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Embracing Muslims in a Catholic Land

Rethinking the Genesis of Islām in Mexico

By

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Cover illustration: Part of the facade of the Temple of St. Francisco Acatepec, in the city of Puebla. Photo: iStock.com/James Rivera.

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To Boaz,
The joy and engine of my life

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Preface

Religious pluralism in contemporary Mexico differs greatly from that of its colonial past. When we observe Islām[1] in this predominantly Catholic Latin American country today, we realize that it is an indivisible part of its rich sociocultural and religious mosaic. Its presence in the modern Mexican public sphere is intertwined in a web of transnationalism and also locally, and it is in the local that the most tangible and recent realities of Mexican Islām may be seen. But, was this the case also in *Nueva España*? Two main lines of reasoning emerge from the publications that have to do with the arrival and development of Islām in the Americas. The first locates it before the advent of Spain to the American continent, while the second positions it right after this event, namely, at the commencement of the Colonial era. However, I will argue that exploring the relations and attitudes between any of the three Abrahamic religions, both historical and theological, including confrontations and peaceful encounters, calls for detailed descriptions and renewed assessments of historical evidence written in the original languages of the protagonists, as well as an examination of the relations between the factors and the actors involved in the cases of study. Since such an effort provides an important tool for future research on the subject, it should be included in the methodological repertoire of the researcher. With this in mind, we see that Mexican literature on the theme, although thin, has undoubtedly certain strengths, yet it also presents important limitations on the question of Islām in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico, which makes it altogether arguable. Consequently, I argue that there is a need to challenge the present academic position, and present other points of view.

It is in this context that this book, which is a work of research, revision, and reflection, aims to reassess the genesis of Islām in Mexico. This is a challenging task, because evidence in the archives only illustrates the presence in Colonial Mexico of few and scattered individuals of suspected Islamic affiliation or of Arab and Muslim origin. While their arrival might date back to the earliest appearance of Spaniards in Mesoamerica in these archives, the existence of Islām as an organic religious system present across the historical spectrum of Colonial and Early Independent Mexico is a questionable matter and a his-

1 Unless quoted from secondary literature, I use the term *Islām* in its transliterated form instead of *Islam*. This for two reasons: to signify its essence as *Dīn*, as explained in the following chapters; and to guard the linguistic essence from the Arabic language. I use *Islamic* however, as an adjective in the English language.

torical postulation somehow difficult to sustain. Therefore, inferring that these disseminated-in-time-and-space personages of Moorish and, or of Islamic origin in *Nueva España* equals Islām, as a Novohispanic religious tradition per se, seems rather perplexing. Nor do the primary sources that I have examined demonstrate that their presence in the Viceroyalty of New Spain played a part in the construction of Colonial Mexican society. Historical records show that indeed the opposite occurs, namely, that those few individuals did not bring, guard, and transmit a religious tradition from the Iberian Peninsula to Mesoamerican lands which endured throughout Mexico's Colonial period; but rather, those who reached Mexico, seem to have been absorbed into the modus vivendi of Novohispanic society. In this regard, Kambiz Ghaneabassiri, of Reed College, states, "Muslims neither came to America in large numbers at that time nor did they play a primary role in colonising the Americas."[2] This applies to New Spain as well, partly because their quantitative and qualitative input lacked the magnitude necessary to be the cause of such an effect. Consequently, the first challenge we encounter is the lack of substantial evidence. Despite this, in the historiography composed in Mexico, but not exclusive to it, there exists the idea of an Islām from the distant past that is deeply rooted in Mexican history. This Islām, which transcends time through historical occurrences, and is fed and revived by neocolonial European efforts during the second half of the nineteenth century until it finally reaches present day, prevails. But, does the evidence really point in this direction, or may we ultimately be permitted to perform a historical reconstruction to address this question?

Muslims are a minority in Mexico today, and their belief system is still, sadly, largely misunderstood. In part, the Muslim population of Mexico is the result of Islamic proselytism, and although it includes individuals of diverse backgrounds and occupations, it consists mostly of Muslim converts of Mexican origin. Camila Pastor de María y Campos of the *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas* (CIDE) expresses Islamic proselytism in Mexican society as "the political economy of conversion in Mexico,"[3] and explains, "in the Mexican case, converts are in fact populations subject to various marginalisations."[4] Additionally, proselytism in Mexico is often based on social platforms

2 Kambiz Ghaneabassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 1.

3 Camila Pastor de María y Campos, "Guests of Islam: Conversion and the Institutionalization of Islam in Mexico," in: María del Mar Logroño Narbona, Paulo Pinto, and John Tofik Karam (Eds.), *Crescent over Another Horizon: Islam in Latin America, the Caribbean and Latino USA*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015, pp. 144–189.

4 Ibid., p. 155.

that tackle social marginalisations, but which also underline national traumas derived from the Spanish Conquest of México-Tenochtitlán (1519–1521). I will argue then, that as heirs to a country where the social ladder was built as racial and classists rungs, mainly due to the *Estatutos de Pureza de Sangre*[5] (purity of blood statutes), Mexico still guards in its collective psyche the outcome of those crude social realities of its colonial past. Pastor de María y Campos makes a relevant point with regard to this:

> La conversión permite a los musulmanes nuevos dar un paso fuera de estas ideologías locales; ofrece la posibilidad de circunnavegar discursos que los definen como subalternos al establecer un acceso directo a regiones lejanas y a los privilegios de la extranjería y lo cosmopolita por vía de la fe.[6]

As a result, Islām has gained ground in today's Mexico, particularly in the most socio-economically neglected areas of the country as the State of Chiapas clearly shows. In this context, we see that Islām is well incorporated in Mexico's present, despite the acute incomprehension that still exists in Mexican society about this religion and culture.

It is difficult to deny the fact that this Abrahamic faith is part of contemporary Mexico's sociocultural and religious reality. There are those who choose for Islām, but also those who misuse and abuse the actuality on the ground. Likewise, it should be remembered that, unfortunately, this has also been instrumentalised by opportunist political actors and parties, mainly across countries in Europe and the Americas. This book has no intention whatsoever to align itself with any position or stand. Its nature and *raison d'être* is purely historical and educational, and belongs solely to the academic realm. It aims to show and discuss, from diverse angles, the genesis and development of this monotheistic religion in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico, in a strict sense. Hence, any use of the content in it that does not comply with this aim in both essence and purpose cannot be attributed to my research. Ultimately, my work stands

5 For an illustration see: Albert A. Sicroff, *Les Controverses des statuts de pureté de sange en Espagne, du XVe au XVIIe siècle*, Paris: Didier, 1960.

6 (Conversion allows new Muslims to step outside of these local ideologies; it offers the possibility of circumnavigating discourses that define them as subordinates by establishing direct access to distant regions and to the privileges of foreigners and what is cosmopolitan through faith), Camila Pastor de María y Campos, "Ser un Musulmán nuevo en México: la Economía Política de la Fé," *Istor Revista de Historia Internacional*, Año XII, Núm. 45, (2011), pp. 54–75.

for the right and freedom of consciousness of any individual, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, or cosmovision which the protagonists in the pages of this book—the *prohibidos*, were, sadly, not fully able to enjoy.

With this in mind, let us first state that Islām belongs to the family of Abrahamic religions along with Judaism and Christianity. While we may find that the three share many ideas which are historically and theologically linked, "simply comparing them as similar-and-different religions misses something crucial,"[7] as Steven G. Smith stated. I argue that this is the acknowledgement that Islām is not only, in the words of Smith, "a phenomenological type, but also a real history, lived forward from a particular time and place of origin, with a knowable development and a discussible future."[8] This fact was not foreign to the Muslims who lived on the Iberian Peninsula during the Late Medieval and Early Modern period of history. In *Hispania*, Islām, historically speaking, had a point of beginning, an arrival, a development, a summit, and a decline. In these periods, it echoed not only in the deepest part of the hearts of its parishioners, their faith, and consciousness, but also in the public sphere, where it was tangible, visible, and influential in most aspects of life in Iberian society. Consequently, it set and shaped the modus vivendi and cosmovision of both its followers and of its non-Muslim neighbors, particularly from the end of the Spanish Reconquista to the expulsion of the Moriscos in the early seventeenth century. Using this prism and from this historical vantage point, we might rightly speak then about Islām as a vivid reality that was present and echoed in the lives of a given region—in this case of Spain. It did so to such an extent that we may as well ask not only if Islām belonged to Spain, but rather if Spain belonged to Islām. By this I mean to the *Abode of Islām*—an Islamic principle utilised with reference to the major divisions of the world in Islām.

From a parallel perspective, this book poses a similar question with regard to Colonial and Early Independent Mexico. The answer to this may help us understand the extent of Islām as a Novohispanic religious tradition *stricto sensu*. I also ask what role Muslims might have played in bringing, guarding, transmitting and developing this religion within the space-time continum we are looking at, and this lies at the core of my research. If the answer fails to provide for a set point on the temporal plane with regard to the Colonial or Early Independent era of Mexico's life, then this should mean that its emergence may be found in a different time, namely, closer to our present day. However, often without questioning, a large part of contemporary academic

7 Steven G. Smith, "Abraham's Family in *Children of Gebelaawi*," *Literature and Theology*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 1997), pp. 168–184.

8 Ibid., p. 168.

work on the subject places the genesis of Islām in Mexico at the very beginning of the Spanish Conquest. According to this vision, Islām in Mexico dates as far as the first meetings between Spaniards and Mesoamericans, and in fact, arrived in Aztec lands by the very hands of Mexico's first Christian colonizers. Islām then developed as a Novohispanic Muslim tradition present across the colonial lifespan of Mexico (1521–1821), becoming thus, part of the religious mosaic of the Viceroyalty of *Nueva España*. It also endorses that Islām eventually went into hiding due to the Inquisition, but persevered through an active performance of *taqiyyah*,[9] entering hence into a phase of caution and dissimulation that extends from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. In spite of this, these scholars further argue that Islām resurfaces and reappears again in those Latin American latitudes during the second French occupation of Mexico (1862–1867) as a direct consequence of the Muslim troops (Algerian and Egyptian Battalions) within the Expeditionary Forces of Napoleon III (1808–1873). This military intervention is believed to have produced a new phase of *taqiyyah* in Early Independent Mexico. The entire premise is framed by the general historiographical vision mentioned above in four different interludes: a) Arrival of Islām in Mexico (1519–1521) b) Obliged dissimulation (1519–1833) c) Pertinent dissimulation (1833–1980) d) Reappearance (1862–1867). However, this proposition is highly debatable and seemingly unconvincing in light of critical scrutiny.

In some journalistic and political circles, both Mexican and international, a similar idea goes further back chronologically, and asserts an Islamic presence in the Americas as far back as the twelfth century. This assumption has served to feed popular understanding. Yet, it is not based on tangible historical evidence. These positions appear, *prima facie*, to demonstrate an Islamic historical depth in the Americas and to create a new socio-historical consciousness and sense of belonging in contemporary society. I refer to a social cohesion through historical reconstruction, or *ʿAsabiyya*[10] in more Khaldunian terms. However, when searching for historical proof to base and justify such pronouncements, the

9 Literally, "caution or dissimulation." It is referred in Islām to the concealment of one's faith when to reveal it may incur a direct threat to its personal integrity. The concept will be further developed in third chapter of this book.

10 Ibn Ḥaldūn (1332–1406) was the author of the monumental history work entitled *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, whose first volume contains a long preface called *Al-Muqaddimah*. In it, he elaborated on a special idea coined as *ʿAsabiyya* (group feeling, social cohesion). This term emphasizes unity, group consciousness and sense of collective shared purpose. Ibn Ḥaldūn describes it as the fundamental bond of human society, which may be strengthened by social aspects and religion. Arab lexicographers connect the term with the Arabic word *ʿAsabah* which literally signifies agnates; to make common cause with one's agnates.

task becomes difficult, especially so since no mosque is found in Mexico before the decade of 1980. I suggest that when speaking of social cohesion it is not only Khaldunian ideas that are relevant, but also the analysis of the prominent French Philosopher Jean Paul Gustave Ricœur (1913–2005). For Ricœur, who considered memory as one of the objects of historical knowledge,[11] the role of remembrance and of its historical inscription as a source of social cohesion is pivotal. For him, 'memory' and 'history' function as prerequisites of social cohesion. In our theme of study, the significance and scope of chronological discontinuity to which this supposed cohesion is subject, is a prevailing issue for the postulators of the theory of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition. For such a theory, the possibility of the past being made present again is proportionally inverse; in other words, from a present Islamic mosaic embedded in today's Mexican society it strives to construct a similar past in which Islām finds a historical depth rooted in the Mexican Colonial Era. This book aims to place this idea in a critical light in order to provide a relief to the aporia in this vision of Islām in Mexico.

But what purpose does memory actually serve? Jeffrey Andrew Barash, of the *Université de Picardie*, explains that as human beings, we call upon memory of the past and its historical inscription "to redress the effects of laceration, discontinuity, and rupture [which over time] aim to lend cohesion to human collectivities."[12] We must recall that memory is related to the past, and this to *historia*. On the latter, Gerald A. Press, from City University of New York, reminds us of Cicero's uses of both *historia* and *historicus*, where the latter refers to the historian;[13] while the former indicates a factual account, and it is understood as "the facts or information about the particular subject, and it might be translated as the facts or account of the facts [...] in which it refers to a written account about social and political events;"[14] in other words, it is an inquiry into the events of previous times. For the researcher of the past, inquiring about these occurrences is mainly from within the corpus of historical evidence. Archives play a role, in this case, as the depositories of the documented memory of a nation. Thus, the name *Archivo General de la Nación* (General

11 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, (Translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer), Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 96.

12 Jeffrey Andrew Barash, "The Time of Collective Memory: Social Cohesion and Historical Discontinuity in Paul Ricœur's *Memory, History, Forgetting*," *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2019), pp. 102–111.

13 Gerald A. Press, *The Development of the Idea of History in Antiquity*, Montreal, Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982, p. 64.

14 Ibid., pp. 46–47.

Archive of the Nation), for instance, evokes exactly this purpose. When historians inquire into the archives in search for factual accounts related to Novohispanic Islamic tradition, the absence of substantial inscribed memories is evident. Therefore, I refer to Ricœur's idea again, where he addresses the question of how a memory in the present can be of something absent, the past. From this perspective, imagination seems to have played a big part in the construction of the theories I question, where its function consists in placing the object before the eyes to make something intangible, visible.[15] Ricœur also underlines the importance of discerning historical discourse and its capacity for representing the past. Accordingly, how the past is represented and how it is narrated is not only linked to the ability of the historian to render the historical account, but to the referential impulse of the narrator.[16] The writing of history should then be performed away from prejudice or appropriation, and as a matter of recognition of registered former events. In addition, its purpose must be "that of representing the past faithfully"[17] as Ricœur stressed. He also emphasises the relation between memory and narrative identity. The former is often falsified, he argued, through the detour of narration,[18] resulting in problems with regard to history. Keeping this in mind, I argue that liberating the past should be done not as an untested reclamation of history, but rather constructed on solid corroborated historical evidence, as Professors George C. Bond (1936–2014) and Angela Gilliam (1936–2018) stated:

> The reclamation of the past has its own complexities and social penalties, especially for scholars focusing on subjugated populations. The formulations of scholars are rarely tested within situations of actual social turmoil. Rarely do they have to pay for their misinterpretations.[19]

My research shows that speaking about Islām in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico is a thematic that is better studied through the lenses of History and Islamic Studies. With this in mind, we may grasp that some of the Mexican academic porosity on the subject might derive from the fact that in today's Mexico, the study of Islām has been performed mainly through the frame of Sociology, Anthropology, Ethnology, Literature and Letters—both Classics and

15 Ricœur (2004), op. cit., p. 54.
16 Ibid., p. 237.
17 Ibid., p. 229.
18 Ibid., p. 505.
19 George Clement Bond and Angela Gilliam, *Social Construction of the Past: Representation as Power*, New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 1994, pp. 10–11.

Hispanics. This is so because as a discipline, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies is still underdeveloped in Mexico. Consequently, the results of intellectual efforts based on the disciplines I have just mentioned, while produced *bona fide*, often present a number of insufficiencies. I must clarify however, that animus of my observation is *de bene esse* and flows from the necessity to improve the scholarly approach to the question. Mexican academic literature on the theme is still at a permeable stage, although it acts at times as if the subject was *cadit quaestio*. The shortfall of Mexican Anthropology to address the topic of Islām in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico lies, paraphrasing Bond and Gilliam, "in the limitation of anthropological paradigms to explain historical constructions."[20] Such limitations are also found in the disciplines mentioned above, whose core focus of study is neither the past nor Islām. Let us recall that History, as field of study, does not attempt to revive the past as its main objective, but to interpret it and to make it comprehensible. Historiography in this case, as an analysis of the past per se, is a subject of constant revision, and sometimes it may even be refutable, whereas History, as human experience, is the happening itself. To historicise is then to constantly question how 'something' came to be and the effect it has had through time. To quote the North American Philosopher Leon J. Goldstein (1927–2002), "the whole point of history is the past, when those events described in history books were really present [...] the starting point of historical inquiry is a body of evidence [...] the problem of the historian is to explain the evidence."[21]

When speaking of Islām in Colonial Mexico, this monotheistic faith is regularly presented by Mexican and foreign historiography as a Novohispanic religious tradition. With regard to history and traditions, it is once again worth referring to Bond and Gilliam, who suggested that power of history lies in several domains: "one is the relations of text to subject, and another is the construction of individual and collective identities. These social constructions are part of the process of inventing traditions."[22] As far as the latter is concerned, we should clarify the role of historical interpretations in the creation of a common past in Latin America, where the phenomena of historical reengineering is not uncommon. Natividad Gutiérrez Chong of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, speaks about the fabricating of new traditions and histories, and illustrates this point through the Yamor Festival in Ecuador. She

20 Bond and Gilliam (1994), op. cit., p. 13.

21 Leon J. Goldstein, *The What and the Why of History: Philosophical Essays*, Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1996, pp. 3–4.

22 Bond and Gilliam (1994), op. cit., p. 13.

suggests that "it may be characterized as recently invented tradition which seeks to refashion and recombine pre-Hispanic female symbols for purposes of social cohesion."[23]

The postulated Novohispanic Islamic tradition and Mexico's present religious pluralism are often acclaimed as if they occupy a continuous space in time. As a consequence, the historical discourse around the historiographies that present a Novohispanic Islamic tradition gain authority. Some Mexican compositions illustrate this alleged tradition by pointing at figures from the Mexican archives which supposedly and ultimately should demonstrate the case, and argue:

> Los documentos que se presentan son muestra de la presencia del Islam en la Nueva España [...] es por ello que esta base busca mostrar expedientes tanto impresos como manuscritos de esta época y con el tema de la presencia del Islam en Nueva España.[24]

However, this claim presents certain astonishing contradictions. For instance, the case of José Bernardino López and María Felipa de la Cruz, both categorized as 'Moriscos' in the original document, are, ipso facto, subsequently referred to as individuals of clear Islamic origin in the academic work mentioned above, which demonstrates, for these researchers, an Islamic presence in New Spain. In 1789, López and De la Cruz obtained a 'dispensa del parentesco de consanguinidad,'[25] a necessity for the purpose of marriage. This is the main premise of the original record. However, the authors failed to clarify that 1789 is a date in Mexican colonial history in which the term 'Morisco' already had a

23 Natividad Gutiérrez Chong, "Ethnic Origins and Indigenous Peoples: An Approach from Latin America," in: Athena S. Leoussi and Steven Grosby, *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, pp. 312–324.

24 (The documents presented are proof of the presence of Islām in New Spain [...] That is why this data base seeks to show both printed and manuscript records of this time and with the theme of the presence of Islām in New Spain), Mariam Saada and Anette Yohalli Santamaría Pozos (Eds.), *Huellas islámicas y árabes en el México Colonial 1570–1820, resguardadas en el Archivo General de la Nación* (AGN), México: LNPP, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, 2018, available at: http://datos.cide.edu/handle/10089/17415, (last accessed June 18, 2020).

25 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Regio Patronato Indiano, Bienes Nacionales* (014), Vol. 93, Exp. 180, "Dispensa del parentesco de consanguinidad concedida a José Bernardino López, Sabino, y María Felipa de la Cruz, ambos Moriscos, solteros, y originarios del Rancho de Temacaque, pertenecientes al partido de S. Antonio Singuilica," México, 1789.

completely different connotation to the one apparently alluded to by the scholarly composition they present, namely, a term with no reference to religion whatsoever, but rather related to a social class (*casta*).

Further illustrations emphasized in the same composition as tangible evidence of Islamic presence in Colonial Mexico are presented through cases of individuals whose last names happened to be either *Mezquita* (mosque) or *Coran*, such as Fray Juan de Mesquita of the *Ordo Praedicatorum* (The Dominican Order) or José María Mezquita; Luis Mezquita; Nicolas de Mezquita; Florencia Mezquita; Juan Manuel Coran; and Catalina de San Joseph Coran. All these are surnames with no relation to Islām. This research, apparently facile in nature, points to an oversimplified methodology, diaphanous in form, and flimsy in depth:

> La metodología que pusimos en funcionamiento para buscar y localizar referencias sobre musulmanes tuvo un conocimiento sobre la religión y su vida cotidiana. Por lo cual, como en el ámbito peninsular los musulmanes no se nombraban como tal en el mundo cristiano, los rastreamos por medio de las prácticas y palabras propias del Islam. Es así como creamos una lista de términos que al integrarlos a la búsqueda de documentación en los archivos los encontramos de manera indirecta. El propósito de esta investigación es el visibilizar a un segmento de la sociedad novohispana que ha sido totalmente invisible e ignorado.[26]

Using the same methodology, the formerly alluded to scholarly reference provides additional illustrations of the Novohispanic Islamic presence through a denouncement in 1754 against certain Moors who carried "una imagen de Mahoma" (an image of Muḥammad); as well as the case of a Moorish man who in 1756 asked, of his own will, to be baptised.[27] As Goldstein emphasised,

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26 (The methodology that we put into operation to search and locate references about Muslims had a base in the religion practised and their daily life. Therefore, as in the peninsular sphere where Muslims were not named as such in the Christian world, we trace them through the practises and words of Islam. This is how we created a list of terms. When integrating them into the documentation search in the archives, we found them indirectly. The purpose of this research is to make visible a segment of the Novohispanic society that has been totally invisible and ignored), Saada and Santamaría Pozos (2018), op. cit, "Metodología," available at: http://datos.cide.edu/bitstream/handle/10089/17415/MET.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y (last accessed March 3, 2021).

27 Saada and Santamaría Pozos (2018) op. cit. The original file of the case is located at: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferente Virreinal*, Caja 5119, Exp. 028, "Informe de Don Leonardo Terrallas, sobre que en la feligresia, un hombre que ha afirmado ser moro, pide

if the historian's duty is to explain evidence, how does this explain the supposedly Islamic nature of the examples mentioned above? How can such a body of evidence serve to point at a Novohispanic Muslim tradition? How would a family name signify Islām? And, is it not forbidden in this monotheistic religion, to create portraits or images of the Prophet? Moreover, how could having an individual, wholeheartedly asking to be baptised, be seen as proof of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition? This particular instance would unquestionably demonstrate the contrary, namely, an apostasy—in case he was indeed a Muslim—due to his voluntary leaving of Islām and his unstinting adoption of Catholicism. Interpretation of textual record will always vary. However, we cannot ignore that the exegesis of archival documentation might also be fed by imaginations and affections, which is what Ricœur's means when he says, "when the affection is present but the thing is absent, what is not present is ever remembered."[28]

Cross-cultural and socio-historical comparisons are necessary to probe key presumptions about ideas that are taken as common wisdom. Thus, a comparative effort on the variables that inform this research is also necessary to foster a better appreciation of the ways these conform to its main question. Accordingly, it is imperative to place the protagonists of this study in perspective *vis-à-vis* each other. This would mean including inquisitorial authorities, from a transatlantic viewpoint, that encompass both sides of the Iberian worlds, and those considered as heretics.[29] They would then need to be situated chronologically *tête-à-tête* on the distinct operational theaters where they historically acted, interacted, and crossed, namely Spain and Mexico of sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Such an exercise gives rise to a historical discussion of the interlacing encounters that have taken placed between those protagonists, and ultimately, it may permit us to question the standard images of the varied aspects that are presented. As a result, it may allow for the formulation of additional and contrasting historical perspectives of a seemingly old matter that in reality, is new in Mexico. The comparative exercise relies on History as a scholarly discipline and also on Islamic Studies, simply because they provide us with a serviceable and essential blueprint, as well as tools and a methodology that may aid us in clarifying and arriving at conclusions. It is History that must be

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el bautismo y cumplimiento con el ritual, no deja de parecer sospechoso," Ciudad de México, 1756, 3 fojas.

28 Ricœur (2004), op. cit., p. 16.

29 Within the context of this study the term 'heretics' is used to define Jews, Muslims and Protestants alike, who due to their beliefs systems were considered as such by the Inquisition.

the bedrock and *raison d'être* of any scholarly effort that aims to research the past, and Islamic Studies will undoubtedly come to the aid of this particular intellectual enterprise. Therefore, if we desire to explore the historical roots of Islām in Mexico, and of this as a religious tradition per se, I dare to argue that it is not sufficient to profile the current Islamic cultural impact upon its contemporary society. This is so, because field and ethnographic work is in this case, a tool at the service of, and not the spine and core of a historical work. Field work does not allow us to travel in and through time, but a thoroughly archivist research may. Ultimately, "there is no unequivocal evocation of the past by the evidence,"[30] as Goldstein rightly argued.

Another shortcoming in studies focusing on the history of Islām in Mexico is the lack of a comparative approach to the socio-religious realities that those considered heretics—Protestants, Muslims and Jews—lived during the time of *Colonia*. If we are to take Spain and Colonial Mexico as the operational platform from where our historical plot emerges and develops, and the actors are to be the *prohibidos* (considered as heretics or the forbidden peoples by the Inquisition) and the *inquisidores*, then we should study them by taking a comparative perspective. The results permit us to realise that although heretics were confronted with the same barriers and obstacles, a well defined ethnoreligious group within the forbidden cluster succeeded in introducing a religious tradition that was protected, practised, and transmitted through diverse historical periods in *Nueva España*, while other *prohibidos* had a less favorable outcome. This situation gives rise to questions that we are obliged to address.

It is possible that such a comparative analysis could produce a different result from the one often recognised as common wisdom by certain academic works dealing with the subject of Islām in the Viceroyalty of New Spain. This simple method delivers significantly better results than seeing only one side of the coin. The act of comparing alludes to juxtaposing, and this is where the compared elements ultimately offer information about the manner in which a contrasting subject intersects with a given object and causes it to be attracted to it, or to be repelled by it. Consequently, the curtain of the Mexican scenario opens in a wider way, permitting us to identify if *Nueva España* was, as a matter of fact, a fertile ground for the implementation, practice, and transmission of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition. Ultimately, such an evaluation may also help us to discern if Islām indeed enjoys historical depth in Mexico as a religious Novohispanic custom *stricto sensu*.

30 Goldstein (1996), op. cit., p. 5.

The case concerning the resurfacing of Islām in Mexico as a direct product of the second French occupation of the Aztec Country presents similar patterns of interpretation as those previously described. However it has different protagonists. The *prohibidos* are no longer a part of this scenario, but instead, a Sudanese-Egyptian Battalion and some Algerian troops in the French Expeditionary Corps that Napoleon III sent to Mexico occupy the stage. We should perhaps ask how Muslim soldiers, at the service of France, contributed to the development of a new phase of *taqiyyah* in the just born Mexican Republic, and to the resurfacing of Islām[31] in a vastly illiterate, precarious, battle-devastated Catholic country, which is what nineteenth century Mexico was. With respect to this, I suggest that relying on the term 'taqiyyah,' while searching for evidence of Islām in Early Independent Mexico, should be done with utmost caution and distanced from simplified generalisations, because its definition is wide and cannot be essentialised. This book invites the reader to rethink, along with the central question of its analysis, the terminology and categories of the thematic as well. For this reason, this work urges self-reflection, and defies the facile categorisation of current academic literature of its subjects and objects of study. This often appears crafted by a well intended and spirited Sociology, Anthropology and Literature, which claim to represent History and Islām.

"The construction of historical and social configurations gains significance only through a stirring of social and historical imaginations"[32] as Bond and Gilliam explained. The social configurations of contemporary Mexico, including those derived from its religious pluralism, should not be taken to create historical reconfigurations. This would constitute a misuse of history and of particularised symbolisms in the interpretation of the past. Neither should the writing of history be one in which cultural appropriation occurs as has been the case with colonialism. Bond and Gilliam provide us with valuable insights on the matter:

> In the act of creating a written text subjects are transformed into transportable objects. We create them and in so doing, we pretend that we are creating ourselves [...] But in the process we appropriate them, we fix and frame the other through a zealous essentialism, thereby falling prey to the dilemma of dual fabrication.[33]

31 See: Pastor de María y Campos (2011), op. cit., pp. 54–75; and Arely Medina, *Islam en Guadalajara, Identidad y Relocalización*, Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 2014, pp. 36–38.

32 Bond and Gilliam (1994), op. cit., p. 13.

33 Ibid.

Furthermore, I must underline that this book does not intend to create a definitive research of Islām in Mexico, but only aims to be a modest contribution towards that end. It avoids appropriating a culture and religion and shows in the light of archival sources that these are apparently missing in a particular time and space of the Mexican past. Therefore, this work questions and counters the vision mentioned above through an in-depth examination of Mexican and French archives as well as other documentation treasured in the depositories of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (BnF) and the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* (BNE). In utilising primary sources in diverse languages other than English for the writing of this book, translations were needed for the sake of the reader who is not acquainted with Arabic, French and Spanish. I opted to provide the general public with the extracts in the original language, and then proceeded to translate these in the corresponding footnote. Translations are in this manner of my authorship, and I bear full responsibility for any lack of accuracy. In this way, the book is a merely qualitative study with its methodology in archival research. It allows collective access to a significant corpus of data in order to reflect on its scientific postulations and precise interrogations. As a historian, I work within the limits of the evidence found and strive to protect historical plausibility. Within those limits, I believe, and I intend to endeavour, to stay as close as possible to what Leon J. Goldstein righteously declared:

> The historian [...] must persuade his colleagues that the evidence is to be ordered in the way he proposes as relevant to the problem he seeks to deal with, and that, in consequence, what he presents in his book or essay is precisely what it is reasonable to believe took place once upon a time.[34]

With this in view, the purpose of the intellectual effort behind this work is to bring new insights and fresh perspectives of study on the theme. I seek to contribute to an improved understanding of Islām in Mexico's history and of Mexico in the history of Islām, as well as to recognise Mexico's contemporary society and this Abrahamic religion. It is directed not only to the academic community, but also to the wider public. Through this research, I have found that the genesis of Islām in Mexico, as a religious tradition per se, is located at a different chronological time than the one proposed by contemporary academic works. *Ergo*, I claim that this religion, as a belief system, is rather new to Mexico, where it forms an indivisible part of its colorful religious pluralism today. In this manner, I encourage the reader, in the words of professors Bond and Gilliam, to

34 Goldstein (1996), op. cit., p. 206.

"become the final arbiter, measuring history against history, and interpretation against interpretation."[35] My aim is to provide a scholarly work that reassesses the genesis of Islām in a region of the world where long-term European settlement and Christian theological and socio-political attitudes determined the modus vivendi of its society: Colonial and Early Independent Mexico. I suggest that New Spain and Islām might have known about the existence of each other, but within the chronological framework in which *Nueva España* developed there were social hindrances, geopolitical imperatives, and theological impediments on both sides of the Atlantic, that gave rise to the quasi-perfect circumstances for Islām not to exist as a religious tradition in this period of Mexican history. But beyond that, this book intends to promote freedom of thought and liberty of academic consciousness. And while historiographical divergence should indeed exist, this work challenges superficial conclusions on the theme it addresses. It asks questions and strives for creating dialogue, instead of simply providing answers. Yet, at heart, it aims to satisfy the historiographical necessity that exists today on the subject, while keeping in mind the ideas of Goldstein:

> The past that the historian evokes is not a real past as it was when it was present, but rather a construction of his own [...] devised as the best explanation of the evidence he has. The historical event—the only historical event that figures in the work of historians—is a hypothetical construct [...] And while one might want to say that the historical construction which most nearly describes the real past is the best or the truest account, how can we ever know? How can we ever test the event except in terms of our evidence?[36]

Fundamentally, the objective of revising history that is regarded as common wisdom should make us more aware of the dynamics of representing the past. However, if the findings of the research I present do not convince all readers, let them serve then to enrich the historiographical space with fresh perspectives. But before further reading, I believe that it is essential to invoke the thought of the illustrious Mexican historian, Mariano Cuevas (1879–1949), who wisely advised: "Taparnos los ojos ante la luz que irresistiblemente se nos echa encima de las puertas abiertas de los archivos no es sistema posible ni necesario de

35 Bond and Gilliam (1994), op. cit., p. 11.
36 Goldstein (1996), op. cit., pp. 5–6.

defensa."[37] With this in mind, it is my vehement hope that this book will be serviceable to anyone wishing to gain a clearer understanding about the history of Colonial and Early Independent Mexico and its religious minorities. Yet, its ultimate objective is to invite readers to question and rethink anew the genesis of Islām in Mexico. If attained, I hope my research is a humble contribution to the field.

37 (Covering our eyes before the light that irresistibly is thrown at us from the open doors of the archives, is not a possible or necessary defense system), Genaro García, *Documentos Inéditos del Siglo XVI para la Historia de México, Corregidos y Anotados por el Padre Mariano Cuevas S.J.*, México: Talleres del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, 1914, p. xi.

Acknowledgements

Qur'ān 31:12 reads: "Be thankful to Allāh, for whoever gives thanks benefits his own soul." In similar fashion Isaiah 12:4 expresses "Give thanks unto the LORD." From this verse of *Sūrat Luqmān* and from the aforementioned masoretic read is that I express my gratitude in the following lines. The former on behalf of the Moriscos. The latter, in the name of the Judeoconversos. Both, children of Abraham who were denied freedom of expression and liberty of consciousness during the chronological margins that this book occupies itself with. Hence, it is from this cognizance and faculty that I wish to thank some exceptional people who have collaborated in both the construction of this work and my academic and personal development. People I am fortunate to have in my life. Without them and their essential support I would not be writing these lines and this project could not have seen the light.

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INTRODUCTION

On Hispania, Islām, Mexico, and Religious Tradition

There is not much research on Islām in Mexico, and even less with respect to the Colonial and Early Independent era. So far, work on the theme is not only scant, it is nascent in scholarly writings. There are still a variety of areas to explore, new angles to review, a need to reinterpret sources with new methods. Consequently new postulates in collaboration with other disciplinary fields would emerge. The size of the effort should include all the necessary precautions in order to avoid reductive anachronisms, and it should resonate with the problems of our contemporary and multicultural societies, in particular the question of the place of the 'other' and integration. We are undoubtedly faced with a delicate and understudied subject. Analysing it however, may permit us to better comprehend mutual perceptions between Muslims and other religious groups in present day Mexico, as well as shed new light on its complex, dramatic and fascinating past. The genesis and historical development of Islām in this Latin American country should be reassessed and mapped anew, because it is a matter that, as controversial as it may appear sometimes, calls today for further historiographical interpretations. Such an effort may provide a new vision, challenge established perspectives and contribute to current debates on the topic, both within the academic realm and beyond it. Furthermore, if one wishes to understand modern Mexico's religious pluralism in a brighter light and the historical relation it might have with Islām and other minorities, it is necessary to have an encounter with its colonial period. But in order to decipher its colonial past, delving into the history of Spain is mandatory. This, I will emphasise is imperative, not only because Mexico was a Spanish viceroyalty from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, but because when speaking about Muslims and their religious traditions in our time-space continum of our study (Colonial and Early Independent Mexico) the Islām we have to focus on is the one introduced to the Iberian Peninsula by its Muslim conquerors, which is intimate and inseparable with the one of the Maġrib. Therefore, a defined frame of study and a definite point of departure must be set. I believe that this should be located at the Islamic conquest of *Hispania*. While this fixed coordinate may function as an introduction to our main subject, missing this point might cause us to circumvent key historical elements and facts that form an integral part of the mosaic of my research question.

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I will begin by stating that between the years 711 and 719 C.E., less than a century after the emergence of Islām, the Arab armies serving the Umayyad Caliphs of Syria occupied Spain. Consequently, and in less than a decade, most of the Iberian Peninsula fell under Islamic rule. The new conquered territory was given the Arabic name of *Al-Andalus*. However, the Battle of Poitiers in 732 C.E., along with the Battle of Talas (751 C.E.) against the Chinese Tang Dynasty, limited the expansion of Islamic rule. In a chronological parallel, the Abbasid Revolution terminated the Umayyad Caliphate. With the only surviving Muslim stronghold remaining in Granada, the Spanish Reconquista eventually ended Islamic rule in *Hispania*. However, the Muslim Conquest of Spain was a magnificent historical event, whose impact would eventually echo across the Iberian worlds on both sides of the Atlantic.

From the sixteenth century onwards, emigration, supposedly reserved for Old Christians to the Americas took place. These, referred to as *Cristianos Viejos* in the language of Castilla, were individuals who could demonstrate that they had professed Catholicism for at least three generations from patriarchal and matriarchal lines. They were not supposed to have any ethnic or religious liaison to Jews and Muslims whatsoever. Muslims, Jews and Protestants, who were considered heretics by the Spanish Crown and the Catholic authorities, were prohibited from travelling to and settling in the New World. Despite this, historical records demonstrate that such prohibitions were not always enforced, and were even often dodged. For instance, extensive archival documentation concerning *Judeoconversos* in Ibero-America, who were subject to the same Spanish royal decrees as Muslims, shows that they eluded the ecclesiastical and jurisdictional restrictions by a variety of means and managed to reach Mexico in considerable numbers. They also succeeded in establishing their lives in the dominions of *Nueva España* in ways that were forbidden to them, and even founded cities in it. Monterrey in Mexico serves as an illustration of this. This brings me to the question why a particular ethnoreligious group, the Jews, are highlighted in Mexican archives and heretic counterparts are not? Furthermore, I ask, how did the *prohibidos* shape Colonial Mexico, and vice versa?

Bernard Vincent of the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* and Patrick Cabanel of the *École pratique des hautes etudes* suggest that the expulsions of the Moriscos (Islamic converts to Christianity[1]) from Spain accounted for about 270,000 individuals. They were expelled as consequence of the decision taken by King Phillip III (1578–1621) on April fourth, 1609. Cabanel and Vin-

1 Kevin Ingram (Ed.), *The Conversos and Moriscos in Late Medieval Spain and Beyond*, Vol. 2, The Morisco Issue, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012, p. ix (n. 1).

cent state that this was "the most important religious migration in quantitative terms."[2] They searched for refuge in different latitudes. In this context, common wisdom may dictate that if *Judeoconversos* were prohibited in the *Nuevo Mundo*, and yet many of them crossed the Atlantic, there would not be a reason then to assume that the case of the Moriscos would be significantly different. However, the archives seem to tell a different story. Considering that the expulsion of Moriscos was the most important migration, in quantitive terms, coming out of the Iberian Peninsula, why did their presence not echo in New Spain, in quantitative and qualitative terms, as the heretic counterpart did? Vincent provides some clarity through an important and interesting reflection on this question:

> Les exilés ont alors cherché à trouver refuge en de nombreux lieux du bassin de la Méditerranée. Certains se sont installés en France ou en Italie, d'autres à Istanbul ou ans d'autres villes de la Méditerranée orientale, l'immense majorité dans les pays du Maghreb.[3]

But what about Islamic theologies forbidding or permitting Iberian Muslims to move around in the world known to them by then, freely and at will? How did theology influence their social perceptions and, consequently, their sense of security and ecclesiastical obligations? Do we consider these elements when analysing the subject? Having said this, I emphasise that heretics were not the only ones who succeeded in crossing the Atlantic into the Western Hemisphere. Novohispanic social exchanges demonstrate that awareness of Islām also travelled to Spanish America, whose settler population was familiar with the Christian-Muslim polemics of the time. This awareness however, represents a reflection of the influence of this hostile state of affairs on transatlantic Iberian societies,[4] and does not seem to point to the presence of the Islamic religious system in a dynamic and organic way in Colonial Mexico per se. Rather, it was a part of the geopolitics of the day, especially during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It is perhaps worth remembering that the outcomes of the Battle of Lepanto (1571) were still fresh in the minds

2 See: Bernard Vincent, *L'Islam d'Espagne au XVIe Siècle, Résistances Identitaires des Morisques*, Saint-Denis: Editions Bouchene, 2017, p. 7; and Patrick Cabanel, *Histoire des Protestants en France, XVI–XXI Siècle*, Paris: Fayard, 1998.

3 (The exiles then sought refuge in many places in the Mediterranean basin. Some settled in France or Italy, others in Istanbul or in other cities of the eastern Mediterranean. The vast majority emigrated to the countries of the Maġrib), Vincent (2017), op. cit., p. 7.

4 Karoline P. Cook, *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016, pp. 87–88.

of Christians in Spanish society. But, did the cognizance of Islām in Colonial Mexican society suffice to establish that the Moriscos created, protected, and transmitted a Novohispanic Muslim tradition for over three centuries? Karoline P. Cook of the Royal Holloway University of London provides a compelling argument in this regard:

> Ideas about Islam, as articulated in written texts and in daily conversations, also influenced how individuals perceived Muslims and Moriscos in Spanish America. Through denunciations before the inquisitorial and ecclesiastical courts, one can glimpse common assumptions about Moriscos. These assumptions produced a sometimes contradictory set of images of Muslims and Moriscos that circulated in the Spanish world, undermined or upheld in daily interactions. Who actually was under the category of Morisco was remarkably diverse.[5]

Categorising all Moriscos in New Spain as Muslims and taking this as a proof of Islām in it is debatable. This is so, because the term 'Morisco', in a Novohispanic context, is a remarkably diverse category and did not always stand for a continual organic definition in the society of Colonial Mexico.

The dynamics of denunciations are another complex subject due to the contradictory set of images that they produced, many of which were the results of rivalries and mutual social disdain. In Colonial Mexico accusations of being Arab, of having Islamic affiliation or Morisco ancestry, should not be taken soundly as definitive evidence of Islām either. As Cook clearly explains, the term Morisco "held public meaning, constituting evidence that could be brought into court and reflected the public and notorious nature of an individual's gestures, speech, and performance in charged settings such as during mass."[6] Furthermore, 'Arab' is not intrinsic to Islām. An accusation is just that—a charge, an inculpation, and it does not prove anything beyond that, unless proven by evidence. Members of Novohispanic society who accuse certain individuals of professing the Islamic faith because of the latter's actions, without demonstrating how this can be explained cannot be taken as providing proof of a Mexican Colonial Islām. If this would be the case, we could infer that if a person of Arab origin or Muslim affiliation performs an act of terror, this may be attributed to Islām. Under no circumstances should we be allowed to support such a claim. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify what it is that we are research-

5 Ibid., p. 88.
6 Ibid., p. 7.

ing, namely, Islām as a culture and religion in *Nueva España*, or Moriscos and their whereabouts in Colonial Mexico. These are two distinct subjects and not always directly interconnected.

In addition, I argue that both lines of reasoning may rightly direct us to further and broader questions.[7] Rather than assuming that no or very few Moriscos settled in Mexico due to the extensive legislations prohibiting their emigration, or that because other heretics succeeded in dodging these legislations, Muslims, ipso facto, should have been present across the Novohispanic space-time continum, we ought to focus on the scarcity of historical evidence in the archives. This limitation may ultimately suggest the complexity and the simplicity of this state of affairs. Complexity because assuming a historical reality without documentation to sustain it is a seemingly unfathomable and difficult matter indeed. Simplicity, since in History, as a discipline of human knowledge, the researcher functions simply as an exegete, with authority derived from his capacity and legitimacy to interpret the sources only. It is a simple truth that historians might try to recreate the happening in the light of primary sources, but they cannot fabricate evidence. Hence, from these scant archival sources, it is difficult to reconstruct an organic Novohispanic Islamic religious tradition and Colonial Mexican Muslim communities, or to point at their "significant impact on Colonial Spanish American society and the everyday workings of empire."[8] This issue is particularly accentuated when many of the Mexican primary sources concerning Islamic matters are related to accusations only, among them, and perhaps the most common, of being Morisco.

However, very often, finding Moriscos in the archives emanates from a category conceived or invoked in a Novohispanic context whose connotation is linked to a *casta*, and not to religious affiliation. What did it mean to be seen as Morisco in Colonial Mexico? How did this categorisation include or exclude certain individuals of Novohispanic society, particularly when it is known that legislation and attitudes on Islām and Moriscos on the Iberian Peninsula crossed the Atlantic and reached Mexico? While these debates influenced Spanish policies and attitudes towards the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica, does this signify an Islamic presence in Colonial Mexico per se? As for the materiality and content of the primary sources, do these allow heretics to speak for their own right, or do inquisitorial suspicion and social accusation suffice to declare a verdict on their religious condition today? I will reason that not all the *prohibidos* stand speechless in the historical records of Colonial Mexico.

