, culture, customs, entertainment and festivities, educational and military facilities as well as the history of the Spanish monarchy. He noted the sociological differences between various cities and described their architectures, and different gender roles which pertained to various social classes. He even inquired into the conquest of America and wrote about the revolt of colonies against the British Empire (Al-Miknasi 1965, 97). Before venturing into Europe, al-Miknasi noted that he studied the Bible and the available histories of Islamic Spain; an act which was undoubtedly carried out to familiarize himself with the context and the theological basis of his hosts. As already indicated, he also was aware of the accounts of his predecessors which points out that he believed that a certain level of familiarity was necessary so as to avoid flaring out unnecessary accidents which could jeopardize his original purpose.

Aside from this, what diplomatically interests this section is his stops at Cartagena and Segovia, the cities in which the meeting of the captives took place. Al-Miknasi prefaced his account with the purpose of the journey writing that he was sent to Spain because "the Christians in Spain had a significant number of Muslim captives, a large population, all of whom were from the eastern lands such as Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria, and its provinces" (Al-Miknasi 1965, 6). Mohamed III was concerned with releasing Christian captives and ransoming Muslim captives irrespective of their nationality or ethnicity. As such, all of the Muslim captives who were to be ransomed were Algerian subjects under Ottoman sovereignty. Al-Miknasi showcased his

diplomatic ethics when he reached Segovia. He provided a historical testimony, that he conveyed with utmost integrity, pertaining to the good treatment of the Spaniards towards these captives, saying: "And they treated them well, not burdening them with work or service, providing them with sufficient food and clothing" (130). However, the dire conditions of captives were noted by al-Miknasi's predecessors, al-Ghassani and al-Ghazzal. Al-Miknasi confirmed such conditions too when he met the captives in Cartagena, writing that

> the governor sent for them, bringing them out in a state which would soften the rocks, torn the hearts, and make the infidels shed boiling tears, and their hearts would quiver in their chests at the mere sight of these prisoners. Perplexity overwhelmed me, and emotion overpowered me, and I consoled them by assuring that our master, the Commander of the Faithful, would not abandon them and that we had spoken on their behalf regarding their redemption through an exchange. (2015, 163)

Al-Miknasi's ethical faithfulness was present with him throughout his journeys. He gave credit when credit was due and criticized when unjust conditions were displayed before him. He commended the goodwill of the King Carlos III when he released 30 captives "as a gift from the king to our Lord, the Commander of the Faithful. He removed their shackles, allowing them to be free" (164). In fact, al-Miknasi was enraged with the Turks of Algeria not with the Spaniards. He wrote:

> The mentioned captives, all of whom are from Algeria and its provinces, have not been overlooked by our Master, may God support him. He has spent approximately two thousand on them in multiple payments. Our Master, may Allah support him, had been talking with the tyrant before this for about fourteen years, and negotiated for the ransom of these mentioned captives in exchange for the captives of Spain residing in Algeria. The tyrant [Spanish King] delegated the matter to our Master, may Allah grant him victory, who then sent a message to the governor of Algeria, urging him to fulfill this virtuous deed. The tyrant informed all the Muslim captives to embark on the ships and directed them toward Algeria with the intention of exchanging them for Christians. The Turkish governor of Algeria ransomed the Turks but refused to ransom the Arabs, and he ransomed the

> remaining Christians with money. The Muslims were returned to the dungeons of disbelief. Look at this heinous act and the terrible situation. (164-65)

He scolded the Turkish authorities for not upholding the Islamic ideal which renders Muslim captives worthy of being ransomed irrespective of their nationality or ethnicity. Peter Kitlas commented on such a diatribe by showcasing how a Moroccan diplomatic actor defined the sovereignty of Mohamed III in opposition to the Ottoman Algerian authorities, not only as a Commander of the Faithful but also as a temporal and political authority; a Muslim sovereign in charge of Muslim subjects and not only Turkish Muslim subjects (Kilats 2015, 182). As such, Al-Miknasi expanded the domain of the Sultan's religious and political power throughout the Mediterranean. Within the context of his ethical formation of diplomacy, it seems to me that al-Miknasi's castigation of such a deed is also informed by his attempt to demarcate the proper conduct of diplomatic exchange. His rendition of the Turks in such a light identifies a discrepancy between the sovereignty of the Ottoman Caliphate in theory and practice. Ellen Friedman noted that the Ottoman Dey of Algeria was apprehensive that his revenue would be diminished from piracy activities. As such, when the Spanish brought Muslim captives to Algeria for exchange, the Turkish Algerian announced that he "did not want Moors, but money," and primarily wanted money for Christian captives not exchange (Friedman 1983, 160). When placed within the context of early modern diplomatic culture, this could be envisioned as a practice, as highly ambiguous as it is, of competing claims to superiority and legitimacy (Windler 2018, 3). The Ottoman's claims to the Caliphate were solidified during the reign of Selim I after conquering and bringing under his authority vast lands. Only after being recognized as the defenders of the Holy Sites of Mecca and Medina that they were referred to as the representative leaders of the Islamic world (Dominique 1978). The Caliph, by virtue of his position, was responsible for all Muslim subjects. When al-Miknasi pointed out the hypocrisy and the greed which Ottoman authorities exhibited in relation to Arab subjects, he was not only questioning such a religio-political sovereignty but also pinpointing the unethical and undiplomatic nature of such an act particularly as he supplemented his critique by pertinent Quranic verses and Prophetic Hadiths (2015, 165) denouncing such an action. On the one hand, his critique insinuates a surreptitious claim to superiority which was performed within the practice of diplomacy. On the other hand, he was displaying to an emerging Moroccan diplomatic cadre, Moroccan identity on the Mediterranean scene. Such a scenario

allows us to access the extent and varieties of cultural compatibility involved in diplomatic interactions among political figures originating from normative systems that exhibited varying degrees of difference and similarity. Diplomatic encounters led to both conflicting cultural outlooks and beneficial exchange of knowledge, and their repercussions extended even to the diplomatic proceedings themselves. Al-Miknasi emphasized that the mission of Moroccan ambassadors was to uphold a normative order with utmost ethical standards, and through such vigilance, they were to become a part of a Morocco whose international identity does not only rethink the presumed hostility of Muslim-Christian relations but also Muslim-Muslim relations. Al-Miknasi exclaimed:

> And how can he resolve to differentiate between Muslims, when they all took refuge under his authority, so he would ransom his Turkish brethren and leave the Arab captives. Even if he held in his hands enough Christian prisoners to redeem all Muslim captives, he would still have many Christians left. He chose worldly gains and paid the ransom for the Christians with money, returning the Muslims to captivity without distinguishing between a believer and a non-believer. Yet, our Master, may He be exalted, continues to show mercy in their rescue, little by little, every time a group is saved from among them until He [God] brings them all out, seeking His highness and seeking His pleasure. (165)

Al-Miknasi's rendition of this episode reveals the Ottoman Algerians to be the sole reason which ruined the exchange process. He stripped them of any spiritual authority over the Islamic world by highlighting how their greedy investment in the temporal world undermines their claims of the Caliphate. Moreover, such ethnic fanaticism which favored material gains and abandoned Muslim captives unless they were of Turkish origins, desecrated the Islamic obligation of solidarity and the rights of the *Ummah* (religious community). The profanity of separating captives on the basis of ethnicity and ransoming only the Turkish subject is presented by al-Miknasi as an act which undermines the proclaimed religious sovereignty of the Sublime Porte. It showcases how "the Moroccan religio-political elite extended a spiritual sovereignty against other Muslims" (Kitlas 2015, 187). It constitutes a challenge to the Ottoman Caliphate's universalistic claims from a Morocco which boasts of its Sultan's concern and authority over all Muslims. In light of Windler's insight that "early modern Mediterranean diplomacy was marked by multiple and

contrasting claims to superiority, which in turn derived from competing normative orders," (2018, 3) it seems that al-Miknasi's rendition of the Ottoman episode discredits their normative diplomatic praxis. Additionally, Windler highlights that "religious difference fostered divisions between Christians and Muslims, which had repercussions on diplomatic practice" (3). Al-Miknasi's instance showcases that such divisions were not exclusive to Muslim-Christian relations but also to how Muslim ambassadors de/legitimize other diplomatic practices in the Islamic world. It also represents a situation "in which diverging normative systems overlapped or clashed with one another" (5) despite emanating from the same religious rubric. This was a chance to articulate a claim to Caliphal rank for the Moroccan Sultan, superior to the claim of the Ottomans, and within a European cross-confessional context. Such a scene is relevant when we juxtapose it with al-Miknasi's astute realization underscored in his account of Naples; namely that the failure of international affairs depended heavily on the ability of the diplomat to be oriented by a vision which amalgamates between religious integrity as well as political interests. Moreover, in this episode he underpinned how 'hideous' political and diplomatic acts can undercut the proclaimed religious sovereignty which the title of the Caliph, as someone who is representative and a sovereign over all Muslims, signifies in the Islamic world. While both the Ottomans and the Moroccans were operating within the same confessional order, al-Miknasi claimed superiority to the Moroccan diplomatic order which did not differentiate between any Muslim captives.

Within the project of the Sultan Sidi Mohamed ben Abdullah to end slavery and captivity, al-Miknasi held a great reputation that spanned across various European countries. The Sultan's efforts and al-Miknasi's diplomatic presence and correspondence with his counterparts in Europe reached public display particularly when the official journal of the French government *Le Moniteur Universel* noted after al-Miknasi managed to establish the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Navigation, Commerce and Fisheries between Spain and Morocco signed in 1799, that this treaty was a monumental step towards progress and civil rights:

> The sacred principles of international rights have transitioned from the books of philosophers to the halls of the Moroccan kingdom, and these principles have come to dominate their actions. Religious differences between peoples no longer remain an obstacle in the path towards rapprochement. Those who used to only accept submission or the sword from non-believers, today we only hear from them words of friendship, understanding, and

> harmony. In short, the Emperor of Morocco writes that he wishes for the detestable word 'enslavement' to be erased from the memory of humanity and replaced with his own name. (Qtd in al-Fassi 1961, 71)

This is a testimony not only to the efforts of the Sultan but also to his diplomatic cadre which materialized and ensured the sustainability of friendly and peaceful relations through ethical actions and diplomatic correspondence. The latter is particularly relevant as the insurance of honest diplomatic relations between various diplomatic state actors was premised upon various ethics of friendship coupled with the concept of *Mahaba*. This particular ethical orientation was seen by Moroccan ambassadors as a viable tool for the furtherance of diplomatic interests. The use of friendship in diplomatic relations should evoke al-Miknasi's pronouncement that the failure of international relations depended immensely on the ability of the ambassador to have practical rationality, i.e., the ability to assess the situation and engage in behavior that will benefit a higher goal while attending to one's spiritual integrity. Such invocation is necessary as it provides an alternative interpretation to what Matar identified as the source of failure of Moroccan diplomacy namely that the lack of "professionalization," differentiated European diplomats from their Moroccan counterparts by highlighting how European "negotiators belonged to a state institution that dictated their actions and strategies, irrespective of individual relations" (Matar 2015b, 63). While such an argument might be valid to his case study of Ibn Aisha, a seventeenth-century admiral, pirate, and diplomat, it does not stand when he generalizes his case to characterize Moroccan diplomatic actors as a failure resulting from "the lack of North African preparedness in diplomacy" (63). As such, Matar concluded that Ibn Aisha's resort to *Mahaba* was an ineffective maneuver of diplomacy. What Matar failed to realize here is that the intellectual roots of such concepts are not merely political but rather find their initiation as a result of attempting to bridge the schism between the religious and the political. Official documents frequently expressed discourses of friendship that presented a notion akin to a contractual agreement, outlining the reciprocal responsibilities inherent in maintaining a state of friendly relations (Sowerby and Markiewicz 2021, 17). Windler argues such verbal ceremonies serve as a compelling illustration of how diplomats and their counterparts in the royal courts could collaboratively evolve a mutual comprehension of suitable ceremonial practices through ongoing dialogue and correspondence (2017, 225). The utilization of *Mahaba* facilitated diplomatic conduct for the worldly, and the