7 See: Ibid., p. 1.
8 Ibid., pp. 1–2.

However, when their collective voices are not heard, we are obliged to ask if this is because of the lack of their presence in these records. Moriscos in New Spain and the essence of archival records about them often stand voiceless in many contemporary academic compositions. Notwithstanding, suspicion and denunciation are utilised to justify the existence of Islām as *Dīn* in Colonial Mexico; this, in apparent frontal challenge to the content of primary sources. In light of this, the context and content of evidence should be our main concern, not only its nomenclature and categorisation in the archives and sources. A careful reading of the data may permit us to hear the voices of the accused, and as a result of this, we would listen to their realities and see the historical verisimilitude of our question from diverse angles.

Indeed, archival documentation related to Colonial Mexico reveals the confessions of a variety of non-Muslim heretics whose voices matched the accusations formulated against them. For instance, a variety of avowals can be heard of those accused of heresy during the decade of 1640, whose voices in the files correspond to the imputations. The Jews condemned to the stake in this decade suffices to illustrate how inquisitorial suspicion, people's denunciation, the categorisation of the archival record, and the confession of the accused match. If these elements are found in a corroborative manner in the sources, then we are undoubtedly referring to a minority ethnoreligious group active in Colonial Mexico. However, does this happen every time we find the word Morisco, or *Mezquita*, *Coran*, *Moro*, or even *Mahoma* in the files of the Mexican archives?

The *Aljamiado*[9] manuscripts propagated among Mudéjares and Moriscos serve as further illustrations, and in a colorful form, of the previously mentioned historical realities. For example, their *datum* may speak to us, in active voice, about doctrinal instruction to Muslims parishioners living outside of *Dār al-Islām*[10] (abode of Islām). Mariam Medhat Saada, through her study on the *MS. 4963*, provides an insightful point on the *Aljamiado* manuscripts:

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9 *Aljamiado* or *Aljamía* texts are manuscripts that use the Arabic script for transcribing mainly Romance languages. The Moors utilised this in Spain to record documentation in the Castilian language that was written in the Arabic alphabet. For an illustration on the *Aljamiado* subject see: Mariam Medhat Saada, "Edición y estudio del manuscrito aljamiado-morisco ms. 4963 de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid," *PhD Thesis*, University of California, 2011, available at: http://people.virginia.edu/~mav4n/libguides/docu/aljamia/ucla.pdf, (last accessed June 19, 2020).

10 Territory of Islām, or region of Muslim sovereignty where Islamic law prevails. The Ḥanafī school of law holds that territory conquered by nonbelievers can remain *Dār al-Islām* as long as a Qadi administers Islamic law and Muslims are protected. See: John L. Esposito (Ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 62.

> These are significant since they display aspirations and the annihilations of a community at the verge of extinction and its attempt to maintain its identity, language, and faith [...] The increased interaction and integration amongst bilingual Spanish Muslims, who were systematically losing Arabic competence, resulted in the creation of this koiné language. The Aljamiado-Morisco writing became the medium connecting between language, faith, and identity so as to endure the waves of Islamic identity eradication in Spain during the 16th through the 17th centuries.[11]

Thus, *Aljamiado* texts serve as testimony that permits, among other things: 1) to point to the existence of an underground Islamic practise 2) to see the manner in which Iberian Moriscos were attracted to or repulsed by Christianity 3) to discern their identification with Islām. They reveal the social and theological experiences more than any official record.[12] But do we find such type of evidence *in esse* or *in specie* concerning Islām and its relation to Colonial Mexico? As we have seen thus far, assessing what is intrinsic to Islām in *Nueva España* is a complex issue that cannot and should not be performed lightly.

In analysing the presence of Islām in Colonial and Early independent Mexico, it is paramount to question what we understand by Islām, and to signal what we are investigating. This, because in order to conduct sound research, identification of the object of the study is *conditio sine qua non*. Neal Robinson of the University of Leeds suggests that "it is not possible to study Islam in any depth without encountering Arabic proper names and technical terms."[13] The theological and social aspects of the study need to be addressed and the historical perspective taken into account as well. The latter is especially important because the subject of Islām in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico is intrinsically historical. I, therefore maintain that it is indispensable to define *Islām* both in general terms and as *Dīn*, and what the latter implies. The *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (2003) defines it as:

> Way of life for which humans will be held accountable and recompensed accordingly on the Day of Judgement. The word is the root of the Arabic terms for 'habit,' 'way,' 'account,' 'obedience,' 'judgement,' and 'reward,' and it is often translated as religion. It implies that living in obedience

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11 Saada (2011), op. cit., p. xii.

12 Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Morisco Stories and the Complexities of Resistance and Assimilation," in: Ingram (2012), op. cit., p. 161.

13 Neal Robinson, *Islam: A Concise Introduction*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 1999, p. xiv.

> to God is an obligation owed to Him, for which people will be taken to account, judged, and recompensed [...] Din encompasses beliefs, thought, character, behavior, and deeds [...] Therefore Islam, or peaceful submission to God in belief, character, rituals, and sociopolitical and economic interactions, is termed the 'way of the truth' (din al-haqq), which is accepted by God.[14]

Ian Richard Netton of the University of Exeter defines *Dīn* as: "Faith, religion, the area of that which concerns the spiritual. In Islamic writings, the *Dīn* of Islām is often contrasted with *al-Dunyā* (the world)."[15] Furthermore, Islām is not a religion in the manner religion is understood in Western societies.[16] Therefore, it is necessary to highlight that Islām, as *Dīn* implies a threefold sense that goes beyond common Western understanding, namely: "1) Judgement, retribution 2) Custom, usage 3) Religion. The first refers to the Hebraeo-Aramaic root, the second to the Arabic root *dāna*, *dayn* (debt, money owing), the third to the Pehlevi *dēn* (revelation, religion)."[17] Robinson provides a metaphor for the definition of Islām that may serve our purpose:

> Muslims often speak of the House of Islam. If it is legitimate to think of Islam as a building, then the Quran, the scripture revealed to Muhammad, is clearly its foundation. Extending the architectural metaphor, the Prophet said that Islam is built on five pillars, which he defined as: the Shahada, or testimony that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God; performance of ritual prayer; compulsory almsgiving; the fast of Ramadan; and pilgrimage to Mecca. These five pillars support the whole fabric of Sharia, the divine law.[18]

This metaphor serves to demonstrate that Islām is a religion with a proper and well-defined base and structure. The *Sharīʿah* is at its core, which while not always literally, to a degree regulates and informs social practises. Islām "emphasises practise as well as belief. Law rather than theology is the central religious practise and locus for defining the path of Islam and preserving its

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14 Esposito (2003), op. cit., p. 68.

15 Ian Richard Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 1992, p. 73.

16 Esposito (2003), op. cit., pp. 68–69.

17 Gardet, L., *"Dīn,"* in: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs (Eds), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0168, (last accessed May 28, 2020).

18 Robinson (1999), op. cit., p. 16.

way of life."[19] Therefore, it is convenient to define it without flawed analytical categories. Consequently, when speaking of an organic Novohispanic Islamic tradition it should include within it both Islām as *Dīn* and Islām as culture, as a modus vivendi.

Ebrahim Moosa of the University of Notre Dame states, "… each of us articulates a version of Islam. This proposition has led some scholars to say that there is not one, single, monolithic 'Islam,' but a multiplicity of Islams."[20] The idea has certain veracity, and might be used by scholars to define the subject of Islām in Colonial Mexico with regard to each researcher's discipline of study. However, this should not lead us to generalise a Novohispanic Muslim tradition as a homogeneous and continuous Islām in Colonial Mexico. At best, it could be inferred that a Novohispanic Islām in the category 'little tradition' existed, as we will further observe. However, even here, a certain base must be seen to enable us to promote such an idea. On the use of the words 'Islām/Islamic,' the recognised Pakistani American scholar of Islamic Studies at Harvard University, Shahab Ahmed (1966–2015), stated:

> The existing uses of "Islam/Islamic," rather than denoting, describing, evoking or otherwise conveying the *fullness* of the *reality* of the historical phenomenon of Islam have the unfortunate effect of obscuring, fracturing, impoverishing, mis-calibrating, distorting, reducing and otherwise rendering incoherent the phenomenon they intend to denote.[21]

I suggest then that anyone interested in researching about Islām in New Spain and Early Independent Mexico should define first if they are searching Islams or Islām; Moriscos or Muslims; Arabs or Moros. These are all, intertwined, yet different subjects in their own right. Following this, one could proceed to question what was Islamic among the Moriscos of New Spain, and what of Colonial Mexico was Muslim and intrinsic to Islām. Otherwise, we would be only obscuring and impoverishing our investigation, as Shahab Ahmed rightfully suggested. On this question Professor Moosa explains that "what many 'Islams' suggest is that there are many discursive traditions through which Muslims imagine themselves."[22] We could then ask how did the Moriscos, or any other

19 Esposito (2003), op. cit., p. 14.

20 Ebrahim Moosa, "The Debts and Burdens of Critical Islam," in: Omid Safi (Ed.), *Progressive Muslims*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2003, p. 114.

21 Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 114.

22 Moosa (2003), op. cit., p. 114.

individual of Islamic affiliation or on suspicion of being Muslim in Colonial Mexico, imagine themselves with respect to Islām? This is an interrogation that is difficult to find a response to, since documentation does not provide us with enough evidence. A cogent assumption cannot be founded on the testimonies of few suspects only, or on mere accusations against them. With regard to the representations of 'Muslimness' Professor Moosa further suggests:

> It is through different ways of conceiving knowledge in all its complexity of time and space that people adhering to this faith identify themselves as "Muslims." In other words we can say that there are multiple and diverse forms and articulations of "Muslimness" or "being Muslim." What we really have are multiple representations of being Muslim, embodied by concrete individuals and communities [...] For whatever Islam *is*, the closest we can come to what "it" is or not, is through the embodiment in concrete forms, practises, beliefs, traditions, values, prejudices, tastes, forms of power that emanate from human beings who profess and claim to be Muslim or profess belonging to a community that calls itself Muslim.[23]

This raises additional key interrogations that the researcher of this thematic cannot ignore. What is the Novohispanic representation of Islām? What type of Islamic practises, values, traditions, and forms of power emanated from those individuals, men and women accused of Islamic affiliation in New Spain, whether Moriscos or Muslims, and where do we observe that embodiment in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico? How did these people preserve their connection with Islām in a Catholic land away from *Dār al-Islām*? Furthermore, how did they conserve their own Muslim identity and theological knowledge in a Spanish colony that was part of *Dār al-Kufr*? How did they profess their 'Muslimness'? Did they, or is this *ad valorem* of Novohispanic social accusations? When speaking of Islām in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico, are we seeking to imply by it the historical, theological, cultural and social phenomenon that this important religion is all its cornucopia and complexity?

In view of this, neither critics or supporters of the Novohispanic Islamic tradition are accustomed to inquire into, perhaps, one of the most fundamental questions concerning our subject: What is Islām? The anthropologist Ronald A. Lukens-Bull of the University of Florida states that "the theoretical question 'what is Islam' and the theological question 'what is Islam' are not the

23 Ibid., pp. 114–115.

same," and indicates, "the anthropological study of Islam is one that has been plagued by problems of definition."[24] Along this line of reasoning, it ought to be stressed as well that where Islām is present, so is the *Sharīʿah*. Joseph Schacht (1902–1969), the eminent Professor of Islām at Columbia University shows a recognition of Islām and *Sharīʿah* in a way that may very well give us the workable definition we are aspiring for:

> Islamic law is the epitome of Islamic thought, the most typical manifestation of the Islamic way of life, the core and kernel of Islam itself [...] Apart from this, the whole life of the Muslims, Arabic literature, and the Arabic and Islamic disciplines of learning are deeply imbued with the ideas of Islamic law; it is impossible to understand Islam without understanding Islamic law.[25]

Sharīʿah is then a detailed canon of conduct comprising ways and modes of worship, standards of morals and life, laws and jurisprudence. It is related to ritual, to the devotional duties that Muslims are legally, spiritually and morally bound to perform.[26] Two major sources teach us about *Sharīʿah*: the *Qurʾān* and the *Ḥadīth*. The former is the divine revelation; and the latter is a collection of instructions and memoirs of the Prophet Moḥammad, as preserved by those to whom this corpus was handed down from the first witnesses. These reports and histories (*Ḥadīth*) were compiled through a series of collections known as the *Al-Kutub as-Sittah* (the six books).[27] The *Ṣaḥīḥ* (genuine) is said to have been compiled from about 300,000 traditions and has been unanimously acclaimed as authoritative through the six canonical collections of *Ḥadīth*.[28] Today, these enjoy a general acceptance as part of the official cannon provided by the *Isnād*,

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24 Ronald A. Lukens-Bull, "Between Text and Practice: Considerations in the Anthropological Study of Islam," *Marburg Journal of Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (1999), pp. 1–21.

25 Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 1.

26 A. Kevin Reinhart, "Ritual Action and Practical Action: The Incomprehensibility of Muslim Devotional Action," in: A. Kevin Reinhart and Robert Gleave (Eds.), *Islamic Law in Theory: Studies on Jurisprudence in Honor of Bernard Weiss*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014, p. 63.

27 On *Ḥadīth* see: G.H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007.

28 Namely: the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (810–870 CE); the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* of Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (875 CE); the *Kitāb al-Sunan* of Abū Dāʾūd al-Sijistānī (817–888 CE); the *Kitāb al-Sunan* of Abūʿ Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nasāʾī (830–915 CE); the *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of Abū ʿIsā Muḥammad al-Tirmidhī (892 CE); and the *Kitāb al-Sunan* of Abū ʿAbdallāh ibn Mājā (824–887 CE). The first two are regarded as the most authentic of all.

the authorities that transmitted the reports of Prophet Muḥammad and his *Ṣaḥābah* (companions). These reports became the basis of all Islamic scholarship, from exegesis of the Qur'ān (*tafsīr*) to legal theory (*fiqh*) and were not foreign to the Mālikī scholars on the Iberian Peninsula and the regions of North Africa.

These facts should ask us to think deeply about the theological knowledge Moriscos might have carried with them through their transatlantic passages in the Colonial age, as well as the ecclesiastical *savoir-faire* that they may have had, and transmitted in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, so as to keep their religious traditions alive and in motion then and in the future. Karoline P. Cook explains that by the end of the sixteenth century many Castilian Moriscos had already integrated with the Old Christian layers of Spanish society. Therefore, when faced with expulsion, they argued that they were *Cristianos Viejos*.[29] If there was indeed an organic Novohispanic Islamic tradition, it is worth asking how familiar its practitioners were with the tenets of Islām, theoretically and empirically, particularly in light of their social integration on the Iberian Peninsula. How and in what manner were the guardians and transmitters of this Novohispanic religious tradition acquainted with the *Sharīʿah*? How did Islamic Law fashion this allegedly religious tradition of Colonial Mexico and consequently the modus vivendi of its practitioners? Do we see the causality of these dynamics in the timeline of Colonial and Early Independent Mexico and if so, where and how?

Conceptualisation is an additional hindrance when studying this Abrahamic religion as being Colonial, Early Independent, or even Modern Mexican. This is reflected in the contemporary literature on the theme, which often conflates Arab with Muslim. Consequently, in that literature, Arab becomes intrinsically Muslim, and Muslim naturally belongs to Islām, solving the problem our research confronts us with. Yet, it must be recalled that not all Muslim inhabitants of *Hispania* were of Arab origin. As Mary Elizabeth Perry from the University of California, Los Angeles explains: "Muslims also varied considerably, for they came from different lands outside Iberia, lived for different periods of time within the Spanish kingdoms, enjoyed varying amounts of wealth, and experienced widely ranging degrees of assimilation."[30] Therefore, pointing at Moriscos as *exempla* of developers of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition is incorrect. Similarly, equaling Muslim to Morisco and *vice versa* overlooks historical

29 Cook (2016), op. cit., p. 142.

30 Mary Elizabeth Perry, *The Handless Maiden, Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 11.

agency and tags these terms as categories that historically and conceptually do not always fit. This is because Morisco, as a concept, metamorphosed with time and its Islamic connotation was reshaped by the distinct social realities of Colonial Mexico's daily life. Consequently, its connection to the Islamic eventually vanished, turning the word into a noun related to colonial social order. Moreover, in New Spain, among the Moriscos that we find in the archives, many were married to *Cristianos Viejos*. Perry makes a relevant point on this aspect: "Moriscos who married Old Christians were more likely to become 'Christianized,' it was believed, and to permit their children to be educated Christians."[31]

Approaching the thematic of Islām in Colonial Mexico as a religious tradition evokes the ideas of the anthropologist Robert Redfield (1897–1958). Redfield outlined a binary model for the anthropological study of world religions as 'great tradition' and 'little tradition.' This suggests that 'great tradition' is the orthodox form of the cultural and the religious center, that of the urban elite. On the other hand, the 'little tradition' stands for the heterodox form of the cultural-religious periphery, which incorporates many elements of local tradition and practise in daily life of ordinary people.[32] In *Dār al-Islām* the Islamic pattern is generally in line with 'great tradition.'[33] As a notion of geographic collective identity the boundaries of the abode of Islām adapt to the historical period and political environment, yet, within the realms of the Islamic world.[34] *Nueva España* was not part of that geographic Islamic world. Therefore, Islām, as a 'great tradition,' cannot apply to Colonial Mexico.

In 1986, the anthropologist Talal Asad of the City University of New York wrote an insightful analysis on the anthropology of Islām. In it, he made a riveting point that I believe is still valid today:

> In recent years there has been increasing interest in something called the anthropology of Islam. Publications by Western anthropologists contain-

31 Ibid., p. 35.

32 Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 70.

33 Gustave E. von Grunebaum, "The Problem: Unity in Diversity," in: G.E. von Grunebaum (Ed.), *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1955, p. 28.

34 Giovanna Calasso, "Constructing and Deconstructing the *Dār al-Islām / Dār al-Ḥarb* Opposition. Between Sources and Studies," in: Giovanna Calasso and Giuliano Lancioni (Eds.), *Dār al-Islām / Dār al-Ḥarb: Territories, Peoples, Identities*, Studies in Islamic Law and Society, Vol. 40, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017, p. 23.

> ing the word "Islam" or "Muslim" in the title multiply at a remarkable rate. The political reasons for this great industry are perhaps too evident to deserve much comment.[35]

Likewise, the terms 'Islamic, Islam, Muslim, Moro, Morisco, Muslimes' multiply in scholarly works concerned with Islām in Mexico. Yet they fail to properly define them. At most, they are, altogether, designated with the same meaning. The conceptual basis of such academic works and their objects of investigation should not be categorised as simply as they are. Neither can Islām be made a designation for a heterogeneous collection of items. Professor Asad suggests that "this does not help identify Islam as an analytical object of study."[36] Asad further stated that, "for anthropologists, neither form of Islam has a claim to being regarded as 'more real' than the other."[37] Therefore, this may explain the general conceptualisation on the theme of Islām in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico that prevails in current Mexican scholarship, which is mostly performed by anthropologists and sociologists. On writing about Islām in Colonial Mexico, I argue that we should begin by defining it and understanding it as Professor Asad expounds: "From the concept of a discursive tradition that includes and relates itself to the founding texts to the Qur'an and the Hadith [...] It is a tradition."[38] But to comprehend and implement this properly, we ought to define beforehand the word 'tradition' and do this in relation to Islām. I will again borrow Professor Asad's compelling writings to illuminate this point:

> A tradition consists essentially of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history [...] An Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present [...] Orthodoxy is crucial to all Islamic traditions [...] not a mere body of opinion but a distinctive relationship of power. Wherever Muslims have the power to regulate, uphold, requite, or adjust *correct* practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace *incorrect* ones, there is the domain of orthodoxy.[39]

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35 Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam. Occasional Paper Series*, Washington D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986, p. 1.

36 Ibid., p. 2.

37 Ibid., p. 6.

38 Ibid., p. 14.

39 Ibid., pp. 14–15.

With the above in mind, this research places scholarly discourses employed in the construction of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition theory *vis-à-vis* the historical content of the sources. Primarily, it is the latter that must represent the historical setting of Islām in Colonial Mexico as a religious tradition, and not any academic, political, ideological or personal agenda. From this point of view, demonstrating the presence of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition depends not only on how Mexico's colonial social structure was formed or is conceptualised by scholars, but rather on the way in which Islām itself, as a religious tradition, is defined by the historical sources and the way the actors embedded in it constitute the events that created such a tradition. I will contend that failing to do so may create ill-founded academic assertions. We should approach the subject in a way that permits us to observe it as "a discursive tradition that connects variously with the formation of moral selves, the manipulations of populations (or resistance to it), and the production of appropriate knowledges,"[40] as Asad further suggested.

Furthermore, I argue that heterogeneity in traditional practise does not equal absence of an Islamic tradition.[41] However, there are preconditions that form the basis of such a religious tradition that cannot be ignored. These may ultimately point at its existence or absence in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico. In this context, we see that diversity in Islām goes beyond the Sunni and Shīʿah divide, and that its cultural variety differs across the globe and through history. Yet, let us recall that a theological common denominator, as prescriber, is always present, because foremost, Islām implies a religion, a faith and a total submission to God. It is then worth thinking about how Muslims were inducted as such in Colonial Mexico, and the narrative and practise through which their religious tradition was taught and transmitted in that region of the Americas. This is because as Asad explains, "the discourses in which the teaching is done, in which the correct performance of the practised is defined and learned, are intrinsic to all Islamic practises."[42] How were the few and scattered individuals of Islamic origin or of Muslim confession found in the archival sources acquainted theoretically, empirically, personally, and collectively to Islamic practise? This is a question that when answered, should clarify the manner, depth, and extent, both socially and historically, by which the alleged Islamic tradition was practised in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico.

40 Ibid., p. 7.
41 Ibid., p. 16.
42 Ibid., p. 15.

Now, from the angle of 'little tradition,' we may observe Islām in the Iberian worlds of the sixteenth to nineteenth century as "the catchment of the popular undercurrent,"[43] as explained by Gustave E. von Grunebaum (1909–1972), the recognized Arabist of the University of California, Los Angeles. In the case of Spain, the *Aljamiado* manuscripts bear witness to this very popular religious undercurrent. On Iberian soil Islām is indeed appraised through the lens of 'little tradition' both in the public eye and in its status as a crypto practice, particularly during the Early Modern period of history. This popular religious undercurrent should echo as 'little tradition' also in Colonial Mexico for us to point to the existence of Islām in the Novohispanic case. For example, in Colonial Mexico this is well illustrated through the case of the Novohispanic *Judeoconversos*, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that from documented evidence we observe that this particular forbidden 'little tradition' of Colonial Mexico eventually ended up blending in with the Novohispanic 'great tradition.' Therefore, we witness that although some clusters of that particular Novohispanic 'little tradition' were recorded in written and official documentation during continuous periods of time in Mexico, in due course they too vanished with time, because the 'great tradition' prevailed over the 'little tradition.' This is most likely because, as Grunebaum proposed, "the social position of a person may depend on which of the two traditions he determines to live by."[44] Under the rule of the Inquisition, it was more convenient to adhere to the cosmovision of the system, particularly when personal integrity was at stake. In spite of this, oral history still echoes the past and the existence of that 'little tradition' as practised by this particular group among those considered heretics in Colonial Mexico. This is the case of the *Alteños* of Jalisco, Mexico, who regularly identify themselves as descendants of the Novohispanic *Sefarditas*. The presence of this minority, well documented in official records, is also to be heard in regional popular fables today. In this way, the impact of 'little tradition' transcending time and space across the Iberian worlds should serve as a blueprint for any researcher investigating religious minorities in Colonial Mexico.

Let us now analyse 'normative Islām,' sometimes termed traditionalist,[45] which is perhaps a concept that is more suitable to the study of Islām as a

43 Grunebaum (1955), op. cit., p. 28.

44 Ibid.

45 Andrew Rippin, *Muslims, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (Second Edition), London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 181.

religion.[46] In it, liturgical ceremonials and credence are portrayed through a discursive tradition, which becomes essential to the definition of Islām. This can be seen through historical development across time.[47] The prominent Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Lausanne, Jacques Waardenburg (1930–2015), stated that "for the study of Islām as a religion, we may try to reconstruct the meaningful connections that particular individuals or groups project onto reality to make this reality meaningful."[48] Practise and belief embedded in social reality is then a further indispensable characteristic that enables us to point at the existence of religion in any given society. Waardenburg also indicated that normative Islām would endure "even if only a few Muslims actually would live up to it."[49] If it endured indeed in New Spain, we ought to encounter it either in the archives or across popular stories. From this perspective, how is normative Islām seen through time in *Nueva España*? More importantly, what type of interconnection did the few Moriscos present in Colonial Mexico have to embed Islām, as a religious tradition, in *Nueva España* for over three centuries, and consequently, in the nation-state of Mexico?

In the case of Colonial Mexico I opt to use the term Moriscos rather than Mudéjares. I suggest that we cannot speak of the latter in the Novohispanic context. This is so, because from a historical, geographical, and etymological perspective, it is not accurate to use these terms interchangeably, for they have different meanings and belong to divergent and particular historical periods, distinct social and spatial conditionings, and ultimately reflect individual cases. I elaborate briefly on their conceptualisation in the second chapter of this book, but for now it is worth recalling that at the fall of Granada, Spain decreed that Muslims in its territory had to convert to Christianity or else to leave to Berbería[50]—a term used by Europeans to refer to the coastal regions of the Maġrib. From this period on, those Muslims who converted to Catholicism, whether voluntarily or by force, were known as Moriscos.

As I have argued, official Islām is found within the abode of Islām (*Dār al-Islām*). It provides specific institutions, jurisdiction, and provisions to exercise its tenets, and it is also observed in the public sphere. It is, ipso facto, unsus-

46 Jacques Waardenburg, *Islam: Historical, Social and Political Perspectives*, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002, p. 97.

47 Andrew Rippin (Ed.), *Defining Islam: A Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007, p. 6.

48 Waardenburg (2002), op. cit., p. 13.

49 Ibid., p. 101.

50 Luis del Mármol Carvajal, *Historia del rebelión y castigo de los moriscos del reino de Granada*, Libro Primero, Capitvlo XIII, Malaga: Iuan Rene, 1600, f. 27v.

tainable to affirm the practise of orthodox Islām, as *Dīn*, and its prolonged transmission in time in New Spain. I suggest that in a Colonial Mexican context we should rather refer to it as Islam, namely as a *sui-generis* Novohispanic tradition, if at all, and not as Islām proper. This might be possible, because the lack of recorded evidence does not mean that in reality, when our past was their present, those individuals of alleged Islamic background, as a whole community or independently, had not practised the little or much they could have known about the religion of their ancestors. Unfortunately, I have not found any concrete historical evidence in the archives, which in the final analysis, could help us to clearly point in that direction.

Andrew Rippin (1950–2016), the distinguished scholar of Islamic Studies at the University of Victoria, explained on the concept of Islams that "all have a shared repertoire of principles of individual and collective action which can be called Islam [...] Islam is a concept which is defined by the community itself."[51] From this perspective, those tangible repertoires ought to be observed across Mexico's colonial past as well; while the Novohispanic Muslims, as a community per se in New Spain, should be allowed to define themselves through the sources. Therefore, it may be better suited to speak of the history of individuals of Arab origin; of Moriscos; of general suspicion of Islamic affiliation in Novohispanic society; and eventually also of some scattered Muslims in New Spain, rather than of Islām as *Dīn* present through the three centuries of Spanish colonisation in Mexico.

Another essential distinction is between the two terms that are regularly interchanged when speaking about our subject are Islām and Muslim. These need to be qualified, because whoever sets out to research about this Abrahamic religion will eventually face this and be exposed to a common confusion. While they are related, each has a distinct meaning and essence. The *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in the *Kitāb al-Īmāni*, recounts through a *Ḥadīth*, the response of Prophet Muḥammad to what Islām was: "Islām means to bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is the messenger of God; to establish the *Ṣalāt*, to pay the *Zakāt*, to fast in *Ramaḍān* and to perform pilgrimage to the House [Mecca] if you are able."[52] This *Ḥadīth* narrates as well, that Archangel *Jibra'īl*, who had previously asked Prophet Muḥammad, further stated: "... to teach you your religion [*Dīnakum*]."[53] This illustrates that Islām is,

51 Rippin (2007), op. cit., p. 6.

52 Rāid bin Ṣabrī ibn Ābī 'Alfah (Ed.), *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim līabī al-Ḥasayn Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj bin Muslim al-Qushayrī an-Nīshābūrī*, Al-Riyāḍ: Dār al-Ḥaḍārat an-Nashr wā-l-Tawzī', 2015, p. 23.

53 Ibid.

foremost, *Dīn*. The *Ḥadīth* additionally recounts that the archangel *Jibra'īl* also asked Prophet Muḥammad what *īmān* (faith) is, to which the Prophet of Islām replied: "It is to believe in Allāh, his angels, his books [*kutubihi*], his messengers [*rusulihi*], the last day [*Al-yawmi al-'āḥiri*], and to believe in the determination of the divine will [*Al-Qadari*]."[54]

As for Muslim, the term is derived from the Arabic root 's-l-m,' which designates the person who professes Islām.[55] The *Islamic Desk Reference* (Brill, 1994) provides a clear definition of Islām as a word that means submission, total surrender (to God) according to the message of the Prophet of Islām; whereas Muslim is defined by it as "one who submits to God while following the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Muslim Tradition."[56] Although we can speak with full confidence of an Islām in *Hispania* and of Muslims practising this Abrahamic religious tradition in it, speaking about it in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico is highly debatable. This is evident when we recall that as religious system in history, Islām became "the ideology of a vast empire which extended from India to Spain,"[57] in which Colonial Mexico did not belong; neither did it figure within these boundaries and nor was it theologically affiliated to it. *Nueva España* rather belonged to the territory of the *Dār al-Kufr*: "the territory of unbelief."[58]

As we explore these interrogations, we will note through six chapters that primary sources reveal the complexity of cultural, social, theological, and even personal realities experienced by the *prohibidos* altogether in Colonial Mexico and Muslims fighting for the French flag in nineteenth century Mexico. With regard to the former, it is through the experiences of a particular group of heretics that we see the overall realities of New Spain, its religious minorities, and the significance of the phrase 'religious tradition' for this research; as well as the active roles of ordinary people making history, and in this particular case, the history of Mexico.

My research as reflected in this book unfolds in six chapters that discuss and question key assumptions in current scholarly debates on Islām in the

54 Ibid.

55 C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, and Ch. Pellat (Eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition Prepared by a Number of Leading Orientalists*, (Vol. VII MIF-NAZ), Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1993, p. 688.

56 E. van Donzel (Ed.), *Islamic Desk Reference*, Leiden, New York and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1994, p. 176.

57 Robinson (1999), op. cit., p. 15.

58 On *Dār al-Kufr* see: Sarah Albrecht, *Dār al-Islām Revisited: Territorial in Contemporary Islamic Legal Discourse on Muslims in the West*, Muslim Minorities, Vol. 29, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018, p. 50.

Americas, and in Mexico in particular. The first segment questions a theory that assumes the arrival and existence of Islām in the New World during pre-Hispanic times. This theory also proposes that Muslims knew the maritime routes from Africa to the American continent before the Spaniards. Two leading sources are regularly used as foundations for this premise: 1) The writings of Columbus; 2) Muḥammad al-Idrīsī's (1100–1165) *Tabula Rogeriana* (1154 C.E.). I analyse both in the first chapter with the intention of finding cogent proof of the hypothesis.

The second chapter focuses on a double-fold academic proposition that dates the arrival of Muslims in Mesoamerica to the Spanish Conquista (1519–1521) and the development of an Islamic tradition in Colonial times (1521–1821). I challenge this claim through a comprehensive examination of archival documentation in the 'Inquisition Section' of Mexico's *Archivo General de la Nación* (AGN), the most important in its class in the Americas, as well as other primary and secondary sources safeguarded at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris. I question the historicity of this assumption and propose instead, a different perspective and a new historiography.

The third segment questions a conclusion that exists in scholarly works on the subject of Islām in Colonial Mexico that justifies the absence of evidence of Novohispanic Muslim tradition on grounds of *taqiyyah* performance. For those who take this stand, Islām was actively present as a crypto religion throughout the Novohispanic period. The Inquisition and a variety of royal edicts forbidding the passage of *prohibidos* to the Americas are signaled as the main cause of this. Consequently, this theory affirms, that since Muslims found it difficult to profess their religion in New Spain, they opted to perform the Islamic principle of dissimulation (*taqiyyah*), which they did in two different historical stages: a) Obliged dissimulation (1519–1833); b) Pertinent dissimulation (1833–1980's). This section of the book discusses those assumptions by observing the following: 1) the theological and etymological definition of *taqiyyah*; 2) the *Fatāwā* (Islamic legal opinions) concerning *taqiyyah* performance amongst Iberian Muslims; 3) the familiarity, theoretically and empirically, of Muslims in Spain with this Islamic principle. If Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were indeed well acquainted with it, we might see it echoing in Colonial Mexico through the deeds and lives of those Muslims who undertook the forbidden passages to the Americas. However if they were not, why then do contemporary scholars suppose Moriscos in New Spain knew the conceptual and practical aspects of this Islamic tenet that they supposedly practised from the beginning of the *Conquista de Mexico* until the second half of the nineteenth century? This chapter intends to shed some light onto this question.

The fourth chapter is a continuation of the thematic addressed in the previous one. It provides a comparative study of the hidden heretics of *Nueva España*. I strive to dissect myth, legend, and evidence about the crypto-religious Abrahamic traditions of Colonial Mexico. I question why one particular group of heretics, who under the light of the Mexican archives, is seen as a fully operational religious minority with a well structured religious community and which functioned beyond the idea that is commonly held about it, succeeded; this, despite having the same hindrances as other minority groups that were banned from the Indies. How did this community bring its forbidden faith into Novohispanic lands, protect it and transmit it as an encrypted religious tradition through time, while others appear to have done otherwise? These reflections may indicate a potential absence of Islām in New Spain as an organic religious tradition *stricto sensu*, thus corresponding to the findings in the archives. The findings of this chapter are intended to cause the reader to rethink, from within the corpus of primary sources, the factual or legendary nature of the matter in question.

Some academics argue that two developments took place during the Second French Occupation of Mexico (1862–1867): firstly, that Islām reappears, and resurfaces which is an intricate inference in itself and secondly, that this was the beginning of a new *taqiyyah* phase in Mexico. At the core of this proposition is the presence of the Zouave Regiments, and the Egyptian and Algerian Battalions in the Expeditionary Corps of the French Army. These are signaled as the Islamic elements within the Forces of Napoleon III responsible for the developments mentioned above. This section challenges this argument, and reevaluates the *Armée d'Afrique*, to which part of those military units belonged. My intention is to verify the historicity of this claim. To realize my aim, I researched the archives of the *Service historique de la Défense*, in Vincennes, France, which holds the records and annals of the French Military Forces. The outcome of my investigation differs with the proposition here above.

My research concludes with a sixth chapter, which is an extension of the previous one. Here, I focus on the Egyptian Battalion. In support of the second French military occupation of Mexico, the Khedive of Egypt lent a battalion consisting of Egyptian and Sudanese troops, which arrived in Mexico in 1863. General historiographical accounts point at this military formation as both an 'elite unit' and as an 'Egyptian Division.' Similar to the Algerian and Zouave troops analysed in the previous chapter, scholars, specially in Mexico, affirm that a vast number of those belonging to the *Bataillon Nègre Égyptien* stayed in Mexico after the French left. The resurfacing of Islām and of a new phase of *taqiyyah* in Mexico is attributed to these troops. This chapter reassesses this claim and proposes, according to the records in the French archives, a divergent story.

I shall finally conclude by arguing that anyone interested in researching Islām in both *Nueva España* and Early Independent Mexico needs to rethink their object of study. Fine-tuning the concept of 'tradition' will undoubtedly contribute to this endeavour. Because as expressed by Leonard P. Harvey, Islām "is not just a matter of private devotions, it is also a matter of public duties."[59] As Professor Asad suggested, "there clearly is not, nor can there be, such a thing as a universally acceptable account of a living tradition. Any representation of tradition is contestable."[60] This applies to the representation of Islām in Colonial Mexico as a Novohispanic religious tradition.

59 Leonard P. Harvey, "The Political, Social and Cultural History of the Moriscos," in: Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, (Second Edition), Leiden, New York and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1994, pp. 201–234.

60 Asad (1986), op. cit., p. 17.

CHAPTER 1

Imagined Communities: An Islamic New World in Pre-Columbian Times

Mexico was a Spanish colony known as *Virreinato de Nueva España* from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. After the fall of the Aztec Empire, which was the main event of the Spanish conquest, the Novohispanic center of power was established on ancient Tenochtitlán, which is known today as Mexico City. Prior to this, Spanish administration of the Americas was concentrated in the Caribbean Islands, from where initial exploration of Mexican territory took place. The chronicles of Bernal Díaz del Castillo (c. 1492–1585),[1] illustrate the conquest of Mexico along the coasts of the Yucatan Peninsula and the Gulf of Mexico through the early expeditions of Francisco Hernández de Córdoba (c. 1467–1517) and Francisco de Garay (1475–1523). On October twenty-third, 1518, the Governor of Cuba, Diego Velázquez, sent Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) and Juan de Grijalva (1490–1527) on the mission to explore the Mexican inland.[2] Mesoamerica was about to change in social, cultural, religious and even linguistic terms. Cortés' military enterprise would produce a turning point in the history of the Americas and Spain, whose impact would echo in the collective psyche of Mexico in the centuries to unfold.

During the sixteenth century, it is possible to find among those crossing the Atlantic from the Iberian Peninsula to the American continent men and women of Arab descent, Muslims, Moriscos, or those of suspected Islamic affiliation. Yet their numbers are minimum. Two geographical points served as an indispensable gateway to the American mainland: the Canary Islands and the Caribbean Archipelago. No ship could enter or leave Spanish America without passing by the West Indies. However, Spanish dominion of the Caribbean did not go uncontested for long, and European rivalry soon developed.[3] The general

1 Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España*, Tomo IV, Madrid: Imprenta de Don Benito Cano, 1796, p. 27.

2 Archivo General de Indias (Henceforth: AGI), *Patronato, 15, R.11*, "Instrucción Diego Velázquez: Hernán Cortés y Juan Grijalva," Santiago de Isla Fernandina, October 23, 1518, available at: http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/show/121450?nm, (last accessed June 20, 2020).

3 Ángel Gurría Quintana, "Caribbean, Pre-1700," in: Jennifer Speak (Ed.), *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, A to F, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 186.

 | DOI:10.1163/9789004510319_003

historical consensus is that these events mark the genesis of the Iberian presence in the Western Hemisphere, a virgin territory before the arrival of Europeans. Scholars contest Spanish dominion as well as the arrival of other peoples to the New World. From this perspective, a twofold hypothesis emerges, which supports the arrival of Islām to the American continent in pre-Hispanic times. The following assumptions support this theory: 1) Islām was present in the Americas, the Antilles per se, in pre-Hispanic times, brought there by Iberian sailors; 2) African Muslims knew the maritime routes from Africa to the Western Hemisphere, consequently Islām was brought there before the Spanish Conquista. This point is used to validate a supposed Islamic historical depth on the American continent, and it is frequently heard across the intellectual spectrum of Latin America and the *Daʿwa* enterprise in that part of the world. It is also often entangled in a political rhetoric whose purpose seems to go beyond the academic realm.

Two leading sources are regularly used as foundations for this premise: 1) The *magnum opus* of the Moroccan geographer Muḥammad al-Idrīsī (1100–1165), titled *Al-Kitāb ar-Rujārī* or *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī Iḥtirāq al-Āfāq*, most often known as the *Tabula Rogeriana*, or simply as *The Geography of Idrisi*; 2) The writings of Columbus. The *Bibliothèque nationale de France* holds the oldest surviving Arabic version of the *Tabula Rogeriana* along with the first translation in French of this interesting document by Pierre Amédée Jaubert (1779–1847). He was the French orientalist who served as interpreter and diplomat at Napoleon Bonaparte's court and who was the appointed translator for the French legation in Constantinople. I studied the translation together with its Arabic counterpart, as well as the documentation by Columbus to find proof to support or refute the claims made above.

Idrīsī was a twelfth century traveller, whose geographical research became renowned. He was among the first Arabic authors to have his works translated into Latin, and during the sixteenth century, his work was a known geographical reference source. He moved to Sicily in 1138, and put his knowledge and navigation experience at the service of the Norman King Roger II (1130–1154). The latter ordered him to compose a description of the known world of then. The result of this commission was the *Kitāb ar-Rujārī*, which he completed in 1154.[4] Yehoshua Frenkel, Professor of Middle Eastern History and Islamic Studies of the University of Haifa, explains the uniqueness of Idrīsī's work: "the book combines descriptive geography with astronomy, fact with legend, and current data

4 Yehoshua Frenkel "Al-Idrisi (c. 1099–1154) Arab Geographer and Traveler," in: Jennifer Speake (2003), op. cit., p. 586.

with old. The volume begins with the southern latitude, that of sub-Saharan Africa, and concludes with the most northwestern regions of Europe."[5] Hence, Idrīsī's *Tabula Rogeriana* describes the world known to him and illustrates it with a *Mappae Mundi*.[6] However, as stressed by Professor Frenkel, the map seems to lack a cartographic illustration of the American continent. We should ask why, if Idrīsī, as a geographer, recounted the arrival of navigators to what is argued to be the Western edge of the Atlantic, is this not illustrated?

The *Kitāb ar-Rujārī* tells about an ocean feared by the sailors, a dark and an enigmatic sea never explored before: the *Baḥr al-Ẓulamāt* or *Baḥr a-Muẓlim* (ocean of shadows, ocean of darkness), namely, the Atlantic Ocean. Idrīsī depicts it as an area in which no habitable place is found and as a space of whom nobody knows what exists beyond its boundaries.[7] However, the Moroccan geographer also wrote about a group of eight adventurers, referred as *Maghrurin*, who one day decided to depart from the Port of Lisbon on the unknown vastitude of this dreaded ocean of darkness with the objective of exploring it. The narration goes on to describe that after having sailed off from the Portuguese coasts they navigated for eleven days, until these brave sailors reached a sea where thick waves exhaled a fetid odor, and fearing it, they turned southwards. These eight fearless men sailed for another twelve days on this new route, until they arrived at an island, which the document refers to as the *Jazīrat al-Ġanam* (island of the sheep), named this way due to the abundance of sheep that lived in it. The helmsmen departed again and sailed still southwards for another twelve days. At the end of this interval they found a well cultivated island where they were taken as prisoners by the inhabitants, who the manuscript describes as "men of blond-glittering hair in their heads (*Rajālān shaqharān za'arān sha'aūr rūws-hum*)."[8] After having been captive for three days, the eight adventurers were visited by a man who spoke Arabic and claimed to be the interpreter of the island's King, who wanted to know what these men from Lisbon were doing in his realms. The sailors told the translator they were simply exploring the *Baḥr al-Ẓulamāt*. After being liberated, they sailed again, this time for three additional days, until they

5 Ibid., pp. 586–587.

6 Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Idrīsī, "Nuzhat al-muštāq fī iḫtirāq al-āfāq (Henceforth: *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq*)," *Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Ms Arabe 2221*, Year: 1325, ff. 3v–4r.

7 Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Sharif Abu Abdallah al-Idrisi, *Géographie D'Édrisi* (Translated from the Arabic to French by Pierre Amédée Jaubert), Vol. 2, Paris: A L'Imprimerie Royale, 1840, p. 440.

8 *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq*, f. 192r.

reached a place named *Āsafī*, in *Al-Maġrib*, where its dwellers told them that they were at a distance of two months from home.[9]

Based on Idrīsī's work, some scholarly literature assumes that the place where these Iberian sailors arrived was the Caribbean Archipelago: "… a group of seaman who reached the isles of the Americas […] This astonishing historical report not only describes contact between Muslim mariners and the Native people of the Americas, but it also describes travel between islands, probably the Bahamas chain or the lesser Antilles."[10] However, there are other academic works that differ and provide a different destination, one closer to the Iberian Peninsula: "His account [Idrīsī's] of the voyage of the *Maghrurin* or Deceived Men of Lisbon in the Atlantic, a voyage on which they seem to have visited Madeira and one of the Canaries."[11] At first sight we might imagine that indeed it was possible that these adventurers had arrived as far as the Americas, but at closer scrutiny, the matter is more complex, consequently causing us to rethink. For instance, sailing today from Lisbon to Puerto Rico at a constant speed of eight knots would take about sixteen days and fourteen hours; to the Bahamas it would be an eighteen day and five hour trip.[12] Christopher Columbus, heir to a great wealth of navigational knowledge and having at his disposal better means of seafaring than those existing three centuries before him,[13] left the Iberian Peninsula on August third, 1492, and navigated until he saw American dry land on October twelfth, 1492.[14] Already in the nineteenth century, the French corvette *La Créole*, which was considered among the fastest ships in the French fleet during the first intervention of France in Mexico (1838–1839), took twenty-eight days of travel from Havana to Brest, on the Atlantic French coast

9 Ibid., ff., 192v–194v.

10 Abdullah Hakim Quick, "Islam in the America Before Columbus," in: Amadou Mhtar M'Bow and Ali Kettani (Eds.), *Dialogue of Cultures and Religions. Islam and Muslims in the American Continent*, Beirut: Center of Historical, Economical and Social Studies Gefinor Center, 2001, p. 28.

11 "Idrisi," in: James L. Garvin and Franklin H. Hooper (Eds.), *The Encyclopædia Britannica, Fourteenth Edition*, Vol. 12, Hydrozoa to Jeremy, Epistle of, London and New York: The Encyclopedia Britannica Company, Ltd., 1929, p. 72.

12 For calculation of oceanic distances see the site: *Sea-Distance*, available at: https://sea-distances.org/, (last accessed June 2, 2020).

13 Sean McGrail, *Boats of the Words*: *from the Stone Age to the Medieval Times*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 248.

14 Bartolomé de las Casas, "Relación del Primer Viaje de Don Cristóbal Colón para el Descubrimiento de las Indias," in: Cristóbal Colón, *Relaciones y Cartas de Cristóbal Colón* (Henceforth: *Relaciones y Cartas de Colón*), Biblioteca Clásica, Vol. CLXIV, Madrid: Libreria de la Viuda de Hernando y C., 1892, pp. 4, 23.

of Bretagne.[15] With this in view, it is quite difficult to evaluate the manner in which these *Maghrurin* sailors made it to the Americas in the time provided by Idrīsī's chronicle, and with a more rudimentary vessel than the Spanish explorers of the Indies.

But if it was not the waters of the Antilles, where could the sailors in Idrīsī's chronicle have arrived? If we analyse in detail the features of the waters recounted in the *Tabula Rogeriana*, we might infer that it is probable that these sailors might have come across the Sargasso sea instead, whose borders are dynamic and defined only by ocean currents, with the Canary Current at its eastern boundary.[16] Noteworthy however, the currents off the Atlantic coast in the Americas originate in the Gulf of Mexico and pass through Cuba and Florida, flowing strongly northwards to be deflected eastwards south of Nova Scotia by the south-flowing Labrador Current. They then widen and slow down to form the North Atlantic Current, flowing east towards the Bay of Biscay. The Southern part of this oceanic stream deflects and becomes the south-southwest flowing Portugal and Canaries currents, the flow patterns of which can reach up to one knot off the Iberian coast. On the other hand, the predominant trade winds from the northwestern corner of the Iberian Peninsula southwards are from the northerly sector,[17] and these move in a revolving direction southwestwards. In light of this, it is feasible to assert that the trip back to the Iberian Peninsula from the eastern borders of the Sargasso sea, especially when navigating on ocean currents and by the force of the wind, could have made the journey longer than from the opposite direction. From this factual perspective, time and distance back and forth from the Iberian Peninsula to the Antilles, do not fit with the information provided by the *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī Iḥtirāq al-Āfāq*.

Another interesting point, yet highly questionable, is found in the description of the inhabitants of the Island where the *Maghrurin* were supposedly taken prisoners, presumedly the Americas, in some scholarly literature. While the *Tabula Rogeriana* describes the aboriginal people of that archipelago as "men of blond-glittering hair in their heads," the sixteenth century Spanish chroniclers of Indies provide us with a different account concerning the original peoples of the American continent, particularly of those from the Antilles

15 Jules M. Hello, *Relation de l'Expédition de la Corvette la Créole au Mexique en 1838 et 1839*, Paris: A la Librairie de P. Dufart, 1839, pp. 49–50.

16 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "What is the Sargasso Sea," *US National Ocean Service*, October 10, 2017, available at: https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/sargassosea.html, (last accessed June 2, 2020).

17 McGrail (2001), op. cit., pp. 169–170.

and Mesoamerica. If we recall that the physical description of the American natives constitutes a significant part of Spanish literature during the conquest of the Americas, then a brief glimpse at these records enable us to obtain a colorful and detailed illustration of the American aboriginals *vis-à-vis* the individuals in Idrīsī's writings. For instance, Columbus' letters describe the inhabitants of the New World's islands as follows: "los cabellos gruesos cuasi como sedas de cola de caballos [...] dellos se pintan de prieto, y ellos son de la color de los canarios, ni negros ni blancos."[18] The *Almirante* further recounts: "Me aseguraron haber otra isla mayor que la expresada Española, cuyos habitantes no tienen cabellos."[19] An additional brief glimpse at some pre-Hispanic *Codex* will also allow us to further see the physical features of the aborigines inside American continental land, specially those from Mexico. None of them was white, or blond, as the aboriginal peoples of the Island in Idrīsī's story. Of further interest however, is the fact that in the literature supporting this theory, no mention is made of the physical features of the men from the island in Idrīsī's tale. While the pages of Columbus' diary may be open to interpretation, the previous descriptions of the aboriginal peoples of the Caribbean Islands it provides do not fit the illustration in *The Geography of Idrisi*.

Two additional elements need to be observed from the *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq* concerning the Muslim affiliation of both the navigators and the islanders. On the Islamic identity of the sailors, Raymon Delval (1917–1994), who was *Chef de Bureau* of the Direction of Political Affairs at the French Ministry for Overseas, poses an insightful point in this regard: "Rien ne permet d'affirmer que ces voyageurs partis de Lisbonne étaient des Musulmans. On peut simplement relever qu'ils comprenaient l'arabe et le berbère."[20] As for the islanders in Idrīsī's report, they are highlighted in some literary works as follows: "The people on the islands had developed the ability to communicate in Arabic, a language that cannot be mastered by a single contact. They must have been regularly visited by Arabic speaking Muslim merchants or adventurers or had lived in a Muslim territory"[21] which appears to point at their Islamic identity because of the Arabic language. However, speaking Arabic is neither an indica-

18 (... the hair [is] thick, almost like the tail of horses [...] they are painted swarthy, and they are of likewise color as the canary birds, not black neither white), *Relaciones y Cartas de Colón*, p. 24.

19 (They assured me that there is another island larger than the *Española*, whose inhabitants have no hair.), Ibid. p. 203.

20 (Nothing permits to affirm that these travelers from Lisbon were Muslims. We can just note that they understood Arabic and Berber), Raymond Delval, *Les Musulmans en Amérique Latine et aux Caraïbes*, Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1992, p. 24.

21 Hakim Quick (2001), op. cit., p. 28.

tion of Islamic affiliation, nor of being of Arab origin, both then and in modern times. The eminent rabbinical figure from Cordoba, Moses ben Maimon (1135–1204), serves as an illustration. He spoke, wrote and read the Arabic language, and was neither Arab nor Muslim, but Jewish.

On language and communication, the diary of Columbus recounts the manner the *Almirante* and his men communicated with the natives of the Antilles: "como por señas que me hicieron todos los indios de estas islas y aquellos que llevo yo en los navíos, porque por lengua no los entiendo."[22] This extract shows Columbus' difficulties in conversing with the natives of the Antilles. Nevertheless, we must ask a question: if Columbus had among his crew translators, such as Luis de Torres, who spoke Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic,[23] why could he not communicate with the Antilleans, if indeed the latter did speak the language of the Arabs? However, Christopher Columbus stated: "y también no sé la lengua, y la gente destas tierras no me entienden ni yo ni otro que yo tenga á ellos."[24] Hence, the experience the *Almirante* and the crew had and the description of their *voyage* across the Caribbean do not corroborate whatsoever with modern literature, which relies on Idrīsī to demonstrate a pre-Hispanic Muslim arrival in the New World. It is but a slight foundation on which the claim to such discovery rests. Yet, slight and presumptuous as it may be, it is enough to render a decidedly inaccurate assertion about the subject.

As for the *Jazīrat al-Ġanam* in Idrīsī's account, if we presume it was indeed part of the Antilles, the fauna described in the *Kitāb ar-Rujārī* complicates this altogether. The diary of Columbus provides us with information about the wildlife of the Caribbean, and rather than affirming that the 'island of sheep' might have been part of the Americas, his testimony demonstrates a different situation: "Era cosa de maravilla ver aquellos valles y los ríos buenas aguas, y las tierras para pan, para ganados de todas suertes, de que ellos ni tienen alguna."[25] Here Columbus speaks of the lack of livestock altogether on those islands. In a further section he mentioned the particular absence of sheep and goats by saying, "ovejas ni cabras ni otra ninguna bestia vide."[26] The Spanish chroni-

22 (As by signs that all the Indians of these islands and those that I carry on the ships made to me, because by language I do not understand them), *Relaciones y Cartas de Colón*, p. 43.

23 Anna Brickhouse, *The Unsettlement of America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1560–1945*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 289.

24 (And I also do not know the language, and the people of these lands do not understand me, neither do I, nor anyone else that is with me understand them), *Relaciones y Cartas de Colón*, p. 80.

25 (It was a marvelous thing to see those valleys and rivers and good waters, and the lands good for bread, and for cattle of all kinds, of which they have none), Ibid., p. 104.

26 (Neither sheep nor goat nor any other beast I saw), Ibid., p. 34.

clers described cattle in the Indies similarly as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478–1557) wrote, by referring to them as "ningunos ganados tenían por grangeria, y sí algunos avisa en la tierra-firme era solamente en el Perú de aquellas ovejas grandes."[27] Joseph de Acosta (1540–1600) elaborated further:

> Ninguna cosa tiene el Piru de mayor riqueza y ventaja, que es el ganado de la tierra, que los nuestros llaman 'Carneros de las Indias,' y los Indios en lengua general los llaman Llama [...] De este ganado sacan comida y vestido como en Europa del ganado ovejuno.[28]

Along with these records, Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1559–1625) tells of the cattle brought to the Americas from the Canary Islands on Columbus' second trip: "Sábado a cinco de Octubre (1493), tomó la Isla de la Gomera, donde se detuvo dos días, proveyéndose de agua, leña, y ganado, como becerros, cabras, ovejas y ocho puercas."[29] Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) also recounts correspondingly: "Y ésta fue la simiente de donde todo lo que hoy hay acá de las cosas que de Castilla han salido."[30] In a similar vein, the manuscript called *Espagnol 271, Du droit de faire la guerre aux Chichimecas*, attributed to Gonzalo de las Casas (1510-?), reports some interesting data on the the *Chichimecas* (nomad indigenous tribes of Mexico) who were surprised when they first saw cattle and exclaimed, "de estançias de ganado [...] admiración a quien no lo a visto."[31] And again, Fernández de Oviedo says of the Americas, "no avia en

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27 (They did not have any cattle for farming, and if there were any on the mainland, it was only in Peru—of those big sheep [the *llamas*]), Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general y natural de las Indias, Islas y Tierra-Firme del Mar Océano*, Primera Parte, Lib. VI, Cap. XLV, (Ed. José Amador de los Ríos), Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia de la Historia, 1851, p. 239.

28 (Nothing does Peru have of greater wealth and advantage than the cattle of the land, which we call 'Rams of the Indies,' and the Indians generally call them *Llama* [...] From this cattle they get food and clothing like in Europe from ovine cattle), "Cap. 41, De los Pacos, y Guanacos, y Carneros del Piru," in: Ioseph de Acosta, *Historia Natvral y Moral de las Indias*, Libro Quarto, Sevilla: Casa de Iuan de Leon, 1590, p. 293.

29 (Saturday October fifth, arrived on the Gomera Island, where he stopped for two days, taking provisions of water, firewood and cattle, such as calves, goats, sheep and eight sows), Antonio Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano*, Decada I, Libro II, Cap. VI, Madrid: Emplenta Real, 1601, p. 57.

30 (And this was the seed of all what there is today here from the things that came out of Castile), Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, Vol. II, Primer Libro, Capítulo LXXXIII, Madrid: Imprenta de Miguel Ginesta, 1875, p. 3.

31 (Cattle estates [...] admiration to whoever has not seen it), *MS-Espagnol 271: Du droit de*

esta isla ni en las deste golpho otros animales algunos de quatro pies y de pelo, terrestres, sino estos çinco géneros [namely, hutia, quemi, mohuy, cori, dogs and mice[32]] exçepto ratones."[33] The description presented by these historical records concerning cattle in the Americas seems to be different to those in the *Jazīrat al-Ġanam* as illustrated in Idrīsī's work. As for the particular breed of sheep named 'Canary Hair', which is very common today in the archipelagos of the Caribbean, as well as in diverse locations across the Americas, it is a breed originally from the Canary Islands[34] and not from the Antilles. How then could those sailors have seen an ovine species in a place where the latter seemingly was not existent and was introduced only at the advent of the Spaniards?

Another important point must be made on wide domestic and culinary usages of canines in the Americas. How could natives of the Indies be associated with Islām if they were part of a society where dogs, an impure animal according to this monotheistic religion, were not only a companion pet, but were considered a delicatessen and part of the pre-Hispanic menu. Bernardino de Sahagún (1499–1590) calls them the "Chichi o Techichi, perro mudo que a falta de carne lo comían los Indios."[35] Many are the Spanish chronicles who recount the domestic and culinary use of dogs among the aboriginal peoples of Americas, but perhaps, it is Fernández de Oviedo's work which best confirms this in the New World:

> Perros gozques domésticos se hallaron en aquesta Isla Española y en todas las otras islas que estan en este golpho, los quales criaban los indios en sus casas [...] los indios tomaban con ellos los otros animales [...] en la

faire la guerre aux Chichimecas (Henceforth: *Ms Espagnol 271*), Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 271*, Year 1501–1600, f. 10v.

32 On these species see: Fernández de Oviedo (1851), op. cit., Libro XII, Capítulo V, De los perros que ovo en esta Isla Española é los que hay al pressente, pp. 389–391.

33 (There were no other animals on this island nor in those of this gulf with four feet and fur, or terrestrial, but these five genera, except mice), Ibid., p. 391.

34 See: J.V. Deldago, R. Perezgrovas, M.E. Camacho, M. Fresno and C. Barba, "The Wool-Less Canary Sheep and their relationship with the present breeds in America," *Animal Genetic Resources Information. Bulletin d'information sur le ressources génétiques animales*, *The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, No. 28, (2000), pp. 27–34, available at: http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/012/x9024t/x9024t00.pdf#page=36, (last accessed June 20, 2020).

35 (The *Chichi* o *Techichi*, a mute dog that the Indians ate for lack of meat), Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva España*, (Ed. Carlos Maria de Bustamante), Vol. III, México: Imprenta del Ciudadano Alejandro Valdés, 1830, p. 164.

> tierra firme é la Nueva España, los hay en gran cantidad [...] y cuando alguna fiesta prinçipal se haçe entre indios, comen estos perros por el mas presçioso é mejor manjar de todos.[36]

In pre-Hispanic Mexico per se, a specific type of dog named *Xoloitzcuintle* figured as both pet and food. It was raised as fowl and played a significant role in the Mesoamerican societies. It served as nourishment for its owners, but also as a spiritual companion who awaited its lords in the afterlife, and was employed as their soul guide.[37] It was also found in sacrificial ceremonies.[38]

Equally important to remember is that the Canary Islands, of which the *Guanches* people were its aboriginal Berber inhabitants who had no religion, but adored nature,[39] had not yet been discovered by European sailors until the 1402 expedition led by the French explorers Jean de Béthencourt (1362–1425) and Gadifer de la Salle (1340–1415) to the Island of Lanzarote.[40] This may be why the *Maghrurin* in Idrīsī's story appeared as having arrived at unknown lands. So where did the sailors of the *Tabula Rogeriana* arrive? According to Delval, the *Geography of Idrisi* allows us to infer that the place these navigators reached were the Canary Islands, whose aborigines were exterminated by the Spaniards on their arrival in the fifteenth century. Among them, Arabic speaking individuals were also found.[41] Thus he concludes: "Il apparaît ainsi que ces Maghrourin ne parvinrent jamais en Amérique et qu'il n'y avait pas de Musulmans au Nouveau Monde avant les découvertes de Christophe Colombe [...] Ils se trouvèrent alors sur une terre habitée par des Berbères."[42]

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36 (Domestic dogs were found in the *Española* island and in all the other islands that are in this gulf, which the Indians raised in their houses [...] the Indians hunted other animals with them [...] on the mainland and in New Spain there are in big quantity [...] and when there is a main feast among Indians, they eat these dogs as the most precious and best delicacy of all), Fernández de Oviedo (1851), op. cit., Libro XII, Capítulo V, De los perros que ovo en esta Isla Española é los que hay al pressente, pp. 390–391.

37 Norman Pelham Wright, *El enigma del xoloitzcuintli*, México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1960, p. 44.

38 Alicia Blanco Padilla, Bernardo Rodríguez Galicia and Raúl Valadez Azúa (Eds.), *Estudio de los cánidos arqueológicos del México prehispánico*, México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2009, p. 185.

39 José de Viera y Clavijo, *Noticias de la historia general de las Islas de Canaria*, Vol. IV, Madrid: Blas Román, Plazuela de Santa Catalina de los Donados, 1783, p. 3.

40 Ibid., p. 15.

41 Delval (1992), op. cit., pp. 23–24.

42 (It thus appears that these Maghrourin never arrived in America and that there were no Muslims in the New World before the discoveries of Christopher Columbus [...] They then found themselves on a land inhabited by Berbers), Ibid., p. 25.

On the navigation of African Muslims to the Americas in pre-Columbian times, some scholars argue that sailors from West Africa arrived on the American Continent "at least five centuries before Columbus, which is plausible, given their level of education and expertise in navigation."[43] Others claim the existence of "evidence that suggests that Muslims were in Guyana long before Columbus,"[44] and affirm, "groups of Muslim blacks called *Almamys* inhabited Honduras prior to the arrival of the Spaniards therein. These Africans were either the same as, or related to [...] the blacks sighted by Columbus along Honduras' norther coast."[45] In a likewise spirit, additional literature suggests, "Muslim kings from Mali initiated several expeditions to the American continent in the early part of the thirteenth century."[46] However, no concrete reference to point at such assertions is provided. On maritime navigation Joseph de Acosta recounted that the natural peoples of the Americas were perplexed at the presence of the Spanish boats. Moreover, he described, in colorful detail, the naval techniques and type of vessels utilised by the aboriginals of the Antilles:

> ... que en ninguna tierra de Indias se han hallado nauios grandes, quales se requieren para passar golfos grandes. Lo que se halla, son balsas, o piraguas, o canoas, que todas ellos son menos que chalupas con las cuales no podían engolfarse [...] no sabían de aguja, ni de astrolabio, ni de cuadrante [...] miraron la grandeza de las velas tendidas y los baxeles tambien grandes, quedaron atonitos y como nunca pudieron pensar que eran navios, por no auerlos visto jamas de aquella forma y tamaño. Dizen que deuian de ser rocas y peñascos sobre la mar, y como vian que andauan y no se hundian, estuuieron como fuera de sí de espanto gran rato, hasta que mirando mas vieron vnos hombres barbubos, los cuales creyeron que deuian ser algunos dioses. Donde se vee bien, quan agena cosa era para los indios vsar naos grandes, ni tener noticia de ellas.[47]

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43 Nadia B. Ahmad, "The Islamic Influence in (Pre-)Colonial and Early America: A Historico-Legal Snapshot," *Seattle Journal for Social Justice*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (2014), Article 7, available at: Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/sjsj/vol12/iss3/7, (last accessed June 5, 2020).

44 Ahmed Hamid and Wazir Baksh, "Islam in Guyana," in: M'Bow and Kettani (2001), op. cit., p. 357.

45 Harold G. Lawrence, "Mandinga Voyages across the Atlantic," in: Ivan Van Sertima (Ed.), *African Presence in Early America*, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1992, p. 196.

46 Abidullah Ansari Ghazi and Khwaja Moinul-Hassan, "Islam in the USA," in: M'Bow and Kettani (2001), op. cit., p. 109.

47 (... that in any land of the *Indias* has been found big vessels, which are required to pass big

If the natives of the Indies had periodical contact with Africa or Europe during pre-Hispanic times, and if we think about the fact that, for that type of encounter to really happen, a suitable vessel to cross the Atlantic is needed, would not this mean a certain level of familiarity with navigation systems, sailors and watercraft? And if "anything sailing or drifting about a hundred miles off Africa, caught in a squall or a storm, is blown automatically towards America,"[48] would not this mean a greater acquaintance with marine traffic by the natives of the New World? Further assumptions on the question go farther in their chronological line and suggest that "a number of linguistic, historians, and archaeologists have postulated that Arabic speaking North African Muslims had made contact with the Americas in the seventh century C.E."[49] Professor Thomas Ballantyne Irving (1914–2002), also known as Al-Hajj Ta'lim Ali Abu Nasr, a Canadian-American Muslim who produced the first American English translation of the Qur'ān, is quoted by Delval stating:

> On a besoin de preuves véritables sur les navigateurs Noirs, car l'absence de bons ports en Afrique de l'Ouest et même au Maroc ne favorise pas le développement de la navigation maritime; l'Islam de l'Afrique de l'Ouest a été pendant des siècles confiné dans les savanes de l'intérieur.[50]

Ballantyne Irving further questions the assumption regarding the conversion to Islām of Amerindians in the pre-Columbian period. To quote Delval: "tous ces éléments sont hors de propos parce qu'ils ne sont pas historiques."[51] Deeper

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gulfs. What is found are rafts, or canoes, which are all less than *chalupas* with which they could not sail out to sea [...] they did not know about needle or astrolabe, nor of quadrant [...] they looked at the greatness of the sails stretching out and the vessels, also large, and were astonished, because they could never think that these were ships, since they had never seen them in that shape and size. They say that they must have been rocks and crags on the sea, and as they saw that they were going and did not sink, they were as if terrified for a long time, until they looked more and saw some bearded men, who they believed must have been gods. Here it is seen how foreign it was for the Indians to use big vessels, or to have news of them), Acosta (1590), op. cit., Libro Primero, Cap. 21, "En que manera passaron bestias, y ganados a las tierras de Indias," pp. 72–73.

48 Ivan Van Sertima, "Evidence for an African Presence in Pre-Columbian America," in: Sertima (1992), op. cit., p. 36.

49 Hakim Quick (2001), op. cit., p. 24.

50 (We need veritable proofs about the Black navigators, because the absence of good ports in Western Africa and Morocco does not favor the development of maritime navigation; Western Africa's Islām has been confined through centuries to the savannas of inner Africa), in: Delval (1992), op. cit., p. 25.

51 (All of these elements are irrelevant because they are not historical), Ibid.

research is then needed to better evaluate the navigation systems present on the African continent and the Iberian Peninsula in pre-Hispanic times, as well as the maritime capacities and *savoir-faire* of those sailors, before performing hypothetical transatlantic voyages to the American continent prior to Columbus. In light of the brief historical illustrations mentioned above, the arrival of sailors coming from Iberian latitudes into the Americas before Columbus is indeed a questionable matter.

In the next and last part of this chapter I will analyse a Spanish term regularly present in the writings of Columbus and the chroniclers of Indies, which plays an important and supportive role in the theory of pre-Columbian Islām: *Mezquita* (mosque). This word is used by those championing proof of a pre-Hispanic Islamic presence in the Americas by referring to its literary meaning. But does documentation of the epoch in question really refer to Muslim shrines, or was it a word in the Spanish milieu of the fifteenth and sixteenth century whose connotation varied from its mere literary signification? Anyone acquainted with the *Viajes de Cristóbal Colón* (1552),[52] which is an excerpt from Columbus' diary that was compiled by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, could have realised that no mosque was built on the islands of the Antilles at the time of Columbus' arrival. I did not find any indication of a building constructed on top of any hill, mountain, or in the valleys and meadows of any Caribbean island explored by Columbus that may point to the existence of a physical structure utilised as a place of worship, prayer hall, temple, or altar of any Abrahamic religion whatsoever, in the diaries or the manuscripts of the sixteenth century chroniclers. In this regard, the diary of Columbus states: "montañas hermosas y altas como la Peña de los Enamorados, y una dellas tiene encima otro montecillo á manera de una mezquita."[53] He uses this allegory to describe the geographical landscape that he witnessed, and although the original journal of the *Almirante* is lost, the version that De las Casas guarded has served to promote the controversial hypothesis. Such an assumption has also gained proponents in popular literary circles and politicians in the contemporary Islamic World, who present this source as evidence of a pre-Columbian Islamic presence in the Western hemisphere, challenging thus, the historical line of European exploration in the Americas.

Common wisdom might dictate that asserting the presence of pre-Columbian Muslim communities on the American Continent ought to indicate an

52 See: Bartolomé de las Casas, *Viajes de Cristóbal Colón*, *Manuscrito*, 1552, available at: http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000048660&page=1, (last accessed June 5, 2020).

53 (Beautiful and high mountains like Peña de los Enamorados, and one of them has on top another little hill that has the form of a mosque), *Relaciones y Cartas de Colón*, p. 49.

indigenous American Islamic historical depth, consequently redefining the Muslim world altogether. Yet again, the theological and socio-political narrative around this premise is debatable. While historical revisionism is necessary and even laudable when a hypothesis has been demonstrated to be either wrong or unfounded, fabricating history to promote non-scientific ends is a matter that rather belongs to myth and legend, instead of historiography as an intellectual discipline. But if this is legend, why did the *Almirante* use the word *mezquita* in his diary? To better understand the Spanish chronicles we must see them through the socio-historical and political perspectives of their epoch. This may ultimately permit us to discern the regular appearance of this word in the writings of the Spanish chroniclers.

In 1492, Columbus arrived in America, while on the Iberian Peninsula the Reconquista had just been accomplished for a Catholic Spain. Centuries of religious confrontation between Christianity and other religions in *Hispania* had impacted the collective psyche of Spanish Christian society. Hence, generalizations of idioms that represented either heresy or its theological and political contestants were frequent. *Mezquita* is in this way, perhaps the word that best illustrates this. Its usage has no relation to Muslim shrines *stricto sensu*. Instead, it is associated with what the Spaniards considered as pagan non-Catholic temples in general. An example of this can be found in the works of Diego Durán (1537–1588): "Mezquitas llenas de idolillos."[54] Similarly, Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) recorded: "mezquitas ú oratorios donde ellos tienen sus idolos,"[55] and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo wrote elaborately on this subject:

> Mezquitas ó casas de oracion con ydolos, los quales templos. Sacrifican cada mes á sus propios naturales é hijos, é con la sangre dellos untan las caras á los ydolos é las puertas de las mezquitas [...] templo ó mezquita, para los españoles [...] mezquita ó templo del diablo.[56]

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54 (Mosques full of idols), Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, Vol. II, México: Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1880, p. 272.

55 (Mosques or oratories where they have their idols), Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, *Historia de Méjico Escrita por su Esclarecido Conquistador Hernán Cortés*, New York: Vanderpool and Cole, 1828, p. 108.

56 (Mosques or houses of prayer with idols. They sacrifice every month their naturals and children, and with their blood they daub the idols' faces and the doors of the *mezquitas* [...] such temple or *mezquita* for the Spaniards, *mezquita* or devil's temple), Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, Parte III, Tomo IV, Libro XLVI, (Ed. José Amador de los Ríos), Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia de la Historia, 1855, pp. 158, 185, 191.

The Spaniards utilised the lexicon of their epoch in the way it had been shaped by geopolitical events and social hindrance. Mutual perceptions between the different members that conformed the pluralistic mosaic of Spanish society also fashioned the meaning and usage of its vocabulary, not only in a Christian *vis-à-vis* non-Christian sense, but also visibly on a Jew *versus* Jew level (the word *marrano* for instance), and in a Muslim *tête-à-tête* Muslim approach as well. This was especially after the forced or willing conversions to Catholicism of the latter. Therefore, Spanish Christians could only call the unknown in the Americas with known names and words that best represented and described for them the object that they witnessed. For example, Fernández de Oviedo called "… obispo de aquella mezquita"[57] with regard to the religious leader of the indigenous temples and described the iguanas as "… una serpiente tambien de quatro pies."[58] Let us remember that at the first encounter of Europeans with Amerindians, Luis de Torres was brought forth to translate in Arabic, which illustrates that for Spaniards, the Islamic and Christian worlds were the two major geopolitical forces of their epoch. This political background fashioned the Christian Spanish cosmovision, psyche, and eventually also its jargon. As Louis Cardaillac (1933–2015) explained: "… la civilización islámica, ella, está omnipresente en la mente de los conquistadores, es parte de su vivencia hispánica."[59] Therefore, to better understand this situation, it is worth remembering conversions to Christianity across the Spanish worlds. For those considered heretics, conversion, whether forced or voluntarily, was often a means to an end, that signified better adaptation in the new socioreligious realities of sixteenth century Spain. This is however, only one side of the coin. In same way, upon the conquest of Mexico, Spain faced the conversion *en masse* of vanquished peoples on both sides of the Atlantic: on Iberian soil, the Moriscos and in Mexico the Amerindians. Conversions would serve the Spanish authorities as a means to assimilate the conquered populations now under their control. When Spain clashed with México-Tenochtitlán, the latter became the 'new infidels' who the Spanish enterprise in the Americas had to evangelize.[60]

57 (… the bishop of that *mezquita*), Ibid., p. 191.

58 (… a four feet serpent), Fernández de Oviedo, (1851), op. cit., Lib. II, Cap. XII, p. 50.

59 (The Islamic civilization, she, is omnipresent in the minds of the conquerors, it is part of their Hispanic experience), Louis Cardaillac, "Lo morisco peninsular y su proyección en la conquista de América," in: Martín Ríos Saloma (Ed.), *El mundo de los conquistadores*, México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2015, p. 437.

60 Ibid., p. 439. On the subject see: Antonio Garrido Aranda, "La educación de moriscos y mexicas como factor de asimilación cultural," *Estudios sobre política indigenista española en América*: *Terceras Jornadas Americanistas de la Universidad de Valladolid*, Vol. 2, Evan-

I will argue then, that the word *mezquita*, should on no account be understood by its literary meaning, not only because common wisdom may undoubtedly cause us to question it, but because historically and even semantically it is inaccurate to arrive at this conclusion. Whether Columbus' imagination caused him to describe the topographic relief of the hills in those islands of the Caribbean or not, and regardless of the phraseology of the Spanish chroniclers, Archeology does not provide us with evidence either to sustain the idea of an Islamic place of worship, namely a real mosque, in the Americas at the time Columbus and the Spaniards reached them. However, and probably of greater relevance, is to recall that in Islām, neither are idols permitted to be found inside mosques, nor are human sacrifices allowed. This is the antithesis of the three Abrahamic religions. Such conduct would be undeniably considered as pagan, sinful acts by Christians, Muslims and Jews, then as it is today.

To conclude, besides this point the Spanish chroniclers of the Americas also recorded in their writings another practise that might serve some enthusiastic scholars to point at an early Islamisation or Judaisation of the New World: male circumcision. This is a ritual performed by Jews and Muslims alike. On the subject, Juan Díaz (1480–1549) and the Jesuit Ioseph de Acosta reported in their annals that the Amerindians were circumcised;[61] while Toribio de Benavente (1482–1569) wrote that the inhabitants of Mesoamerica had certain habits similar to those of Jews and Moors.[62] This however, reflects the biases of the Christian colonisers of the Americas towards the Children of Abraham; which eventually, during the colonisation of Mesoamerican lands, were going to be directed to their indigenous inhabitants.[63] Yet, these happenings do not suffice as historical evidence to permit us to create a link between this Mesoamerican practise and a Judaisation or Islamisation of pre-Hispanic Mexico. As Jacques Lafaye at *Colegio de Jalisco* explains:

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gelización, régimen de vida y ecología, servicios personales, encomienda y tributos, (1977), pp. 9–19; and Beatriz Suñé Blanco, "Los moriscos de Granada y los indios de Yucatán: Análisis comparativo de una política de aculturación," *El reino de Granada y el Nuevo Mundo* (v Congreso Internacional de Historia de América. Mayo de 1992), Vol. 1, (1994), pp. 567–578.

61 Juan Díaz, *La Conquista de Tenochtitlán* (Ed. Germán Vázquez), Madrid: Historia 16, 1988, p. 57; and Ioseph de Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, Barcelona: Iayme Cendrat, 1591, f. 53.

62 Toribio de Benavente, *Memoriales o Libro de las Cosas de la Nueva España y los Naturales de Ella* (Ed. Edmundo O'Gorman), México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971, p. 14.

63 Rebecca M. Seaman, "Díaz, Fr. Juan," in: Rebecca M. Seaman (Ed.), *Conflict in the Early Americas: An Encyclopedia of the Spanish Empire's Aztec, Incan, and Mayan Conquests*, Santa Barbara, Denver, and Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2013, p. 122.

> Muchos de ellos [Spaniards], que habían participado en guerras contra el islam, asimilaron naturalmente los indios a los infieles musulmanes. Por la forma de las almenas que coronaban la techumbre, calificaron espontáneamente de mezquitas a los templos construidos en a cumbre de las pirámides del Nuevo Mundo.[64]

Thus, with little regard for historical evidence, which may be rightly considered an affront to the noble scholastic discipline that studies the past, the narratives I have questioned here are widely used for diverse purposes that appear to go beyond the realms of academia. Their postulations seem to be distanced from historicity, and remote from the rigorous principles of the academic *savoir-faire*. For this reason their core assumptions are highly debatable, for they appear to be the recreation of a sort of 'imagined communities', instead of historicity. Imagined communities however, not in the sense of Benedict Anderson's work (1983), but in the style of Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726), who inspired by the Scriblerus Club recounts the protagonist's journeys into several remote nations of the world, in which Gulliver only appears in the title and no further evidence of him is to found in the story told. Imagined communities because this hypothesis braids the history of Islām with the America's already troubled past, creating seemingly fictitious accounts, through fancy historical narratives and a certain degree of cultural appropriation. Therefore, it is worth quoting the French Professor Daniel Lévine, Head of the Department of Archeology of Civilizations of pre-Hispanic America of Sorbonne University, who said, "toutes ces assertions relève du domaine de la pure légende."[65]

64 (Many of them [Spaniards], who had participated in wars against Islām, naturally attributed to the Indians the identity of Muslim infidels. Due to the shape of the battlements that crowned the roof, they [Spaniards] immediately qualified as mosques the temples built on top of the New World's pyramids), Jacques Lafaye, *Mesías, cruzadas, utopías: El judeo-cristianismo en las sociedades iberoamericanas*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997, p. 58.

65 (All these assertions belong to the realm of pure legend), Delval (1992), *op. cit.*, p. 22.

CHAPTER 2

Fiction in the Archives: An Islamic Tradition in the Viceroyalty of *Nueva España*

Accepting the most stripped down definition of Morisco as a set and constant variable whose meaning alludes to Muslim, is the beginning of the academic error that I will analyse in this chapter. An additional common issue is the arbitrary use, when studying Islām in Mexico, of the words Mudéjar, Moro, and *Taqiyyah*, which often omits the essential aspects of these terms. It is important to recall that after the first Alpujarras rebellion (1499–1501), the Muslims of Granada who were the last Muslim-ruled bastion on the Iberian Peninsula, were obliged to convert to Catholicism. They then formed a nominally Christian community knows as Moriscos. While many of them preferred exile over baptism, others had a sincere desire for social integration, and conversion as a means to that end. On the Morisco issue Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), the French historian and leader of the Annales School, stated, "le problème morisque est un conflit de religions, autrement dit, au sens fort, un conflit de civilisations."[1] Keeping this in mind, we see that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the rising power of the Ottoman Empire would eventually clash with Western Christianity. The former was going to finally dictate the status of the Muslim population of Spain. As Louis Cardaillac explained, "la política morisca se enmarca dentro de una perspectiva más general islámica. La preocupación fundamental del rey fue [...] el miedo al turco."[2]

On May fourth, 1543, Philipe II began to rule in Spain. That day, Charles V gave him the instruction to "nunca permitáis que las herejías entren en vuestros Reinos. Favoreced la santa Inquisición."[3] Meanwhile in the New World, México-Tenochtitlán had fallen just couple of decades before, and the Spanish

1 (The Morisco problem is a conflict of religions, in other words, in a strong sense, a conflict of civilizations), Fernand Braudel, "Conflits et refus de civilisation: espagnols et morisques au XVIe siècle," *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations*, 2e année, No. 4, (1947), pp. 397–410.

2 (Policy on Moriscos is framed within a more general Islamic perspective. The king's [of Spain] primary concern was [...] fear of the Turk), Louis Cardaillac, "Felipe II y los Moriscos," in: Abdeljelil Temimi and Luce López-Baralt (Ed.), *Mélanges Luce López-Baralt*, Série 9, Tome premier, Zaghouan: Fondation Temimi pour la Recherche Scientifique et l'Information, 2001, pp. 169–181.

3 (Never permit heresies to enter your Realms. Favor the holy Inquisition), "Instrucciones de

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evangelistic enterprise was marching on full steam. At this point, Spain faced two peoples in two geographical locations that it believed needed to be converted to Christianity and pressurised to assimilate: Amerindians and Moriscos. The Granada born chronicler, Luis del Mármol Carvajal (1520–1600), provides us with a definition that may serve our study of Morisco, Moro and Mudéjar as these terms were understood at the end of the sixteenth century in Christian Spain:

> Una breve relación, para que el lector entienda lo que es moro y mudéjar, y de dónde vinieron estos nombres. Los sectarios secuaces de Mahoma propriamente deben ser llamados con dos solos nombres, alárabes o agemes: los alárabes son los originarios, y los agemes los advenedizos que de otras naciones y provincias abrazaron su opinión. A éstos llaman generalmente los mahometanos entre sí muçelemin, y nosotros los llamamos moros, nombre improprio, porque mauros fueron otros pueblos fenicios que vinieron de Tiro a poblar en África [...] Los mauros, fenicios o cartaginenses, como los quisiéremos llamar, que escaparon de la ira de los romanos [...], constituyeron señorío en algunas partes, especialmente en las Mauritanias, [...] éstos como los otros mauros de Fenicia abrazaron la secta de Mahoma en el número de los agemes, el vulgo cristiano los llama comúnmente a todos moros [...] Los mudéjares vienen de los alárabes y de los agemes africanos y de otras naciones, y son los que se quedaron en España en los lugares rendidos por vasallos a los reyes cristianos, a los cuales, porque servían y hacían guerra contra los otros moros, los llamaron por oprobrio mudegelín, nombre tomado de *Degel*, que es en arábigo el Antecristo; y no por ser de casta de judíos, como algunos han querido decir. Esto baste para la etimología destos nombres.[4]

Carlos v a Felipe ii," Palamós, May 4, 1543, in: Manuel Fernández Álvarez (Ed.), *Corpus Documental de Carlos v*, Vol. ii, 1539–1548, Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad Salamanca, 1975, pp. 90–103.

4 (A brief account, so that the reader understands what is Moro and Mudéjar, and where these names came from. Muḥammad's sectarian minions must be called by two single names, *alárabes* or *agemes*: the *alárabes* are the original people, and the *agemes* the upstarts who embraced their opinion from other nations and provinces. These are generally called among the Mohammedans, *muçelemin*, and we call them Moors, an improper name, because Mauros were other Phoenician peoples who came from Tire to populate Africa [...] The Mauros, Phoenicians or Carthaginians, as we would like to call them, who escaped the wrath of the Romans [...] built lordship in certain regions, especially in the Mauritanians [...] these, like the other Maures of Phenicia embraced the sect of Muḥammad in the number of the *agemes*,

The *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* defines the word Moor (Moro) as: "A Middle French/ Middle English term derived from the Latin *Maurus*, an inhabitant of Mauritania."[5] The *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* defines the term Morisco as "Cualquiera de los moros que al tiempo de la restauración de España se quedaron en ella bautizados."[6] The latter includes a particular feature of the Morisco: conversion to Christianity. When did the Morisco era begin then? I will argue that we cannot see 1492 as its genesis, nor the beginning of the sixteenth century, because, as Leonard P. Harvey suggested: "The word 'Morisco' as such was not yet in use; it did not become current until well after the mid-point of the century [...] By reclassifying people as Moriscos rather than Moros (Muslims), the authorities made them subject to the jurisdiction of the Inquisition."[7] From this perspective, it is clear that once the term Morisco began to be applied to these new Christian converts from Islām, it figured in the collective consciousness of Christian Spain. Therefore, when the Spaniards arrived in Mesoamerica they brought with them this terminology along with other Islamic elements, which had entered the life of Spain during the eight centuries of Muslim occupation. Yet, its signification in Colonial Mexico was not always fixed and continuous, and the term Morisco was shaped by social circumstances across the time of Novohispanic Viceroyalty. A reason and source behind this usage is described by Professor Serafín Fanjul of *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* as follows:

> Ante la confrontación con fenómenos culturales nuevos que no sabían cómo definir y describir [...] Creemos que el vehículo de las reminiscencias hispanoárabes fueron más bien los mismos cristianos viejos que habían asimilado rasgos sueltos de la cultura, el ocio, la vida cotidiana, etc., de sus vecinos durante siglos.[8]

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but the Christian commoners usually call them Moors [...] The Mudéjars come from the *alárabes* and African *agemes* and from other nations, and they are the ones who stayed in Spain in the places vassals surrendered to the Christian kings, who, because they served and made war against the other Moors, were called, in opprobrium, *mudegelín*, a name taken from *degel*, who is in Arabic the antichrist; and not for being a caste of Jews, as some have wanted to say. This is enough for the etymology of these names), Mármol Carvajal (1600), op. cit., Libro Segvndo, Capitulo Primero, ff. 32v–33r.

5 Esposito (2003), op. cit., p. 205.

6 (Any of the Moors who were baptized at the time of the restoration of Spain), Real Académia Española, *Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana, por la Real académia española*, (Séptima edición), Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1832, p. 497.

7 Harvey (1994), op. cit., p. 203.

8 (In the face of confrontation with new cultural phenomena which they did not know how

An illustration of this may be seen through a case that occurred in December, 1696. That year the Spanish Crown received a report from the *Consejo de Indias* of a man named Francisco Castellanos, presumably of "nación morisco," and who lived in Tepatitlán, Jalisco. For the authorities in Spain, Castellanos had violated the *Leyes de Indias*, which prohibited Moriscos and Berberiscos, whether free or slaves, to settle in the Indies.[9] The Spanish Crown demanded his immediate expulsion from Mexico and requested to be informed about the origin of this individual. The President of the *Audiencia Real de México* responded to the Iberian authorities explaining to them that the sense of the word Morisco had evolved in New Spain and that it designated a child of a Spanish and a Mulata, and did not refer to heresy any longer. He further replied to Madrid that because of this, Francisco Castellanos could not be expelled. Spain demanded the cancellation of this word's meaning in Mexico, but it continued to be used in New Spain to designate a caste, and no longer to identify a follower of the Mohammedan faith.[10]

Another example is illustrated by an order against an individual named Marcos de Castañeda, prosecuted in Mexico in 1720 for having married twice at the same time. Castañeda is described in the legal document as a "Mestizo o Morisco,"[11] namely, Mongrel or Moorish denoting the caste to which he belonged and not to his religious affiliation. The case against a certain Tomas Machuca is an additional evidence of the change of meaning that this word took on in Colonial Mexico. In 1749, he was judged for superstition, and the fiscal Inquisitor of Mexico indicated that Machuca was of "Casta Morisca."[12] No indication of Muslimness is found in his file. We see from these historical examples that the word Morisco and its connotations varied through time in

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to define and describe [...] We believe that the vehicle of the Spanish-Arab reminiscences were rather the same Old Christians who had assimilated loose features of culture, leisure, the daily life, etc., of their neighbors for centuries), Serafín Fanjul, *La quimera de al-Andalus*, Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2006, p. 134.

9 AGI, *Registro: Nueva Galicia, Guadalajara, 232, L. 8*, "Yndice de los reales despachos que comprehende este libro Nueva Galicia de oficio desde 31 de Agosto del año de 1695 hasta 7 de Septiembre de el de 1699. Letra Z, Número 8. Observancia de leyes sobre que no pasen moriscos a Indias," Madrid, December 3, 1696, ff. 68r–69v.

10 Cardaillac (1976), op. cit., pp. 288–289.

11 Archivo General de la Nación (Henceforth: AGN), *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 781, Exp. 35, "El Sr. fiscal de este Santo Oficio contra Marcos de Castañeda, Mestizo o Morisco, por casado dos veces," Real y Minas de Santa Eulalia de Chihuahua, 1720, ff. 373–398.

12 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 912, Exp. 68, "El Sr. Inquisidor Fiscal contra Tomas Machuca, de Casta Morisco, por superstición," Queretaro, 1749, ff. 292–295.

New Spain, and as time went by, its meaning developed until it was utilised to designate a caste: "De Español y Mulata: Morisco"[13] or in other words, the children of Mulattos and Spaniards.