other-worldly, for the political and the religious. Additionally, this form of diplomacy which took into account an affective element such as *Mahaba* meant that the agency of the Moroccan ambassadorial actor is crucial to the betterment of Moroccan diplomatic interests because those actors operated within the shadow of the Sultan (institutional structure) and outside of it as well through their personal correspondence with their European counterparts. As such, it "offers important insights into the ways in which diplomatic representatives realized political agency and established relations in other cultural contexts" (Sowerby and Hennings 2017, 8).

In a recent article, Kitlas brilliantly showcased how in the second half of the eighteenth-century Ahmad ben Mahdi al-Ghazzal, "in his correspondence with the Marqués de Grimaldi, […] invoked Islamic cultural notions of friendship to define the ethics of peaceful, cross-confessional diplomatic practice" (2022, 8). Kitlas notes that *Mahaba* was "a necessary characteristic for diplomatic and administrative practice as read through Islamic theological obligations of sincere intent and trust" (12). E.M. Corrales notes how "Muhammad Ibn Utman was, without a doubt, the Moroccan politician most respected by the Spanish authorities in the last third of the eighteenth century" (2020, 255). Al-Miknasi had sustained various important friendships with "Jorge Patissiati, who was interim consul general in 1767 and later Spain's vice consul in Tangier; he was also acquainted with Francisco Pacheco, another Spanish vice consul, and with Father Boltas of the Catholic mission in Meknes" (254-55). Al-Miknasi's ethical caliber as an ambassador impressed the Spanish King Carlos III so much so that he wrote to the Sultan Mohamed III:

> Finally, I must tell you that your ambassador, since his arrival in Spain and especially at my court, has displayed such sensible, virtuous, and frank personal conduct, in his own household and in service to his mission, that he has proved worthy of my favor; and he deserves to remain in your good graces, which he had already earned when you named him to such an honored post. (Qtd in Corrales 2020, 257)

Al-Miknasi epitomized his diplomatic philosophy, and "met and addressed the king with the greatest respect, praise, and generosity, and has shown every merit in his fine qualities, probity, and talent" (258). He utilized his loving friendship not only to advance diplomatic interests but also to do humane favors engaging with various classes of Spanish society, and more importantly to expand the agential and authoritative space of Moroccan diplomats. On his way back to

Morocco, al-Miknasi passed through Cartagena. Near the end of his stay, he received a request from Vicente Torregrasa, a resident of Cartagena, a nobleman, and a silversmith by profession, who had been imprisoned for ten years on the accusation of counterfeiting currency and sentenced to death by garrote. Torregrasa sought al-Miknasi's protection and valuable intervention with the Count of Floridablanca who was al-Miknasi's close friend in order to have his death sentence commuted to another punishment (Palau 1975, 73-74). Al-Miknasi managed to save that person's life through his *Mahaba* as embodied in friendship.

Another incident occurred when al-Miknasi reached Cadiz. A soldier named José de Ortega had been sentenced to death for the crime of desertion. His lawyer Antonio de Sierra pleaded the Moroccan ambassador to take the soldier José de Ortega under his protection, to which the Moroccan ambassador agreed. Immediately, al-Miknasi went to the Captain General of the province of Cadiz, asking him to postpone the execution of the sentence to allow him time to reach Madrid and request a pardon for the prisoner from Carlos III. After a tiring process of correspondence between the Count of Riela, Count of Floridablanca and the King Carlos III, the Spanish sovereign decided to grant the pardon requested by al-Miknasi and spared the life of José de Ortega, commuting his death sentence to ten years of service in a regiment in America (Arribas 1975, 70). These instances instantiate to the Moroccan diplomatic cadre, the agential spaces in which they could exercise their autonomy by claiming diplomatic authority not only in Morocco but in foreign countries with diplomatic ties. It also underscores the authority of the Moroccan normative order of diplomacy vis-à-vis its Christian as well as Ottoman counterparts.

Additionally, while these might be taken as incidents that solely reflect al-Miknasi's character as a diplomat, *Mahaba* is instantiated in his praxis, too. During the reign of Mulay Sulayman, the Spanish and the French were at war. A group of businessmen from Rabat bought a ship that was to sail from Morocco to France with a cargo of wool. The ship, which was bought by Moroccan subjects, hanged the Moroccan flag to showcase to the Spanish that it was under the authority of the Moroccan kingdom. Some of the passengers on the ship were French authorized by the Sultan with documents and passports which prove their status under the Moroccan flag. The Spanish seized the ship on the premise that the French, wanting to mislead the Spanish, fabricated papers that stated that the ship was sold to the Moroccans because they surmised that it would not be seized due to the Hispano-Moroccan Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Commerce. As such, they seized the ship but agreed to release the "Moors" despite having taken part in this affair "favoring

the interests of [the French] by means of dissimulation and pretense" (Qtd in Corrales 2020, 438). The Spanish consul reported that the French could not be released "while we are in a state of war with them" (438). Al-Miknasi wrote to his "esteemed and beloved friend Manuel Salmón"[36] that the French subjects were protected by the Moroccan flag. He issued a letter from the Sultan Mulay Suleyman stating that "if you are at peace with us, you should not treat us worse than you do the Christian nations who are at peace with you" (484). The letter highlights that if the seizure of the Moroccan ship had been legal, both the Moroccans and the French would have succumbed to the same punishment. However, since it was not the case, the Moroccan kingdom demanded the release of both subjects. After various correspondences between al-Miknasi and the Spanish consul, and having proven that the ship and its cargo belonged to the Moroccans, the Spanish insisted that if the third of the passengers sailing in the ship belonged to an enemy country, according the "the law of the sea" it can be legally seized. Al-Miknasi responded that it is

> a universal custom that an enemy flying the flag of a friendly nation should be free, this being the general law of all nations […] you still have much scope for doing good; and the friendship between my king and yours is much greater than all this. We too have done far more than what the law prescribes in favor of the king of Spain. […] If between ourselves and you, our neighbors, such a firm friendship [Mahaba] reigns, you should not give so much importance to a petty affair like this. (Qtd in Corrales 2020, 488)

Having recognized that such a matter would complicate Moroccan-Hispano relations, the Spanish eventually agreed to release the French. It seems that *Mahaba* as an ethic of diplomatic conduct is not merely a naïve concept of affective undertones. It is drawn upon during diplomatic crises so as to manage and let the wheel of diplomacy spin smoothly with the flow of the interests and laws of the nations involved. It is also the case that whenever such an ethical acuity is evoked,

[36] Juan Manuel Salmón was a veteran Spanish Consul who resided in Tangier. It was due to his and al-Miknasi's friendship and efforts that a bilateral treaty of peace and commercial was signed between Morocco and Spain in 1799. This treaty is noted by Moroccan and Spanish scholars as a fundamental stepping stone towards solidifying a framework for consistent civil relations between Morocco and Spain. It was one of the highlights of al-Miknasi's carrier after which he was appointed as a minister. See Ibn Zaydan's *Itḥaf a'lam al-nas bi Jamal Hadirat Maknas* (2008, Vol 4, 194).

it is allocated a higher purpose, i.e., it is formulated in such a way that does not let 'petty affairs' derail its presumed telos, peaceful and friendly relations, especially between neighboring nations. While the subjects were released, the faith of the ship remained unclear. Yet, what is worth noting here is that the existence of diplomatic tensions had to be filtered through certain ethical categories which ensures the maintenance and furtherance of communication beyond any confessional or cultural divide. It becomes clear that *Mahaba* was an ethical concept that animated the writing and diplomatic praxis of al-Miknasi both at the bureaucratic and personal levels. It could be understood as a linguistic and affective spectrum that was shared between a network of actors all invested to various degrees in building and sustaining diplomatic friendships that attend to the interests of both nations falling under its ethical rubric.

Such a formation bestowed upon Moroccan diplomatic actors a shared Islamically inflicted ethical framework from which they redefined the conduct of diplomatic affairs. The increased concerns of diplomacy demanded cross-cultural awareness, adaptability, malleability, rational assessments and having a higher purpose that evaluates present mis/deeds in view of the spirit of diplomacy. It also becomes evident that diplomacy was not solely under the authority of the Sultan himself, but rather the agency of Moroccan diplomatic actors played a crucial role in the advancement of Moroccan and other friendly nations' interests through personal friendships. In fact, *Mahaba* as a loving friendship focalizes the notion of personalized diplomacy by allowing Moroccan ambassadors to express their humanism and as such attain a certain degree of leeway in which interpersonal relations accelerated and advanced bureaucratic state relations. These two modalities of diplomatic conduct converged together in the figure of al-Miknasi through his nurturing of trustworthy friendships with various foreign ambassadors and consuls and with his cardinal position in the Moroccan court in relation to the Sultan Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah. The latter concept of *Mahaba* cannot be taken apart from other ethical formations that al-Miknasi displayed through his writing, namely those of proper conduct, contextual awareness, cultural and religious sensitivity, and faithful testimony. In this regard, we can advance that the diplomatic inventory of Moroccan ambassadors contained affective, intellectual, and ethical acuities which animated how they oriented themselves as diplomatic actors, as Muslims within Christian lands, as friends with other diplomatic agents, and in relation to each other as a cadre of ambassadors representing their country and the Sultan. It is this kaleidoscope of conceptual acuities across civilizational settings that constitutes Moroccan Islamicate diplomacy. Such civilizational

encounters necessarily cross-fertilized Moroccan diplomacy with ideas and intellectual loans which corresponded to the situational novelties Muslim ambassadors encountered abroad and as such enabled them to transcend the rigidity of ideological separations always imposed upon such a rich history.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has aspired to shed light on the diplomatic merit of the Moroccan ambassador al-Miknasi. Within the theoretical framework of New Diplomatic History, it argued that throughout his writings a spectrum of intellectual, affective, and ethical formulations which pertain to diplomatic conduct are configured in light of an Islamically-inflicted background so as to accommodate both *Deen and Dunya,* i.e., the religious and the worldly. Al-Miknasi's diplomatic mind seems to have been preoccupied with demarcating the ethical praxis that defines how diplomatic conduct should be practiced in a world that is increasingly oriented by political and secular or rather non-religious acuities. As such, the development and employment of various practical categories facilitated the possibility of operating within a nexus that can simultaneously attend both to the religious integrity of Islam as well as the political ends of the *Ummah*.

The investigation of the *Rihla* has almost always been carried out through the Self/Other paradigm where the relation between the Self and the Other is given primary attention so as to unlock the nature and the basis of such a relationship within the cultural imaginary. Rarely do such interrogations step forward to decorticate the intellectual basis which underpinned such a genre and how it relates to the local realities of the author and his community. Such an investigative gap eventuated the proposition that beyond imagining the Other, Moroccan ambassadors' intellectual milieu was either in awe or jealous of the modern technological developments of the 'West,' and as such the only shared understanding which could be established between various Moroccan diplomats is that being enchanted or repelled by the 'West'. One can see that even when admitting that a shared ethos was present, it is usually subsumed under the Self/Other paradigm. Such a formulation implies that, as Abdullah Laroui reiterates, Moroccan efforts in the international scene do not truly deserve the label of diplomacy (2015, 244) because it does not rise to the European enlightenment-inspired model. This dissertation hopes to have shown that the absence of a diplomatic institution in North Africa, as claimed by Matar, does not necessarily render Moroccan diplomacy unsystematic and random. The epistemic basis of such a position is that Moroccan

diplomacy's dissimulation from European diplomatic institutions renders it a jumbled enterprise. While Moroccan diplomacy did not fit the European model, it was still integrated within the larger rubric of Mediterranean and cross-confessional diplomacy by having developed in contact with European as well as Ottoman diplomatic circles.