Morisco, Moro, Muslim and Arab also appear in some Mexican sixteenth century records. This is mainly due to the effects of the Chichimeca War (1547–1600), and not merely because of the presence of a widespread Islamic or Morisco community in Colonial Mexico. For instance, the chronicler Antonio Tello (1567–1653) in his account of the history of Jalisco depicts the Chichimecan wars and the Spanish conquest of Nueva Galicia. Cook used this source to depict what she coins as "gender parallels between Spanish interactions with North African Muslims and Turks in the Mediterranean and with indigenous peoples in the Americas."[14] On the Chichimecan Indians, she cites Tello: "when they fight, they yelp and cry out like Muslims."[15] Without supporting this claim, I will mention that the original source reads "Moros"[16] rather than "Muslims"—an etymological difference that changes the sense of the sentence. A Muslim is not intrinsically Moro. Why are sources altered in this manner? Quoting Cook I would like to point out: "in a twist [...] which reveals how writers could recast [...] narratives for their own purposes."[17] Is this what we are up against?

References as those of Antonio Tello's are seen in the documentation related to what Spaniards defined as 'right and ethic grounds' to wage war upon the Chichimeca peoples of Northern Mexico. The Spanish compared Mexican Chichimecas and Moors, albeit for different ends, not connected to religious matters whatsoever, but rather to what they considered similar physical and behavioral features between these two peoples. An illustration of this can be found in the *Ms Espagnol 271*, *Du droit de faire la guerre aux Chichimecas* at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, in Paris, which contains a discussion of the cases in which war and enslavement of the Chichimecas could be justified. This source describes the Chichimeca as follows: "Este nombre chichimeca es genérico, puesto por los mexicanos enygnominia a todos los yndios que andan vagos

13 Angel Rosenblat, *La Población Indígena y el Mestizaje en América, Vol. 2 El Mestizaje y las Castas Coloniales*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Nova, 1954, p. 168.

14 Cook (2016), op. cit., p. 41.

15 Ibid.

16 Antonio Tello, *Libro segundo de la Crónica miscelanea, 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*, Guadalajara: Imprenta de la republica literaria de Ciro L. de Guevara, 1891, p. 11.

17 Cook (2016), op. cit., p. 29.

sin tener casa ni simentera. Los cuales se podrían comparar a los alarabes."[18] As a result, even when the words Morisco or Arab appear in Novohispanic documentation, the essence of the sources does not refer to anything inherently Islamic. In most cases its nomenclature appears as a product of the imagination of the Spaniards and the manner by which they divided Novohispanic society into castes. Some of the after effects of this are tangible in Mexico even today. Thus, these comparisons emanated from a world known to Spaniards and from their own national and personal experiences. Again, the *Ms Espagnol 271* (BnF) exemplifies this reality: "Tienen otra fruta qllamamos datiles, que puesto que las palmas que los lleban ny los datiles sean como los nuestros, pero por parezerse a ellos y por simylitudine los llamamos ansi."[19]

As for the word Mudéjar, it hints at Muslims who remained in Catholic Spain once the Reconquista began, but who did not convert to Christianity. They were allowed to practise Islām and to continue living in accordance to their own tradition. So it is incorrect to claim that Mudéjares were present in Colonial Mexico. The term seems to have entered medieval Castilian from the Arabic word *Mudajjan*, whose root *d-j-n* refers to the meaning of 'staying,' 'domesticated,' or 'tamed', in allusion to Muslims who submitted themselves to Christian Spain. This root also means to "impose tribute; to pay tribute; tributary."[20] The words *Mudajjanūn* and its hispanicised form Mudéjar are coined from it. The Andalusian lexicon referred to those former Muslim regions as *Bilād al-Djān*, namely, the land of the tamed. The Arabic root *d-j-l*,[21] from where the word *dajjāl* comes—meaning 'deceiver, cunning, false'—seems to have also shaped the name Mudéjar.[22] This may be seen through the theological Islamic attitudes which disapproved of the Mudéjares subjugated status and their willingness to live in a Christian land instead of leaving for *Dār al-Islām*. They lived as a protected community (*mudajjal*), which referred to subjugation, in a similar way that the *dhimmi* (non-Muslims living under Islamic protection) lived in

18 (This name Chichimeca is generic, given by the Mexicans as an affront to all the wandering Indians without house or foundation who could be compared to the Arabs.), *Ms Espagnol 271*, f. 1r.

19 (They have other fruit that we call dates, not because the palms that carry them nor the dates are like ours, but because they resemble, and due to the similitude we call them like this), Ibid., f. 5v.

20 Federico Corriente, *A Dictionary of Andalusi Arabic*, Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1997, p. 174.

21 On the root *d-j-l* see: Ibid., p. 174.

22 Federico Corriente, Christophe Pereira, and Ángeles Vicente, *Dictionnaire du faisceau dialectal arabe andalou, Perspectives phraséologiques et étymologiques*, Vol. 2, Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2017, p. 452.

Muslim lands. This status (*dajn*) is a term that corresponds with *ḥayawanāt dājina*, namely 'tame animals.'[23] The Arabic root *d-j-l* and its derivates *dajjālun* and *āhl ad-dijjāl* (someone who was allowed to stay; people who remained on) can already be found in classical Arabic sources, such as the *Lisān al-ʿArab* of Ibn Manẓūr (1232–1311), the Maġribi Arab lexicographer.[24] It is then probable that on the Iberian Peninsula of the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period, the term Mudéjar had been conceived as a taunt that alluded to adherents of Islām in Christian Spanish realms.[25] The rather derogatory meaning however, does not appear in the sources mentioned above, which underpins its usage as a popular taunt. From this perspective, Mudéjar might be interpreted as a hispanicised term applied to the Muslims that remained within the Iberian Christian territories when, through the eyes of their pious coreligionists, they should have emigrated to lands included in the *Dār al-Islām*.

It is worth recalling that in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain, society ethnicity, genealogy, religion, and cultural traits dictated the social status of its population. Genealogy ultimately prescribed the fate of every individual in the Iberian society of those days and it played an essential role in the Spanish worlds, particularly throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century.[26] From this perspective, religious and ethnic differences gradually became the trigger that, in a desire to ensure the purity of the Spanish Christian realms in that period, caused Spanish ecclesiastical and secular authorities to prohibit those they considered heretics from staying on Iberian soil and from passing to the Indies, once these were discovered and conquered. The Christian Iberian understanding of the 'other', aligned with the Spanish geopolitical imperatives of the late fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries, justified the progressive move of addressing the heretic problem by the Spanish Crown and its ecclesiastics. This crystalized in two evacuations: the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and the Muslim exodus in 1609. It was from this Christian understanding that the Spanish Inquisition framed Islām as a politico-religious threat. Therefore, heresy per se was not the only issue concerning Muslims in Christian Spanish discourse.

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23 Harvey (1994), op. cit., p. 178.

24 Li-l-Imām al-ʿAllāmaï Abī al-Faḍl Ǧamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn Manẓūr al-Ifrīqī al-Miṣrī, *Lisānu al-ʿArab*, Vol. 11, Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1997, p. 359.

25 For a further account on the subject see: Angus MacKay, *Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire, 1000–1500*, (New Studies in Medieval History), New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977; and Leonard P. Harvey, *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 2–13.

26 Enrique Soria-Mesa, "Genealogía y poder: invención de la memoria y ascenso social en la España Moderna," *Estudis: Revista de Historia Moderna*, No. 30, (2004), pp. 21–56.

On the Moriscos, Professor Enrique Soria-Mesa of the University of Cordoba explains that many of them integrated into old Spanish Christian society through a progressive assimilation.[27] Certain elite members of the Moorish community desired this, and the Spanish Crown simultaneously supported it.[28] Soria-Mesa underlines the fact that in the case of the Kingdom of Granada, for instance, thousands of Muslim descendants stayed and managed to evade the hindrances that their religious group faced. The *modus operandi* they employed was to hide their true origins by obtaining genealogical treatises that portrayed them as part of the Old Spanish Christian nobility.[29] Modern historiography on this subject tends to focus on the crackdown of the Inquisition on heretics, particularly the *Cristianos Nuevos*, but it fails to delve into the subsequent fate of the victims. This calls for a broader examination on the survival groups of crypto-religious Iberian traditions punishable by the Holy Office on both sides of the Atlantic.

Economic power was important for the heretics and the Spanish Crown. Genealogy was virtually everything, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Economic power furnished new Christians with the opportunity to buy genealogical works, which enabled them to construct a more patrician background, and ultimately, allowed them to rejoin society, to buy offices, posts, and bribe officers as well. This reality was the norm, not the exception in the Spain of the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern period. Economic power enabled new Christians to attain power in the municipality and the court, and eventually, even to join some of the most eminent houses of Spanish nobility, which assured them a safe haven and status in the Iberian Christian society of those days.[30] So all the *prohibidos* who could pay, sought the services of the *linajudos*, the genealogists whose *métier* was to investigate and to elaborate ancestries as well as to extort money from candidates aspiring for public office.[31]

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27 Enrique Soria-Mesa, "De la conquista a la asimilación. La integración de la aristocracia nazarí en la oligarquía granadina. Siglos XV–XVII," *Areas*, No. 14, (1992), pp. 51–64.

28 Enrique Soria-Mesa, "La asimilación de la elite morisca en la Granada Cristiana. El ejemplo de la familia Hermes (1)," in: Abdeljelil Temimi (Ed.), *Mélanges Louis Cardaillac*, Vol. 2, Zaghouan: Fondation Temimi, 1995, pp. 649–658.

29 See: Enrique Soria-Mesa, "Los moriscos que se quedaron. La permanencia de la población de origen islámico en la España Moderna (Reino de Granada, siglos XVII–XVIII)," *Vínculos de Historia*, No. 1, (2012), pp. 205–230.

30 Enrique Soria Mesa, "De la represión inquisitorial al éxito social. La capacidad de recuperación de los judeoconversos andaluces entre los siglos XV–XVII: Un ejemplo del linaje Herrera," *Medievalismo: Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales*, No. 24, (2014), pp. 339–417.

31 On the *Linajudos* see: Ruth Pike, *Linajudos and Conversos in Seville: Greed and Prejudice in*

However, some modern Mexican scholarly literature, but not exclusive to it, avows that Islām, as a religious tradition, appeared in Mesoamerica at the arrival of the Spanish Conquistadors, to eventually develop across the socio-religious mosaic of the Viceroyalty of *Nueva España* (1521–1821). Proponents of this view assert the following:

1. El Islam como tradición religiosa llega al continente de la mano del cristianismo, a la sombra del proceso de reconquista que se extiende en la conquista de la Nueva España.[32]
2. [...] a wide range of cultural and social facets of an Islam present in the very conception of a New World and the very pulse of this hemisphere ever since [...] reveal that these Americas are part of an Islamic world and that Muslims are integral to these Americas.[33]
3. The history of Islam in Mexico started with the conquest of the American territory: Muslim *conversos* arrived in Mexico as Catholics and crypto-Muslims.[34]
4. Archival sources report on scarce but sustained arrivals of Moors as trade specialists in New Spain.[35]
5. La comunidad musulmana en México tiene una amplia diversidad [...] su presencia es tan antigua como la propia colonización del país por España [...] la presencia islámica aparece con los primeros descubridores del continente.[36]

In view of these claims, I argue that speaking of the genesis and development of Islām in Colonial Mexico is a complex subject that obliges us to be cautious and mature and practice strict academic conduct. Caution is necessary in order to avoid historical distortions; maturity, since it enables us to see the

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Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Spain, New York: Peter Lang 2000; and Enrique Soria Mesa, "Los Linajudos, Honor y conflicto social en la Granada del Siglo de Oro," in: Julián José Lozano Navarro and Juan Luis Castellano (Eds.), *Violencia y conflictividad en el universo barroco*, Granada: Comares, 2010, pp. 401–427.

32 (Islām as a religious tradition arrived on the continent by the hand of Christianity, in the shadow of the process of Reconquista and extends through the conquest of Nueva España), Pastor de María y Campos, (2011), op. cit., p. 54.

33 Logroño Narbona, Pinto, and Karam (2015), op. cit., p. 2.

34 Arely Medina, "Islam in Mexico," in: Henri Gooren (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Latin American Religions. Religions of the World*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019, pp. 1–5.

35 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 185 (n. 4).

36 (The Muslim community in Mexico has a wide diversity [...] its presence is as ancient as the mere colonization of the country [Mexico] by Spain [...] islamic presence appears with the first discoverers of the continent), Zidane Zeraoui, "La comunidad musulmana en México: diversidad e integración," *Relaciones Internacionales*, Vol. 20, No. 40, (2011), pp. 337–359.

light of primary sources; while a strict academic conduct guides the professionalism of the researcher. The historical realities concerning Islām in New Spain are therefore not as simple as certain scholarly works present. These invite us to think the geographies of the Americas within the boundaries of a Muslim world of "global breath and plural configuration in the making of these Americas,"[37] implying thus a "*longue durée* of interplay between these Americas and an Islamic World."[38]

Archival sources point instead to a Mexican postcolonial Islamic tradition in the twilight of the nineteenth century, that sees full, bright light at the end of the twentieth century, rather than a Novohispanic one. For this reason, a novel approach on the same subject is needed—one that invites us to rethink the whole issue anew. Taking this as a point of departure, we are obliged to search for a Novohispanic Islamic tradition that began at the moment Spaniards stepped on Mesoamerican soil and continued, from that chronological point, along with the historical socioreligious development of Mexico. Consequently, we are bound to research Islām, if not as *Dīn*, then as 'little tradition' in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico. But, what do we understand by 'tradition' and 'doctrine'? Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), the prominent English lexicographer, defined the word tradition in his illustrious *Dictionary of the English Language* (1761) as "the practise of delivering accounts from mouth to mouth; anything delivered orally from age to age."[39] The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, adds the following to the previous interpretation: "Des faits purement historiques qui se sont conservées"[40] (purely historical acts which are conserved). In a likewise spirit, the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* defines the term *Tradición* as "the transmission of doctrines, rites, customs, literary compositions conserved by a people and passed on from generation to generation."[41] It defines the word doctrine as "the teaching given to somebody for instruction; a practise directed to the people explaining a given set of ideas or religious opinions; jurisprudence."[42] These definitions, in relation to our subject, should cause us to include some essential interrogations: where are the

37 Logroño Narbona, Pinto, and Karam (2015), op. cit., p. 2.

38 Ibid.

39 Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 2, London: J.F. and C. Rivington, 1761, p. 862.

40 Académie Française, *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, Vol. 2, Paris: J.J. Smits, 1798, p. 680.

41 "Tradición," in: Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, Online version, available at: http://dle.rae.es/?id=aDbG8m4 (accessed February 24, 2020).

42 "Doctrina," in: Ibid., available at: http://dle.rae.es/?id=E3eOaI9 (accessed February 24, 2020).

individuals who uttered the words needed for the transmission of the Novohispanic Islamic tradition and those who received them? Who passed it on orally to the next generations across time and space in *Nueva España*, and how? Where was that Novohispanic Muslim tradition conserved, and in what manner? Do we find the parameters included in the previously cited definitions among the isolated cases of Moriscos, Muslims, Arabs, or suspected individuals of Islamic affiliation in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico? Did the Novohispanic Islamic tradition indeed conserve those elements throughout Colonial Mexico's timeline so that we can call it a religious tradition per se? Answers to these questions are required, particularly if we recall that Islām is a socially active religion. Hernán Taboada of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) comments:

> No parecen haber existido comunidades Islámicas en la época colonial ni durante las primeras décadas de la independencia [...] Mi timidez en las afirmaciones anteriores no es compartida por muchos entusiastas, que multiplican el número de muslimes también en el pasado colonial aludiendo a una realidad que habría sido oficialmente ocultada. En este espíritu, dan por sentado que llegaron abundantes moriscos (estableciendo además la engañosa ecuación Andaluces=Moriscos=Muslimes) y esclavos negros islamizados. No vacilan en apropiarse de algunos personajes históricos [...] el escaso Islam colonial no parece haber sobrevivido.[43]

Taboada's assertion highlights the complexity and dynamics of the subject. Indubitably, we are confronted with a historical and scholarly entanglement that only evidence and questioning will help clarify; an issue that, unfortunately, seems to reflect politics more than academia.

Speaking about the social, cultural and religious aspects of life in Colonial Mexico also forces us to investigate the Novohispanic Inquisition (1524–1820). When studying the development of any non-Catholic group in New Spain, it is imperative to keep the role of the Inquisition in mind, for it was this that dic-

43 (Islamic communities did not seem to exist in colonial times or during the first decades of independence. Many enthusiasts do not share my assertion; they multiply the number of Muslims in the colonial past, alluding to a reality that would have been officially concealed. In this spirit, they assume that an abundant number of Moors and Islamised black slaves arrived (they have even come up with the deceptive equation: Andalusian = Moor = Muslim). They do not hesitate to appropriate some historical figures [...] the slim Colonial Islam does not seem to have survived), Hernán G.H. Taboada, "El Islam en América Latina: del siglo XX al XXI," *Estudios Latinoamericanos, Nueva Época*, Núm. 23, (2009), pp. 85–103.

tated the modus vivendi of Novohispanic society, and consequently, the fate of any non-Christian faction on Mexican soil. It was an extension of the Spanish *Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición*. It dealt with the same groups of heretics in Mexico as in Spain, and it was established on the same instructions given by Tomás de Torquemada (1420–1498), the first Grand Inquisitor.[44] In 1570, the Spanish Crown officially established the Tribunal of the Faith in Mexico as a fully operative inquisitorial office through a royal decree. It was bestowed on the General Inquisitor of Mexico, Pedro Moya de Contreras (1527–1591).[45] However, the shadow of this ecclesiastical enterprise was present in Mexico since the coming of the first twelve Franciscan Padres in 1524. They had arrived in the New World with inquisitorial powers. These clerical powers were granted posteriorly to the authorities sent to the Indies with the job of auditing matters related to the *Santo Oficio de la Inquisición*.[46] An example of this is evident in the person of Francisco Tello de Sandoval (?–1580), who was given the title of *Apostolic Inquisitor*[47] and replaced, in these canonical matters, the tutelage of Mexico's first bishop Juan de Zumárraga (1468–1548). Between 1544 and 1547, Tello de Sandoval examined affairs related to the Mexican Inquisition. Upon his return to the Iberian Peninsula, he advised the Spanish Crown about the urgent need to officially establish a tribunal of the *Santo Oficio* in Colonial Mexico, with personnel dedicated to that ecclesiastic work. As a result, Spain decided to officially set in motion this autocratic socio-religious apparatus on Novohispanic territory. This is proof of the Mexican Inquisition, which operated actively since the very first day the Catholic Orders set foot on its soil, until its official termination in 1820.

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44 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1519, Exp. 2, "Instrucciones del Ilustrísimo Señor Cardenal Inquisidor General para la fundación de la Inquisición en México," Madrid, 1570, ff. 41–170.

45 See: "Poder general que su Magestad da a los Inquisidores de la Ciudad de México para el uso y exercicio de sus oficios," Madrid, August 16, 1570, in: Diego Encinas, *Libro Primero de Provisiones Cedvlas, Capitvlos de Ordenanças y Cartas Libradas despachadas en diferentes tiempos por sus Magestades de los Señores Reyes Católicos Don Fernando y Doña Ysabel* (Henceforth: *Cedulario Real*), Madrid: En la Imprenta Real, 1696, pp. 45–46; and AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición, Edictos de Inquisición* (43), Vol. 3, f. 15, "Edicto general de la Fe dado por Moya de Contreras en el que se justifica la instalación del Santo Oficio en la Nueva España," México, 1571.

46 "Poder antiguo que se daba a los Inquisidores Apostólicos al tiempo que el Inquisidor General proveía a alguno por Inquisidor a las Indias," Valladolid, July 18, 1543, in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 55.

47 "Cédula que manda que las justicias de las Indias den favor al Licenciado Sandoval Inquisidor," Valladolid, July 24, 1543, in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), pp. 55–56.

Among the 'crimes' that the Holy Tribunal dealt with, heresy was considered a major offense for Spanish civil and ecclesiastical law, and it was condemned by the Inquisition on the Indies as well as on Iberian soil. As far as the Catholic Church was concerned, Islām, Judaism and Protestantism were heresy. However, during the second half of the sixteenth century, any baptised Christian who did not believe in the articles of the holy Catholic faith, or in some of them was defined as a heretic by royal decree.[48] However, heresy should in no manner be understood as a reference to Muslims, Jews or Protestants only, because other acts considered as crimes by the Church were part of this spiritual offense. Fornication, and the denial of it as a mortal sin, is one example of this.[49] Documentary evidence of inquisitorial procedures with regard to heresy were recorded in *Nueva España* from 1536. A typical case is the process against a certain Hernán Nuñez. The first bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga (1468–1548), judged him for having said, while playing cards, that if in Novohispanic lands there were any Moros, he would become one of them.[50] In this specific case, it is not the type of crime committed by this person that is of interest to my research, but rather the textual content of his utterance, which reflects a presumable absence of Moors in the early stages of life in Colonial Mexico, contrary to what contemporary historiography strongly affirms.

Another fact worth remembering is that a vast number of individuals, regardless of religious affiliation, who moved to the New World during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, did so due to its natural resources. Adventures, fortune seekers, and filibusters were common in the history of Colonial Mexico, and among them were a few scattered Moriscos as well. The inquisitorial process in 1560 against a man named Hernando Beltran illuminates this point. He was judged for having said in church, during mass, "it is late," which was considered a blasphemy by the ecclesiastical authorities.[51] Beltran was originally from Beas, a small village close to Barcelona. His mother was Morisco and his father,

48 "Ley Primera, título de los hereges, que esta en el libro de la recopilacion de las leyes del Reyno, que manda que el Christiano que no creyere alguno de los articulos de la Fe sea tenido por herege, y sus bienes sean para la camara," Consejo Real de Indias, 1566, in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 456.

49 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición, Edictos de Inquisición* (43), Vol. 3, f. 20, "Edicto en el que se aclara que la fornicación sí es pecado mortal, y advierte que quien dijera lo contrario cae en el delito de herejia," México, 1576.

50 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 30, Exp. 2, "Proceso del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición contra Hernán Núñez, natural de la ciudad de Sevilla," México, 1536, ff. 22f–26v.

51 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 16, Exp. 7, "Proceso eclesiástico de oficio contra Hernando Beltran, por blasfemo y amancebado" Guadalajara y México, 1560.

a Spaniard. He had arrived in Mexico attracted by its mines of silver. After the *Santo Oficio* examined his case, the Inquisition decided to punish him with a mulct of ten pesos of the same metal he went to search for in Mexico.[52] Also in New Spain, in 1583, a man named Francisco López, a merchant and rescuer of metals, was denounced for praying in Arabic and pronouncing the name of Muḥammad. The Inquisition's verdict: "Se proveerá lo que convenga"[53] (what suits will be provided). The process was interrupted thereafter. Such accusations would have been punished more rigorously in Iberian tribunals, but, in Mexico, the situation was different.

Similarly a case took place from 1594 to 1596, which involved a woman named María Ruiz, whose husband, Rodrigo Deza, was an Old Christian wine merchant. When in Mexico, Ruiz contemplated on whether she wanted to continue living as a Muslim or Catholic. In 1594 she presented herself, out of will, before the inquisitorial Tribunal of Mexico and confessed that she had practised Islām in Granada before marrying a Christian man. She was granted absolution for having turned herself in. The Mexican Inquisition believed that if there were any more followers of Islām in New Spain, and if they saw that no rigorous punishment was inflicted on other members of their faith, they would eventually come out and confess their heresy.[54] Neither a Moor, nor a single Morisco, nor a former Muslim followed suit. If there were any more Moriscos at that time in Colonial Mexico they probably hid, but what this case may also hint at, is an absence altogether of Muslims in Novohispanic territory by then. Thus, these examples illustrate the attitudes of the Mexican inquisitorial Office *vis-à-vis* Islām, which were comparatively lenient. Can these types of dispersed and isolated cases be counted as evidence of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition, especially so, when we see examples of people of Muslim background who hesitated to practice their beliefs, like María Ruiz did? Taking Islamic parameters into consideration, these examples might not necessarily indicate a Muslim identity. Concerning who is a Muslim, the Qurʾān 52:21 states that these are "the believers with their offspring who followed them

52 On the case see: Antonio Garrido Aranda, "El morisco y la inquisición novohispana (Actitudes antiislámicas en la sociedad colonial)," in: Bibiano Torres Ramírez and José J. Hernández Palomo (Eds.), *Andalucia y America en el Siglo XVI, Vol. 1*, Sevilla: Consejo Superior de las Investigaciones Científicas, 1983, pp. 501–534.

53 Garrido Aranda (1983), op. cit., pp. 516–517; and AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 141, Exp. 3, "Carta al Comisario de Guadalajara acusado de recibo de la información contra Francisco López, Africano," México, 1584.

54 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 151, Exp. 5, "Proceso contra María Ruiz, mujer de Rodrigo Deza, por Mohometano," México, 1594.

in faith."[55] So having a Catholic mother, even if she was ethnically Moorish, does not necessarily make a child part of *Al-Ummah al-Islāmiyah*, unless he really practises Islām and continues to do so in adulthood. Taboada stated in this regard: "No podemos equiparar sin más a los moriscos con los muslimes. A partir del año 1500 habían empezado a ser bautizados, formalmente eran cristianos y su cultura árabe se iba perdiendo en el aislamiento."[56] For this reason, it is hard to accept the existence of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition by pointing at the just mentioned types of examples. The hypothesis is difficult to prove, considering the paucity of evidence showing a Novohispanic crypto Islām. Citing lone illustrations of confused practising Catholics of Moorish origin, or those whose mothers were of Muslim background, yet were outwardly practising Christians and married to Catholic spouses is not enough.

However, an even more significant intricacy is presented in such illustrations through the *nasab* (filiation) of these individuals. Patrilineal transmission in Islamic social order is built on the principle of *al-walad lil-firāsh* (the child belongs to the conjugal bed), which emphasizes that the mother's husband and offspring belong to each other.[57] The Mālikī and the Ẓāhirī schools of Islamic jurisprudence, which were present on the Iberian Peninsula, "coincide in subscribing the centrality of the principle of *al-walad lil-firāsh* for the preservation of the Islamic social order."[58] Islamic family line is perpetuated mainly from male to male.[59] While we may find records of Islamic filiation on the maternal side in biographical Islamic sources, it is important to stress that patrilineality is essential for the conservation and continuation of Islām as a religious tradition.[60] The *Ḥadīth*, the *Sunna*, and the historical accounts concerning the gene-

55 M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Ed. and Trans.), *The Qur'an, Oxford World's Classics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 345.

56 (We cannot equate the Moors with the Muslims. From the year 1500 they had begun to be baptized, they were formally Christian and their Arab culture was getting lost because of the isolation), Hernan Taboada, "El moro en las Indias," *Latinoamérica. Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos*, No. 39, (2004), pp. 115–132.

57 Delfina Serrano, "Paternity and Filiation according to the Jurists of Al-Andalus: Legal Doctrines on Transgression of the Islamic Social Order," *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, No. 7, (2013), pp. 59–75.

58 Ibid., p. 63.

59 Alfred Bel, *La religion musulmane en Berbérie: esquisse d'histoire et de sociologie religieuses*, Tome I, établissement et développement de l'islam en Berbérie du VIIe au XXe siècle, Paris: P. Geuthner, 1938, p. 67.

60 Adeel Mohammadi, "The Ambiguity of Maternal Filiation (*nasab*) in Early and Medieval Islam," in: Jason Smith (Ed.), *The Graduate Journal of Harvard Divinity School, Vol. 2*, Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 2016, pp. 52–68.

sis and development of Islām are based on the genealogical architecture of the reporters and witnesses (*isnād*),[61] and these demonstrate the vital role of paternity in Islām. Moreover, Islamic jurisprudence forbids Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims. Corinne Fortier of the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* explains:

> Dans le droit musulman, le fait qu'une femme musulmane ne puisse épouser qu'un musulman vient de l'importance d'agrandir la communauté musulmane (umma); la religion se transmettant en filiation patrilinéaire en islam, l'enfant d'une femme musulmane qui épouserait un 'infidèle' serait non musulman [...] l'enfant sera musulman par son père.[62]

There were also other individuals in Colonial Mexico who, frustrated by the harshness of the Inquisition, reneged against religion altogether while they were already incarcerated for diverse crimes. Francisco Jasso is such an example, a mulatto of Andalusian origin who was a slave in *Nueva España*. He pretended to be a Moro while in jail in 1596, where he often asked to be burned so as not to be in this world. He insisted that the law of *Mahoma* was better than the Gospel. Jasso might have done so either with the intention to fulfill a seemingly suicidal mission, or as an attempt to deviate the attention of the authorities from other crimes that he had perpetuated for which he was in prison in the first place. Whatever the reason for his defiant and seemingly fearless attitude, his apparently open confession did not result in the Mexican Inquisitors condemning him to the stake for the heresy he wished to be punished for. Instead, the Holy Tribunal issued a sentence of 200 lashes and sent him back to jail.[63]

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61 Constant Hamès, "La Filiation généalogique (*nasab*) dans la societé d'Ibn Khaldun," *L'Homme*, Tome 27, No. 102, Tribus en Afrique du Nord et au Moyen-Orient, (1987), pp. 99–118.

62 (In Muslim law, the fact that a Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim comes from the importance of enlarging the Muslim community (umma); religion is transmitted by patrilineal filiation in Islām. The child of a Muslim woman who marries an 'infidel' would be non-Muslim [...] the child will be Muslim through his father), Corinne Fortier, "Le droit musulman en pratique: genre, filiation et bioéthique," *Droit et Cultures*, No. 59, (2010), pp. 15–40.

63 On this case see: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 145, Exp. 7, "Proceso contra Francisco Jasso, mulato, esclavo de Martin de Jasso," México, 1596; and Genaro García, *Documentos Inéditos o muy Raros para la Historia de México*, *Tomo v*, *La Inquisición de México*: *Documentos Inéditos de sus Archivos*, México: Libreria de la Viuda de Bouret, 1906, p. 88.

Regardless of the original crime that took him to prison, nothing assures us of his possible alleged adherence to Islām.

Meanwhile in Valencia in 1561, the Inquisitor Don Bartolomé Carranza de Miranda (1503–1576) appointed members of the rich Moor family Abenamir as *Familiares de la Inquisition* with the intention of converting Moors by using persuasion.[64] As early as 1528, the *Cortes de Aragón* had petitioned the Spanish Crown to prohibit the Inquisition from prosecuting Moors until they had been instructed in the faith.[65] From 1526, regulations had been issued forbidding the use of the Arabic language, the wearing of Muslim clothes or the use of Islamic names, but Moors offered money to the Spanish Crown on certain occasions as a result of which such regulations were suspended.[66] These types of benefits are hard to see in favour of Protestants or Jews in the Spanish worlds. In fact, the growing popular intolerance of fourteenth to sixteenth century Spain was generally directed against Jews, and not Muslims; and in the massacres that occurred as a consequence in those years, no comparable hostility against the Mudéjares is to be found.[67]

Stigmatization and infamies were another common occurrence in the Americas. In this respect Karoline P. Cook states that the "inquisitorial edicts of faith labelled certain actions as Morisco, condemning these before large audiences [...] regional customs were stigmatized increasingly on both sides of the Atlantic."[68] This may suggest general knowledge in Novohispanic society concerning what was fit for prosecution on heresy charges, but it might also hint at an apparent abuse of it. Communal tensions derived from collective and individual experiences of religiosity and social struggle also resulted in individuals accusing each other of heresy, by which being Morisco, Moor, or Muslim was part of the repertoire of accusations and false witnessing. These are generally referred to as 'denunciations.'[69] Cook argues that "denunciations of suspected

64 Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, Vol. III, London: Macmillan & Co., 1907, p. 362.

65 Jean Antoine Llorente, *Histoire critique de l'Inquisition d'Espagne depuis l'époque de Ferdinand V jusqu'au règne de Ferdinand VII, Tirée des pièces originales des Archives du Conseil de la Supreme et de celles des Tribuneaux subalterns du Saint-Office*, Vol. 1, Paris: Truttel et Wurtz, 1817, p. 436.

66 Henry Kamen, *La Inquisición Española*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1973, p. 123.

67 Lea (1907), *op. cit.*, p. 317.

68 Cook (2016), op. cit., pp. 88–90.

69 For example see: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1A, Exp. 53, "Proceso por testigo falso contra Juan de León Abaroa," México, 1577; and AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 84, Exp. 19, "Marcos Rodríguez, Notario del Santo Oficio en Veracruz, se querella contra Alonso de Brizuela por llamarle Morisco," Veracruz, 1578.

Moriscos generally focused on two primary interrelated concerns: religiosity and lineage."[70] Religiosity was primarily related to heresy, while lineage had a direct connection to genealogy. Therefore, accusing someone of having a heretic family background could threaten his removal from office, posts, or nobility titles. However, these were not the only types of accusations that reverberated in the inquisitorial trials and in colonial societies. Some individuals blamed others of invoking Muḥammad and praying in Arabic, since speaking the language of the Qur'ān was considered as additional accusatorial evidence. Cook's work (2016) praises the linguistic skills of Moriscos and highlights their utility as interpreters during the conquest of the Americas:

> During the 1530s, Spaniards brought interpreters to northern New Spain, and there were some who were Moriscos or North African Muslims conversant in Arabic dialects. Their perceived facility with languages made these individuals attractive candidates for becoming *naguatatos*, or translators of Nahuatl [...] it reveals the importance in early expeditions of Morisco interpreters [...] Arabic speakers as cultural brokers [...] In a few cases local authorities requested their participation in local projects, as interpreters or as artisans, occupations traditionally associated with Moriscos.[71]

Conversely, she explains, that by the middle of the sixteenth century, "Moriscos in many parts of Spain who remained Muslims no longer spoke Arabic";[72] and adds that "at the time of the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain, some North African Muslim writers commented on the ignorance of the Moriscos about Islām. They began a campaign to teach the new arrivals a more orthodox version of the faith."[73]

Mid-sixteenth century is a date in which certain territories of Mexico, such as Nueva Galicia and Nueva Vizcaya, were still under exploration. Expeditions were an ongoing affair, and manpower was needed for the Spanish enterprise in Mesoamerica. Hypothetically, the linguistic skills of the Morisco could have been placed at the service of the Conquistadores. However, in what tangible

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70 Karoline Cook, "Contesting belonging: Relationship between Muslims and Christians in colonial Latin America," in: David Thomas and John Chesworth (Eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 12, Asia, Africa and the Americas (1700–1800), Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018, p. 731.

71 Cook (2016), op. cit., pp. 40, 43, 45–47.

72 Ibid., p. 83.

73 Ibid.

manner could a Morisco, who had lost some of his culture, mother tongue, and theological knowledge decades before the sixteenth century, partly due to the repressive inquisitorial laws and sociopolitical realities of the Iberian Peninsula, have offered his services as interpreter or "cultural broker"? Are the illustrations above provided by Cook singled events, or were they the norm in Colonial Mexico? What was the contribution of those interpreters to the implementation of Islām in Colonial Mexico, when the Moriscos are reported, not by any writers of the Maġrib, but by theological authorities, as being part of a community who ignored both linguistic and theological matters? And what could have been a "more orthodox version of the faith" than the *Mālikī maḏhab* known and professed by Muslims in Spain?

In 1489, the prominent Muftī of Fez, a Mālikī jurist named Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā bin Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Wāḥid bin ʿAlī al-Wansharīsī (1430–1508), wrote a *fatwā* to warn Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula. Through it, he instructed them not to change their customs or language for Christian ones, explicitly mentioning that contact with the latter had led to the loss of the Arabic language on the Iberian Peninsula, which eventually produced a decline of religious faith among the members of the Islamic community in Spain.[74] This was a time in which Spain had not reached the land mass within longitudes 20° W and 160° W, and yet, the Moriscos were already suffering from cultural, linguistic, and religious assimilation. Consequently, at the time of their expulsion from Spain, the vast majority of this social group had already been linguistically incorporated to Catholic Spain.

On language assimilation of the Moriscos, an important source to refer to is the publication in 1853 of the Spanish Arabist Pascual de Gayangos (1809–1897). Known as the *Leyes de Moros*,[75] it shows that Moors in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain had lost their own language [Arabic], to the point that it was necessary to utilise the language of Castilla in their writings.[76] Concerning religious matters, the same literary composition recounts that Moriscos, particularly during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had their religious practises "arrinconadas y hasta olvidadas, habiendo ingerido en ellas no pocos

74 Ana Echevarria, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude towards Muslims in Fifteenth Century Spain*, Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1999, pp. 138–139.

75 On the *Leyes de Moros* see: Gerard Albert Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado: Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), His Antecedents and Successors*, Leiden, New York and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1994, pp. 57–59.

76 Real Academia de la Historia (Ed.), *Tratados de Legislación Musulmana: 1º Leyes de moros, del siglo XIV. 2º Suma de los principales mandamientos y devedamientos de la ley y çunna*, Madrid: Real Académia de la Historia, 1853, p. 4.

usos y costumbres tomadas de los cristianos."[77] With regard to this, Çiti Bulgaiz, a principal Muslim figure in seventeenth-century Tunis and protector of the Moriscos, stated: "No solo tenían olvidado de todo punto su algarabía, sino que ni siquiera conocían ya las letras en que fué revelado el honrado Alcorán."[78] This fact should make us think about the linguistic familiarity with Arabic and the theological *savoir-faire* that Moriscos in Mexico might have had. These are considered as necessary facets in order to keep Muslim tradition alive. The Argentinian historian Tulio Halperin Donghi (1926–2014) explained that there were regions, such as Aragon, where "las comunidades moriscas habían abandonado del todo el árabe."[79] This line of cultural, customary, and linguistic analysis invokes the thinking of Taboada again:

> Cantidad de supuestos andalucismos en las hablas americanas también han sido desechados como mito por los lingüistas. Camino igualmente dudoso es el de quienes han apuntado a influencias culturales de origen árabe-islámico en América Latina, para deducir de ellos una nutrida presencia mora desde el inicio mismo de la Colonia [...] todo ello ha sido llamado a colación, con una lógica errática. Lo que han descuidado estos exégetas es una serie de pasos para evaluar las manifestaciones consideradas: ver en qué medida describen realidades americanas y realidades árabe-islámicas (porque mucho hay de atribución fantasiosa).[80]

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77 (Cornered and even forgotten, having ingested in them not a few uses and customs taken from Christians), Ibid., p. 7.

78 (Not only had they completely forgotten their Arabic, but they did not even know the letters in which the honored Qur'ān was revealed), Ibid. On the Spanish spoken by Moriscos and the figure of Çiti Bulgaiz see: Míkel de Epalza and Abdel-Hakim Slama-Gafsi (Eds.), *El Español hablado en Túnez por los moriscos o andalusíes y sus descendientes* (*siglos XVII–XVIII*), Granada, València and Zaragoza: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, Editorial Universidad de Granada, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2010.

79 (The Morisco communities had abandoned the Arabic language completely), Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Un conflicto nacional: moriscos y cristianos viejos en Valencia*, Valencia: Universitat de València, 2008, p. 94.

80 (The amount of supposed Andalusianisms in the American languages has also been dismissed as myth by linguists. An equally doubtful path is that of those who have pointed at cultural influences of Arab-Islamic origin in Latin America, to deduce from them a nourished Moorish presence from the very beginning of the Colony [...] all this has been called up into collation, with an erratic logic. What these exegetes have neglected is the series of steps required to evaluate the considered manifestations: to see to what extent they describe American realities and Arab-Islamic realities, because there is much attribution that is fanciful), Taboada (2004), op. cit., p. 116.

Infamies thus served to discredit others in Colonial Mexico, where the Inquisition often called upon the Novohispanic population to denounce potential members of the 'Sect of Moses, Luther, or Muḥammad.'[81] However, lack of concrete evidence on the empirical theological knowledge that Muslims in New Spain might have had, should cause us to question the veracity of heresy. An illustration of such denunciations is evident in the case of Rodrigo de Evora, who confessed to have accused others of being Moriscos and Jews because he wanted to cause them harm.[82] Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492–1584) recorded this frequent social misbehavior:

> Se pregonó, que todos los que venían del linaje de Ivdios, Moros que huviessen quemado, ó ensambenitado por la Santa Inquisición en el quarto grado a sus padres, ó abuelos, que dentro de seys meses saliessen de la Nueua España, so pena de perdimiento de la mitad de sus bienes; y en aquel tiempo vieran el acusar que acusauan vnos a otros, y el infamar que hazian, y no salieron de la Nueua España sino dos.[83]

Two individuals at the time of the Conquest of Mexico, whose true religious identity has been ignored, provide no solid foundation to affirm the arrival of Islām in Mexico in that period.

Nonetheless, the Mexican Inquisition continued to demand that the people report any suspects of the three sects that the Catholic Church was fighting at the time, namely: "*La ley de Moisén* [Jews], *de Mahoma* [Muslims] *y de Lutero*

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81 From the 312 records treasured in the "Edictos de Inquisición (43)" subsection at the *Archivo Nacional de la Nación* (National Archive of the Nation), only the following edicts relate, while not exclusively, to the 'Secta de Mahoma,' namely, Islām, along with Judaism and Protestantism: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición, Edictos de Inquisición* (43), Vol. 1, f. 28; Vol. 2, ff. 71, 83–88, 101–105; Vol. 3, ff. 16–18, 23–26, 69–73.

82 José Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, México: Ediciones Fuente Cultural, 1905, pp. 104–105.

83 (It was proclaimed, that all those who came from the lineage of Jews or Moors (who were condemned to burning at the stake or forced to put on the sambenito by the Holy Inquisition) in the fourth grade to their parents, or grandparents, to leave New Spain within six months or face the penalty of losing half of their assets; and at that time you should see the accusations against one another, and the defaming they did, and only two left New Spain), Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia Verdadera de la Conqvista de la Nueva-España escrita por el Capitan Bernal Diaz del Castillo, uno de sus Conquistadores. Sacada a lvz por el P.M. Fr. Alonso Remon, Predicador, y Coronista General del Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced Redempcion de Cautivos. A la Catholica Magestad del Mayor Monarca Don Felipe Qvarto, Rey de las Españas, y Nuevo Mundo, N. Señor*, Madrid: Emprenta del Reyno, 1632, f. 228v.

[Protestants]."[84] Denunciations in this case, were also fomented and encouraged by the authorities of Colonial Mexico through time and not only at the beginning of the Conquista.[85] For instance, in 1781, a new edict was issued exhorting the Novohispanic population to denounce diverse heresies, among them Judaism, Islām, and Protestantism.[86] It is difficult to affirm that every individual accused of heresy in New Spain was indeed a practising member of the ethnoreligious group or sect to which he was being accused of belonging.

Mexican archives show us only very few cases of individuals who were accused of being of Muslim origin, speaking Arabic, or practising Islām in Mexico during the three centuries of Novohispanic life. Such actions were considered heresy during the Colonial epoch, and thus a crime punishable by the Holy Tribunal in New Spain. What is more, from records in the General Archive of the Nation (Mexico) we see that many such offenses did not occur on Mexican soil, but in the Philippines, which was a geographical region under the jurisdiction of Novohispanic Viceroyalty. Amongst the files in the *Fondo Inquisición* at the AGN, this research found sixty-two entries that contain the words '*Moro*, *Morisco*, *Morisca*, *Mahoma*, *Ley de Mahoma*, *Secta de Mahoma*, *Mahometano*, or *Turco*.' However, only eighteen such cases are related to individuals accused of matters related to Islām, and not all them occurred in Mexico, as previously stated. This cannot and should not be taken as a historical proof to assert the existence of Islām as a 'religious tradition' in the Colonial Mexican era. Further and more tangible evidence is needed; affirming it without the latter is to put History, as a discipline, and the quality of research, in jeopardy.

On the other hand, it is possible to find records on Protestants in the *Fondo Inquisición* of the AGN by the hundreds; and on Jews the files may as well reach above the thousand. In the Novohispanic Viceroyalty these two groups were persecuted, punished, had their properties confiscated, and in certain cases, they even payed for their heresy with their very lives. Both Protestantism and Judaism were present as 'little traditions' in Colonial Mexico, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the latter in a very tangible manner. We do not see a similar pattern with regard to Muslims anywhere in the Mexican Colonial Era. Why? Taboada comments that Moriscos in Novohis-

84 García (1906), op. cit., Tomo V, "La Inquisición de México," p. 279.

85 See: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición, Edictos de Inquisición* (43), Vol. 2, ff. 83–88, 101–105.

86 AGN, *Indiferente Virreinal, Edictos de Inquisición*, Caja 2020, Exp. 30, "Edicto del Tribunal del Santo Oficio en el cual se exhorta a la población a que denuncien diversas herejías como la observancia de la Ley de Moisés y Mahoma, las proposiciones Luteranas, vituperio y malos tratos a las imágenes sagradas," México, 1781.

panic territory "are mere isolated cases."[87] He further asserts that "the presence of Islam in the Americas during colonial times, and even in the nineteenth century, was minimum. It wasn't until the twenty-first century that it [Islām] makes an act of presence and shows a visibility, until now unknown."[88] In a likewise spirit, José Toribio Medina (1852–1930) wrote, "rare were the cases of those who fell in prisons of the Inquisition for being Muslims in the Americas,"[89] and Professor Antonio Garrido Aranda of the *Universidad de Cordoba* stated:

> La primera conclusión que resalta [...] es la escasa incidencia, en términos cuantitativos, del Islam, en general, y de los moriscos, en particular, en Nueva España. Menos del centenar de individuos, incluidos los esclavos blancos, que son los detectados por este estudio, suponen muy poco, para proyectarse socialmente. Igualmente, el impacto de la calidad del mahometismo en el Nuevo Mundo participa de las mismas características de flaqueza. La extracción social de las personas encausadas en México no supera los estratos inferiores de la arquitectura humana del Estado Colonial. Resulta descabellado pensar en influencias cualificadas del islamismo, en lo individual, como un intento de evangelización y, menos, en lo colectivo.[90]

My research on the Islamic Novohispanic tradition points to documentation that is blurry and quantitatively and qualitatively implausible.

As far as the punishment for 'Islamic heresy' in Colonial Mexico goes, the case of a man named Alejo de Castro illustrates it, perhaps, in the clearest manner. De Castro was born in the Molucas (Philippines) and resided in Manila. He is one of the few persons summoned by the Mexican Inquisition for practising Islām proper; and as Garrido Aranda argues, the only one judged for Islamic

87 Hernan G.H. Taboada, "La Sombra del Islam en la Conquista de América," *Doctoral Thesis*, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México, 2000, p. 88.

88 Taboada (2009), op. cit., p. 1.

89 Toribio Medina (1905), op. cit., p. 168.

90 (The first conclusion that stands out [...] is the low incidence, in quantitative terms, of Islām, in general, and of the Moriscos, in particular, in New Spain. Fewer than a hundred individuals [in a three century period], including white slaves, who are the ones detected by this study, account for too little to matter socially. Equally, the impact of the quality of Mohammedanism in the New World shows the same characteristics of frailty. The social extraction of the accused in Mexico does not go beyond the lower strata of the human architecture of the Colonial State. It is unreasonable to think of qualified influences of Islam, individually, as an attempt to evangelization and, less so, in a collective sense), Garrido Aranda (1983), op. cit., p. 522.

matters at an *Auto de Fé* in Mexico, which took place in 1648.[91] His father was Juan de Castro, a man of Portuguese origin born in Galicia. His mother was Felipa Deza, a Catholic convert of Moorish origin. De Castro was accused of having said that incest was not a sin, of superstition, of practising Islām and of having communication with the Moors from the Island of Terrenate—offenses he did not commit in Mexico, but in the Philippines. For his alleged crimes he was condemned to exile in Mexico, but due to his relatively advanced age of eighty-two years at the time of his trial, he was confined to serve in a convent in New Spain for as long as he lived in order to be instructed in the matters of the Catholic faith. His sentence, *vis-à-vis* the crime imputed, was thus moderate.

I must emphasise that Alejo de Castro was judged under *abjuratio de levi*, which was an abjuration taken by individuals who were 'slightly suspected of heresy,' and by which the heretic renounced his mistakes.[92] Consequently, De Castro's alleged heresy was not fully demonstrated, in spite of the prolonged recidivism.[93] A similar example was of Anton Rosado in 1651, a slave of about sixty years old, son of a Mulatto father and a Moorish mother.[94] In a similar fashion to Alejo de Castro's, the Mexican Inquisition did not attempt to take Rosado's life, and he was registered as a 'renegade,' rather than as Muslim in the file. These are, conceivably, the most severe Novohispanic trials that the Mexican Inquisition executed for what was considered as 'Islamic heresy'. Yet, they illustrate a lighter touch with regard to Moriscos and Islamic issues in New Spain as compared to the Iberian Peninsula. Why then, in spite of this apparently lenient inquisitorial stand, did Islām in Colonial Mexico according to the archives, not develop as a Novohispanic religious tradition?

Moriscos, as descendants of the Mudéjares, the Muslims of medieval Spain that lived under Christian domination, were converted by either force or will at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and expelled from the Iberian Peninsula

91 Ibid., p. 519.

92 Pierre-Toussaint Durand de Maillane, *Dictionnaire de droit canonique et de pratique bénéficiale*, Troisième édition, Tome première, Lyon: Joseph Duplain, 1776, p. 33.

93 On his case see: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 220, Exp. 8, No. 142, "Por supersticioso: Alejo de Castro," Manila, 1623; Vol. 350, Exp. 1, "Causa criminal contra Alejo de Castro por sospechoso de que es mahometano," Manila, 1625; Vol. 418, Exp. 5, "Pleito y causa criminal contra Alexo de Castro, por sospechoso en la falsa secta de Mahoma," Filipinas, 1643; and Genaro García, *Documentos Inéditos o muy Raros para la Historia de México, Tomo XXVIII, Autos de Fé: Extractos de sus Causas, 1646–1648*, México: Libreria de la Viuda de Ch. Bouret, 1910, pp. 171–172.

94 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 454, Exp. 37, "Información contra Anton Rosado. Por renegado," México, 1651.

about one century later.[95] These Muslim peoples entered the Iberian Peninsula from Mauritania Tingitana, a geographic location, which was a Roman province, located on the Northwestern side of the African continent. Yet, they were foreign to *Hispania*.[96] Chronicles of early seventeenth century point to them as mainly of Arabic or Berber origin and not as individuals of Iberian descent.[97] It must be stressed too that Islām arrived in Spain as a foreign religion and due to the Muslim conquest and expansion of the Umayyad Dynasty, whose base of power was located in Syria. Emphasising this point sheds light on the ethnoreligious background of the Moriscos, which may consequently help us trace a line of investigation based on social adherence or potential *ʿAṣabīyah* concerning their probable whereabouts after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula. Although Arab ethnicity may be altogether irrelevant to the correct understanding of the message of Islām, in the particular time-space setting of this research, it may help us evaluate if *Nueva España* was a desired destination for Moriscos or not.

The Department of Manuscripts at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* has a very interesting document that clarifies this point. Written in *Aljamiado*,[98] an extract in a manuscript titled *Ms Arabe 774* contains an interesting and important primary source and furnishes us with some fascinating evidence about the realities of the Islamic community on the Iberian Peninsula of that time. The script relates how the Moriscos used to pray under the hardship of the Spanish Inquisition, and it reflects their daily difficulties, but also their deepest hopes. Even more significant is the fact that this manuscript speaks about those Muslims, who had already fled Iberian lands to foreign destinations, in the following manner: "Shāñor, ashāgura ā tosh shiyārvosh losh Muslimāsh, ākāllosh kāya shādatajarōn ēntiyārra ēshtaranna [...] ēshfuwaārsalosh kon ēshfuwaārso fārmosho dētī, ī yāshkapalosh ā lash villash dālosh Muslimāsh."[99] This source illustrates that the desire of Muslims fleeing Spain was to arrive at Islamic regions,

95 Rafael Carrasco, *Deportados en el Nombre de Dios*, Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 2009, p. 12.

96 Damian Fonseca, *Ivsta Expvlsion de los Moriscos de España*, Roma: Jacomo Mascardo, 1612, p. 1.

97 "Argumento y división de la obra," in: Ibid., s/f.

98 A Spanish dialect, quite different from the standard literary language, and set down by Iberian Muslims in Arabic script.

99 (Lord, secure your servants, the Muslims, those detached in foreign land [...] strengthen them with your beautiful strength and take them to the villages of Muslims), Naṣr ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *Recueil en aljamiado avec quelques fragments en Arabe* (Henceforth: *Ms Arabe 774*). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, *Ms Arabe 774*, Year: 1501–1600, ff. 260r–260v.

to territories contained within *Dār al-Islām*, in which Mexico did not figure. In addition, when we see the Arabic version of the previously cited account in the *Ms Arabe 774*, we find exactly the same essence and meaning: "wa'khaliṣhum ilā bilādi-īl-muslimīna."[100] The phrase 'tiyārra ēshtaranna' (foreign land) in the *Aljamiado* text could indicate any given geographical destination foreign to Moriscos. However, the manuscript tells that it did not necessarily mean the New World, but rather other European locations that served as transit stations on their way to Ottoman lands:

> Kafaranī, Sharransha, Ōloron, ā Naī, ā Tarbah, ā Tolosh, ā Galak, Villafaranka, ā Rosh, ā Lāōn dā Faransiya, para Baloniya lagharasha, ā Milan. Kuwando shārāysh ā kuwatro ō sinko lāwash dā Milan dāsharlo āsh ālamanodārācha, pasharāysh por dātarash dā lamontanna kā notokāysh ēn latiyārra dālānpārador, dāmandarāish ēlkamino para Bārshāsh kāshlapirimāra shiwdad dā vānāsiyanosh, dā ālli ā la Vērona. Nopashāysh por dā dāntoro dā lasiwdad kā pagarāsh ā reāl por kabāsa. Ālli dāmandarāsh ēlkamino para Padowa. Ālli osh ēnbarkarāsh para Vānāsiyah, dā Vānāsiyah para la Vālona ō para Dorasiyo, ō para Lāshosh, ō para Kashtālnov, ēlkā āntāsh hallāsh dāshtosh puwārtosh.[101]

The *Aljamiado* script in the *Ms Arabe 774* gives additional details about the way Moriscos escaped to Islamic regions, the instructions given to them and the manner by which Jews across Europe aided them on their route to the Ottoman Empire:

> Ābishosh para ēlkamino. En Jaca manifāshtarās ēloro shiōsh pārāguntan ālguno kā ā dondā ōshis, por dāwdash, īkā ōshkārāsh rātaraēr ēnfaransiya, īyēnfaransiya kā īsh ā shantamariya dēlorito. Ēn Lāōn manifāstarāsh lamonāda, pagarāish dē kuwarānta ūno palata, ōloro dāmandarāsh ēlkamino para Milan. Dalli ādālantā dirāsh kā īsh ābashitar ēlshāñor shamarko dā

100 (And take them in safety to the land of Muslims), Ibid., f. 260r.

101 (Casaran, Sarrance, Oléron, to Nay, to Tarbes, to Toulouse, to Gaillac, to Villefranche, to Ros, to Lyon in France, through Balonia Lagrasse, to Milan. When you are at four or five leagues from Milan, you will leave it on your right hand side, you will pass behind the mountain so as not to step on the emperor's land, you will ask for the road to Brescia, which is the first city of the Venetians, from there you will go to Verona. Do not pass inside this city, for you would pay a real per head. There you will ask the way to Padua where you will embark for Venice, and from Venice to Valona, or Durazzo, or Lissa, or Castelnouvo, whichever of these ports that you may have found before), Ibid., ff. 37v–38r.

> Bānāsiya. Ēnbarkaroshēsh ēn Paduwa ī ēnunriyo para Bānāsiya, pagarāsh mēdiyo reāl por kabāsa, īroshāysh ā dāshānbarkar ālapalasa dā Shamarko. Ēntararāsh ēnuna poshada ī walarāsh pirimāro āntēsh dā dāntarar. Ūna ēshtansiya konunakama pagarāsh mādiyo reāl por diya, ī notomāysh nada dā laposhada kosharan pagara dā uno tārāsh [missing[102]]. Alli loshkābārāysh kontokash balankash shonturkosh, losh kā bērāysh kon āmarillash son Judiyosh, mārkadārāsh dālgaranturko. Ādakāllosh dāmandarāysh kowanto kārraysh, kāllosh ōshānkaminaran. Dāzir lāshāysh kā tānāysh ērmanosh ēnshalonikī, kā kārāysh īrālla. Pagarāysh ā dokado por kabāsa dālpasho, daroshan āwa ī lāña. Pornāysh porobishiyon para kinzādiyash, mārkarāysh olla ī rosh, ī āzāytā, ī binagrā, ī olibash, ī garbansosh ojodiyash, ī pan fārāshko para ojo diyash, ī bishkojo ādiyēsh librash poronbārā.[103]

The chronicle of Marco de Guadalajara y Xavier (1560–1631) gives a similar account to the one found in the *Ms Arabe 774* concerning the destination Moriscos sought after their exile from Spain: "Todos los que podían se pasaban a

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102 The *Ms Arabe 774* of the *Bibliothèque national de France* was analyzed by Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) when it was coded as *Ms 290 Saint-Germain-des-Prés*. De Sacy provided an approximate transliteration of certain passages from it, including parts of those I cited. According to his assessment of the document, the text reads in the missing previously signaled part: "salreis a la palaça a comparar lo que avreis menester" (you will go out to the square to buy whatever you may need). For a reference see: A.I. Silvestre de Sacy, *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Tome Quatrième, Paris: Imprimerie de la République, 1797, p. 626.

103 (Instructions for the road. In Jaca, if you are asked where are you going, you will declare that you are running away because of debts, and that you want to cross to France, and in France you will say that you go to Santa Maria de Lorette [Notre-Dame-de-Lorette]. In Lyon you will declare your money, and you will pay one silver coin out of forty, then you will ask the way to Milan. From there on, you will say that you are going to visit the Lord Saint Mark of Venice. Embark in Padua on a river for Venice; you will pay half a real per head, and you will disembark at Saint Mark's Square. You will enter an auberge, and you will inspect it first, before you check in. For a room with a bed you will pay half a real per day, and do not take anything from the auberge because they will make you pay three times the price [missing]. There, the ones you see with white headdresses are Turks, those you will see with yellow headdresses are Jewish merchants of the Great Turk. From the latter you will ask whatever you may want, for they will route you. You will tell them that you have brothers in Salonica, and that you want to go there. You will pay one ducat per head for the passage, and they will give you water and wood. Take provisions for fifteen days. You will buy a pot, and rice, and oil, and vinegar, and olives, and chickpeas for eight days, and fresh bread for eight days, and biscuits at the rate of ten pounds per person.), *Ms Arabe 774*, ff. 38r–39r.

Africa."[104] This should come as no surprise, since Muslims in the Maġrib shared the same Islamic cosmovision as those on the Iberian Peninsula, namely, the *Mālikī Maḍhab*. These historical facts and references may help us understand the absence of Muslims in New Spain, for they demonstrate the longing of the Moriscos to move to Muslim lands. They were, apparently, their main desired destination during the epoch in question, and not the Americas or Colonial Mexico per se. Consequently, it is not surprising to find only a minimum number of scattered individuals that account for the cases of Morisco arrivals in Colonial Mexico. From these facts, we can conclude that in those days, the Moriscos were not really craving for an American dream.

On the other hand, I emphasise that not all the Moriscos were clandestine Muslims; some of them were even real Christians, while others practised a lifestyle removed from any religion.[105] The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not immune to Muslims converting to Christianity out of good faith, and from their own wills and hearts. Conversions to Catholicism of Muslim individuals in that epoch was a social phenomenon not confined only to Spain and to people of Moorish or Jewish origin. Nor did it occur solely among Muslim residents of the Iberian Peninsula, but it was evident as far as Safavid Iran, with some eminent Persian figures embracing Catholicism wholeheartedly and out of their own volition. Such is the case of Oluġ Beg (1560–1604), who together with Sir Robert Shirley (1581–1628) was at the Persian Embassy to Europe (1599–1602). He converted to Christianity by will and said fervently: "To the King of Kings I offer my zeal and good desire that since I first tried to be Christian, I have been lucky to have on the road of my salvation."[106] It follows that equations in which Andalusian = Moro = Muslim; or formulas in which Morisco = Crypto Muslim = Islām do not stand up to scrutiny. It is worth remembering Luis de Torres, the translator of Columbus in his first voyage to the Americas. He spoke Hebrew, Chaldean, and Arabic—languages that the *Almirante* considered useful for his expedition. De Torres is believed to be the first Jew ever to set foot in the Americas,[107] and was, perhaps the first non-Catholic Iberian individual the New World ever saw. We may not know accurately who De Tor-

104 (All those who could passed to Africa), Marcos de Guadalajara y Xavier, *Memorable Expulsion y Iustissimo Destierro de los Moriscos de España*, Pamplona: Nicolas de Assiayn Impressor del Reyno de Navarra, 1613, f. 159r.

105 Luis Fernando Bernabé-Pons, "*Taqiyya, niyya y el islam de los moriscos*," *Al-Qanṭara*, Vol. 34, No. 2, (2013), p. 512.

106 Juan de Persia, *Relaciones de Don Ivan de Persia, Dirigidas a la Magestad Catholica de Don Philippe III, Rey de las Españas y Señor Nuestro, Libro Tres*, Valladolid: Iuan de Bostillo, 1604, p. 173.

107 Toribio Medina (1905), op. cit., pp. 94–95.

res was, but today, the Bahamas Islands house a synagogue with his name to preserve his memory and to remind us all about a Luis de Torres, who spoke the language of the Qur'ān as well as that of the Tōrah, and was of Andalusian origin.

Like De Torres, we could name several additional cases of individuals of non-Muslim affiliation, non-Arab origin, non-Catholic, born on the Iberian Peninsula, who besides speaking *Castellano* and the language of their ethnoreligious group, also spoke, wrote, and read Arabic. Such examples extend from the Medieval Era all the way to the Late Middle Ages and beyond. To cite few instances, I refer to the poetry of Yehuda ben Samuel Halevi (1075–1141), the prominent Spanish Jewish poet and philosopher from Tudela;[108] or the Arabic manuscripts written by the most influential Tōrah scholar of the Middle Ages, a Córdoba-born Rabbi named Moses ben Maimon (1135–1204), generally known as *Maimonides*, or the Arabic works of a Rabbi born in Zaragoza whose name was Bahya ben Asher (1255–1340), known as *Rabbeinu Behaye*, one of the most distinguished Jewish biblical exegetes of Spain. These are just a few examples.[109] Therefore, it is similarly inaccurate to equate Andalusian with Muslim. It is equally equivocal to infer that if an individual from the Iberian Peninsula spoke Arabic, it must be because he was of either an Arab or of Muslim origin. Such conjectures are erroneous and misleading and do not belong to the scholarly realm, and certainly not to History as a discipline of human knowledge. Likewise, the term 'Morisco' cannot be applied in the Novohispanic case (1521–1821), nor in the Early Independent Mexican context, as an organic and set reference to Muslims or anything intrinsically Islamic.

I will also argue that the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain did not signal their influx into Mesoamerican territory. In fact, Moriscos did not stream to Novohispanic lands. Nor did the Mexican records that I analysed demonstrate a "sustained arrival of Moors as trade specialists in New Spain."[110] How can a handful of such instances, in a chronology of at least three centuries, provide sustained examples, particularly when history records that even when the highest Novohispanic Christian authorities requested such services, Spain declined to oblige?

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108 On Arabic influence on Spanish Hebrew poetry see: Arie Schippers, *Spanish Hebrew Poetry and the Arabic Literary Tradition: Arabic Themes in Hebrew Andalusian Poetry*, Leiden, New York, and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1994.

109 On Hebrew literature, philosophy and arts in Fifteenth-Century Spain see: Jonathan Decter and Arturo Prats (Eds.), *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain, Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy and the Arts*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012.

110 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 185 (n. 4).

On the expulsion of Moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula, I would like to emphasise that it was carried out with local opposition, since not everybody in Catholic Spain agreed with the idea. Unlike the expulsion of the Jews from *Sepharad*, that of the Moriscos was often contested, and this, by a wide variety of figures, who ranged from clerical personages to the nobility,[111] town council members, and a large number of individuals who supported their Morisco neighbors.[112] Their expulsion occurred more than a century after the Alhambra Decree was issued. The supporters of the Moriscos often gave their reasons for objecting to the expulsions from the Spanish lands to the Crown. These opponents also created committees of ambassadors from the Spanish military arms and nobility, naming prominent figures of the time, such as Felipe Buyl, the Lord of Manises,[113] and Juan de Valterra, to address the audience at the Spanish Royal Court on behalf of the Morisco cause.[114] The expulsion from Spain was not a spontaneous event either, but a meticulous thought out and considered matter, as expressed in a letter by King Philip III to the juries and military wing of Valencia:

> Despues de averlo encomendado á Dios, y hecho encomendar mucho este negocio, confiando en su divino favor para lo que importa a su divina gloria, he resuelto que se saquen deste Reyno, y de Castilla todos los Moriscos que ay en ellos.[115]

The chronicles of Damián Fonseca (1573–1627) recount that when the decree to expel the Moriscos from Spanish soil was issued in 1609, they responded to the King by sending a junta of noble men with "gran donativo" (great donation), promising the Spanish Crown to help it fortify the Kingdom's Armada.[116] Fonseca also narrated the manner Moriscos returned "a sus errores" (to their

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111 On the Spanish nobility as defenders of the Iberian Moors see: Perry (2005), op. cit., pp. 130–132, 138, 143, 146.

112 Trevor J. Dadson, *Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain, Old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo de Calatrava*, Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2014, p. 123.

113 The Buyls were one of the most illustrious of Aragonese families, see: Albert Van De Put, *Hispano-Moresque Ware of the Fifteenth Century*, London: The Art Worker's Quarterly, 1911; and Timothy Husband, "Valencian Lusterware of the Fifteenth Century: Notes and Documents," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 1, (1970), pp. 11–19.

114 Fonseca (1612), op. cit., Libro I, Cap. I., pp. 209–210.

115 (After having entrusted it to God, and after having greatly entrusted this business, trusting in his divine favor for what matters to his divine glory, I have resolved that all the Moors be removed from this kingdom and from Castilla), "Carta de su Magestad para los Jurados y Braço Militar de Valencia," September 11, 1609, in: Ibid., p. 214.

116 Fonseca (1612), op. cit., pp. 255–265.

mistakes), in reference to their faith, which casts additional doubts on a general *taqiyyah* performance among them. Fonseca's work contributed to justifying what he considered as "the holiest and most prudent determination that a Christian King ever had," and it tells how, after their expulsion, Moriscos departed to "lands of infidels, lands of Berbers, we know they go to places of Moors."[117]

Charles V intended at all costs to avoid massive uncontrolled exits of Moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula, and Felipe III rushed the process of expulsion without forbidding them to arrive to Muslim lands, and safeguarding their path to their final destinations.[118] Manuel Lomas Cortés of the *Universitat de València* explains that the Moriscos who left Spain during the 1609 expulsion were escorted to North African ports where the Spanish Crown had its dominion, and that they were welcomed in a decent manner on arrival.[119] This corresponds with sources of the time, which indicate that in order to coordinate their displacement, royal orders were given commanding that Moriscos be treated well on their way to North Africa.[120] Thus, on September twenty-second, 1609, the Spanish Crown sent a letter to Valencia with regard to their evacuation and allowance:

> ... llevando consigo de sus haziendas muebles lo que pudieren en sus personas, para embarcarse en las galeras y navios que estan aprestados para passarlos a Berberia, a donde los desembarcarán sin que reciban maltratamiento, ni molestia en sus personas, ni lo que llevan, de obra, ni de palabra. Advirtiendo que se les proveera en ellos del bastimento que necessario fuere para su sustento durante la embarcacion [...] y el que no lo cumpliere, y excediere en un punto de lo contenido en este bando, incurra en pena de la vida, que se essecutara irremissiblemente.[121]

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117 Ibid., pp. 389, 393, 415–416.

118 Bernard Vincent, "La Geografía de la Expulsión de los Moriscos, Estudio Cuantitativo," in: Mercedes GarcíaArenal and Gerard Wiegers (Ed.), *Los Moriscos*: *Expulsión y Diáspora*: *Una Perspectiva Internacional*, Valencia: Universitat de València, 2013, p. 29.

119 Manuel Lomas Cortés, *El Proceso de la Expulsión de los Moriscos de España, 1609–1614*, València: Universitat de València, 2011, pp. 291–292.

120 Fonseca (1612), op. cit., p. 111.

121 (... taking with them from their *haciendas* furniture, that they could carry with them, to embark on the galleys and ships that are ready to pass them to Berberia, where they will disembark them without receiving mistreatment, or annoyance, on them or on whatever they carry, neither in deed or word. Warning that they will be provided with the necessary supplies for their livelihood during the journey [...] and whoever does not fulfill it, and exceeds in a point of what is contained in this ordinance, may he incur death penalty, which will be irretrievably executed), Ibid., Libro IV, Cap. III, p. 216.

The expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain was apparently a regulated enterprise in which the Spanish Crown was attentive to the wellbeing and whereabouts of those expelled. Some historiographical Latin American currents ignore such records when speaking about the equation 'Spain-Moriscos-Mexico.' However, I argue that what took place was a general influx of Moriscos to Muslim lands, because of the shared religion rather than to the territory in *Dār al-Ḥarb* (abode of war) in the distant Americas.

Jorge Gil Herrera of the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales de Paris* and Luis Fernando Bernabé Pons of the University of Alicante suggest that from the mid-sixteenth century, Moriscos from Valencia[122] and Granada journeyed, in the majority of cases, towards Istanbul, and that before their general expulsion in 1609, Moriscos had two main options: North Africa and the Ottoman Empire.[123] Similarly, Tijana Krstić of the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales de Paris* explains that among the Morisco communities within Ottoman realms, the one in Galatia was the most important, and Moriscos began to settle there from the second half of the sixteenth century.[124] As for those Moriscos who stayed in or returned to Spain, James B. Tueller of Brigham Young University Hawaii proposes that they separated themselves from their Muslim past and integrated into Christian society.[125]

In spite of this, human smuggling to the Indies was a given reality during the Colonial epoch that might hint at a potential penetration of Moriscos into Novohispanic territory. Indeed many 'New Christians' have been found amongst those entering Mexico in this way. However, we cannot know the religious affiliation of every one of them with certainty. References to Moriscos, Muslims, Arabs, or suspected individuals of Islamic affiliation found in the Mexican archives are truly few, and not significant qualitatively speaking, so as to provide evidence of an influx of Muslims. Similarly, the suggestions some scholars make of Moriscos as the architects of an organic Novohispanic Muslim tradition that was born with the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in Mex-

122 On the Muslims of Valencia see: Mark D. Meyerson, *The Muslims of Valencia in the Age of Fernando and Isabel, Between Coexistence and Crusade*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.

123 Jorge Gil Herrera and Luis F. Bernabe Pons, "Los Moriscos fuera de España: Rutas y Financiación," in: Mercedes García-Arenal (2013), op. cit., p. 215.

124 Tijana Krstić, "Los Moriscos en Estambul," in: Mercedes García-Arenal (2013), op. cit., p. 261; and Tijana Krstić, "Moriscos in Ottoman Galata, 1609–1620s," in: Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (Eds.), *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain: A Mediterranean Diaspora*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014, pp. 269–285.

125 James B. Tueller, "Los Moriscos que se Quedaron o Regresaron," in: Mercedes García-Arenal (2013), op. cit., p. 191.

ico, and developed along the Colonial period is unlikely.[126] The *Picaros*, which was a nickname designated to people selling licenses for immigration to the Indies, facilitated the smuggling. In this manner, bribery could get you in a ship to cross the Atlantic if you were in the boat of the *prohibidos*.[127] But if Moriscos were expelled with permission to carry with them their personal belongings, this might signify then that some among them probably had the means to bribe the *Picaros*, in case they wanted to reach America. Yet, the Moriscos arriving in Colonial Mexico were only a handful of few dispersed individuals. When they were sometimes judged by the Inquisition, being Moro, Muslim or Morisco was not the main accusation against them. Such is the case of Alvaro de Castrillo for instance, who in 1591 stood trial for not going to mass, for not confessing, and ultimately for being descendant of Moros; this, in spite of holding the title of *Familiar del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición*.[128]

Reports on human smuggling to Mexico can also be found in the chronicles of Bartolomé de las Casas. His records show that De las Casas requested the Spanish monarchs to remedy the smuggling situation in New Spain, and advised them to give orders to Iberian navigators not to carry anyone by contraband, or else be punished by the law.[129] Contraband and smuggling were thus at reach of anyone who was able to afford these. On Moriscos' capital at the time of their expulsion from Spain, Fonseca recounted:

> Lo principal que sacaron del Reyno fue oro y plata, de lo qual yuan cargados, principalmente las mugeres, las quales lleuauan la mayor parte cosida en los vestidos, y muchas dellas en las faxas con que se ceñían [...] Trataron los Moriscos con el Virrey de Tremecen (lugar de Moros, que está dos jornadas de Oran) que los recibiesse por vasallos, lo qual hizo de buena gana, porque sabia, que venían cargados de oro y plata.[130]

126 Logroño Narbona, Pinto, and Karam (2015), op. cit., p. 2; Medina (2019), op. cit., p. 1; Pastor de María y Campos, (2011), op. cit., p. 54; Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 185 (n. 4); and Zeraoui (2011), op. cit., p. 337.

127 On the subject see: Louis Cardaillac, "Le Problème Morisque en Amérique," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, Vol. 12, (1976), pp. 283–306.

128 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 150, Exp. 2, "Información acerca de que Alvaro de Castrillo, familiar del Santo Oficio, no oye misa ni se confiesa y desciende de Moros," Acapulco, 1591.

129 Bartolome de las Casas, *En Defensa de los Indios*, Barcelona: Biblioteca de Cultura Andaluza, 1985, p. 117.

130 (The main thing they took out of the kingdom was gold and silver, with which they were loaded, mainly women, who wore most of them sewn on the dresses, and many of them in the sashes with which they were girded [...] The Moriscos dealt with the Viceroy of Treme-

Gil Herrera and Bernabé Pons explain an interesting aspect with regard to the Moriscos' monetary goods: "There were numerous cases of Moriscos who not only managed to get away with their lives and wealth, but even managed to thrive outside Spain."[131] *Judeoconversos* participated in the smuggling of these moneys, and for a commission, they were willing to help Moriscos smuggle their capital outside Spain through their extensive network of commercial relations. This was a collaboration that generally satisfied both sides.[132] Considering this, money appears not to have been a hindrance in case Moriscos had indeed wanted to move and settle in Colonial Mexico, just as Protestants and Jews did. The main obstacle points instead to the social, theological, and ethnical adherence or potential *ʿAṣabīyah* of the Moriscos, which was completely different from colonial societies in the Americas. The Hispanist Francisco Márquez Villanueva (1931–2013) also emphasised Morisco capital and signaled the Jews as agents who contributed to the smuggling of Morisco economic wealth out of Spain, which he coined as an "alianza táctica entre moriscos y conversos."[133]

Slavery in Colonial Mexico is another aspect that is believed to have contributed to the developing of an Islamic tradition in New Spain. The *Ms Espagnol 174*, housed at the *Bibliothèque national de France*, contains a reference dated November thirteenth, 1550, on this matter: "para que los esclavos berberiscos se hechen de las Yndias."[134] This might indicate a real issue that the Spanish authorities had to deal with in the Indies due to the presence there of Berber slaves. Indeed a seemingly potential problem for the Church and the Crown. Mary E. Perry states: "Usually lacking the wealth to buy a forged genealogy showing their purity of blood, some Moriscos came as slaves who became free in the realms of New Spain or Peru."[135] Historical evidence points to a distinct line of reasoning that permits us to question the general inferences. Edicts and

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cen (A Moorish place, which is two days from Oran) to receive them as vassals, which he did willingly, because he knew that they were laden with gold and silver.), Fonseca (1612), op. cit., Lib. v, Cap. i, pp. 273, 276.

131 Jorge Gil Herrera and Luis Fernando Bernabé Pons, "The Moriscos Outside Spain: Routes and Financing," in: García-Arenal and Wiegers (2014), op. cit., pp. 227–228.

132 Ibid., p. 228.

133 (A tactical alliance between Moriscos and conversos), Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "La Criptohistoria Morisca (Los otros conversos)," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, Núm. 390, (Diciembre 1982), pp. 517–534.

134 (So that the Berber slaves be thrown out of the Indies), *Ms Espagnol 174: Copies de cédules et ordonnances royales relatives au gouvernement des provinces du Pérou*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 174*, XVIe siècle, ff. 75v–77v.

135 Perry (2005), op. cit., p. 179.

secondary literature suggest that these type of rulings were part of a series of preventive moves that the Spanish Crown took, rather than a proof of sustained influx of slaves of Muslim origin in the Indies. Among the *prohibidos*, finding Muslims in Mesoamerica was in fact not the norm, but the exception. But if the Moriscos presented themselves to the Spanish Crown with a "gran donativo" when they were confronted with expulsion from Spain, and if they were allowed to leave the Iberian Peninsula with their monetary goods, how could they have arrived as slaves in the Indies as a consequence of not being able, due to usual lack of economic resources, to pay for the genealogical services of the *linajudos* or to bribe the *picaros* to obtain their favors? Garrido Aranda explained that the *Casa de Contratación* in Sevilla began to register records of slaves in the Americas from 1532. It suddenly stopped in 1540, issuing in this time, a total of sixty-eight licenses for slaves, of whom only two were men.[136] He further stated:

> The meaning given to the 'white-slave' is wide, since we can already see in 1541 how a Mulatto slave was called 'white-slave.' Moreover, the requirement for some individuals to be enslaved was that the slave needed to be baptized at the age of ten. In case of issuing licenses to female slaves of Moorish origin, these were limited and when the permit expired, they had to return to the Peninsula, as was the case of Ruy Dias in 1576.[137]

Professor Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán (1908–1996) explained that the majority of such slaves arrived in the New World with the necessary royal licenses.[138] This means that if an individual was granted the license to move to the Americas, and/or to take his slaves with him, the latter, by royal decree, were not supposed to be Muslim, Jew or Protestant, at least officially. Furthermore, slaves were often under rigorous scrutiny by the ecclesiastical authorities and their possessors. From this point of view, the extent to which the few Morisco slaves in Mexico might have contributed to building an Islamic tradition there is rather nominal.

During the seventeenth century, an epoch in which heresy was severely punished in Mexico, the city of Puebla de los Ángeles was the main competitor

136 Garrido Aranda (1983), op. cit., p. 506.

137 Antonio Garrido Aranda, *Moriscos e Indios, Precedentes Hispánicos de la Evangelización en México*, México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2013, pp. 127–128.

138 Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, "The Slave Trade in Mexico," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3, (1944), pp. 412–431.

of Ciudad de México for slave trade. Yet, Morisco slaves there were rare.[139] In the preceding century, the situation seems to have been of a likewise nature. Fray Alonso de Montúfar (1489–1572), Mexico's second archbishop, provides some information on the Novohispanic slave trade and the faith of Black slaves through a letter dated June thirtieth, 1560, to the King of Spain. In his correspondence, Montúfar informs him that slavery in Mexico was not exclusive to African individuals, but also to Mexican natives. With regard to the former, he stated that they volunteered to accept the tenets of the Christian faith, to a greater extent than the natives did: "No sabemos qué causa haya para que los negros sean cautivos más que los indios, pues ellos de buena voluntad reciven el Santo Evangelio, y no hacen guerra a los Cristianos."[140]

In an investigation carried out in 1578, the *Real Audiencia de México* inquired into the number of Morisco slaves in Mexico City. The research resulted in "the laughable number of four women, who were sent to the Metropolis afterwards."[141] Although Mexico's *Archivo Nacional de la Nación* treasures very rich and vast documentation related to the Inquisition, it fails to provide for a wider account of Muslim slaves in New Spain. It contains a few dozen processes concerning Moriscos in total.[142] Then, why equal slave to Muslim? Miguel Sierra Silva, of the University of Rochester explains: "Iberians had historically linked Africans with Islam, thereby equating skin color with a politico-religious adversary."[143] On the other hand, since the early period of Colonial Mexico, the Novohispanic ecclesiastical authorities argued that such generalisations lacked validity.[144] A similar approach—'slaves equal Muslim'—is given to the native peoples of the Canary Islands, who were often trafficked as slaves too, and many times found their way to the Americas. Yet, it must be

139 Miguel Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico, Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531–1706*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 34.

140 (We do not know what reason there is for Blacks to be held captive more than Indians, since they, willingly receive the Holy Gospel, and do not make war on Christians), "Carta del Obispo de México al Rey sobre los escrúpulos existentes por esclavizar a los Negros después de haberse liberado a los Indios," Mexico, June 30, 1560, in: Manuel Lucena Salmoral, *Regulación de la esclavitud negra en las colonias de América Española (1503–1886): Documentos para su estudio*, Alcalá de Henares, Madrid: Universidad de Alcalá, Universidad de Murcia, 2005, p. 88.

141 Garrido Aranda (1983), op. cit., p. 509.

142 Cardaillac (1976), op. cit., p. 296.

143 Sierra Silva (2018), op. cit., p. 41.

144 Ibid.; on Black slave trade in Colonial Mexico see: Úrsula Camba Ludlow, *Imaginarios ambiguos, realidades contradictorias: conductas y representaciones de los negros y mulatos novohispanos, Siglos XVI y XVII*, México: Colegio de México, 2008.

remembered that they were not Mudéjar or Moors, and did not share the characteristics of Moriscos on the Iberian Peninsula.[145]

Sources examined so far permit us to see that the Mexican Inquisition was not as rigid against heresy as its Iberian homologue. This should mean that we can imagine greater freedom of movement for Moriscos in New Spain, at least compared to Jews or Protestants. Common wisdom may say so, but archival documentation gives us a different account, and points at a clear scarcity of cases as far as the Moriscos go. In spite of this fact, we cannot deny that some dispersed Moriscos and Muslim individuals might have indeed arrived in Mexico during the earliest phases of the Colonial Era, and probably too after their expulsion from Spain, besides those recorded in the archives. However, their presence in *Nueva España* remained largely unfelt, perhaps because their numbers were not significant enough to cause an impact on that society, or their deeds were not of social relevance, or their adventures there focused on finding earthly riches rather than spiritual gains.[146] Whatever the case may be, they did not produce a substantial echo across the times and spaces of Novohispanic history to enable a recorded presence in Mexico.

Therefore, it is not possible to claim the presence of an Islamic 'little tradition' in Colonial Mexico by pointing at files from the Mexican archives. The references contain words, that if seen independently on blank paper, might signify or infer Muslimness, but once the content of the dossiers is analysed together, we realise that in most instances the material is not related to anything Islamic. In simpler words, categorising archival records by a methodological approach in which the classification is based on vague nomenclatures rather than on content and essence, deviates from historical veracity and misleads the investigation. Archival sources should not be equivocated by presenting nomenclatural findings as ultimate proofs of an Islamic Novohispanic tradition. For instance, we find in the *Fondo Inquisición* of the AGN a process against a man named Pedro Fructuoso Juárez. In 1577, he was judged because he accused a man named Sancho de Aldana of being 'Lutheran.'[147] If we were to take only the title or general description of this record we could unleash our imagination to many places and occurrences, but if the file is not examined thoroughly, and its content does not give veracity of the allegation, how can we be sure

145 Lomas Cortés (2011), op. cit., p. 446.

146 For instance, from the 147 volumes of the AGN collection "Real fisco de la Inquisición (97)," I found no reference to Islām or Muslims.

147 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 46, Exp. 18, "Proceso contra Pedro Fructuoso Juárez por haber llamado Luterano y penitenciado a Sancho de Aldana," Teotlalco, 1577.

that this is not a simple accusation as those have previously mentioned in this chapter? Can these types of instances serve to build the existence of Protestantism, in this case, as a Novohispanic 'little tradition'? The alleged Islamic tradition of New Spain appears hence as mere fiction in the archives rather than a subject of historicity, since claiming its existence without the elemental primary sources to sustain it, relates more to a simple act of faith. Finally, it is perhaps worth remembering that in his *De Inventione*, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) stated: "Historia est gesta res."[148] This is to say, "History is the literally true record of actual facts." For History as an academic discipline, tracing facts to their source and giving a fair account of them is necessary. Doing so will permit us to illustrate events in a manner that is closer to veracity than to fiction. Ultimately, this is mandatory in order to avoid propaganda from becoming historiography.

148 C.L.F. Panckouckee (Ed.), *Bibliothéque Latine-Française, Oeuvres Complètes de Cicéron*, Tome deuxième, Paris: Imprimerie Panckoucke, 1840, pp. 68–69.

CHAPTER 3

Taqiyyah, Fatwas, and *Cédulas Reales*: A Novohispanic Crypto-Islām between Paradigm, Folk Tale, and Faith

A lot has been written about the Spanish Inquisition and on those persecuted on the Iberian Peninsula as well as in the Americas. However, when it comes to the first stages of the Holy Tribunal, several lacunas can be found in the historiography. This is partly due to the vast amount of primary sources that have vanished through time and of equal importance, to paradigms and the selective research of many scholars. They concentrate on the institution itself, and in other instances on the victims, and tend to bypass those amongst the 'forbidden' who survived. They also often ignore the *modus operandi* employed by these survivors, on both sides of the Atlantic, in order to preserve their life and social positions. Lastly, and equally significant, is the traditional academic rejection of genealogy as a branch of human knowledge at the service of historical analysis. When it comes down to the crypto-religious traditions of New Spain, this is fundamental because the purchase of genealogical treatises played a crucial role for any individual seeking to move to the Americas, and to whom travelling there was prohibited. However, it is common that in every field where documentation is lacking, imagination flies, and with imagination myths are created. When speaking of myths and Moors as a subject of study, Professor Serafín Fanjul's work *Al-Andalus contra España: la Forja de un Mito* (2000) comes to mind. In his book, the Spanish Arabist of the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* defines as a "grave falsificación histórica" (grave historical falsification) the act of pretending that the Muslim community from Andalusia was of Spanish origin, simply for having been born on Iberian soil.[1] Similarly, Mexican scholars justify the absence of evidence concerning the Novohispanic Muslim tradition on grounds of *taqiyyah* performance.

The settling of Iberians in the Americas was not exclusive to Catholic Spaniards, although they were the main players on the field. Primary sources give testimony of the arrival in the New World of adherents to other religions

1 Serafín Fanjul, *Al-Andalus contra España: La Forja de un Mito*, Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, 2002, p. 112.

 | DOI:10.1163/9789004510319_005

besides Catholicism, many of whom converted to Christianity in Spain, either by will, force, or convenience. When searching for *conversos* in the Americas it is possible to find plenty of references to Jews, few to Protestants, but "practically nothing [or very dim information] referent to Moriscos."[2] On the latter, Fanjul states something worthy of our attention: "Estos criptomoriscos no dejaron huellas distintivas una vez en América."[3] So why do scholars insist on the existence of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition that existed through time due to its religious concealment? The hypothesis that prompts this often responds by pointing to a Mexican crypto-Islām as a result of *taqiyyah* performance. This illation is outlined by some proposers in the following manner:

1. In thinking of Islam in Latin America, it is useful to note two processes that are parallel yet distinct: one, the presence of Islam as a religious tradition in the region and, the other, its visibility in the public sphere [...] Given the late abolition of the Holy Inquisition in 1820 and the controversial institutionalization of religious freedom in Mexico in 1860, it is perhaps not surprising that these early Muslim populations did not generate institutional spaces or a visible presence in the Mexican public sphere.[4]
2. [...] los musulmanes encontraron dificultades para profesar el islam [in Colonial Mexico] y se vieron motivados a la conversión al cristianismo [...] Esta etapa puede considerarse como una especie de una etapa de "disimulo obligado" o taquiya, y abarca el periodo que va desde la conquista hasta el triunfo de la reforma liberal de 1833. Esta fase se vincula con la inmigración de mudéjares y esclavos islamizados durante el periodo virreinal.[5]
3. En la segunda etapa se puede seguir hablando de un disimulo pertinente, y abarca desde el triunfo de la Reforma liberal hasta la década de los ochenta del siglo XX. En el proceso de esta ocultación de la fe islámica no sólo los inmigrantes cambiaron sus nombres y apellidos, sino que muchas familias, por lo regular libanesas, ya no educaron a sus hijos bajo los preceptos del islam [...] Se debe tomar en cuenta también que la pos-

2 Ibid., p. 81.

3 (These crypto-Moriscos did not leave distinctive traces once in America), Ibid., p. 82.

4 Pastor de María y Campos, (2015), op. cit., pp. 144, 145.

5 (... Muslims found it difficult to profess Islām and they were motivated to convert to Christianity [...] This stage can be considered as a stage of "obliged dissimulation" or *taqiyyah*, and it encompasses the period that goes from the Conquest [of Mexico, 1519–1521] to the Liberal Reform of 1833. This stage is linked to the immigration of Mudéjares and African Muslim slaves during the viceregal period), Medina (2014), op. cit., p. 36.

> guerra (1945–1947) así como la creación del Estado de Israel (1948) y la eventual ocupación de Palestina y la guerra civil del Líbano (1975) también motivaron la ocultación.[6]

With regard to the first assumption, we have seen the historical, academic and methodological complexity behind the hypothesis that a 'Novohispanic Islamic tradition' existed in the previous chapter. I found no traces that made such a religious tradition in Novohispanic public spaces visible. Furthermore, even if not widely perceived, Mexican colonial society should have witnessed this somehow through the passage of time. With Jews and Protestants, not only were synagogues denounced,[7] but also Bibles (some of which were even translated in Nahuatl) confiscated.