Drawing upon legal, jurisprudential, ethical, historical, and intellectual elements, al-Miknasi's oeuvre discloses that Moroccan diplomatic actors were not a disjointed cadre of *ad hoc* ambassadors, each of whom conducted diplomacy according to their whims, but rather they operated within a lively intellectual and historically-aware tradition which understood the necessities affected by the global changes of the 18th-century New World Order. Al-Miknasi's understanding of such changes underscored his configuration of what I called Islamicate diplomacy and the ethics which should govern diplomatic conduct. Such an endeavor was not only theoretical but embodied in his figure which displayed honesty and integrity, cultural sensitivity, neutrality and objectivity, professionalism, negotiations, and mediational skills for the benefit of Moroccans, Muslims, and Christians. Such an understanding, as al-Miknasi's profuse quotation and evocations of the Quran and the prophetic tradition indicate, were grounded in an Islamic tradition intended to define the bureaucratic and legal contours in which he, and by extension the Moroccan ambassadorial actors, can maneuver and from which they could orient themselves as diplomats, representative not only of the Sultan but also of Islam and Muslims.

Conclusion

This dissertation delved into Moroccan ambassadorial narratives spanning the early modern period (17th-18th centuries) from a decolonial standpoint. It expressly contended that while the texts and their authors may not have directly grappled with decolonial concerns, the interpretive lens applied by scholars from the Global North and South was deemed as mono-dimensional and as such in need of a decolonial hermeneutic sensibility. This project aimed to uncover the intellectual and diplomatic merit of Moroccan ambassadorial narratives so as to shed light on non-Western ventures in intellectual history and dismantle the historical tendency to think about diplomacy as a particularly European venture. Additionally, it also counteracted the proclivity of construing religion as a constraining interpretive prism when engaging with the non-Muslim Other.

Having gained a more nuanced understanding of the linguistic as well as the intellectual undercurrents that underpin Muslim Moroccan ambassadors, now we can speak of Islamicate diplomacy within a Moroccan framework. It is possible to understand the history of Muslim diplomacy in terms of how actors drew on and reformulated their intellectual, legal and jurisprudential traditions to formulate a distinctively and contextually attuned diplomatic ethos and eventuate an ethical praxis to encounter the Other and to orient the Self. These insights have come to fruition through an interpretive praxis which was conceptualized as 'decolonial hermeneutics.' I have aspired through theorizing such an approach and demonstrating how it ought to sensitize and orient our reading praxis to display how an interpretive venture from within the contours of the Self can yield different and more sophisticated insights into narratives which have thus far been read, consciously or unconsciously, with an epistemological bias, that of rendering the understanding or lack thereof of modernity as the evaluative yardstick of non-Western intellectual and diplomatic ventures.

As far as the historical context is concerned, decolonial hermeneutics allowed us to rethink the centrality of 1492 to the indigenous American population from a Muslim, particularly Moroccan angle. I have aspired to provide a thick description of how the birth of modernity/coloniality was experienced on the Southern Mediterranean shores by bringing into the conversation the historical events which preceded and immediately proceeded 1492. Such a historical framing not only displayed the colonial condition which furnished the global transmutations which were initiated in 1492 but also distinguished the Muslim experience from the Native American experience by foregrounding their plight which culminated in the expulsion

of the Moriscos in 1609. In light of pursuing such an argumentative line, other significant insights have been highlighted particularly in relation to the Islamic world's awareness of European imperial ventures in the Americas, which have thus far been considered as nonexistent or trivial at best.

Moroccan ambassadors of the 17th century had more awareness of such happenings given their temporal proximity to Europe. Having escaped religious persecution from Spain, Qasim al-Hajari's narrative stands as a unique historical record that witnessed the dispossession as well as the displacement of his community from Spain. Through a decolonial hermeneutical reading, I have delved into al-Hajari's text and context highlighting the cross-cultural, cross-confessional and multi-lingual intellectual tradition in which his brief references could be mapped out. Through his account, I have aspired to investigate how a paramount historical episode from Spanish imperial incursions in the New World was formulated into a legal precedent indicative of how Spanish diplomatic praxis constituted an infringement upon international law. Al-Hajari supplemented the episode of *Lèse-majesté* which took place between the conquistadores Hernan Cortes and the Aztec King Montezuma by the breach of the Treaty of Granada as well as the Spanish Catholic incursions on Protestant European neighbors to demonstrate the treasonous tendencies of Spanish diplomatic praxis and as such legally legitimize an alliance between Saadi Moroccan, the Ottoman Caliphate and the Protestant powers. Al-Hajari rhetorically Islamized non-Muslim imperial experiences with Spain and strategically emphasized the commonalities between Islam and Protestantism so as to religiously legitimize their alliance. This venture of inter-religious diplomacy emphasized the distinction of the Protestants from those who 'tortured the Andalusians' in Spain and drew on the Spanish imperial presence at the time in the recently independent Low Countries to urge the Dutch Prince Maurice of Nassau into an inter-religious alliance of the 'wronged Sultans' against Spain.