Besides academic circles, reports in prominent Mexican newspapers affirm that the practise of *taqiyyah* by Muslims in Mexico has been performed not only since colonial times, but as late as the decade of the 1980s. These journalistic works also propose that the Islamic Revolution of Iran (1978–1979) caused Mexican Shi'ites to leave *taqiyyah*; and they assert that the lineage and origin of the Shi'ite community of contemporary Mexico emanates from the *Aljamas*[8] that collected taxes for the Spanish Crown.[9] Thus *El Excelsior* reported on January first, 2016, ignoring, willingly or not, that Muslims in Spain were not Shi'ites, but Sunnis. However, like their co-religionists in the Maġrib, Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula were adherents to the *Mālikī maḏhab*, and not to the *Shīʿeh-ye Davāzdah-Emāmī* (Twelver Shi'ism), the principal version of Islām practised in Iran and by the Mexican Shi'ites today. The abuse of the word *taqiyyah* in academic and journalistic works should serve as a red light for researchers. This Islamic principle, and how the Muslims of Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain understood it deserves further examination,

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6 (In the second stage, it is possible to continue talking about a pertinent dissimulation, and it spans from the triumph of the Liberal Reform until the decade of the eighties of the twentieth century. In the process of this concealment of the Islamic faith, not only did the immigrants change their names and surnames, but many families, usually of Lebanese origin, did not educate their children under the precepts of Islām [...] It must be taken into account also that the postwar (1945–1947), creation of the State of Israel (1948) and the eventual occupation of Palestine, as well as the civil war in Lebanon (1975), also motivated this practice), Ibid., pp. 36–38.

7 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 335, Exp. 86, "Borrador de la denuncia de que la Sinagoga estaba en la calle de Santo Domingo," México, 1622.

8 *Aljama* is an Arabic term used to designate the communities of Muslims and Jews under Christian rule on the Iberian Peninsula.

9 Carmen Álvarez, "El Islam se expande por América," *Excelsior*, January 1, 2016, available at: http://www.excelsior.com.mx/global/2016/01/16/1069164, (accessed March 31, 2020).

one that goes beyond its grammatical definition. Furthermore, the practice of *taqiyyah* by Iberian Moriscos is a subject that cries out for new debates and fresh historiographical approaches.

How should we understand this Islamic principle? The *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* defines *taqiyyah* as a term that is etymologically linked to "piety and devotion."[10] Etan Kohlberg, Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and specialist on Shi'ism, explains that *taqiyyah* is an essential facet and hallmark of Shi'ism, which in many instances, even raised this principle to the level of an article of faith.[11] While this mainly Shi'ite practise was shaped, for the most part, by political circumstances in the course of history and formalised by the corpus of *Emāmī* doctrine, it was not implemented during every period of hardship that the Shi'ites faced. Furthermore, its meaning and the Islamic views on it are more complex than this. The generally held view among non-Shi'ite Muslims is that *taqiyyah* is a central tenet in the doctrine of the *Shīʿatu ʿAlī*. Kohlberg divides the concept of *taqiyyah*, from a point of view of motive, into "one which is based on fear of external enemies, and another which is based on the need to conceal secret doctrines from the uninitiated."[12] He adds, 'it is a method of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*'. Kohlberg calls the first type of *taqiyyah* "prudential," while he names the second as a "non-prudential," and explains its definition as follows:

> Broadly speaking, two kinds of prudential *taqiyya* may be distinguished. The difference between them is one of degree: the first is passive and consists in concealment, for instance certain beliefs or texts of the identity of certain Imams. The second, which I shall call 'dissimulation,' is characterized by the use of words or actions intended to mislead one's opponents.[13]

Professor Kohlberg seems to favour the practical approach to *taqiyyah* over its normative procedures, and explains that Shi'ite attitudes towards this Islamic practise were fashioned as much by political and historical circumstances, as by the growth of an increasingly intricate body of Shi'ite doctrine. Whereas Ignác

10 Richard Martin and Said Amir Arjomand (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Vol. 1, A–L, New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004, p. 678.

11 Etan Kohlberg, "Some Imāmī-shīʿī Views on Taqiyya," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (Jul.-Sep., 1975), pp. 395–402.

12 Etan Kohlberg, "Taqiyya in Shīʿī Theology and Religion," in: Hans G. Kippenberg and Guy G. Stroumsa (Eds.), *Secrecy and Concealment, Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions*, Leiden, New York, London: E.J. Brill, 1995, pp. 345–380.

13 Ibid., p. 346.

Goldziher (1850–1921), considered to be the founder of modern Islamic Studies in Europe, defined *taqiyyah* as a practise that is accepted as legitimate by all Muslims on the authority derived from Qur'ān 3:28: "The believers should not make the disbelievers their allies rather than other believers. Anyone who does such a thing will isolate himself completely from God, except when you need to protect yourselves from them."[14] Shi'ites developed this Quranic principle into a fundamental doctrine, and its observance became an essential duty for them. Goldziher further explained that Shi'ites regard *taqiyyah*, which was forced upon them, as a form of martyrdom and as a principle that constantly feeds their hatred of those inflicting difficulties on them.[15]

As for the exegetes of the Qur'ān, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Qurṭubī (1214–1273), a Mālikī scholar from thirteenth century Cordoba, elaborated an exhaustive *tafsīr* (exegesis) known as *Al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (The General Judgments/Provisions of the Qur'ān). In his compendium, Al-Qurṭubī provides a robust reference to the Islamic principle of *taqiyyah*. The main focus of Al-Qurṭubī's magnum opus is on the rulings and judgments to be found in the Quranic text, but its scope and range is not limited to verses concerning legal issues only. Rather, it provides a general interpretation of the entire Quranic corpus from a Mālikī standpoint. His exegesis on Qur'ān 3:28 explains the implementation of *taqiyyah* through a Ḥadīth, which reads: "Ibn Abbās said that [*taqiyyah*] is to speak with his tongue and his heart reassured with faith; he shall not be killed, nor will he be sinning."[16] Al-Qurṭubī hints to the duration of this practise and illustrates it through another Ḥadīth: "And Al-Ḥasan said *taqiyyah* is permissible for a person until the Day of Resurrection [*Al-Yawm al-Qiyāmah*, namely, the end of times]."[17] He furnishes us with an additional explanation on Qur'ān 16:106, which expounds: "Whoever disbelieves God after his faith; except those who were forced [to disbelief] and his heart is content with the faith."[18] Al-Qurṭubī's approach to this Quranic passage implies that one who utters statements of disbelief, because he is being forced to do so either by torture or menace, but his heart refuses to accept what he is saying

14 M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A New English Translation*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 36.

15 Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981, pp. 180–181, 217.

16 Li'Abī ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *Al-ǧāmiʿu li-Aḥkāmi Al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 4, Al-Qāhiraï: Matba'ate Dāri Al-Kutub Al-Miṣrīyya, 1937, p. 57.

17 Ibid.

18 Li'Abī ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *Al-ǧāmiʿu li-Aḥkāmi Al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 9, Al-Qāhiraï: Matba'ate Dāri Al-Kutub Al-Miṣrīyya, 1939, p. 180.

is, actually, at peace with his faith in God and is ultimately performing an act of self-preservation. This therefore is the essence of *taqiyyah* according to Al-Ḥasan. Despite this, such 'consent' is not an ideal thing for a Muslim believer, and there are instances in the *Aḥadith* which demonstrate that indeed some pious Muslims remained steadfast in their profession of Islām, while others preferred to take advantage of this permission to safeguard themselves.

While one cannot deny that Muslims in Spain may have known this Islamic tenet in theory, it is an equally undeniable fact that it may have been largely foreign to them in practise, especially so since it was the Shi'ites who were more acquainted with it.[19] In spite of this, the concept of *taqiyyah* seems to be abusively applied as an absolute truth relevant to New Spain, particularly when Mexico's presumed Islamic historical depth is presented. Generally, researchers dealing with the history of Muslims in Spain and the Americas have accepted the notion that they performed *taqiyyah* in the Spanish worlds. As consequence, they assume that this Islamic principle permitted Muslims to deny their faith in the face of the dangers of the Inquisition, while allowing them to preserve it through time in diverse spaces. The French historian Louis Cardaillac (1933–2015) presented this idea as: "La taqiyya, défense des Morisques contre l'Inquisition."[20] For this French scholar, the Muslims of Spain possessed a "remarkable theoretical instrument" which although more developed amongst Shi'ites, might have been proposed to them in 1504. According to him, a Mālikī scholar named Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad bin Abī Jumʿah al-Maghrāwī al-Wahrānī (?–1511), commonly known today as the *Muftī of Oran*,[21] issued a *fatwā* (resolution to a legal question) to this effect. So for Cardaillac, *taqiyyah* was a fundamental facet of Moriscos' beliefs and practise.

In 1964, Leonard P. Harvey shed light on the subject through an article entitled, "Crypto-Islam in sixteenth-century Spain."[22] In it he proposed that a *fatwā* was issued dated 1504. This clerical ordinance supposedly commanded Moors

19 Shi'ites were present in Spain, but in very small and scattered groups and their sociorelligious contributions were not tangible. No indication has been found so far of their denomination in the *Shīʿatu ʿAlī*, namely, the partisans of ʿAlī ibn Abī Tālib (599–661 C.E.). It is therefore unfeasible to connect the practice of *taqiyyah* among Sunni Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula with the fraction of Shi'ites who were present in Spain.

20 (*Taqiyyah*, the defense of the Moriscos against the Inquisition), Louis Cardaillac, *Morisques et Chrétiens, Zaghouan*, Tunis: Centre d'études et de recherches ottomanes, morisques, de documentation et d'information, 1995, p. 76.

21 Louis Cardaillac, *Les Morisques et l'Inquisition*, Paris: Publisud, 1990, p. 89.

22 Leonard P. Harvey, "Crypto-Islam in Sixteenth-Century Spain," in: *Actas del Primer Congreso de Estudios Árabes e Islámicos*, Madrid: Comité Permanente del Congreso de Estudios Árabes e Islámicos, 1964, pp. 163–179.

to take up *taqiyyah* across Spain. In his work entitled *Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614* (2005), Harvey confirmed this by stating: "The key theological document for the study of Spanish Islam in this final period is a *jurisconsultum fatwa*, a considered legal opinion provided on request, handed down by a mufti in Oran in 1504."[23] The Islamic edict that Cardaillac and Harvey mention, whose authorship is attributed to the same *Muftī*,[24] has appeared as a key document in the literature on the Moriscos. In an article that Harvey published in 1995, he mentioned that he decided to utilise the term *taqiyyah* for the following reason: "Para caracterizar el modo en el cual los moriscos sunníes—bajo persecución cristiana en la España del siglo XVI—ocultaban sistemáticamente sus verdades creencias."[25] From this perspective, the concept of *taqiyyah* has served as a systemic and organic solution to the inquisitorial problem that Moriscos faced in Spain. However Harvey provided a riveting remark, which is worth quoting here:

> Tenía presente que no existía testimonio alguno de la palabra árabe misma [*taqiyyah*] en ningún texto de al-Andalus de fecha relevante (o incluso de ninguna palabra romance que aparentemente transmitiera su significado). Desde luego no aparece en la *fatwà* árabe que era la fuente principal de mi comunicación [...] No necesitaba haberme preocupado: en las publicaciones de temas moriscos de más o menos los últimos veinte años, alguna mención de la *taqiyyah* ha venido a ser casi una necesidad ritual.[26]

Since Cardaillac and Harvey published their work, historians "have stressed that, in setting out these instructions, al-Maghrāwī developed the concept of

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23 Harvey (2005), op. cit., p. 60.

24 He is generally believed to be from North Africa, but some scholars consider him to be Andalusian from the Spanish town of Almagro. For a reference see: Devin Stewart, "The Identity of the *Muftī* of Oran, Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad B. Abī Jumʿah Al-Maghrāwī al-Wahrānī," *Al-Qanṭara*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (2006), pp. 265–301.

25 (To characterize the manner in which Sunni Moriscos, under Christian persecution in sixteenth-century Spain, systematically occulted their true beliefs), Leonard P. Harvey, "Una referencia explícita a la legalidad de la práctica de la 'taqiya' por los moriscos," *Sharq Al-Andalus*, No. 12, (1995), pp. 561–653.

26 (I was aware that there was no testimony of the Arabic word itself [*taqiyyah*] in any text of al-Andalus of relevant date (or even of any Romance word that apparently conveyed its meaning). It certainly does not appear in the Arabic fatwa, which was the main source of my communication [...] I did not need to have worried: in publications on Morisco themes of the last twenty years or so, some mention of the *taqiyyah* has become almost a ritual necessity), Ibid., p. 561.

taqiyyah as prudence in a hostile environment."[27] Conversely, García-Arenal provides an example which relates to the Moriscos of Cuenca, and indicates that their dissimulation might have been related to the force of circumstances they faced *vis-à-vis* the Inquisition, rather than to knowledge of religious doctrine per se.[28] Therefore, I will insist that first, it is necessary to qualify this concept and not to generalise it, especially because the Muslim community in Spain did not deny or hide its faith in an organic and systematic manner. The Moros were not the Biblical *Nicodemus* of the Iberian Peninsula, a personage who the Biblical story depicted as Pharisee during the day, while he visited Jesus at night, who he followed in secret.

I would like to point out that the term 'taqiyyah' was never used in the original source that Harvey and Cardaillac present. The *Bibliothèque Méjanes* in Aix-en-Provence, France contains a complete *Aljamiado* version of this document. On analysing it, we see that the words of al-Maghrāwī do not appear as a general ecclesiastical command to the entirety of Iberian Moors through which he was ordering them to perform the Islamic principle of *taqiyyah*. Rather it was aimed at a select group, probably with the intention of bringing about a frontal resistance to the prominent Muftī of Fez, Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā bin Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Wāḥid bin ʿAlī al-Wansharīsī. This Mufti had ordered the Andalusian Moors in 1491, through a *fatwā*, to abandon the *Dār al-Ḥarb*, of which Spain was believed to be part. In doing so, he was using this Islamic edict to forbid their voluntary residence under non-Muslim rule, or risk being punished by divine providence.[29] Hence, al-Maghrāwī's letter, rather than reflecting a broad institutionalisation and command of the Islamic principle of *taqiyyah* upon the entire community of Muslims in Spain, points at an illustration of possible theological rivalries between high ranking clerics.

Al-Wansharīsī was not the first Islamic important figure, or the only jurist, to have addressed such types of theological issues.[30] However, since his compilation of judicial consultations includes more than 2144 Islamic edicts of relevant historical interest, this enormous corpus contributes to improving our knowl-

27 David Thomas and John Chesworth (Eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 6 Western Europe (1500–1600), Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014, p. 69.

28 Mercedes García-Arenal, *Inquisición y moriscos: Los procesos del Tribunal de Cuenca*, Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1987, pp. 101–102.

29 Abu ʾl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī, *Kitāb al-Miʿyār al-Muʿrib wa-l-Jāmiʿ al-Muġrib ʿan Fatāwā Āhl Ifrīqiya wa-l-Andalus wa-l-Maġrib*, (Ed. Muḥammad Hajji, Vol. 11), Ar-Ribāṭ: Ministry of Awqāf and Islamic Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco, 1981–1983, pp. 119–141.

30 Jocelyn Hendrickson, "The Islamic Obligation to Emigrate: Al-Wansharīsī's Asnā al-Matājir Reconsidered," *Ph.D. Thesis*, Emory University, 2009, p. 12.

edge and understanding of the Muslims of Late Medieval Spain.[31] Unfortunately, their study is often absent in scholarly writings dealing with the subject of Islām in Colonial Mexico. As for the *Fatwā of Oran* and its author, Bernabé Pons mentions an interesting point that I believe should be considered when studying *taqiyyah* and crypto-Islām on the Iberian Peninsula and in the Americas:

> Since the creation of Al-Wahrani's document, the minimum echo of his fatwa in the entire *Maghreb*, or in the East does not exist. Nothing, not a single commentary or critique. Al Wansharisi continued being considered as one among the top Islamic jurists of his time; whereas the Mufti of Oran would be known only in the twentieth century[32]—[when Jean Cantineau (1899–1956) found the Aljamiado version of the document containing this fatwa at the *Bibliothèque Méjanes* in Aix-en-Provence, France, and published it in 1927.[33]]

Therefore, in light of the primary sources and the conclusions of specialists, I find it difficult to support the Muftī of Oran's letter as a *fatwā* which supposedly ordered the Iberian Moors to practise *taqiyyah* actively, and because of which Moriscos in Colonial Mexico could have adopted this Islamic principle. This is particularly because of the lack of reverberation that this document had in the lives of Muslims in the Spanish worlds of the epoch in question, and what is more, due to the evident absence of empirical knowledge of *taqiyyah* by both Mudéjares and Moriscos in Early Modern Spain. Furthermore, the fact that nobody seems to speak about it after it was issued opens a new interrogation. If nobody spoke about it, how can we infer then, that this Islamic edict is what launched the Iberian Muslims into a full-fledged *taqiyyah* practise on both sides of the Atlantic?

As Thomas and Chesworth point out: "Neither the formulation of the original question nor any information about the people who asked it has survived; [and] it adopts a view that is opposite to majority Mālikī opinion, which recommends Muslims to leave *Dar al-Kufr*."[34] As a result, it is hard to attest this

31 For an illustration see: Vincent Lagardère, *Histoire et Société en Occident Musulman au Moyen Âge, Analyse du Mi'yar d'al-Wansharisi*, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1995, p. 17.

32 Bernabé Pons (2013), op. cit., p. 498.

33 Jean Cantineau, "Lettre du Moufti d'Oran aux Musulmans d'Andalousie," *Journal Asiatique*, Vol. CCX, (January–March, 1927), pp. 1–17.

34 Thomas and Chesworth (2014), op. cit., p. 69.

letter's influence upon the Moors in Spain altogether, and even harder to measure its influence on Moriscos in Novohispanic lands. If the document had such a juridical importance in Islamic matters, which were vital to the lives of Iberian and Novohispanic Muslims, why do we not witness the manuscript's content echoing in other sources in Mexico as well as Spain? In fact, the contrary occurs. However, if this document was indeed a *fatwā*, then what Professor Harvey said might be right: "The *fatwa* could have been limited only to certain areas of Spain, since the interpretations of the Muslim law outside of the Iberian Peninsula were far from the views of the Mufti of Oran."[35] In holding this perspective as true, we should ask how could a letter, in which the purpose of the content is questionable, be the grounds for a general *taqiyyah*, when apparently it was not even directed to the entire Muslim community of Spain?

An additional aspect to consider is that the nature of such *fatwā* would contradict the common position of the main Islamic jurists of the epoch, namely, 'to immigrate'—a theological vision derived from the verses in Qur'ān 4:97, which read as follows:

> When the angels take the souls of those who have wronged themselves, they ask them, 'what circumstances were you in?' They reply, 'we were oppressed in this land,' and the angels say, 'but was God's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate to some other place?' These people will have Hell as their refuge, an evil destination.[36]

The previously cited Quranic verse is the Islamic base for immigration when a Muslim is living in *Dār al-Ḥarb* territory, of which the Hispanic world of sixteenth to nineteenth centuries could be righteously considered as an integral part. This Quranic principle makes it harder to assert that Muslims in Spain had chosen America, to where Moriscos allegedly streamed, as a preferred destination at their expulsion from Spain. Furthermore, when this Quranic passage is placed *vis-à-vis* the *Fatwā of Oran*, we cannot afford not to think of the following: for a Muftī to state that Islām could be served and preserved by staying put under the Inquisition and its demands in the 'abode of war', instead of doing what al-Wansharīsī commanded, based on the Quranic command, would that not imply a bold innovation? If so, is not innovation or *Bid'ah* forbidden in Islamic Orthodoxy? This may make us reconsider, and question if it was a *fatwā* at all. In this regard, Abdelkhalek Cheddadi of the Mohammed V University, in

35 Harvey (2005), op. cit., p. 64.
36 Abdel Haleem (2005), op. cit., p. 60.

Rabat, Morocco explains in his article "*Émigrer ou rester …*" (2009), that the text of the Muftī of Oran lacks two fundamental elements of all *fatāwā*: firstly, this concerns the mention of the problem at the beginning of the script (*Istiftā'*[37]) and secondly, the support of his position in previous juridical texts. In Cheddadi's opinion, the *fatwā* of the Muftī of Oran is more a recommendation and advice letter, rather than an Islamic edict per se.[38] This may be right because the concerned *fatwā*, as it is found in the *Aljamiado* manuscript at the *Bibliothèque Méjanes*, reads:

> Eshta esh untarashlado da una shantansiya i rrashbuashta ka invyo el Mufti da Wahran alosh da l'Andalusia y esh lo que she shigua: Alhamdulilah Ama Ba'ad: Nuashtorosh armanosh, losh cuardosh shobra shu ad-Din.[39]

As Cheddadi suggested, this message resembles a familiar form of addressing the receiver of the document, and little does it resemble a religious edict. Although at first sight the word 'shantansiya' (sentence), which is written at the opening of the document, might cause us to believe that indeed it may be a *fatwā* or a legal, theological edict or sentence, yet, at the end it says: "Akaboshe lakarta de rashbueshta i konshuelo ke inviyo el Mufti de Wahran a losh dal' Andalusia kuando losh hizieron hazer krishtinosh."[40] Let us remember that a *fatwā* is not a 'letter of consolation,' but a strict Islamic religious ruling.

The content of Al-Maghrāwī letter, regardless of its academic acceptance as a *fatwā* or not, is a document that permits us to learn about the pronouncements of Islamic authorities to their parishioners on Iberian soil during the time of crisis under the Inquisition. It is a key manuscript that demonstrates the uncertainty, in the social and theological sense, that Muslims faced in Spain.

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37 On the concept of *Istiftā'* see: Muhammad Khalid Masud, "The Significance of Istiftā' in the Fatwā Discourse," *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Autumn 2009), pp. 341–366.

38 Abdelkhalek Cheddadi, "Émigrer ou rester? Le dilemme des Morisques entre les fatwas et les contraintes du vécu," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 79, (2009), pp. 31–50.

39 (This is a translation of a sentence and answer that the Muftī of Oran sent to those of Andalusia and it is as follows: God willing as next, our brothers, the sane/firm on your religion), "*Aljamiado* version of the fatwa of the Mufti of Oran, 1504," in: *Livre de prières Musulmanes, comprenant des extraits du Coran, des prières et des invocations, en Arabe et dans un autre idiome écrit en caractères arabes*, Collection: Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Méjanes, Aix-en-Provence, Fonds des Manuscrits Orientaux, *MS-1367 (1223) Arabe*, Year: 1609, f. 130r.

40 (Thus ends the letter of response and consolation that sent the Muftī of Oran to those of Andalusia when they made them become Christians), Ibid., f. 138.

Furthermore, it demonstrates that general dissimulation was not constantly employed by the entirety of the Islamic community on the Iberian Peninsula, and more importantly, that the Islamic authorities of the region held a discrepant view on the matter. However, it would be absurd to negate the use of a general caution that those individuals could have exercised to feel secure when they were faced with danger. Similarly, it would be to affirm that exercising *taqiyyah* was a general order and a known performance undertaken by the entire Moorish communities on both sides of the Atlantic as a safeguard. It is even more daring to claim that *taqiyyah* was practised in the Americas as late as the Islamic Revolution (1978–1979). Such a claim not only constitutes an affront to history, but denotes a lack of basic knowledge of Islām. Furthermore it stains the reputation of prominent newspapers and some higher educational institutions which have sadly given free reign to unsubstantiated claims in Mexico.

So far we have seen an illustration of Islamic sources concerning *taqiyyah* and its relation to Muslims in Spain in the period concerned, but what did Christian Spanish chroniclers witness in this respect? Some sixteenth and seventeenth century records tell us that the Spanish Crown and its ecclesiastical authorities were well aware of the double standards often seen in Moors, which might hint at a general *taqiyyah* practise. For example, the chronicles of Marcos Guadalajara y Xavier expressed: "En ocasiones forçosas pudiessen fingir en lo exterior, y sin pecar, qualquier Religion [...] y hablando bien de nuestra Religion Catholica, siendo en lo interior finos Mahometanos."[41] This quote communicates a compelling idea that is in agreement with the definition of *taqiyyah* above, namely "speaking well of our Catholic religion," which is the oral central aspect of this Islamic practise, yet not as a continuous effort but "on forced occasions." From this point of view, we could infer that they performed *taqiyyah* per se. However, does this apply to the entire Islamic community of Spain? And how, if at all does it relate to Novohispanic society?

In light of such chronicles, it is possible to clarify that this double standard did not necessarily mean 'practising Christians of Muslim hearts.' Again, as De Guadalajara y Xavier's records show: "Hazen los Moros poca demostración de ser Christianos."[42] If we are to accept a supposedly general practise of *taqiyyah* and the existence of a crypto Islām in the entire Moorish community across Spain and the Indies, then, would that not also point to an increase in demonstrations of Christianity by them in the Americas and Iberia, particularly

41 (On forced occasions they could pretend on the outside, and without sin, any religion [...] speaking well of our Catholic religion, while actually inside, they were fine Mohammedans), De Guadalajara y Xavier (1613), *op. cit.*, f. 159.

42 (The Moors do little to demonstrate that they are Christian), Ibid., f. 54.

vis-à-vis the threat of the Inquisition? If that is the case, why does Guadalajara y Xavier make a contrary claim? Moreover, as we have seen, the Inquisition was stricter and harsher on the minorities who confessed in Spain than in *Nueva España*. Despite this, the chroniclers of the peninsula tell us that the Moors showed little evidence of demonstrating Christianity. Should there not then be evidence of greater freedom of the practise of Islām in Colonial Mexico? Why did the chroniclers and inquisitors, who watched over the heretics with magnifying glasses and witnessed their very actions by living side by side with them in time and space, report differently from what the scholars who were born more than four centuries afterwards dare to affirm? Can it be that the inquisitorial authorities failed to see what today seems so clear and evident for some academics and journalists?

Rafael Carrasco Muñoz from the *Université de Montpellier* provides an interesting piece of information from the archives about the status of Moors in Spain *vis-à-vis* the practise of a religion other than Islām: "Y si otra ley mudaran, se irían a Gehennem, y a esto respondieron todos a una: si cada día diez mil quemasen, no mudaríamos de ley."[43] This shows an apparent lack of will in the community of the Moors in Spain to leave their creed. It does not mention 'dissimulation.' Instead, it portrays a strong challenging zeal and readiness to sacrifice even their own lives if it was necessary in order to guard and preserve their faith. If this was the case in Spain, where the Inquisition was not as lenient as the *Santo Officio* in Colonial Mexico, why do not we see a similar pattern amongst the members of the alleged Novohispanic Islamic tradition, or more so, in Early Independent Mexico? Indeed Muslims did find it difficult to profess their faith in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain, but they also found the courage and determination to face and challenge those difficulties. Therefore, it may be inaccurate to define *taqiyyah* merely as "disimulo obligado,"[44] and even less precise to chronologically frame it in the Mexican case as: "un periodo que va desde la conquista hasta el triunfo de la reforma liberal de 1833."[45] As for immigration of Mudéjares to Colonial Mexico as an occurrence that took place "durante el periodo virreinal"[46] (1521–1821), can we speak about Mudéjares in the time of New Spain? Why would they escape to Mexico when they were per-

43 (And if they would move to another law they would go to hell, and to this all responded at once, 'if every day they would burn ten thousand, we would not change the law'), Archivo Histórico Nacional (Spain), *Inquisición*, Lib. 991, Fol. 39r–v, Leg. 549, n. 1, in: Carrasco (2009), op. cit., p. 180.

44 Medina (2014), op. cit., p. 36.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

mitted to practise Islām and were even protected within Spanish realms? This is again, another reflection of how an abundance of imagination dictates historiography.

In 1551, Sinān Pāshā besieged and captured Tripoli, which remained in Ottoman hands until the Italians occupied Libya in 1911.[47] Tunis followed suit in 1574, and subsequently the North African coast became a Muslim stronghold that would pose a direct threat to Catholic Spain. The consummation of the Spanish Reconquista brought an influx of Muslim refugees to the coasts of the Maġrib, and these "new arrivals intensified raids [...] on Spanish coastal areas and shipping."[48] So Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula became a potential threat to Spain, and Moriscos were suspected of collaboration. Consequently, new waves of expulsion and conversions of minorities in Spain were the norm. The exodus was mainly in the direction of Islamic lands. Those who opted for conversion did it as a means to preserve their modus vivendi on Iberian soil. On the Moriscos, Perry states: "These people varied widely by generation, class, place of origin, and length and location of residence in Iberia."[49] This perspective reinforces my point, which shows two claims as flawed: firstly, the uniform application of this term as a designation for Muslims in the Spanish World in its totality and secondly, the influx of Muslims into Mesoamerican lands.

The illegal entry of heretics into Novohispanic territories troubled the Spanish Crown and the Church. However, archival records demonstrate that among the *prohibidos* in Mexico, Moriscos were not only the fewest in number, but also the least important concern for the Mexican Viceroyal authorities. As Sierra Silva explains: "Catholic anxieties over Moriscos and their Muslim ancestry faded over time in New Spain."[50] If the Novohispanic authorities were less anxious about Muslims and Moriscos in general, would this not mean that, as a result, we would witness a greater influx and additional movement of people of Islamic or Morisco origin in *Nueva España*? The latter may be true, but with relation to social designation, namely, as a *casta* only, particularly during the latter phase of the Colonial epoch.

Academic circles use another source to justify the implementation of *taqiyyah* by Muslims in New Spain. These are the diverse Spanish royal decrees

47 Ludovido Micara, "The Ottoman Tripoli: A Mediterranean Medina," in: Salma K. Jayyusi (Gen. Ed.), *The City in the Islamic World*, Vol. 1, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008, p. 388.

48 Nevill Barbour, "North West Africa from the 15th to 19th Centuries," in: H.J. Kissling, F.R.C. Bagley, N. Barbour, J.S. Trimingham. H. Braun. B. Spuler, H. Härtel (Eds.), *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey*, Part III, The Last Great Muslim Empires, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969, p. 98.

49 Perry (2005), op. cit., p. 5.

50 Sierra Silva (2018), op. cit., p. 38.

(*Cédulas Reales*) that were issued in order to regulate immigration to the Americas. Since Muslims were not allowed in the New World, due to these interdictions, Moors in Colonial Mexico resorted to *taqiyyah* so as not to be detected. I claim that this position is highly debatable. Other contemporary academic assertions claim that in fact, "it was not until 1543 that a royal decree banned the passing of Moorish converts to the American territories."[51] From this, we might understand that until that particular moment, Muslims reached America freely. So, the claim that the "history of Islam in Mexico started with the conquest of the American territory"[52] might potentially be emphasised. In other words, this reasoning could point to the possibility that only in 1543 did Muslims begin to face obstacles in trying to enter the New World. Indeed the 1543 royal decree was issued with the intention to prevent all heretics from arriving in the Americas. However, the historicity of this scholarly claim is more complex than it appears. We must be conscious that the long series of *Cédulas Reales* cannot be used to justify the lack of historical evidence to demonstrate the presence, practice, and transmission of any given colonial religious tradition. In other words, it is unsustainable to affirm that because of these decrees, we cannot see qualitative and quantitative evidence of Muslims in New Spain, although there was, arguably, a crypto Islām present. The Jews similarly faced the hardships of the Inquisition and the challenges of living in a Christian Novohispanic society, yet and we witness their presence in the thousands. Protestants practised utmost discretion in Colonial Mexico as well, and evidence of their presence adds up to hundreds. This happened, because prohibitions on emigration to the Americas were difficult to enforce.

Greater restrictions on heretics were imposed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries yet, going underground was always a vivid option, and the purchase of licenses, including those to cross the Atlantic, was a possibility for any bidder. While most times this was illegal, at other times, these were also considered legal. An important event in 1543 proves this. Charles V allowed for the purchase of public offices to whoever was interested in acquiring them.[53] With a public office in hand, a new world of possibilities opened. Corruption was not foreign to those times either, making the enforcement of royal edicts concerning heretics a more complex endeavour. On the passage of *prohibidos* to the Western Hemisphere, Karoline P. Cook suggests: "Free Morisco emigrants to Spanish America may have sought to escape the increasing tensions with Old

51 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit, pp. 144–145.

52 Medina (2019), op. cit., p. 1.

53 Enrique Soria-Mesa, "Venta de oficios y ascenso social: Los municipios andaluces de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Andalucía en la historia*, No. 59, (2018), pp. 14–17.

Christians in Spain."[54] This assumption may be proposed to vindicate a supposed Morisco influx into the Indies. But why would they escape from Iberian inquisitorial atrocities to its Novohispanic counterpart when the entirety of the Islamic world was at their feet? Leonard Harvey wrote a judicious statement that should cause us to rethink such an influx: "… in the late 1490s when the Muslims of Granada, conscious of their powerlessness now that their state had been liquidated, decided to make an appeal to their fellow Muslims elsewhere."[55] Their fellow Muslims were mainly in two geographical locations: the Maġrib and the Ottoman Empire. Such areas with an Islamic world-view, make the Islamic influx to the Americas a debatable matter.

The first royal decree forbidding the passage of heretics to the Americas was issued in 1501, a year in which México-Tenochtitlán was the vivid heart of the Aztec Empire. Through that decree the Catholic Kings commanded Nicolás de Ovando (1460–1511), the Governor of the Indies, to forbid any foreigner of their kingdoms and realms entry into the Americas.[56] In 1510, another *Real Cédula* was issued commanding the *Casa de Contratación* (House of Trade) in Sevilla to prohibit the passage of foreigners and *prohibidos* to the entire Indies.[57] It is important to remember that the Crown of Castilla established *the Casa de Contratación* on January tenth, 1503, in the port of Sevilla, and it served as a crown agency.[58] It functioned until 1790, and it was responsible for the licensing of emigrants. Its official name was *La Casa y Audiencia de Indias*, and all passengers wishing to reach the Americas were requested to pass by its gates. In 1511, another royal decree was issued expressing the desire of the Spanish Kings to populate the Indies and their willingness to allow anyone who wished to go there. There was however one requirement for potential travellers—to register their names in the *Casa de Contratación*.[59] In 1518, King Charles I (1500–1558) issued a new royal decree banning all those condemned by the Inquisition and

54 Cook (2016), op. cit., p. 80.

55 Harvey (1994), op. cit., p. 204.

56 "De la instruction que se dio a Fray Nicolas de Obando, quando fue proveydo por gouernador de la prouincia de Tierra firme en Granada, a diez y siete de Septiembre, de quinientos y uno, que manda no consienta estrangeros en las Indias," in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 441.

57 "De la instruction que se dio por los Reyes Catolicos para la casa de la contratacion de Seuilla que manda que no passen a las Indias estrangeros, ni personas prohibidas, 1510" in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 440.

58 Cristobal Bermúdez Plata, *La Casa de la Contratación, la Casa Lonja y el Archivo General de Indias*, Sevilla: Consejo de la Hispanidad, 1942, p. 8.

59 "Cédula que manda a los oficiales de Sevilla que dexen passar a las Indias a todos los que quisieren con solo escrivir sus nombres en la *Casa de la Contratación*, 1511," in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 396.

their offspring access to the Spanish colonies of the New World. On September fifteenth, 1522, another ruling prohibited new converts from going to the Americas, without the consent of the king.[60] Some of these royal decrees, like the *Real Cédula* of December sixth, 1530, also targeted other ethnic groups besides the commonly persecuted heretics. These were Blacks and Gypsies, and foreigners in general regardless of nationality and creed, even if they only wished to merely sail across the Spanish territories of the New World.[61] By 1534, Spain reminded the Novohispanic authorities that there should be no children of those condemned by the Inquisition in Colonial Mexico;[62] and by 1539, the ecclesiastical authorities, in Spain as well as in the Americas, were instructed to enforce regulations with regard to the *prohibidos*:

> Por quanto por experiencia se ha visto el gran daño e inconueniente que se sigue de passar a las nuestras Indias hijos de quemados y reconciliados de Iudios y Moros, y nueuamente conuertidos, y queriendolo proueer y remediar para que los dichos inconuenientes cessen [...] por la cual prohibimos, queremos y mandamos [...] que ningun hijo ni nieto de quemado ni reconciliado de Iudio o Moro por la Santa Inquisicion, ni nigun nueuamente conuertido de Moro ni Iudio pueda passar ni passe a las dichas nuestras Indias.[63]

As observed, royal decrees banned the entrance of *prohibidos* to the Americas well before 1543. These edicts continued to be issued by the Spanish Crown,

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60 "Citas de Leyes de Indias Relativas a Pasajeros en General, Libro 9, Título 26, Ley 15," in: Luis Rubio y Moreno, *Pasajeros a Indias*: *Catálogo Metodológico de las Informaciones y Licencias de los que allí pasaron, existentes en el Archivo General de Indias, Siglo Primero de la Colonización de América, 1492–1592*, Vol. 1, Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1920, p. 235.

61 "Real Cédula a los oficiales de la Casa de Contratación para que, en vista de las quejas recibidas, se mantenga la prohibición de que ningún extranjero ande en la navegación de las Indias ni como marinero tampoco, December 6, 1530," Book 3, File 1, in: Rubio y Moreno (1920), op. cit., p. 351.

62 *Cedulario Real* (1696), pp. 455–456.

63 (Insofar as it has been seen by experience the great damage and inconvenience that follows the passing to our Indies of children of burned and of reconciled Jews and Moors, and of new converts; and in wanting to provide and to remediate so, that the said inconveniences cease [...] therefore we prohibit, we want and we order [...] that no children or grandchildren of burned ones, or of reconciled Jew or Moor by the Holy Inquisition, neither any new convert of Moor or Jew, can pass to these Indies of ours), "Prouision que manda que ningun hijo ni nieto de quemado, ni reconciliado, pueda passar a las Indias ni estar en ellas, Madrid, October 3, 1539," in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), pp. 452–453.

which, motivated by alarm and suspicion as a result of the growing power of the Ottoman Empire, opted to suppress those whose sociopolitical and religious cosmovision aligned with that of Istanbul.

In spite of these prohibitions, travel to the Indies was a given reality, regardless of having the necessary licenses or not, and fraud and forgery were tools that facilitated this. In 1552, the *Casa de Contratación* declared that many of those passing to the Americas had presented fake witnesses: "Presentan testigos falsos [...] y se hacen otros fraudes."[64] That was the new norm of those days, when licenses, genealogical compositions, and permits issued for servants were often sold to heretics who sought refuge, adventures, or a better life in the Americas. On April twenty-ninth, 1549, a royal decree demanded officers in Sevilla not to consent to the selling of licenses and to forbid the passing to the Americas of anybody who had bought or obtained such permits.[65] These kinds of restrictions were also seen in the eighteenth century. For instance, in 1701, a *Cédula Real* prohibited *heretics* from entering Novohispanic lands.[66] Renewals of these royal edicts were not triggered by a given influx of Moors in New Spain per se, but rather mainly by both the *Contra-Reform* movement which opposed Luther's Protestantism, and the geopolitical rivalries between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire. The 'Lutheran threat' can be observed in a royal decree dated 1559,[67] which ordered the authorities in the Americas to monitor Protestants and to prohibit their entry, declaring, that if any were found in the New World, they would be punished rigorously.[68]

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the authorities regularly searched for evidence of Moors in Spanish America. On March twentieth, 1595, the Spanish Crown gave instructions to the Viceroys of the Indies not to allow any Morisco, free or slave, and to perform a diligent investigation to know if there were any in the new Spanish colonies.[69] Moriscos were sought regularly in Colonial Mexico, but not many were found, and when they were, the

64 (They present fake witnesses [...] and other frauds are done), *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 397.

65 Ibid., p. 404.

66 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1176, Exp. 10, "Expediente sobre una real cédula expedida por el Rey Don Carlos II, en que prohíbe la entrada a los pasajeros que no traigan licencia, evitando se introduzcan a los puertos Moros, Judíos y Herejes," México, 1701.

67 "Cédula dirigida a todos los prelados de las Indias que manda se informe cada uno en su diocesi, si ay en ella Luteranos, Moros o Iudios, y procedan contra ellos," July 13, 1559, in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 454.

68 María Justina Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco, Virrey de Nueva España, 1550–1564*, Sevilla: CSIC, Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1978, p. 131.

69 "Instrucción que se da a los Virreyes del Peru, Capítulo XXIX, Que de orden, como se echen de la tierra todos los Moriscos," March 20, 1596, in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), p. 338.

punishment was not as severe as under the Spanish inquisition. Archival documentation points in one direction: being a Morisco in Mexico was not such a grave crime as being a Jew or Protestant, even though the three *prohibidos* were bound by the same legal framework. While the Muslim identity was considered as heresy in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, it was the growing power of the Ottomans that played an important role in the formulation of the Spanish royal edicts concerning Moriscos. Hence, the shadow of the Ottoman Sultans, and not that of Islām is what indeed reached Colonial Mesoamerica. It may be therefore inaccurate to point at these *Cédulas Reales* as product of fear of the Islamic faith as a religion per se. From this perspective, we could argue that if Islām, as a creed in the strictest sense, had frightened sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain, we would not see a diplomatic effort between Spain and Safavid Iran. Instead, geopolitical confrontation with the Ottomans and the possibility of having Moriscos as collaborators appears to have been the main Spanish concern:

> Sacrée Royale Majesté. Nous, les Morisques d'Espagne, vos esclaves de coeur, prions Dieu, Notre Seigneur, pour votre conservation et victoire, et vous pouvez nous tenir pour vos loyaux serviteurs [...] nous n'avons jamais été traîtres à notre loi, ni à notre Roi, parce que nous sommes Mores de nation et des plus anciens qu'il y ait au monde; car nous demeurons en Espagne depuis le temps que le Roi Muley-Jacop Al-Mançor la conquit, et lui et ses descendants possédèrent longtemps le Royaume d'Espagne; en suite voyant que les Chrétiens commençoient à conquérir l'Espagne, beaucoup d'entre eux se décidèrent à retourner en Barbarie [...] attendant tous l'occasion de se venger de la tyrannie espagnole [...] Nous, ceux du Royaume de Valence, sommes soixante-seize mille maisons, plutôt plus que moins, tous réunis dans des villes et de riches villages, race vaillante et gens courageux; quand besoin sera, nous pourrons faire soixante mille hommes sans dépeupler nos dites maisons, ni sans qu'il en coûte rien au Roi qui sera notre appui; bien plus, lui donneronsnous de l'argent s'il le faut, parce que certainement nous ne manquons de rien, sinon d'armes [...] Dans le Royaume de Valence il n'y a rien à craindre des Espagnoles, parce qu'ils sont dans nos villes et villages et que nous en sommes les maîtres. Si sa Royale Majesté nous favorise de quelques hommes qui entendent la guerre, et de quelques armes telles qu'arquebuses et pièces de canon, afin de commencer par prendre Valence [...] Les Tagarinos du Royaume d'Aragon sont comptés passer quarante mille maisons, ce sont de braves gens qui désirent se voir déjà au milieu de la lutte. Comme les Aragonois sont riches, nombreux et réu-

> nis dans leur villes et villages, ils pourront fournir quarante mille soldats, ils manquent aussi d'armes. Outre ceux de notre nation, elle aura encore beaucoup de Chrétiens pour auxiliaires […] Il y a aussi de notre nation en Catalogne environ trois mille maisons; il se trouve également une autre nation en Castille, qui se nomment les Mudegales, Mores comme nous, qui seront de cinq mille maisons.[70]

The outcome of Lepanto was still fresh in the collective consciousness of Christian Spain, and voices of conspiracies about potential Moorish insurrections only increased the perceived threat, as the extract above illustrates. This is a part of a memorandum signed by *Hamete Musrif de Segorbe* in the name of the tribal Moorish societies of Spain. It was addressed to King Henri IV of France, along with his councils and agents, soliciting support against Felipe III, and appears to have been an intended plot against Spain. This source enables us to see several historical facts: the Moriscos' grievances with regard to the King of Spain; their claim to never have betrayed their own law, namely their Islamic faith; their desire to try to pass to North Africa; the forces at their disposal with which they sought to take on their challenges on the Iberian Peninsula

70 (Sacred Royal Majesty. We, the Moriscos of Spain, your slaves of heart, pray to God, Our Lord, for your preservation and victory, and you can have us as your loyal servants […] we have never been traitors to our law, nor to our king, because we are Moors of a nation and one of the oldest that ever has been in the world; because we have been resident in Spain since the time that King Al-Manṣūr conquered it, and he and his descendants have long possessed the Kingdom of Spain; then seeing that Christians began conquering Spain, many among them decided to return to Barbary […] all waiting for the opportunity to take revenge on Spanish tyranny […] We, of the Kingdom of Valencia, are seventy-six thousand houses, rather more than less, all gathered in towns and rich villages, valiant race and courageous people; when need be, we will be able to make sixty thousand men without depopulating our said houses, nor at any cost to the king who will be our support; moreover, will we give him money if necessary, because we certainly do not lack anything, but weapons […] In the Kingdom of Valencia there is nothing to fear from the Spanish, because they are in our towns and villages and we are the masters. If his Royal Majesty favors us with a few men who understand war, and with a few weapons such as arquebuses and cannon, in order to start by taking Valencia […] The Tagarinos of the Kingdom of Aragon are expected to pass forty-thousand houses, they are brave people who wish to see themselves already in the midst of battle. Because those of Aragon are rich, numerous and united in their towns and villages, they will be able to provide forty thousand soldiers, they also lack weapons. Besides those of our nation, there will be many Christians as auxiliaries […] There are also about three thousand of our nation in Catalonia; there is also another nation in Castile, who are called the Mudegales, Moors like us, who will be of five thousand houses), "Mémoire adressé à Henri IV par les Morisques d'Espagne, 1602," in: JacquesNompar de Caumont, Duc de La Force, *Mémoires authentiques de Jacques Nompar de Caumont, Duc de La Force*, Vol. 1, Paris: Charpentier, 1843, pp. 341–345.

as well as their dynamism and readiness for combat; their fearless challenging attitude *vis-à-vis* Catholic Spain; and a Morisco economic power ready to be put at the service of France. These aspects position the Moriscos in an altogether different light from the secondary literature we have seen so far, which often depicts them as powerless, economically broken, immobile individuals resigned to their fate.

The Spanish authorities were aware of the potential plots of the Moriscos, and a feeling of treason pervaded the atmosphere. It was not only the Spanish Kings who were concerned. Ecclesiastical figures were preoccupied with the Ottoman-Moorish connection and their potential threat as well. Consequently, a general feeling of mutual mistrust abounded. The Bishop of Orihuela persuaded the King of Spain: "It is necessary to make war on the Moors or to expel them from Spain, they do not trust us and neither can we trust them."[71] The 1580 and 1582 Morisco conspiracies of an invasion from North Africa also serve to illustrate the Spanish security concern *vis-à-vis* the Moriscos. At the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth, there was a latent perception of a possible Moorish hostility towards Christian Spain. Since Catholics and Muslims had been fighting for centuries on Iberian soil, it was natural that as outcome of the prolonged conflict, they would mistrust each other. The possibility that Moriscos would become a fifth column on behalf of the Ottomans only increased with time in the collective consciousness of Catholic Spain. As a result, Spanish officials watched over the Moriscos, who were reputed to be spies at the service of the Ottoman Empire.[72] Despite the potential threat, nobles from Valencia opposed their expulsion and shared their reasoning with the Spanish Crown on why not to expel them from Spain: "Being the Turks of such a powerful state, why have they not dared to arrive to Spain?",[73] suggesting that the perceived Morisco menace was far from crystalising. Such menace was beyond spiritual heresy for Spain.

A *Cédula Real* dated December twenty-sixth, 1571, which celebrates the Victory of Lepanto (1571), reads: "The victory that thus has been granted to us last October against the Armada of the Turks."[74] It was not meant as a victory of Christianity over Islām, but rather of the Crown over the Turban, in a political and military sense. This royal edict recalls the 1609 *ouvrage* of Lope de Vega

71 Fonseca (1612), op. cit., p. 144.

72 Perry (2005), op. cit., p. 1.

73 Ibid., p. 192.

74 "Cédula en que se da aviso al Provincial de la orden de San Francisco, de la Nueva España, del nacimiento del Principe don Fernando, y victoria contra el Turco," December 26, 1571, in: *Cedulario Real* (1696), pp. 39–40.

(1562–1635), titled *Jerusalén Conquistada*.[75] Although it constitutes a nationalistic revision of the 1581 *épopée* of Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, it illustrates, along with *España Defendida* (1609) of Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645), a vision of a political victory over the Turks and a sense of Spanish patriotism. Lepanto impacted Spain in a way that was not related to religion only, but also in a geopolitical sense. Therefore, the exile of the Moriscos was different not only in nature, but also in purpose from that of the Jews. For although both Jews and Muslims were considered heretics, the former did not represent a national security threat with external repercussions for Christian Spain, as the latter did for Madrid.

On September eleventh, 1609, King Philip III (1578–1621) sent a letter to the juries and military wing of Valencia. This document exemplifies a Spanish effort to convert its Muslim population and the failure, *grosso modo*, of this enterprise. It resonates with the previously cited memorandum that the Moriscos in Spain sent to the King of France. This letter also stresses the Moorish security element, which worried the Spanish Crown, as well as the perceived Morisco will to plot against Catholic Spain:

> … como por largo discurso de años se ha procurado la conversión de los Christianos nuevos deste Reyno, los Edictos de Gracia que se les concedieron, las demás diligencias que se hizieron para instruyrlos en nuestra santa Fé, y lo poco que todo ello ha aprovechado, pues no se ha visto que alguno se aya convertido, sino antes crecido de día en día su obstinación, y el desseo y voluntad que siempre han tenido de maquinar contra estos Reynos.[76]

Mary Elizabeth Perry of The University of California, explains that armed rebellion was less of an option for Jews than it was for Moriscos. The latter had experience of a long tradition of countless battles during the Spanish Reconquista and rebellions in the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the Jews did

75 Lope de Vega, *Jerusalén Conquistada, Epopeya trágica de Lope Félis de Vega Carpio*, Madrid: En la Imprenta de J. de la Cuesta, 1609.

76 (… as for the long discourse of years that the conversion of the new Christians from this kingdom has been sought, the edicts of grace that were granted to them, the diverse steps that were taken to instruct them in our Holy Faith, and little advantage has been taken of these. For it can been seen that not one has converted, but rather their stubbornness has grown from day to day, and so has the desire and will that they have always had, to plot against these kingdoms), "Carta de su Magestad para los Jurados y Braço Militar de Valencia," September 11, 1609, in: Fonseca (1612), op. cit., "Libro I, Cap. I.," pp. 212–215.

not count on groups of their own in other latitudes of the world to align in battle against their Christian oppressors. The Moriscos did, and they were well aware of Muslims in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, who they could rely on for armed assistance against Catholic Spain.[77] Clashes between Muslims and Christians on Iberian soil were a constant reality since the beginning of the Islamic occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. As a consequence, Islamic leaders had warned their people not to remain in places where they would be subject to Catholic rule, because *taqiyyah* could not protect them from contamination by contact with Christians.[78]

Once the Reconquista culminated, Catholic Spain became ipso facto part of 'the abode of war.' Therefore, it is essential to understand the socioreligious struggle between Spain and its Muslim inhabitants, as well as the concepts of *Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Ḥarb*. This may enhance our understanding of the Morisco and Islamic vision of the Spanish Worlds. Equally important is to stress the geopolitical realities of the time, and the role the Church played in it. These factors greatly influenced the expulsion of the Moriscos. Some ecclesiastical figures, such as the Patriarch of Valencia, undertook several attempts to convince the Spanish Crown that the "remedy that great evils need, both spiritual and corporal, is to uproot them from the root."[79] For him, the expulsion of the Moriscos was a "soft and benign sentence and a lesser punishment than what they deserved, namely, capital penalty; which for being heretics they should obtain."[80] In view of such dangers, Muslims in Spain would have no choice but to emigrate to areas within *Dār al-Islām*, just as the Islamic jurisdiction and their religious leaders dictated them to do. The decision to expel the Moriscos from Iberian territory was thus a reflection of the magnitude of the threat that they posed as perceived by Catholic Spain. It was the product of unremitting friction in a historical ambiance that was beyond the commonly thought setting of *tolerancia y convivencia*.[81]

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77 Perry (2005), op. cit., p. 4.

78 Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Bernard Vincent, *Historia de los Moriscos: Vida y tragedia de una minoría*, Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1978, pp. 134–135; and Perry (2005), op. cit., p. 35.

79 Fonseca (1612), op. cit., p. 178.

80 Ibid., pp. 182–183.

81 On the subject of *tolerancia y convivencia* between the three Abrahamic religions on the Iberian Peninsula see: Darío Fernández-Morera, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise, Muslims, Christians and Jews under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain*, Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2015; Rafael Sánchez Saus, *Al-Andalus y la Cruz: La invasión musulmana de Hispania*, Barcelona: Stella Maris, 2016; of same authorship: *Les Chré-*

The result was seen on September twenty-second, 1609, when Felipe III issued orders to the Marqués de Carazena to expel the Moriscos from Valencia:

> Entendido teneys lo que por tan largo discurso de años he procurado, la conversion de los Moriscos deste Reyno, y de Castilla, y los edictos de gracia que se les concedieron, y las diligencias que se han hecho para instruyllos en nuestra santa Fee, y lo poco que todo ello ha aprovechado, pues se ha visto que nunguno se aya convertido, antes ha crecido su obstinancion [...] que cesse su heregia y apostasia [...] he resuelto que se saquen todos los Moriscos desse Reyno, y que se echen en Barberia [...] llevando consigo de sus haziendas muebles lo que pudieren en sus personas para embarcarse en las galeras y navios que estan aprestados para passarlos a Berberia a donde los desembarcaran sin que reciban mal tratamiento ni molestia en sus personas, ni en lo que llevaren, ni de obra ni de palabra. Se les proveera del vastimiento que necessario fuere para su sustento.[82]

This document is rich evidence and provides some historical information: 1) the Spanish kings seem to have preferred not to expel the Moriscos, but did so as last resort and mainly due to the security and political threat they posed to the Spanish authorities 2) the resolution to expel them to North Africa confirms that Colonial Mexico was not a geographical target for the Morisco population. This in turns justifies the scarcity of evidence found in the archives with regard

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tiens dans AlAndalus: De la soumission à l'anéantissement, Monaco: Édition du Rocher, 2016; and Serafín Fanjul (2002), op. cit.

82 (You have understood what for so long a discourse of years I have sought, the conversion of the Moors from this kingdom and from Castilla, and the edicts of grace that were granted to them, and the diligences that have been made to instruct them in our holy faith, and the little advantage that they have taken of these. For it has been seen that none has converted and instead their obstinacy has grown. That their heresy and apostasy cease, I have resolved that all the Moriscos be removed from this kingdom, and that they be thrown into Berberia. Carrying with them furniture and anything they could from their haciendas, to embark onto the galleys and ships that are ready to pass them to Berberia, where they will disembark without receiving bad treatment or discomfort against their persons, neither against their property, nor of deed nor word. They will be provided with necessary support for their sustenance), Luis Carrillo de Toledo, *Copia de la Carta que la Magestad Católica del Rey Don Felipe III Nuestro Señor, embió á Don Luis Carrillo de Toledo, su lugartiniente y Capitan General en el Reyno de Valencia para echar los Moriscos de aquel Reyno y del pregon que en execucion della se publicó en 22 de Septiembre deste año de 1609*, Çaragoça: Imprenta de Pedro de Robles, 1609, ff. 1v, 2r–v.

to their supposed influx 3) their expulsion was supervised and their safety procured in certain instances 4) *Taqiyyah* is a non-compulsory general practise in the Morisco community.

When thinking of Islām in New Spain it is necessary to note two aspects, which although may seem parallel, are distinct: its presence as a religious tradition, and its visibility in the public sphere. I argue that the lack of visibility of this Abrahamic faith in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico is a direct product of the tangible absence of Muslims in the course of Novohispanic colonial history. Furthermore, the socioreligious echo that the few Muslims or Moriscos, dispersed in time, could have brought about in New Spain was minimum, and hence they are virtually unseen in the sources. When the supposed appearance of Muslims and Moriscos in the three centuries of Novohispanic period is seen, it is not surprising that the alleged "early Muslim populations"[83] of Colonial Mexico had not created institutional and communal spaces or a visible presence in the public and social spheres. With this in mind, let us now reflect on the scientific method. It dictates that observation is a key step towards both learning about the world around us, and answering questions when conducting research. In this manner, the process of collecting measurable empirical evidence aimed at supporting or rebutting a hypothesis is an integral part of intellectual enquiry. However, observation does not only consist of obtaining knowledge of the outside world through our senses, but also of recording information by using scientific tools and instruments—each according to the discipline of study—which ultimately may furnish us with measurable and valuable tangible evidence. Without the latter, it is impossible to prove a theory. In the scientific research process this is related to content validity and reliable evaluation. Measurement is often considered the hallmark of scientific endeavour and applies to both qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiry. It is also part of the foundation of research and one phase of the research process itself. From this perspective, I ask the following: 1) Can we affirm the bold hypotheses that I argue against, without an in-depth observation of sources? 2) Where is the measurable, tangible evidence of Novohispanic Islamic tradition? 3) How can the historical timing and the chronological phases of *taqiyyah* as practised in Colonial and Independent Mexico be set with such accuracy and certainty? 4) What instrument and parameters of measurement and observation were used to determine this timing with such great precision? 5) How did the promulgation in 1833 of a series of reforms of the Mexican Constitution (1824), aimed at excluding the Mexican Army and the Church from politics, cause the ceasure

83 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 145.

of the alleged practise of *taqiyyah* in Mexico? 6) What kind of evaluation of the sources was carried out in order to arrive at such historical hypotheses?

The Inquisition in Mexico ceased in 1820. Thereafter, no official state apparatus persecuted heresy. This does not mean however, that Catholicism had ceased to be the official creed of Mexico, or that an unabridged religious tolerance, both by the Mexican State and its majorly Christian population, suddenly erupted with Mexico's independence. For instance, we see that on September fourteenth, 1813, José María Morelos y Pavón (1765–1815), the leader of Mexico's insurgent movement of independence, presented a document entitled *Sentimientos de la Nación* (The Nation's Sentiments) to the National Constituent Congress in the city of Chilpancingo, Guerrero. The second article of the document reads: "Que la Religión Católica sea la única, sin tolerancia de otra."[84] In 1821, the *Plan de Iguala* was published with three aspects as the foundation of the new independent Mexican state: 'Independence, union and religion.' The latter meant Roman Catholicism, with no tolerance shown towards any other religion. A similar stand was taken in Mexico's Constitution in 1824, by which the Mexican State was defined as "a Representative Federal Republic with Apostolic Roman Catholicism as the official and only religion of the State."[85] In this manner, Morelos' *Sentimientos de la Nación*; Iturbide's 1821 *Plan of Iguala*; and Mexico's first Constitution (1824), were three documents proclaiming Mexico's Independence, at the core of which, Catholicism was defined as the official and only religion of Mexico, with no toleration of any other.[86] On October twenty-third, 1835, the Constituent Congress of Mexico established the *Bases Constitucionales de la República*. Its first article stipulated: "La nación mexicana, una, soberana é independiente como hasta aquí, no profesa ni protege otra religión que la católica, apostólica, romana, ni tolera el ejercicio de otra alguna."[87] Catholicism was in this fashion, the only faith permitted in that phase of Early Independent Mexico, which points to a possible continued intolerance of other creeds in the country. However, we must ask before, what did such religious

84 (May the Catholic religion be the only one, without tolerance to any other), José María Morelos y Pavón, *Sentimientos de la Nación*, México: Conaculta, 2010, p. 111.

85 Congreso de México, *Acta Constitutiva de la Federación Mexicana de 1824*, Mexico: Supremo Gobierno en Palacio, 1824.

86 AGN, *Catálogo Documental: La Consumación de la Independencia 175 Años, 1821–1996*, México: Dirección de Publicaciones AGNM, 1996, pp., 21–23.

87 (The Mexican nation, one, sovereign and independent as thus far, does not profess or protect any other religion than the Catholic, apostolic, roman, nor does it tolerate the exercise of any other), Congreso General de la Nación, *Bases y Leyes Constitucionales de la República, Decretadas por el Congreso de la Nación en el Año de 1836*, México: Imprenta del Águila, 1837, p. 3.

intolerance really mean in the just born Independent Mexican Republic? Was it parallel to that of the Inquisition? Were foreigners permitted to transit and settle in Mexico if they were not Catholic? Did the new Mexican Republic safeguard their natural rights? In its second article, the *Bases Constitucionales de la República* declared with regard to foreigners:

> A todos los transeúntes, estantes y habitantes del territorio mexicano, mientras respeten la religión y las leyes del país, la Nación les guardará y hará guardar los derechos que legítimamente les correspondan: el derecho de gentes y el internacional designan cuales son los de los extranjeros: una ley constitucional declarará los particulares del ciudadano mexicano.[88]

As observed, foreigners, as long as they respected the national creed of the Mexican nation, were safeguarded by constitutional rights when living in Mexico or transiting through it. Moreover, the new Mexican Republic was not interested in persecuting heresy like in Novohispanic times through the inquisitorial apparatus. Why then a new need for *taqiyyah*?

The anticlerical Mexican liberal reforms of 1833 had a better chance of success when in the decade of 1850s Mexico enacted anew a set of laws to limit the privileges of the Mexican Church and the military. Several of these were raised to constitutional status and became a part of the eventual corpus of Mexico's 1857 Constitution. But if the 1833 liberal policies are to be held as the inception of religious liberties in Mexico, the year of 1857 signals an even more liberal period in Mexican history, and by it, a stricter separation between Church and State. As a result, no further mention nor obligation to comply with Catholicism as a constitutional obligation is issued to Mexicans nationals or residents.

From 1862 to 1867, France occupied Mexico for a second time, and in 1863, the government of Maximilian I of Mexico (1863–1867) was installed as a consequence of France's imperialistic adventures. However, this was not all bad news. For instance, the Mexican historian Patricia Galeana explains that Maximilian's government "meant a new impact of European liberalism in Mexico."[89]

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88 (To all passers-by, who are in or inhabit Mexican territory, as long as they respect the religion and the laws of the country, the nation will safeguard them and the rights that legitimately correspond to them: the law of nations and international law designate which these are for foreigners: a constitutional law will declare these for the Mexican citizen), Ibid.

89 Patricia Galeana, *Las Relaciones Estado-Iglesia durante el Segundo Imperio*, México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2015, p. 10.

The French archives corroborate her claim, and tell us that as far as the French were concerned, "les mexicains ont assimilé la venu de l'Empereur à celle du Messie."[90] Surely not all Mexicans regarded Maximilian as the French claimed. However it must have applied for a minority, mainly due to Maximilian's liberal policies. General Élie-Frédéric Forey (1804–1872) spoke of this as follows: "El Emperador vería con placer que le fuera posible al Gobierno proclamar la libertad de cultos."[91] As observed, the achievement of the freedom of cult in Mexico was one of the political goals of Maximilian I. Galeana further explains in this regard: "La política eclesiástica del segundo emperador de México, coincidió en muchos aspectos con el pensamiento de Benito Juárez y con el de la Reforma de 1833 [...] al mismo tiempo dio libertad de cultos y prensa."[92] Why then, did Muslims in Mexico continue to perform *taqiyyah*, particularly in such a late epoch and under French rule?

An additional historical fact must be highlighted. During the Mexican campaign, the French utilized the term 'dissimulation' with regard to Mexicans. Can we profit from this to point to *taqiyyah* during the Second Mexican Empire? This, undoubtedly would be a great incongruity. The French employment of this term had absolutely no relation to religion, but rather to a description—*à la française*—of what they considered to be some of the most remarkable aspects of Mexico's soul:

> La population mexicaine est la même dans tous les rangs de la société, à peu d'exceptions près [...] l'astuce, la paresse, la dissimulation [...] sont leur qualités dominantes, ils masquent ces défauts sous des dehors si polis qu'on est toujours trompé dans s'en douter. Accoutumais des leur bas âge à dissimuler et à cacher leurs pensées, ils ont atteint en cela le nec plus ultra de la dissimulation et il est très rare qu'un étranger puisse savoir ce qu'un mexicain pense s'il n'a fait une funeste expérience de cette

90 (Mexicans had assimilated the arrival of the Emperor to that of the Messiah), Archives Nationales de France, *Fonds Napoléon, xve–xxe siècles*, "Documents diplomatiques (notes sur le Mexique, analyse du courrier du Mexique), 400AP/1–400AP/221/EXTRAITS-400AP/63," 1863–1866, f. 24.

91 (The Emperor would see with pleasure if it were possible for the Government to proclaim freedom of cults), "Proclama del 11 de Junio de 1863," in: Francisco de Paula de Arrangoiz, *Apuntes para la Historia del Segundo Imperio Mejicano*, Madrid: Imprenta y Estereotipia de M. Rivadeneyra, 1869, p. 135.

92 (The ecclesiastical policy of the second emperor of Mexico, coincided in many respects with the thought of Benito Juárez and with that of the Reforms of 1833 [...] at the same time it gave freedom of worship and press), Galeana (2015), op. cit., p. 11.

> politesse après un long séjour et une étude sérieuse. L'Empereur Maximilien n'a pas échappé au fléau mexicain.[93]

The French description of politeness, cunning, and dissimulation, as features of social behaviour, continue to be some of the most tangible characteristics of Mexican culture even today.[94] But this does not necessarily point to a Novohispanic crypto religious tradition or to *taqiyyah* as an Islamic principle. Yet, on the latter Zidane Zeraoui from the *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey* states: "Precisamente esta taqiya ha permitido a los musulmanes mantener su fe, pero escondida, frente a la represión cristiana tanto en la península ibérica como en el Nuevo Mundo."[95]

I suggest that the theory of a crypto Islām that kept the faith alive through the practise of *taqiyyah* in Mexico over a period of about four centuries is very difficult to validate, and thus unacceptable. However, this does not mean that in the Novohispanic viceroyalty, scattered individuals of Islamic adherence had not taken the necessary precautions to survive. This is because, like other heretics in Colonial Mexico, dissimulation and prudence was regularly required, just as it continues to be essential in many aspects of our daily lives today, in Mexico or elsewhere. In the absence of written documentation, oral transmission and tradition may provide hints and clues to formulate historiography. For instance, we see that some persecuted minorities of New Spain left written and oral testimony of the religious tradition they kept and transmitted during the Mexican Colonial era, in spite of being *prohibidos*.

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93 (The Mexican population is the same in all ranks of society, with few exceptions […] cunning, laziness, *dissimulation* […] are their dominant qualities. They hide these faults under an exterior so polite that one is always mistaken in suspecting it. Accustomed from an early age to conceal and hide their thoughts, they have reached the ultimate in concealment. It is very rare that a foreigner can know what a Mexican thinks, if he does not have experience of this politeness after a long stay and serious study. Emperor Maximilian did not escape the Mexican scourge), Archives Nationales de France, *Fonds Napoléon, xve–xxe siècles*, "Documents diplomatiques (notes sur le Mexique, analyse du courrier du Mexique)," op. cit., f. 26.

94 For an excellent study on the Mexican soul see: Emilio Uranga, *Análisis del Ser del Mexicano*, (Series México y lo Mexicano Vol. 4), México: Porrúa y Obregón, 1952; Manuel Ferrer Chivite, *El Laberinto Mexicano En De Juan Rulfo*, México: Editorial Novaro, 1972; Octavio Paz, *El Laberinto de la Soledad*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1950; and Samuel Ramos, *El Perfil del Hombre y la Cultura en México*, (5ta. Edición), México: EspasaCalpe Mexicana, 1972.

95 (Precisely this taqiyyah has allowed Muslims to keep their faith, but hidden, in the face of Christian repression both on the Iberian peninsula and in the New World), Zeraoui (2011), op. cit., pp. 337–338.

Marín-Guzmán and Zeraoui position the genesis of the Middle Eastern immigration to Mexico from 1878 to 1919.[96] The historian Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp marks the first documented arrival of Middle Easterners to Mexico between 1880 and 1910, although she affirms that not all of those individuals were of Muslim origin.[97] Indeed, the first Middle Eastern immigrants who arrived in modern Mexico practised different religions, and by 1950, Muslims accounted for only 4.6% of the immigration from the Mideast.[98] Alfaro-Velcamp also stressed that since the 1950s, the arrival of Arabs in Mexico dropped drastically due to the selective immigration policies of the Mexican State.[99] Hence, and with no apparent need for further concealment at the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth, speaking of a Mexican crypto Islamic community is rather perplexing. Historical, constitutional, and statistical facts clearly oppose such understanding.

During the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917), the Catholic Church saw the opportunity to return to politics and founded the National Catholic Party.[100] On July second, 1926, during the Presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–1928), which was most noted for his fierce backlash against Catholicism, a new anticlerical legislation was enacted under the name "Ley reformando el Código Penal para el Distrito y Territorios Federales sobre delitos del fuero común y delitos contra la Federación en materia de culto religioso y disciplina externa."[101] This is more commonly known as *Ley Calles*. The Law for Reforming the Penal Code was aimed at promoting the liberty of consciousness, but more importantly, for the separation of the Church from politics. Religious freedom was soon felt, and in those years most of Mexico's Jewish communities formally founded organisations. Liberalism was finally gaining ground. Why then, was a second phase of "pertinent dissimulation [*taqiyyah*] that extended

96 Roberto Marín Guzmán and Zidane Zeraoui, *Arab Immigration in Mexico in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Assimilation and Heritage*, Mexico and Austin: Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey and Augustine Press, 2003, p. 25.

97 Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007, p. 2.

98 Ibid., pp. 90, 110.

99 Ibid., p. 111.

100 Jean A. Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State, 1926–1929*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 10.

101 Secretaría de Gobernación, "Ley reformando el Código Penal para el Distrito y Territorios Federales sobre delitos del fuero común y delitos contra la Federación en materia de culto religioso y disciplina externa," *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Sección Primera, Tomo XXXVII, No. 2, July 2, 1926.

until the decade of 1980s"[102] needed in a Republic where freedom of belief and separation of Church from politics was part of its legislation? Why was this necessary, when the most persecuted of minorities in Novohispanic times now enjoyed complete freedom of consciousness, expression, and manifestation in the public sphere? Whatever the answer may be—if there is to be a clear and concise response to the previous interrogation at all—claiming that the post-war (1945–1947), creation of the State of Israel (1948), the eventual occupation of Palestine, as well as the civil war in Lebanon (1975) had motivated *taqiyyah*[103] is a conundrum. This claim appears to be a reverie that undoubtedly reflects an astounding level of creativity.

Opinion and paradigm, while legitimate on a personal level, are not the foundation on which historiography can be built. The point of my research is not to deny the fact that some individuals of Arab or Muslim backgrounds may have found their way into Colonial Mexico. Undeniable also is the impact that almost eight hundred years of Islamic occupation of Spain had upon the life of its Christian inhabitants, and vice versa, and posteriorly on the Spanish colonies in the Americas. This impact was tangible in sixteenth, seventeenth and as far as eighteenth century Spain, and it has left traces in certain architectural, linguistic, and cultural spheres. Yet, it does not signify the existence, input or product, *ratio stricta*, of a Novohispanic Muslim tradition in the case of Mexico; but it is rather the result of the influence that Islamic culture and faith had on Spain, and the effect of this on the Spaniards who conquered, settled and built Mexico. As a consequence, it was just natural for Spaniards to bring some aspects of those cultural, linguistic, and architectural facets that had become part of their own modus vivendi on the Iberian Peninsula to the Americas.

I believe that the presence of scattered Moriscos or individuals of Islamic background in Colonial Mexico was a historical fact, but not strong or large enough so as to cause us to get nostalgic today for the vanished past of an imaginary community of potential similar features as those of twentieth-first-century Mexico. Moriscos indeed reached New Spain, but in diluted numbers, and not always as zealot practitioners of the religion of their ancestors. Islām in Mexico is an indivisible part of its common present, but not so of its common past. Neither does this point to the evidence of a major influx of Muslims into *Nueva España*, nor does it provide a wide and in-depth account of their deeds there. Islām, as a religious tradition, was not entangled with the state building

102 Medina (2014), op. cit., p. 36; and Felipe A. Cobos Alfaro, "Los musulmanes de México en la Umma," *Revista Diario de Campo*, No. 96, (January–February 2008), pp. 20–21.

103 Medina (2014), op. cit., pp. 37–38.

process of the Mexican nation, both in Colonial and Early Independent times. Nor did the contribution of Moriscos echo in Novohispanic society, as some believe and try to make others do so as well.

If the act of believing is linked to faith, the words of Paul the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, may be appropriately recalled: "Now faith is confidence in things hoped for; the assurance and evidence of things not seen [...] for what is seen, was not made out of what was visible."[104] Likewise, those preaching a pre-Hispanic Islām and a Novohispanic Muslim tradition safeguarded by *taqiyyah* and practised for more than three centuries, seem to perform an act of faith rather than rely on history. I emphasise that the history of Islām in *Nueva España* and Early Independent Mexico still needs to be researched deeply, broadly, objectively, and with strict adherence to scientific methodology. I further suggest that this investigation has to be freed from Mexican nationalisms that sometimes seem to seek, or to want to appropriate everything that touches Mexico's soil, as if looking in despair for a sense of belonging. Only then, we will be able to shed a brighter light on the blurry fate of those who followed the Qur'ān and ended up living under the hardships of the Inquisition in Colonial Mexico. Failing to do so, will undoubtedly cause us to create literary compositions in likeness and image as those of Miguel de Luna (1550–1619), the Arabic interpreter of Philip II (1527–1598), who in 1592 published *La historia del Rey Don Rodrigo y Pérdida de España*,[105] a work that pretended to be an eighth-century chronicle, in which the history of the Muslim world was supposedly interconnected with Gothic Spain. This was a fictional quixotic enterprise that appears to lack historical veracity, but which has a surplus supply of fiction, imagination, and above all, faith.

104 "Hebrews 11:1–3 (KJV)," *Bible Hub*, available at: http://biblehub.com/kjv/hebrews/11.htm (accessed April 6, 2020).

105 Miguel de Luna, *La Verdadera Hystoria del Rey Don Rodrigo*, Granada: Rene Rabut, 1592.

CHAPTER 4

Hidden Heretics in New Spain: Myth, Legend, and Evidence of the Abrahamic Religious Traditions of Colonial Mexico

The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) mentioned that the Arab society of Spain differed from the non-Arab societies that inhabited the Iberian Peninsula. He understood society "as a community of human beings subject to a certain system of customs."[1] The customs of Arab-Spanish society were fashioned by Islām. Politically and socially, from Medieval Islām to the Islām of the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern times, this Abrahamic religion had nothing to could compare it to the separation between spiritual and secular powers in Europe.[2] For the Muslim creed—social, theological and cultural matters are parts of a whole. However, we must think of 'Islām' and 'Muslim' as terms that go beyond theological conceptualisation. Abdel Magid Turki (1931–2010), theologian and historian of Islamic jurisprudence, stressed that the Mālikī school of thought on the Iberian Peninsula was notoriously intolerant towards other Muslim schools of thought,[3] which may denote a non-flexible Spanish Mālikī Islām. As for the concept 'árabe-español,' Ortega y Gasset states:

> Sin que yo pretenda estorbar que los demás hagan lo que les plazca, no estoy dispuesto, por mi parte, a correr la aventura de llamar en serio 'español' a cualquiera que nace en el territorio peninsular, aunque sea de sangre 'indígena' y aunque haya vivido aquí toda su vida. La territorialidad y el plasma sanguíneo son los últimos atributos que pueden calificar la 'nacionalidad' de un hombre, esto es, la substancia histórica de que está hecho.[4]

1 "Prólogo a El collar de la paloma de Ibn Hazm de Córdoba," in: José Ortega y Gasset, *Obras Completas*, Tomo VII (1948–1958), Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1950, p. 42.

2 Darío Fernández-Morera, *Chrétiens, juifs et musulmans dans al-Andalus: Mythes et réalités*, Paris: Jean-Cyrille Godefroy Editions, 2018, p. 111.

3 Abdel Magid Turki, "La vénération pour Mālik et la physionomie du mākilisme andalou," *Studia Islamica*, No. 33, (1971), pp. 41–65.

4 (Without pretending to hinder others from doing what they please, I am not willing, on my part, to take on the adventure of seriously referring to anyone born in the peninsular territory

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These reflections call for an epistemological analysis of the notion 'árabe–español,' one that sees Islām as beyond the common theological frame. Because if society is understood as a community of human beings subject to a certain system of customs, and if the concept 'árabe—español' is taken as an indivisible whole, then, the system of customs to which the members of Islamic society on the Iberian Peninsula were subject to should echo in certain ways throughout Colonial Mexico, and not only or merely within an ecclesiastic framework. However, evidence does not show Islām as *Dīn* in Colonial Mexico, but rather only the presence of some scattered in time and space potential Muslims. Islām and Muslim are two concepts with distinctive definitions of their own. As it has been previously stated, my research here is not concerned with the study of the latter, although it may serve us to understand the former. My focus is on the analysis of Islām as *Dīn* and its potential manifestations in Colonial Mexico as a Novohispanic religious tradition. Studying Mālikī Islām is thus necessary to better understand both the religious vision of the 'árabe-español,' and these two concepts with relation to Spain.

From the Muslim conquest of *Hispania* until the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain, social, cultural, linguistic and architectonic exchanges took place between the Islamic communities of the Iberian Peninsula and its indigenous populations. Such exchanges rightly contributed to that which Ortega y Gasset coins as the enrichment of the "españolía."[5] In spite of this, the Islamic base of Muslim customary life in Spain remained largely based on the tenets of the *Mālikī Fiqh*, which crafted a sense of belonging around an Arabic and Muslim origin. Accepting this, and looking at the principle of social cohesion, aids us to discern their whereabouts subsequent to the Conquest of Mexico, and their eventual expulsion from Spain. It is thus necessary to identify and define the structure of both the Muslim and the Christian society of Spain, as two distinct yet intertwined factors. We should look at them from the angle that best manifests their most authentic sense, and in the case of the Moros, undoubtedly this is found in Islām. For instance, Mālikī doctrine would generally dictate that Muslims under Spanish territories that were under Christian rule had to abandon those regions since they where considered as part of the 'Abode of War', hence obliging them to depart towards territories within *Dār al-Islām*. Conversely, Mudéjares continued to live according to their religious worldview in both the private and the public sphere, hence their habitation in *Dār al-Ḥarb*

as 'Spanish', even if he is of 'indigenous' blood and has lived here all his life. Territoriality and blood plasma are the last attributes that can qualify a man's 'nationality,' that is, the historical substance of which he is made), Ortega y Gasset (1950), op. cit., pp. 41–42.

5 Ibid., p. 43.

was a subject of heated Mālikī jurisprudential discourse.[6] From this perspective the idea of having members of Islamic society in Spain flowing into New Spain and crafting a Muslim Novohispanic tradition there is a matter difficult to evince.

If we wish to support a theory that supports a Colonial Mexican Islamic tradition, Islām needs to be present there, both in theory and practise, whether hidden or revealed, either theologically or culturally. Crypto religious traditions of New Spain may have been invisible to the public eye, but they could not remain thus for three centuries. Jews and Protestants in Colonial Mexico demonstrate this. But if with the arrival of Mālikī Islām to Spain, the *españolía* that Ortega y Gasset refers to enriched itself, it is perhaps worth questioning how the *españolía* of New Spain improved by an influx of *árabes-españoles* during the Colonial period. I will argue that crafting historiographical works on Muslims and Islām in Mexico, both Colonial and Early Independent, requires the interplay of transnationalism, history, and memory. Transnationalism, because it helps us see the self-conceptualization of Muslim *émigrés* and their descendants in Mexico. It also shows how the host communities perceived and received them.[7] Moreover, it urges us to study the societies and the customary elements that shaped them. History, because it evokes the past as an entire compendium of all that has ever occurred anywhere in the universe preceding the present. History may also be regarded as the inquiry of what is no longer and an impartial reconstruction of the same; a representation of the past and its interpretation; a recording of yesterday's occurrences and their recollections in a way that gives meaning to people. As for memory, it is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond of time past tying us to the eternal present. Yet, the uses of History and the reclamation of memory "serve at times as part of a complex and persistent contemporary process of cultural invention."[8]

As for historiography, since it is product of human interpretation, it is capable, academically *stricto sensu*, of elaborating myths. While historical evidence permits us to observe the registration of happenings, it is ultimately the inter-

6 Kathryn A. Miller, "Muslim Minorities and the Obligation to Emigrate to Islamic Territory: Two fatwās from Fifteenth-Century Granada," *Islamic Law and Society*, No. 2, Vol. 7, (2000), pp. 256–288.

7 On transnationalism see: D.J.B. Trim, "The Huguenots and the Experience of Exile (Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries): History, Memory an Transnationalism," in: D.J.B. Trim and Robert J. Bast (Eds.), *The Huguenots: History and Memory in Transnational Context. Essays in Honour and Memory of Walter C. Utt*, Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 1–42.

8 Tamar Katriel, "Sites of Memory: Discourses of the Past in Israeli Pioneering Settlements Museums," in: Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weisseber (Eds.), *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999, pp. 99–135.

pretation of these that produces historiography. Historiography, in the words of Yaakov Shavit, Professor Emeritus at Tel Aviv University, can be understood as the "systematic writing of history, aware of itself and its rules."[9] Collective historical memory, Shavit argues, unites societies, endowing them with a common consciousness and common objectives.[10] By historical memory we may refer also to the manner by which a collectivity of people fashion and consequently recognise themselves *vis-à-vis* specific narratives of historical periods or occurrences. In the words of Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins of Columbia University, "History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an organic relation; while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities."[11] From this understanding, we may grasp that archival evidence points, for instance, to the existence of Mexican Judeoconverso history. Although this may lack an organic relation in time and space to Mexico's current Jewish community, it is linked by a common collective memory, embedded in tragic occurrences of the past, that took place due to ethnoreligious affiliation throughout the course of history. In other words, in the past, the Inquisition took them to New Spain; whereas in modern times it was the Holocaust that caused the vast majority of them to reach Mexico. However, with regard to the Novohispanic *Judeoconversos*, we can see even today, an organic and vivid collective memory that has shaped the identities and common consciousness of those who claim to be descendants and heirs of that Mexican Judeoconverso history. This is the case of the Mexican *Alteños*, who recognize themselves as products of those events and of that collectivity of peoples that caused, built, and shaped the history of the Mexican *Judeoconversos*. I will elaborate a bit on this community in the following pages. Do memory and imagination have a particular role in this equation? Ricœur provides us with further insights on the subject which are worth noting:

> Under the association of ideas, if these two affections are tied by contiguity, to evoke one—to imagine it—is to evoke the other—to remember it. Memory, reduced to recall, thus operates in the wake of the imagination [...] To memory is tied an ambition, a claim—that of being faithful to the past. To put it bluntly, we have nothing better than memory to sig-

9 Yaacov Shavit and Barbara Harshav, "Cyrus King of Persia and the Return to Zion: A Case of Neglected Memory," *History and Memory*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (1990), pp. 51–83.

10 Ibid., p. 60.

11 Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From Collective Memory to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vo. 24, No. 1, (1998), pp. 105–140.

> nify that something has taken place, has occurred, has happened [...] One could speak in this regard of the historicizing of memory, the benefit of which would accrue to memory.[12]

The historiographical exercise should necessarily be formulated in threefold, namely, evidence and sources; analysis and explanation thereof; and historical representation. The historical framework of the Novohispanic Muslims tradition in Colonial Mexico, both ontologically and socio-culturally, should also take these three aspects as a starting point. The logic of this rests, as Ricœur suggested, on the prerequisite of a twofold passage that oscillates from historical provable knowledge to critical hermeneutics, and from the latter to its ontological interpretation and connection.[13] When this link cannot be established, then the assumed historical present-past link is only a supposition. I emphasise however, that producing historiography comes with testimony that can be proved. Testimony, in this case, serves as a main tool that "brings aid and assistance to the orator or the historian who invokes it,"[14] and it is essential in the reconstruction of the historical fact. Thus, written traces of past occurrences may elevate testimony to the rank of documentary proof and vice versa. As Ricœur explained, testimony constitutes the fundamental transitional structure between memory and history; while false testimonies can be unmasked only by critical agency that opposes those accounts reputed to be more reliable to the testimony under suspicion.[15] When erroneous testimony is utilised to create historiography, the product may be observed as a direct derivate of the uses and abuses of memory, and in the best of the cases, as myth.

Recorded testimony contains realities of past occurrences, which are not always subject to human exegesis. History is documented by evidence, while myths have gained ground through the centuries as a result of the "literary culture of western nations because of men's endearing insistence on carrying quasi-mythical modes of thought, expression, and communication into a supposedly scientific age."[16] It is therefore essential to have a clear idea of what myths are and of what can be intrinsically considered historiography. Defining myth and discerning the manner in which it differs from other forms of folk narrative is thus required. The American anthropologist William Bascom

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12 Ricœur (2004), op. cit., pp. 5, 21, 389.

13 Ibid., p. 284.

14 Ibid., p. 169.

15 Ibid., p. 21.

16 G.S. Kirk, *Myth, Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: Cambridge University Press and University of California Press, 1970, p. 2.

(1912–1981) stated that the myth creator "typically takes some already existing matter and shapes it."[17] Bascom outlined folktale, legend and myth as follows:

> Folktales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction [...] Legends are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was mush as it is today. Legends are often more secular than sacred. They tell of migrations [...] Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith, they are taught to be believed, and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt or disbelief. Myths are the embodiment of dogma and they are often associated with theology and ritual.[18]

Myth should not be understood as a pejorative term. A myth may be partly true, false or partly both. It can also be seen as "the expression of a category of thought expressed by the sacred stories and rituals of traditional societies."[19] Leonard Thompson (1916–2004) stated: "If a myth is compatible with the evidence, it passes a crucial test. If it distorts the evidence, it fails the test and is bad history—and to that extent an implausible myth."[20] The French philosopher Roland Gérard Barthes (1915–1980) defined myth as: "Le mythe est une parole, tout peut être mythe, qui est justiciable d'un discours."[21] With these definitions in mind, sources point to a Novohispanic Islamic tradition that is mythical in nature. This is because the theory of Islām in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico as proposed by the generally accepted historiographical account as—arrival (1519–1521), development (1521–1821), resurfacing (1862–1867), and the *taqiyyah* phases in these periods, does not pass Thompson's 'crucial test' in the light of historical evidence. Furthermore, its discourse on Islām, on its orthodoxy and schools of jurisprudence likewise fails to pass the test:

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17 William Bascom, "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives," in: Alan Dundes (Ed.), *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth, Berkeley*, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984, pp. 5–20.

18 Ibid., pp. 6–10.

19 Christopher G. Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction*, New York and London: Routledge, 2002, p. 257.

20 Leonard Thompson, *The Political Mythology of Apartheid*, London and Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1985, p. 12.

21 (Myth is a type of speech, everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse), Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957, p. 215.

> Las dos fuentes principales del Islam son el Corán como texto revelado y la Sunna o Hadith [...] la exégesis que se ha hecho de ellas ha propiciado desde el inicio que se escindiera la ortodoxia y se crearan doctrinas y escuelas jurídicas muy variadas. A grandes rasgos se pueden identificar: sunismo, chiismo, sufismo, wahhabismo y salafismo; y entre las escuelas jurídicas: hanafí, maleki, shafí, hanbalí y wahhabí. [...] islamistas moderados y pragmáticos, e "islamistas." Los primeros son aquellos que surgieron en los años de 1980 y 1990 [...] los segundos son aquellos que fueron miembros militantes de organizaciones marxistas, que bajo un discurso antisemítico, nacionalista, populista y antiimperialista, proponen regresar a los fundamentos del Islam; son considerados fundamentalistas u ortodoxos.[22]

Without a clear picture of these matters, how can we understand the cosmovision of Muslims in Colonial Mexico, and see New Spain as a potential destination for Moriscos?

With regard to the orthodoxy in the study of Islām, Brett Wilson of the *Central European University* explains that "the terms *orthodox* and *orthodoxy* have a history of imprecision and collusion in theological axe-grinding. Yet despite their oft-noted inadequacies, scholars continue to invoke and retool the terms with a perplexing persistence."[23] Nikki R. Keddie wrote in 1972: "Fortunately, Western scholarship seems to have emerged from the period when many were writing [...] that Islam and Marxism were so similar in many ways that one might lead to the other."[24] However, as Tal Asad mentioned, "perhaps that period of Western scholarly innocence is not entirely behind us."[25]

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22 (The two main sources of Islām are the Qur'ān as revealed text and the Sunna or Ḥadīth [...] the exegesis that has been made of them has led, from the beginning, to the split of the orthodoxy and the creation of very varied doctrines and legal schools. Roughly, it can be identified: Sunnism, Shiism, Sufism, Wahhabism and Salafism; and among the legal schools: Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, Ḥanbalī and Wahhābī [...] moderate and pragmatic Islamists, and "islamists." The former are those who emerged during the years 1980 and 1990 [...] the latter are those who were militant members of Marxist organizations, who under an anti-Semitic, nationalist, populist and anti-imperialist discourse, propose to return to the foundations of Islām; they are considered fundamentalists or orthodox), Medina (2014), op. cit., pp. 20, 23.

23 Brett Wilson, "The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of Orthodoxy in the Study of Islam," *Comparative Islamic Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (2007), pp. 169–194.

24 Nikki R. Keddie (Ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslims Religious Institutions since 1500*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972, p. 13.