Al-Hajari's importance cannot be overstated. Firstly, the brevity with which he mentioned such a colossal historical scene in the Americas insinuates to the ubiquity of such information within his Arabophone audience. Juxtaposed against his proclivity, throughout all his narrative, to explain each term that he felt his intended readers might not be familiar with, and given that he was a translator as well as the Sultan's interpreter which renders his intellectual praxis more attentive to the intricacies of language, the fact that he did not feel the need to provide more details about such an atrocity indicates that his readership was already aware of Spanish imperialism and

its unfolding in the Americas. Secondly, his reference of Spain's undiplomatic praxis and infringement of international law sheds light on a core debate concerning the formation of modern diplomacy. The latter is assumed to have reached its prime when consular representation became widespread as a standard diplomatic praxis. It is on such a basis that modern diplomacy is assumed to be a uniquely European venture because Muslim powers never allowed their ambassadors prolonged or permanent residence in non-Muslim territories. The latter is usually accredited to religious prohibition. Al-Hajari's account referenced the Ottoman Caliphate's rejection of the residency of the Spanish ambassador while accepting such a practice from other Christian nations. In light of Spain's treasonous diplomatic praxis, disallowing Muslim residents in Spain and rejecting its ambassadorial representative is further fleshed out because it showcases that the Muslim awareness of Spanish foreign policies also contributed to their abstinence from establishing consular representation on a permanent basis. It also seems that drawing on legal and historical precedents became a precedent in itself particularly as we saw with al-Ghassani and Sultan Mulay Ismail in the second half of the 17th century, who displayed the same historical awareness of European affairs inside Europe and in the Atlantic. Al-Hajari's account displayed how a Muslim Moroccan ambassador, who was concerned with the dispossession of his Morisco community, exercised some degree of autonomy which he believed was oriented toward the *Maslaha* of the Muslim *Ummah*. It also showcases the kaleidoscopic intellectual context of the early modern period, from which Mohamed al-Ghassani ventured into Europe.

Al-Ghassani also encountered Europe from its so-called exteriority. He travelled from a space still saturated with the experience of dispossession which befell his Andalusian ancestors. While al-Hajari is considered to be the first Muslim Andalusian Moroccan to write about Europe, al-Ghassani is viewed as the first Muslim Arab of Andalusian ancestry to write about Spain in the 17th century. Undoubtedly, there were others who might have written other accounts but these propositions are made on the basis of what survived in the archives. Nonetheless, al-Ghassani's uniqueness is unequivocal. His account is held to be the prototype which was to influence all his successors in the 18th century. Whereas al-Ghazzal copied passages from him without acknowledging him, al-Miknasi did mention him by name. Despite highlighting his foundational status, al-Ghassani, as I have argued, has been grossly misread particularly in view of his intellectual and diplomatic merit. Intellectually, his Khaldunian hermeneutics of Spain were parochialized into issues of religious incommensurability. His socio-historical analysis of how

Spanish imperial wealth which was flowing from the 'New World' into Spain fundamentally altered the fabric of Spanish society rendering it dependent on foreign merchandise and immigrant workers, revolted by menial professions to maintain societal and economic balance, and oriented by a mania to join the nobility and bask in the wealth of the Americas. Building on the ideas of Ibn Khaldun, al-Ghassani perceived how luxuries became necessary to maintain a certain lifestyle and traced back the consequences of such a shift in social dynamics to its original source, the wealth of the 'New World'; one point among many other convergences which al-Ghassani had with the Arbitristas regardless of the fact that they were operating from within two different epistemic and religious circles. His insightful analysis of Spain allowed us to rethink the declinist paradigm which dominated the writing of Islamic intellectual and cultural history and underscored the value of considering ambassadors as Islamic thinkers aware of the intricacies of their episteme.

Diplomatically, I read al-Ghassani's account in interaction with the Sultan Mulay Ismail, particularly in relation to his letter to the Spanish King Carlos II. I argued that his vision of diplomacy developed from the same emic intellectual rubric within the contours of the Arabic *Rihla*. All Moroccan travellers to Europe in the early modern period had to contend with the class of *Ulama*, Islamic jurists. The space of the *Rihla* furnished a spacial site in which to engage with them outside the rigidity of legal treatise and as such bring into play their understanding of the global landscape of international affairs. Al-Ghassani displayed his awareness of the ethical and religious concerns of the jurisprudential class in Morocco. He also understood the enterprise of ransoming captives as a political economy in which captives could be imagined as currencies endowed with the potential to generate and facilitate Muslim-Christian relations across the Mediterranean. By portraying the Sultan's decision to establish relations with Catholic Spain not only as a diplomatic move but as one concerned with the faith of those under his sovereignty and religion, al-Ghassani rendered the act of ransoming Muslim captives irrespective of their nationality as an ethical venture in itself, and as such circumvented the uncompromising position of the Maliki jurists. The Sultanic letter which al-Ghassani took with him also invoked the precedents which al-Hajari drew on, showcasing that Spain's historical undiplomatic praxis still had an immediate echo in Moroccan circles. By stressing the fact that the nationality of Muslim captives was not important, the Sultan Moulay Ismail utilized his diplomatic philosophy to display his authority as the Commander of the Faithful and Caliph not only to Europe but also to the Ottoman ruler who bore the same titles. Al-Ghassani's narrative showcases that Moroccan

diplomacy had to be attentive to Muslim-Christian as well as Muslim-Muslim relations. He embodied an era during which Moroccan diplomacy was in the process of delineating its boundaries and navigating the intricate realm of Muslim-Christian relations on the global stage. He adeptly utilized existing legal precedents and the relationships between European nations, capitalizing on them to tip the diplomatic scales in favor of Morocco's objectives. His narrative serves as a vivid illustration of the fluid interplay between intellectual endeavors and diplomatic initiatives; an interplay which Ahmad Ibn Mahdi al-Ghazzal and Ibn Uthman al-Miknasi took to the next level in the 18th century.

Al-Ghazzal travelled from a Morocco underpinned by a different diplomatic philosophy. He travelled from the court of the Sultan Mohamed III to that of the Spanish King Carlos III. Both sovereigns were concerned with reform and interested in the benefit which could be brought about by diplomacy. Al-Ghazzal ventured into a Europe in its Enlightenment heyday. He understood that this historical period was underpinned by a new world order in which diplomatic caliber would be the means by which international affairs were to be managed. As such, Islamicate Moroccan diplomacy in the Ghazzalian sense, while still concerned with religion, displayed an acute interest in the political realities of 18th century Morocco, showcasing how certain ethical concerns from the jurisprudential class could be dissolved in al-Ghazzal's legitimization of diplomacy. Al-Ghazzal utilized the notion of *Mahaba* as one of the tenets of Moroccan diplomacy and rethought jurisprudential concepts of *al-Manfa'a, al-Maslaha*, and *Jizyah* to enroot Moroccan diplomacy in the crux of the ethical debates which were being used to pressure the Sultan Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah to wage *Jihad* against Spain.

Al-Ghazzal, despite his integral role in the jurisprudential council, championed a distinctive vision for how the Sultan should navigate the jurisprudential demands regarding waging *jihad*. He advocated for the principle of *al-Manfa'a*, which represents the paramount benefit to the Muslim Ummah, a principle to which the Sultan also held a religious obligation. In his discourse, al-Ghazzal employed terminology and concepts that hinted at the foundation of his subsequent development of Moroccan Islamicate diplomatic philosophy. He positioned *Jihad* as a secondary concern compared to *al-Manfa'a*. According to his perspective, the legitimacy of *Jihad* hinges on careful consideration and a profound analysis of its consequences, demonstrating a deliberate and intellectual approach. However, al-Ghazzal emphasized that the ultimate objective of *Jihad* is to bring forth *al-Manfa'a*, signifying benefits for the Muslim *Ummah*, both in the present and the

future. In this context, *Jihad* assumes the role of temporal authority rather than solely a religious duty, driven by the pursuit of diplomacy and its potential to foster peace and prosperity.

While al-Ghazzal's life ended in obscurity due to his dismissal by the Moroccan Sultan because of the translation issue in drafting the Hispano-Moroccan treaty, the career of his successor ambassador Uthman al-Miknasi was an absolute success. He was the most prolific Moroccan diplomat, leaving three *Rihlas,* one of which has been left out from our discussion because it was destinated to the Ottoman Caliphate and my project limited its scope to Moroccan-European encounters. By the end of his career, he managed to materialize a milestone in Moroccan foreign affairs by negotiating the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Navigation, Commerce and Fisheries between Spain and Morocco, which was signed at his hometown in the city of Meknes, on March 1, 1799. By this time, he had already been appointed by Moulay Sulayman as the Minister responsible for communication with foreign ambassadors as well as the Minister of foreign affairs. During his twenty years of venturing in Moroccan international relations, he served three successive Moroccan Sultans. I argued that al-Miknasi represented a seasoned stage in Moroccan Islamicate diplomatic thought, particularly in relation to his formulation of diplomatic ethics and sculpturing of the figure of the Muslim ambassador.

Al-Miknasi's significance is underscored by his deliberate focus on ethical principles in the realm of diplomacy and on the caliber of the Muslim ambassador. Having traveled to Europe with a diplomatic retinue, al-Miknasi perceived their unbecoming actions not only as bearing on the image of Muslims in Christian lands but also as an educational moment. He particularly sought to define the ideal diplomat by scrutinizing his own ambassadorial entourage and fellow Ottoman diplomats to delineate the proper code of conduct that should guide Muslim ambassadors. As such, he drew various ethics which he conceptualized as being pivotal to the character of the diplomat from their shenanigans, particularly pertaining to conceptual acuities such as truthfulness, faithful witnessing and testimony, mutual *Maslaha* and cultural awareness, as core ethics of conducting diplomacy. Al-Miknasi's accounts shed light on how he navigated around legal restrictions by introducing novel concepts that not only respected the sanctity of religion but also responded to the evolving global political landscape and regional dynamics. These concepts interweave diplomacy with moral responsibility and establish *Mahaba* and *Maslaha* (welfare, public interest, or the common good) as guiding principles for ethical and political behavior. While these ideas may evoke parallels with Kantian ideals, in al-Miknasi's narratives they are enveloped within a

framework of interpersonal, interfaith, and inter-community relations. In this context, obligations are transformed into acts of ethical and moral conduct, drawing inspiration not only from Islamic principles of engaging with the other but also from the immediate historical backdrop of specific geopolitical realities and cultural contexts.

Unfortunately, the examination of Moroccan diplomatic practices in the early modern period has often been limited to the characterization of their praxis as ad hoc (Laroui 2015), sporadic, and unstructured (Matar 2015b). This characterization is usually contrasted with the Enlightenment-era depiction of European diplomacy, which is seen as a well-organized bureaucratic system, supported by deliberate diplomatic methodologies and knowledge production. Consequently, the term 'ad hoc' renders their ambassadorial praxis as a 'premodern' dabbling in something which does not deserve to be termed diplomacy. However, in this dissertation, these conceptual and ethical discourses employed by Moroccan diplomatic actors in their negotiations are given a more comprehensive context and intellectual significance. They are not mere casual expressions but instead emerge as profound concepts that harmonize the everyday political ambitions with their religious convictions and responsibilities. Consequently, these concepts evolved into ideals that Moroccan ambassadors actively sought to define within a discursive intellectual framework and incorporate into their diplomatic strategies. This unwavering commitment to principles of justice, trust, welfare, and unwavering integrity, within the affective and intellectual rubric of Islamicate diplomacy, effectively aligns political realities with the religious duty to bear truthful witness before God, the ultimate legislator of moral and ethical conduct.

Throughout this dissertation, a shared diplomatic nomenclature becomes evident in the various examples and discussions. Consequently, this study goes beyond merely treating these concepts as ad hoc references. It has made a concerted effort not only to elucidate their meaning and role within the intellectual framework of Moroccan diplomacy but also to explore their significance in relation to their encounters with European modernity, which, historically, has denied them the status of contemporaneity and agency. Furthermore, this dissertation illustrates how Moroccan diplomatic actors, on their own terms, engaged with these concepts, thereby playing a pivotal role in the development of a distinct early modern model of Islamicate diplomacy in the Mediterranean region. In this process, it reveals how, within the confines of the Islamic Maghreb, a region of exteriority in the decolonial narrative of modernity, the history of Moroccan

diplomacy showcases the ways in which Islamicate diplomacy adapted to and engaged with a modernizing world, in which it also held a significant position.

Moreover, this dissertation has demonstrated the value of accounting for Moroccan diplomatic actors in the writing of Islamic intellectual history by approaching them as Muslim thinkers, concerned with local as well as global intellectual developments. Expanding the horizon of Islamic intellectual historiography to include ambassadors allows us to pinpoint the significance of cross-border influences on the development of local epistemologies. Furthermore, this project has highlighted the spatial contours in which Moroccan ambassadors exercised various manifestations of their agency and as such decentered histories which render Sultans as the sole arbiters of diplomatic efforts. However, no doctoral project is exempt from certain limitations which could provide a more comprehensive understanding. The limitation of this venture, which I hope to turn into a post-doc project, pertains to a focus on diplomatic thought rather than narratives given their scarcity in the early modern period. A focus on diplomatic thought would have accounted for the letters that these Moroccan ambassadors wrote and sent to their European counterparts, and various other ambassadors who left a wealth of diplomatic documentation, many of which have survived in various Moroccan and European archives as part of the national archives of foreign affairs. Unfortunately, only a couple of them, which were already available in print were utilized in this study. The difficulty in accessing such wells of knowledge and the funding needed to carry out such a research endeavor were hurdles that inhibited the acquisition of these letters. However, I intend to pursue such a project as a post-doc because those epistolary correspondences could reveal a much more nuanced and sophisticated perspective on Islamicate cross-confessional diplomacy in early modern history. Letters, not only Sultanic but also those who were dispatched between individual ambassadors concerning various issues of commerce, peace negotiations, colonial incursions, captives, gift exchanges, favors, friendships, border issues, piracy and maritime activities etc., provide a more interpersonal, and as such affective space in which Moroccan ambassadors could exercise their agency and legitimize their authority as state actors. It could also allow us to expand our corpus to include ambassadors who did not write narratives in the form of *Rihlas* but left a significant number of letters dispatched all over Europe and the Mediterranean world and as such, get a complex understanding of how Moroccan diplomats contributed to the formation of Islamicate diplomacy and the intellectual overlaps which their conceptualization had with other European and Ottoman forms of diplomatic conduct.

Persisting with this investigative path necessitates a perpetual dialogue between the intricate native intellectual, cultural, and social contexts and the intrinsically interconnected source materials pertaining to Islamicate diplomacy. Regrettably, constraints such as time and available resources constrained my ability to encompass a comprehensive spectrum of source materials in this study. Consequently, several diplomats with relatively limited archival representation in the Moroccan case were regrettably omitted from consideration. Between 1500 and 1900, Moroccan Sultans dispatched the following ambassadors just to Spain: Mohamed ben Ibrahim al-Sufiani 1586, Mansour ben Yahya and Abdurahma al-Chawi 1614, Mohamed ben Abdulwahab al-Ghassani 1690, Ahmed ben al-Mahdi al-Ghazal 1755, Mohamed ben Uthman al-Meknasi 1779, al-Haj Mohamed al-Dlimi 1792, ‘Abas Safir Moulay Salama 1792, the Prince Moulay Abbas 1861, Idriss ben Idriss al-‘Amrawi 1877, Abdusalam al-Sawisi 1877, al-Haj Abdulkarin Bericha 1879, Bouchta al-Baghdadi 1883, Abdusadik ben Ahmed al-Riffi 1885, al-Ma’ti al-Mzamri 1889, Abdulhamid ben al-Fatimi al-Rahmani in 1891. Morocco had extensive relations with other Christian nations like France, Britain, Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Russia and many others. The number of letters composed by these actors and still unstudied could not but be astounding. The bulk of the letters which could be sought out from the archives, studied and translated will definitely sophisticate our understanding of the impact of religion on politics, governance and diplomatic relations.

Another subject that remains on the periphery of this dissertation involves the references which we find to these ambassadors in the histories written by early modern Moroccan court historians and chroniclers. While briefly referenced throughout my project, figures such as Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani, Mohammed al-Duayf, Mohammed ibn Qasim ibn Zakur, Mohammed al-Qadiri, Abd al-Rahman Ibn Zaydan and Ahmad ibn Khalid an-Nasiri contribute significantly to a more comprehensive understanding of how a broader community of intellectuals grappled with the intricacies of diplomacy during the early modern period by providing the historical context whose changing political conditions prompted many ambassadors to use their diplomatic craft to advance Moroccan interests across borders. While my focus primarily centered on the perspective of diplomats in this project, a fresh exploration of these historical chronicles with this intellectual framework could inspire alternative and more intricate reinterpretations of these invaluable historical resources.

Notwithstanding these gaps which could be pursued in future projects, this dissertation has made a significant stride in our comprehension of the growing significance of Islamic intellectual legacies within the broader framework of early modern diplomacy in the Mediterranean / Atlantic world. This path of inquiry may even empower and equip us to rethink some of the contemporary issues that adulterate our understanding of the effect of religion on international relations, and particularly the place of Islam within such a complex international arena of foreign affairs. This investigation serves as a robust and initiatory stride in reshaping the history of international relations, by injecting diverse non-Western voices into the Euro-centric tradition that has long dominated the field. By introducing Islam into the tapestry of early modern intellectual traditions, we may be prompted to recognize the diverse manifestations of Islamicate diplomacy in the present, which were obscured by the shroud of Islamism, extremism, and terroristic conceptions of *Jihad*. By interrogating the genealogies of our epistemological frameworks which have traditionally revolved around European philosophical traditions through a decolonial framework, projects such as this venture could better equip us to navigate an increasingly globalized society and hold the potential to enrich our understanding of international relations and foster greater harmonious coexistence.

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