25 Asad (1986), op. cit., p. 24.

Of likewise imprecision and persistence is to equal the individual Muslim to Islām as a whole. These practises have accumulated too much conceptual baggage in one term with the aim of being useful for academic studies and applicable generally to Islām. However it taxes intellectual effort, and instead of providing clarity, causes confusion. Scholarly works on Islām in New Spain remain attached to this particular plight and promote it, despite its conceptual and historical inadequacies. For instance, when we examine the *Wahhābiyah*, we realise that it is a Salafi current of Ḥanbalī adherence, elements of which may be also found in the Ẓāhirī school of *Fiqh*. The latter refers to Islamic jurisprudence that was introduced to North Africa by Mālikī scholars and was short-lived on the Iberian Peninsula.[26]

With regard to the similarities between the political philosophies of radical Islām, particularly those that derived from the theo-political thought of Sayyid Quṭb (1906–1966), and Marxism, it is possible to find socially oriented philosophical resemblances, but I emphasise that coining Islamists as former Marxists is an implausible claim.[27] Furthermore, let us recall that the term 'orthodox' is not of Islamic provenance. Etymologically it comes from the Greek *ortho* (correct) and *doxa* (opinion, doctrine), and it was first utilised with reference to Judaism in the late eighteenth century.[28] As for fundamentalism in Islām, in the last decades, it has become a significant and increasingly strong political force. Therefore, its interpretation calls for a better outline and deeper understanding than the one presented by current literature on Colonial Mexican Islām. A greater effort in this regard is demanded if scholars intend to link Mexico's present Islām with the Novohispanic Islamic tradition they advocate. I argue that fundamentalism(s) in Islām are commonly misunderstood in scholarly efforts from disciplines outside of the proper frame of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. This is partly because disciplines beyond this academic frame often lack the intellectual tools to study the subjects in these scholarly fields. There is also a popular Western understanding by which the term 'fundamentalism' inherently opposes modernism, an idea that is open to debate. However,

26 On the Ẓāhirī school of Islamic jurisprudence on the Iberian Peninsula see: Amr Osman, *The Ẓāhirī Madhhab (3rd/9th–10th/16th Century): A Textualist Theory of Islamic Law*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014.

27 For a comparative survey on the political philosophy of Islamism and Marxism see: Hendrik Hansen and Peter Kainz, "Radical Islamism and Totalitarian Ideology: a Comparison of Sayyid Quṭb's Islamism with Marxism and National Socialism," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2007), pp. 55–76.

28 Wilson (2007), op. cit., p. 171.

as Sayed Khatab of Monash University states, "the term fundamentalism has no Arabic source or Islamic reference."[29]

It is also important to understand that in Islām, the political and the social are not always derived by theological doctrine, but also shaped by historical experience. Its truth, believed to be revealed by celestial revelation, has often become ideological indoctrination, and transcends the borders of nationalism. Islām calls for a broader universalism, guided by the common Muslim understanding that the message of Islām was given to humanity altogether, binding political thought, theological understanding, and social action. For this purpose, an Islamic nation needs to unite as *Ummah Wāhidah* (united nation) and to revive an Islamic political order. Political order because for this Abrahamic faith, politics and religion are central to state and society. Each Islamic current embraces this order in accordance to its own historical collective experience. From this perspective, it may be conceptually inaccurate to refer to it in singular, as 'Islamic fundamentalism.' Hence, I propose to embrace the concept of 'fundamentalisms'. For instance, the cosmovision of the *Twelver Shi'ites* does not necessarily share the core elements of Wahhabism nor its *weltanschauung*, despite both branches co-existing in a theologically orthodox and fundamentalist Islamic world. What differentiates them is therefore, the historical development that shaped their cosmovision and theology. As for who is a Muslim, the *Amman Message* (2004) provides a clear and elementary definition, which reads: "Whosoever is an adherent to one of the four *Sunni* schools (*Mathahib*) of Islamic jurisprudence (*Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Shafi'i* and *Hanbali*); the two *Shi'i* schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Ja'afari* and *Zaydi*); and the *Ibadi* school of Islamic jurisprudence and the *Thahiri* school of Islamic jurisprudence, is a Muslim."[30]

Under the Muslim occupation of Spain, *Al-Andalus* was considered as an integral part of the Maġrib. Ibn Ḥaldūn (1332–1406) distinguished three lines within the Mālikī school: Iraq (Mesopotamian region), Qayrawan (Tunisia), and Cordoba.[31] He explained that the inhabitants of Mauritania and Spain followed the Mālikī system. This is because students from those regions often travelled for education to the Ḥijāz, where the inhabitants shared a theological affiliation with the Muslims of Spain.[32] Familiarity between *árabes-españoles* and

29 Sayed Khatab, *Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism*, Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2011, p. 12.

30 "The Three Points of The Amman Message v.1," available at: http://ammanmessage.com/the-three-points-of-theamman-message-v-1/ (last accessed May 10, 2020).

31 Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law, 9th–10th Centuries C.E.*, Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997, p. 156.

32 Ibn Khaldoun, *Les Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldoun, traduits en Français et commentés par*

their coreligionists in the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq demonstrates that the routes from Europe to the Ḥijāz and the Mesopotamian region were well known to them. In a similar manner, the Spanish Jews knew and were actively in contact with the Jewish communities in what they called *Babylon*,[33] as the *Ms Espagnol 354* at the *Bibliothèque national de France* illustrates. Hence, observing the geographical dynamics of this Islamic school of jurisprudence can help us trace an additional line of research concerning the Moors and their whereabouts, both after the Spanish Reconquista and subsequent to their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula.

Concerning historiography, we may conclude that it cannot be produced when evidence is lacking. Evidence however, can be distorted or interpreted without the backing of sources. Political and religious ideologies often take recourse to this, creating a product that is closer to myth than to reality or historicity. Christopher G. Flood, Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey, explains that political ideologies are the counterparts of religious belief systems, and he stresses the issue of myth-making as follows:

> The major religions have generated their theologies alongside their mythologies, their liturgies, their rituals, and their artistic expressions. They have accommodated local variations and accretions in the contexts of different societies [...] In the ideological sphere, theoretical argument enjoys particular prestige as a display of rational reflection and a distillation of meaning. But mythmaking is the partner of theory [...] By implication, myths purport to prove the validity of values by showing that they can be enacted. Mythmaking is therefore indispensable to ideology.[34]

When reflecting on the history of Spain and Colonial Mexico, as well as on their religious minorities, we see violent religiously-fueled conquests to exotic romance, and stories of periodical coexistence, to mutual inquisitorial practices. Around them, historiographies and myths often abound. The topic of an embedded Islām in New Spain seems to be no exception.

M. de Slane, Vol. 3, Extrait de la troisème partie du tome xxi des Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impérial, Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1868, p. 14.

33 *Ms Espagnol 354*. "Carta que escrivieron los Judíos que vivían en España a los Judíos que vivían en la ciudad de Babilonia, avec la réponse des derniers." Letter. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 354*, Year: 1601–1700, f. 221v.

34 Flood (2002), op. cit., p. 275.

Stanley G. Payne, Emeritus Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, points out that "memory does not define or fully explain past events but simply provides one version or interpretation of the latter."[35] History on the other hand, he further clarifies "is neither individual nor subjective, but requires the objective and professional empirical investigation of documents and other data and artifacts. It is a supra-individual process of the society of scholars, who debate and contrast results."[36] Hence, the worst outcome of 'historical memory' is not the falsification of history, but rather the political intention it contains;[37] as if this was a *sui-generis* ideological form of history. Our case of study, reflects a sort of pillar of a new fictional movement, based on the principles of a *vivre-ensemble* historical vision. This dominates today's political, cultural and intellectual debate as well. Therefore, there is a need to challenge the current mutatis mutandis approach of scholarly works on the subject of the Novohispanic Islamic tradition, which often poses as a fait accompli to "what needed to be changed has been changed."[38] Instead, the methodology used should invite historical revisionism, not in a sense that denies or distorts historical facts, but rather one in which what needs to be changed, will be changed in accordance to first-hand documentation and historical evidence; one that invites us to rethink history, and consequently, creates its rewriting from a prudent angle and within a rigorous scientific frame, as the discipline rightly demands. This is so, because "history is not only concerned with change, but subject to change, and historians revise; but they also correct, replace and delete their own and others' [unsustainable] words and images."[39] Anyone interested in searching the past is invited to take such a stand, and so are those searching for Islām as *Dīn* in New Spain and Early Independent Mexico.

When researching Islām as a 'little tradition' of Colonial and Early Independent Mexico, we may come across arguments from Mexican academic spheres which propose: "The absence of early community organization could derive in part from Mashriqi Muslim practise, which privileges a direct relationship between the believer and his creator."[40] From this perspective, the lack of tangible Islamic organization in Mexico before 1990 may well be justified. The same

35 Stanley G. Payne, *Spain: A Unique History*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, p. 252.

36 Ibid., p. 253.

37 Sánchez Saus (2016), op. cit., p. 17, n. 10.

38 Tullio Scovazzi, "Within and Beyond Mutatis Mutandis," in: Maurizio Ragazzi (Ed.), *Responsibility of International Organizations. Essays in Memory of Sin Ian Brownlie*, Leiden: Brill, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013, pp. 121–134.

39 Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Revisionist Histories*, New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 1.

40 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 147.

line of reasoning asserts that due to the "late abolition of the Holy Inquisition in 1820 and the controversial institutionalisation of religious freedom in Mexico in 1860, it is perhaps not surprising that these early Muslim populations did not generate institutional spaces or a visible presence in the Mexican public sphere."[41] On the latter we may argue that it might be partially true, especially when referring to the visible presence of the hidden heretics. However, if this is to be held up to scrutiny, it should also apply to religions besides Roman Catholicism in New Spain. In other words, we could argue that Mexico's Inquisition was responsible for a lack of Jewish and Protestant visible presence in *Nueva España*, yet archives demonstrate that the contrary occurs. Why, against such odds, did some hidden heretics succeed in having a well-recorded historical voice in the annals, while others seem to be mute? Was *taqiyyah* so effective? And if so, why did it fail to preserve the Novohispanic Islamic tradition through time, from the conquest of Tenochtitlán, to independence and through the twentieth century in Mexico?

As far as the Mashriqi Muslim practise goes, I emphasise that the word 'Mashriqi' refers to someone who is from *al-Mashreq*, namely the Orient, or more accurately the Levant, in opposition to the term 'Maġrib', which is linked to sunset[42] and refers to North Africa. Having said that, it is imperative to recall that in the Middle East, Muslim practise oscillates from Shi'ite and its branches, to Sunni. How can this 'Mashriqi Muslim practice' in Mexico be homogeneous when the Mashreq itself is not? If Muslims from the Middle East are officially recorded to have arrived in Mexico at the end of the nineteenth century, an epoch in which religious freedom already existed in Mexico, why would they need to practise their religious convictions in a personal private manner? This is especially worth considering, when it is well known that Islām is a social and communally inclined religion.

The French scholar Yves Lacoste signals several differences between the geopolitical features of the Maġrib and the Mashreq, which include religious views as well. He explains that the former is characterised by a grand religious homogeneity, where almost the totality of its population is Sunni, of Mālikī adherence; while the Mashreq contrasts with this religious feature still emphasised today, and is characterised by a collection of various religious groups where antagonism is tangible. Thus, the Mashreq is distinguished by the diversification of Muslim rites, which oscillate between Sunni and Shi'ite, and the diverse adherences to Islamic jurisprudence that each individual and group in

41 Ibid., p. 145.

42 André Chamy, *L'Iran, la Syrie et le Liban, L'Axe de l'espoir*, Paris: Les Éditions du Panthéon, 2012, p. 183.

it profess. Lebanon illustrates the complexity of the geopolitical intricacy of the Mashreq, where religious practise is far from being a homogeneous Islamic practise.[43] Each of the states that can be counted as central to the Muslim world is characterized by a religious specificity.[44] We appear then, to face an effort to adapt a religious tradition that thus far, seems to have been foreign to Colonial and Early Independent Mexico. Are we facing a myth instead?

Blumemberg's 'Theory of Myth' expresses that it is a form of cultural adaptation,[45] whereas the philosophical works of Professor Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) approach myth as sprouting from human emotions. For Cassirer, a "myth cannot be described as bare emotion because it is the expression of emotion."[46] These two approaches are often reflected when examining historical evidence on the hidden heretics of Colonial Mexico. Consequently, we may justly ask if the proposed Novohispanic Islamic tradition is utilised for contemporary cultural adaptation; or serves as a bridge, wrapped in emotion, that connects contemporary and Colonial Mexico in a socio-cultural and religious sense. In addition, Cassirer stressed that "a lie is *no*–thing, for you cannot of nothing make something."[47] Taking this perspective, we should understand that myths have a source of veracity. Few cases of Muslims and Moriscos in the Mexican Colonial period, scattered in the archives are used to serve this idea of Cassirer. "Myths are resistant to analysis because their force does not lie in the power of reasoning but in their pictorial evocation of inexorable movement towards a salvatory goal,"[48] Cassirer continues. Political myths, he explains, "often lie at the very heart of political rituals in much the same way as sacred myths lie at the heart of religious rites."[49] On the other hand, Flood explains that it is not always possible to identify where a myth started or by whose agency, and elaborates on the intentions of myth-makers as follows:

> If the genesis of a story can be traced to a particular individual or a set of people, it is thus natural for those considering it a myth to ask whether or

43 Yves Lacost, *Questions de Géopolitique, l'Islam, la Mer, l'Afrique*, Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1988, p. 72.

44 Ibid., p. 73.

45 Angus Nicholls, *Myth and the Human Sciences: Hans Blumenberg's Theory of Myth*, New York and London: Routledge, 2014, p. 153.

46 Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1946, p. 43.

47 Ibid., p. 216.

48 Flood (2002), op. cit., p. 103.

49 Ibid., p. 187.

> not it was produced with the conscious intention of influencing an audience towards some viewpoint or course of action.[50]

This recalls the thought of the German philologist and orientalist, Max Müller (1823–1900), who explained: "Myth originates not in its virtues, but in its vices."[51] He takes an interesting approach to myth, one derived from a philological analysis. For Müller, as Cassirer explains:

> Myth is neither a transformation of history into fabulous legend nor is it fable accepted as history [...] myth is conditioned and negotiated by the agency of language; it is in fact, the product of a basic shortcoming, an inherent weakness of language. All linguistic denotation is essentially ambiguous—and in this ambiguity, this paronymia of words lies the source of all myths.[52]

What greater vice is there in History, as an academic discipline, than distorting facts and placing feeling, ideology, or any given agenda above them.

'Moro, Mudéjar, Morisco, Musulman, Muslimes' are all paronyms and are found in contemporary academic discourse that focusses on Islām in Mexico as a historical subject. However, these paronyms do not necessarily evoke the same meaning, nor can they be referred to as the forerunners of organic and periodical Novohispanic historical occurrences. While the performance of a thorough conceptual examination of the core elements in research is an essential task, the researcher must also complete and correct the presented evidence to avoid transforming history into legend. With regard to historians and historical evidence, Cassirer brings to mind the ideas of Gobineau (1816–1882) and states: "He [the historian] must stretch the facts and make them fit into the preconceived scheme if our evidence is too scanty or if it seems to be in open contradiction."[53] Eventually, the researcher's credibility rests on the ability to adduce evidence to persuade the public that the references are valid and that the conclusions have been tested against those of other historians working on the subject.[54] For even the historical novel as a literary current, requires a certain degree of proof, and certainly, a surplus of imagination. Historians, as

50 Ibid., p. 47.
51 Cassirer (1946), op. cit., p. 18.
52 Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth* (Translated by Susanne K. Langer), New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1946, pp. 3–4.
53 Ibid., p. 227.
54 Flood (2002), op. cit., p. 57.

people who occupy with researching the past, interpret. Namely, they attempt to connect their statements about the past to a present subjectivity; and provide the evidential or justificatory elements to establish their statements about the past as true. In this fashion, History differs from Literature in its adherence to standards of evidence.[55] For evidence is, ultimately, a pre-condition for reaching the historical truth.

When a comparative analysis is made on the *prohibidos* of New Spain, evidence demonstrates that other non-Muslim individuals who were banned from the Americas did indeed arrive in Mexico and were judged and punished there for their faith since the very genesis of the Spanish Conquista. However, they also succeeded in establishing a social and religious tradition that left historical tracks and tangible traces in the archives, society, customs, collective memory, and myths of Mexico. The Sephardic Jews flourished in Novohispanic society by practising dissimulation, paying bribes at times, and conducting their religious practises in the most clandestine manner.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spain was confronted with two main unwanted religious beliefs in Colonial Mexico: Protestantism and Judaism. The reforms of Luther were echoing across the Iberian Peninsula and perceived as a threat. Preventing this derivate of Christianity from arriving in Spanish America was imperative for the Spanish Crown and the Church. Jews, on the other hand, constituted only a heretical and social problem. To address these challenges the Inquisition was established in Mexico. But the Hebrews in *Nueva España* were more than simple scattered individuals across its territory. Through the three centuries of its existence, they were such a vast minority that, perhaps "if it was not for the establishment of the Inquisition in Mexico, the seventeenth century had found it converted to Judaism."[56] Hence, this particular ethnoreligious minority group of Colonial Mexico serves us well for a comparative exercise.

As early as 1550, Sephardic Jews were already established as a community in Colonial Mexico. By 'community', I mean the assembling of people sharing certain common characteristics. In this case, a crypto Judaism tied them together. As the prominent Mexican historian Alfonso Toro (1873–1952) stated:

> A pesar de que en 1523 se publica el primer edicto contra los judíos en la Nueva España, es un hecho que, para 1550, la comunidad Hebrea de

55 See: Kelly Boyd, *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writers*, Vol. 1, New York: Routledge, 2019.

56 Francisco Fernández del Castillo (Dir.), *Libros y Libreros en el Siglo XVI*, México: Archivo General de la Nación, 1914, p. 584.

> México era ya numerosa, pues formaban el veinticinco por ciento de la población blanca peninsular.[57]

As for the Jews in sixteenth-century Mexico, Margarita Hidalgo, Professor Emeritus of San Diego State University, explains that between 1541 and 1571, they openly practised their religion. Hidalgo also shows that besides Iberian Jews, in *Nueva España* there were Jews from French, Italian and German backgrounds. Additionally, it is believed that by 1622, there were about five hundred Jews in Mexico City only, and both Jews and *Judeoconversos* were accused of being observants of the *Ley de Moysén*.[58] The high number of Jews present in the early stages of Colonial life in Mexico shows that, if they desired, then *Nueva España* was indeed a reachable destination for banned non-Catholic Iberian populations. The members of this non-Catholic religious tradition in New Spain were so numerous that other scholars believed that there were more Sephardic Jews than Spanish Catholics in sixteenth century Mexico.[59]

Vast literature and archival documentation tell of those Jews who were condemned to burn at the stake in Mexico since the days of Hernan Cortés. Two early cases illustrate this point: Hernando Alonso (1461–1528) and Gonzalo de Morales. Both died at the stake in the Tlatelolco Plaza of Mexico City in 1528, for being Jews.[60] Zumárraga and Rafael de Cervantes, who functioned as *Fiscal* on behalf of the *Santo Oficio*, also judged a number of Hebrews in Mexico during the early Novohispanic years. The case against Gonzalo Gómez in 1536, or the process against Francisco Millán illustrate the Inquisition at work by the first bishop of Mexico, as a result of which followers of the *Ley de Moysén* were tortured and suffered for their heresy.[61] Although the Inquisition was not

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57 (Despite the publication of the first edict in 1523 against the Jews in New Spain, it is a fact that, by 1550, the Hebrew community of Mexico was already numerous, as they formed twenty-five percent of the white peninsular population), Alfonso Toro, *Los Judíos en la Nueva España: Documentos del Siglo XVI Correspondientes al Ramo Inquisición*, México: Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982, pp. ii. On the edict see: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1, Exp. 2, "Primer edicto contra herejes y Judíos," México, 1523.

58 Margarita Hidalgo, "El Español de América en los Archivos de la Inquisición: Nueva España 1527–1635," *Anuario de Lingüística Hispánica*, Vol. 27, (2011), pp. 71–93.

59 Toro (1982), op. cit., p. 10.

60 On Alonso's case see: George R. Graham Conway, *Hernando Alonso, a Jewish Conquistador with Cortes in Mexico*, s. l.: s. n., 1928; Medina (1905), *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96; Seymour B. Liebman "Hernando Alonso: The First Jew on the North-American Continent," *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (Apr. 1963), pp. 291–296.

61 See: AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 2, Exp. 2, "Proceso del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición y el Dr. Rafael de Cervantes, fiscal en su nombre, contra Gonzalo Gómez,

established officially in Mexico at the time, such illustrations demonstrate the Novohispanic ecclesiastical position against heresy since the early stages of the *Conquista*. As these examples illustrate, burning at the stake for being a heretic occurred often in Mexico as well as the Iberian Peninsula. However, when we examined such cases in *Nueva España*, the records do not tell of any individual, during the three centuries of Mexican Colonial life, who had been punished to death for practising an Islamic tradition.

Concerning these crude realities, worthy of citing is perhaps the greatest *Auto de Fé* in the Americas, which took place on April eleventh, 1649, in Mexico City. Tomás Tremiño de Sobremonte (1592–1649), also known as *Don Isaac*, is believed to have been the leader of one of the Jewish communities in Mexico City for over a decade prior to his incarceration in 1642. He was burnt at the stake along sixty-nine other Jews, fifty-seven of which were corpses of Hebrews who had died before trial and were disinterred in order to be burnt with the rest of the accused.[62] Another example can be found in the 1635 trial of a Jewish woman named Juana Enríquez,[63] but the case against the Carvajal family is what best exemplifies these atrocities in the Americas. The Carvajals were a Jewish family who became Governors of Nuevo León and stood several trials in the Mexican Inquisition courts, for instance in 1589, 1595, 1596, and 1601, and were all prosecuted for practising a religious tradition different from Catholicism in New Spain. In the Iberian Peninsula, only in the year of 1531, from fifty-eight cases, about forty-five people in total were burned at the stake for heresy. This illustrates a more rigid hand of the Iberian Inquisition in contrast to its Mexican homologue,[64] and exemplifies the latter's selective attitude to the heresy, which it claimed to combat in all its facets.

The social position of the Jews in Iberian society from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries sparked a jealousy in which heresy was simply an excuse to persecute them. Such sentiments led to the 1391 Jewish massacres of Seville

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vecino de Michoacán, por Judaizante," México, 1536; Vol. 30, Exp. 8, "Proceso del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición contra Francisco Millán, hijo de Judíos Portugueses, natural de Utrera, Tabernero, por Judaizante. Juez: Fray Juan de Zumárraga. Srio. Miguel López. Juez comisariado para el tormento: Juan de Rebollo," México, 1538–1539.

62 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales*, *Inquisición* (61), Vol. 426, Exp. 26, "Publicaciones de testigos contra Tomas Tremiño de Sobremonte, por Judaizante" México, 1646; Liebman, "Tomas Treviño de Sobremonte: A Jewish Mexican Martyr," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 1, (1980), pp. 63–74; and Medina (1905), op. cit., pp. 118–119.

63 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 381, Exp. 7, "Testificaciones contra Juana Enríquez, Simón López, Rafael Silva, Isabel de Silva, Elena Silva, por Judaizantes," México, 1635.

64 Toribio Medina (1905), op. cit., p. 13.

and Barcelona, for instance. Of all the heretics in its territory, the Spanish Crown and Church directed their attention to the Hebrews the most. The interpretation of the New Testament that the Church held then, accused the Jews of having crucified the Christ. While this was nothing new for the European cosmovision of that epoch, it was prominent at that specific time in history. However, and despite that stand, the Spanish authorities showed sometimes a certain level of tolerance towards them. Jews lived under the protection of the kings of Spain often, for whom they even served in pivotal roles that varied from banking and accountancy, to medical and notary responsibilities. In other words, Jews and *Judeoconversos* were an asset to the Spanish Crown, but not so for common people. They were expelled nonetheless in 1492, and many amongst them found a new life in the Spanish realms of the New World afterwards.

Mexico's *Archivo General de la Nación* houses one of the largest collections of records on the Inquisition. It provides rich and tangible historical illustrations of the reality that was lived through the Colonial era and Early Independent epoch of Mexico. We learn from these documents of a dynamic Jewish presence, crafted around a religious tradition that, although hidden, existed and flourished even in the dungeons of the Mexican Inquisition. For instance, the Volume 1498 (23) of the *Inquisición* collection tells a fascinating story of seventeenth-century New Spain that relates to the Jews in Mexican dungeons. There, the keepers of the Tōrah described the inquisitorial prisons as a *tianguis* (flea market). This archival record further narrates how the Jewish prisoners recounted their life, both in jail and before having fallen prisoners. The story of a woman named Catalina de Campos vividly illustrates these conditions. She, together with her daughter María, was jailed in the secret prisons of the Mexican Inquisition in 1647. De Campos compares the inquisitorial jails on the Iberian Peninsula with those in Mexico, and on the latter she tells her daughter: "Es pan con miel lo que aqui pasa, si tu vieras lo que pasa en las casas q ay como esta en Portugal, te espantaras del modo y rigor con q los tratan."[65] Again archival sources point to the easier hand of the Mexican Inquisition *vis-à-vis* its Iberian homologue. The story of these women provides a fantastic source of information about the Hebrew community of seventeenth-century Mexico and the religious tradition that this ethnoreligious group kept and transmitted

65 (This is bread with honey, if you saw the things that there are in houses [inquisitorial prisons] like this in Portugal, you would be scared by the manner and rigor with which they treat them), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 3, "Communiciones de cárceles que a oydo Gaspar de Alfar desde la suya: a Doña Cathalina de Campos y Doña María de Campos, su hija," México, 1647, f. 467v.

in it. They did so to its affiliates and on given occasions, even to other members of Novohispanic society, some of whom did not hesitate to adhere to the *Ley de Moysén* in spite of the consequences that this could have signified for them.

The De Campos were not the only historical figures to communicate about Novohispanic Jews and the way they transmitted their beliefs and customs to non-Jews in Colonial Mexico. In 1615, the Mexican Inquisition received news about a man in Zacatecas named Cristobal de Herrera, a Jew, who according to the information obtained, used to teach the *Ley de Moisés* to Mexican natives.[66] Thus, Colonial Mexico's Jews kept the essence of a Judaism that was lived and practised by their forebears in *Sepharad*, "the Jewish word for Spain,"[67] or the *Hispania* where they dwelled since the first centuries of the Christian era.[68] Against common wisdom, the realities of the Novohispanic Jewish tradition included "widespread circumcision rituals and dietary laws,"[69] and its members enjoyed a community of leaders up to the rank of Grand Rabbi.[70] Francisco Fernández del Castillo (1864–1936), an authority on the Mexican Inquisition wrote:

> El incremento del judaísmo se comprueba con la declaración de uno de sus sectarios, Gran Rabino en México, el cual confesó que entre los españoles de la colonia había mucho más judíos que católicos, aun cuando no quiso denunciar a ninguno.[71]

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66 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 309, Exp. 4, "Información contra Cristobal de Herrera, sospechoso de Judío y de que enseñaba la Ley de Moisés a los Indios," Zacatecas, 1615.

67 William Whiston (Ed., and Trans.), *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus, the Jewish Historian. Translated from the Original Greek, according to Havercamp's accurate Edition. Containing Twenty Books of the Jewish Antiquities with the Appendix, or Life of Josephus, Written by Himself: Seven Books of the Jewish War and Two Books against Apion*, Vol. 1, Dublin: R. Reilly, 1741, Dissertation viii, p. cclxxi.

68 Adolfo de Castro, *The History of the Jews in Spain, From the Time of Their Settlement in That Country Till the Commencement of the Present Century. Written, and Illustrated With Divers Extremely Scarce Documents* (Translated by the Rev. Edward D.G.M. Kirwan), Cambridge, J. Deighton; London, G. Bell, 1851, p. 20.

69 Martin Cohen and Abraham J. Peck (Eds.), *Sephardim in the Americas: Studies in Culture and History*, Tuscaloosa and London: The American Jewish Archives and the University of Alabama Press, 1993, p. 224.

70 Seymour B. Liebman, *Réquiem por los olvidados. Los judíos españoles en América, 1493–1825*, Madrid: Altalena Editores, 1984, p. 20; and Toro (1982), op. cit., p. ii.

71 (The increase in Judaism is verified with the declaration of one of its sectarians, Chief Rabbi in Mexico, who confessed that among the Spaniards in the colony there were many more Jews than Catholics, even though he did not want to denounce any of them), Fernández del Castillo (1914), op. cit., p. 584.

The AGN furnishes us with an interesting file that corresponds with Fernández del Castillo's position: "Y en el mundo no ay Judio mas observante de la Ley, ni que mas bien este en ella que Diego Dias, gran maestro de nuestra Ley."[72] The word *law*, in a Judaic context, can refer to both the law of the State and the law of God.[73] However, it would be senseless to believe that Jews in Colonial Mexico had the necessary credentials to practise and teach secular law. This extract should be understood then from a religious perspective, which embraces law in the Judaic context, namely the Mosaic Law. With regard to the term *maestro* (master), in Judaism it conveys the meaning of 'Rabbi' (Hebrew: my master). In this case, 'Maestro de la ley' may as well signify a Master of Jewish Law, or the *Tōrah*, and one who possesses the necessary theological knowledge to render a legal decision based on Mosaic Law and to teach its doctrinal corpus to the members of his community.[74] Additionally, in Judaism, the Master is the bearer of the religious tradition that passes on through generations, both orally and in written form,[75] so, this fits in with the definition of tradition that I referred to earlier. As Professor Jacob Neusner (1932–2016), a prominent scholar of Judaism with over nine hundred and fifty academic works, explained: "Torah was more than laws and legends, and the Master was more than a teacher. The discipline sought something other than mere education. It was the study of Tōrah as a lifestyle."[76] In the Novohispanic context, the Master and the Law kept the same essence. As a result of this, the Jewish Novohispanic religious tradition per se was able to transmit and guard its tenets, at least during the first two centuries of Colonia.

Seventeenth-century Novohispanic Judaism was particularly active and well structured through an underground system that included Bible instruction and even apparently consisted of studying the Tōrah in its original Hebrew. An additional fascinating document at the AGN challenges common understanding about this minority group, and even known contemporary Jewish theology by

72 (And in the world there is no Jew who is more observant of the Law, or who is more in it than Diego Dias, great master of our Law), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 4, "Communiciones de cárceñes que oyo Gaspar de Alfar entre Doña María de Campos y Francisco de Leon año de 1647. Y entre Cathalina de Campos y dicha Doña María de Campos su hija," México, 1647, f. 523.

73 For a reference on the Judaic legal system see: Elliot Dorff, "Judaism as a Religious Legal System," *Hasting Law Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 6, (Jan., 1978), pp. 1331–1360.

74 Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck, *The Routledge Dictionary of Judaism*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 126.

75 Jacob Neusner, *First Century Judaism in Crisis: Yohanan ben Zakkai and the Renaissance of the Torah* (Augmented Edition), Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1975, p. 95.

76 Ibid., pp. 96–97.

placing Hebrew women at the core of the chain of the transfer of Judaism in Colonial Mexico. From a traditional *Halakhically* stand, the authority to teach is manifested in Rabbis as heads of Jewish communities which in turn is derived from the Hebrew acronym *Rōsh Bney Isrāel* (R.B.I.), translated as the 'head of the children of Israel.' However, as previously mentioned, in Novohispanic Judaism, such authority and theological *savoir-faire* was slightly different, this is to say, it was also conferred on women:

> Leonor Nuñez [illegible] de la Ley. Isabel de Gomez disimulada save mas que todos que de enseñar. Y cuan linda maestra es Leonor su madre, Ysabel Gomez save mas que todos juntos, aunque Tremino sea Letrado, lo puede enseñar a él en lo que nos toca, ya me entiendes. Y Francisco de Leon le respondió sí La Ley [...] la puede leer.[77]

This extract demonstrates that Jewish women in seventeenth-century Mexico crossed the threshold of Judaic instruction by providing theological direction to the members of their religious communities as Rabbis did. Furthermore, women also practised faithfulness to their spiritual language and culture, which is evident in: "la puede leer" (She can read it). 'It' refers to the Law of Moses, namely the *Tōrah* itself. If the 'it' indicated a simple demonstration of literacy, then 'she can read' would be a better fit. The Jews of Spain preserved *Castellano* as their mother tongue, but *Ladino*, a mix of Hebrew and Spanish, became their vernacular language.[78] Hence, both Spanish and Hebrew were present in their lives. An additional instance is illustrated through the case of a man named Lorenzo Dionisio, who while in Mexico in 1701, is attributed to have received a letter written in Hebrew, which apparently came from Cadiz, Spain.[79] Undoubtedly, the Novohispanic Jews still have many secrets to tell us, present in the depositories of Mexico's recorded historical memory.

Further realities that the AGN provides about Novohispanic Jews, is that they were organised by boards (*Juntas*):

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77 (Leonor Nuñez [illegible] of the Law. Isabel de Gomez dissimulated, knows to teach more than everyone. And Leonor her mother, is beautiful a teacher, Isabel Gomez knows more than all together. Although Tremiño is lettered, she can teach to him what concerns us, you understand me. And Francisco de Leon replied yes the law [...] she can read it), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 4, op. cit., f. 513.

78 Liebman (1984), op. cit., p. 12.

79 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 546, Exp. 18, "Sobre una carta rotulada a Don Lorenzo Dionisio. Carta en idioma Hebreo procedente, al parecer de Cadiz," México, 1701.

> Juan de Morales prosiguió diciendo ya saves que hemos hecho aquello de cuantas maneras ay desde que nos conocemos con todos sus rritos y términos guardando dura ley fielmente como se deve guardar. Y los que con nosotros lo hacían de la mesma suerte todos los de nuestra junta [...] Mathias Rodriguez de Olivera y los de su junta [...] Y todos los de aquella junta.[80]

The *Juntas* were points of reunion where diverse information was shared. They also functioned as social gatherings, centers of learning and for religious practise. Although they did not operate as Synagogues *stricto sensu*, they were localities in which Jewish Novohispanic tradition was disseminated. Seymour Liebman (1907–1986) explained that in 1622 the Inquisition registered a complaint, which affirmed the existence of a Jewish *Junta* of about five-hundred Jews and a synagogue in the Santo Domingo Street in Mexico City.[81] Documentation at the AGN corroborates his claims.[82] Thus, the possibility that there were underground synagogues in Mexico exists. The same applies to the fact that these *Juntas* may have had contact with other Jewish communities outside Mexico, just like their contemporary coreligionists in Cartagena de Indias did;[83] or that they could have had liturgical material, or have received it from abroad. The entry of forbidden books into Novohispanic territory was an additional reality in Colonial Mexico under the Inquisition.

Judaism does not proselytise, but it accepts non-born Jews as adherents to its belief system once they have converted. This seems to have taken place more than once in Colonial Mexico. The French historian Solagne Alberro explains: "Proselytism and messianism were characteristics of persecuted minority groups."[84] Although Novohispanic Hebrews did not proselytise en masse, archival sources show that these hidden heretics of seventeenth-century Mexico had the *savoir-faire* to instruct others into the Law of Moses. Some Jews resorted

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80 (Juan de Morales went on to say, you know, we have done that in many ways, since we met, with all the rites and terms, faithfully keeping the law as it should be kept. And those who did it with us, in the same manner all of our board [...] Mathias Rodriguez de Olivera and those of his board [...] and all of that board), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 4, op. cit., ff. 517v, 520, 522.

81 Liebman (1984), op. cit., p. 96.

82 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 335, Exp. 86, op. cit.

83 On the Jewish community of Cartagena and its liaison with the Sephardic community of Amsterdam see: Aliza Moreno-Goldschmidt, *Conversos de origen judío en la Cartagena colonial: Vida social, cultural y econímica durante el Siglo XVII*, Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2018.

84 Solagne Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571–1700*, México: FCE, 1988, p. 435.

to this theological practise to include their non-Jewish spouses or partners into their religious tradition and community. This is the case of a woman named Agustina de la Cruz and her partner Francisco Blandón, son of Leonor Nuñez and Pedro López, and brother of María Gómez, the wife of Thomas Tremiño de Sobremonte.[85] The conversion to Judaism of Agustina de la Cruz and her son's circumcision are recounted in the secret prisons of the Mexican Inquisition by fellow Jews as follows:

> Agustina de la Cruz mulata amiga de Blandon y a un hijuelo suio porque anda circuncidado. La prendieron y a un hijuelo suyo. La mulata ussaba nuestra Le, y que era famossa que Blandonsillo la había enceñado. Francisco Blandon es lindo oficial de la Ley, le enseña muy bien, como es barbero circuncidaría al mulatillo.[86]

The sentence "Francisco Blandon es lindo oficial de la Ley" goes beyond its literary meaning. From a Jewish perspective, an 'oficial de la ley' may be a *Ḥazzan*, who in the Talmudic era served as officer of the local community. He performed particular duties in the synagogue or was a permanent representative of the congregation, providing melodies for liturgy. The term 'oficial' (officer) may also be associated with the duties of the *Gabbāī*, the collector of charities and contribution officer of the community.[87] However, when speaking of 'officer of the law' in a Judaic context, this may also refer to the function that a Rabbi performs, as the figure "serving as the executive officer of a synagogue."[88] Francisco Blandón, when imprisoned in the dungeons of the *Santo Oficio* in Mexico,

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85 Antonio Calderón, *Avto General de la Fee celebrado por los señores, el Ilmo. y Rmo. señor Don Iuan de Mañozca, Arçobispo de México, del Consejo de su Magestad y de la S. General Inquisicion, Visitador de su Tribunal en la Nueva España. Y por los muy ilustres señores inquisidores Doct. D. Francisco de Estrada y Escobedo, Doct. D. Iuan Saenz de Mañozca, Licenciado D. Bernabè de la Higuera y Amarilla, y el señor fiscal Doct. D. Antonio de Gabiola en la mvy noble y mvy leal civdad de México, metrópoli de los Reynos y Provincias de la Nueva España. Dominica in Albis, 11 de Abril de 1649*, México: Antonio Calderon, Impressor del Secreto del S. Officio, 1649, Sección 15, Inciso 5, 6.

86 (Agustina de la Cruz, a mulatto woman who is a friend of Blandón, and one of his sons because he is circumcised. They caught her and a little son of hers. The mulatto woman used our Law, and she was famous because Blandonsillo had taught her. Francisco Blandon is a nice officer of the Law. He teaches her very well, and because he is a barber, he would circumcise the mulatto kid), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 4, op. cit., ff. 513rv.

87 Lavinia and Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *A Popular Dictionary of Judaism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005, pp. 60–61.

88 Neusner and Avery-Peck (2004), op. cit., p. 126.

instructed fellow Jews to fast, to guard the *Ley de Moysén*, to keep the Shabbat, to count the cycle of the moon, and to do penance to the "God of Israel."[89] This is some information on him, besides the record of him as an officer of the law. Such teaching requires a level of knowledge that is more in keeping with an individual well learned in Jewish Law. Hence, inferring that he might have been a Rabbi has a solid foundation in Judaism.

On masters and officials, Deuteronomy 16:18 reads: "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns."[90] Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (1829–1908) writer of the *Arūkh Ha'Shūlchan, Ḥōshen Mishpat*, a treatise of Jewish law (*Halakhah*), explains this verse. He sees the requirements for officers of the Jewish community as: "They need to have *Semīkha* [...] when they see a wise man that is fit to judge and issue rulings, they should give *Semīkha* and call him *Rebbe* (Rabbī)."[91] In Hebrew, the *Semīkha* (ordination) is also called *Mīnūī* (nomination) and from a *Halakhical* perspective, carries the same legal and theological authority that Rabbis have.[92] This understanding may help us see that given the social realities of Colonial Mexico, Rabbinical institutions to ordain the officials of the law were absent. Therefore, the nomination (*Mīnūī*) of those best acquainted with the Judaic religious tradition may have served the Novohispanic Hebrews to appoint their community religious leaders and instructors. This is what is suggested in the sources. Hence, the theological knowledge of the leaders of this Novohispanic ethnoreligious minority, at least during the seventeenth century, serves as a line of investigation. We can conclude that in this epoch in Mexico, officers and masters of Jewish law were not simply individuals who had vague memories about the religion of their forefathers in Spain, in spite of having practiced their religion clandestinely.

An additional illustration of conversions to Judaism in seventeenth-century Mexico is the story of another mulatto woman, who is depicted in the sources as well versed in the Law of Moses. She "prided herself on being from the nation," namely, one of the Jewish people. This woman was also present at the *Junta* of a Jewish man named Anttonio Fernández:

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89 Calderón (1649), op. cit., Sección 15.

90 "Deuteronomy 16:18 (ESV)" *Bible Hub*, available at: https://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/16-18.htm, (last accessed May 14, 2020).

91 Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Arukh HaShulchan, Choshen Mishpat, Siman 1*, available at: https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.16.18?lang=bi&with=Halakhah&lang2=en, (last accessed May 14, 2020).

92 Societé des Études Juives, *Revue des Études Juives, Tome Quatre-vignt-troisième*, Paris: La Librairie Durlacher, 1927, p. 108.

> Una mulata de la calle de San Francisco aqui en Mexico [...] me dixo que ella save hacer aquello (que es la ley de Moisen) que lo ha hecho con mucho secreto con Anttonio Fernandez [...] la mulata ayunaba con dicho Anttonio Fernández y me dixo que havia mas de cinco años que hacian ellos dos aquello.[93]

Altogether, these illustrations on Novohispanic Jews may be why the prominent historian Seymour B. Liebman said: "El judío hispánico era sui genesis."[94]

The historical echo that this religious tradition had in Colonial Mexico can be appreciated since the beginning of the *Conquista*, and it extended across time, particularly during the end of the 1500s and along the 1600s. But beyond that, it was a 'little tradition' that was not only inscribed in the records of Colonial Mexico, but was reflected in the jargon of the Novohispanic society. From the *Acto de Fe* on December eighth, 1596, onwards, the word *Portuguese* acquired a new meaning in New Spain. It became synonym for Jew.[95] During the seventeenth century, calling someone *Portuguese* in Mexico implied that the individual was descendant of Hebrews, regardless of his religious observation. We must recall that during that time, Jews in the Spanish world extensively profited from the avarice of the *Picaros*, those in charge of providing the licenses to the Indies, particularly after the unification of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1580. From then on, Spain returned to persecute the Portuguese *Conversos* more atrociously, simply because they were mostly Jewish,[96] which caused a real influx of *Sephardīm* to the Indies, with Mexico as a highly desired destination.

In light of these facts, the *Casa de Contratación* of Sevilla issued explicit instructions to the governors of the colonies in the Americas. The Spanish Crown believed that these *Portuguese* and their fleets arrived in the New World with "malicious intentions."[97] We are facing not scattered individuals, but organic migrations and fleets, to such an extent, that this is a period in the history of Mexico, which may be well coined as the *Century of the Portuguese*. The sev-

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93 (A mulatto woman from the street of San Francisco, here in Mexico [...] she told me that she knows how to do that—that is, the Law of Moses, that she has done it with a lot of secrecy with Anttonio Fernandez [...] the mulatto woman fasted with Anttonio Fernández and she told me that the two of them had done this for more than five years), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 4, op. cit., f. 521v.

94 (The hispanic Jew was *sui genesis*) Liebman (1984), op. cit., p. 6.

95 Hidalgo (2011), op. cit., p. 73.

96 William Monter, *La Otra Inquisición*, Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1992, p. 357.

97 Francisco de Lyra, *Ordenanzas Reales para la Casa de Contratación de Sevilla y para otras cosas de las Indias y de la Navegación y Contratación de Ellas*, Sevilla, 1647, p. 6.

enteenth century also marks the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain. However, incidents related to Islām are minimum and hardly visible in New Spain. The result of this investigation points to the fact that the number of Muslims in *Nueva España* may have accounted for only a handful of scattered individuals in total. In spite of the prohibitions against them, Colonial Mexico embraced and assimilated them into the layers of its society. This may be the reason they are hardly seen in the archives and their religious tradition does not echo in Mexico's recorded or even popular oral history. The scarcity of Islām related cases in Colonial Mexico evokes the words of Garrido Aranda:

> Crimes belonging to the realm of other religions, which the Inquisition considered as heresy, reach the highest percentage on the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in Córdoba, and the minimum in *Nueva España*. In fact, the Inquisition of the Indies did not persecute confessional minorities, but the society of old Christians.[98]

Just like the light that emanates from the documentation studied thus far illuminates, there were some hidden heretics in Colonial Mexico, who did indeed profit as described by Professor Garrido Aranda. Why then did the Moriscos not, who, apparently flooded Mexico?

I would like to emphasise that Novohispanic Judaism is not the ancestor of contemporary Mexican Jewish communities. By the nineteenth century, most, or virtually all crypto-Jews had already converted to Catholicism. In the fullness of time, the Inquisition won and achieved its goals, at least in religious matters with regard to Jews. Despite this, certain traits of Jewish Novohispanic traditions were preserved; and traces of these Colonial Jews can be seen not only in the vast documentation found in the archives of Mexico, but also in the last names of many Mexicans today. A few examples are Caro, Carvajal, Curiel, Levi, Mendes, Pardo, Pinto, Sevilla and Toledano. Throughout the centuries many of them lost their religious Jewish identity, but historical and popular traces still give veracity to the claim that in Colonial Mexico, probably the only non-Catholic religious tradition that was banned from the Indies and nevertheless flourished was the Jewish one. Today, their descendants have blended with Mexico's society and religion, but the practice of endogamy by their predecessors kept a popular oral tradition alive, which links them directly to their Sephardic ancestors. The odds against them were as unfavourable as those against Muslims or Protestants, or even grater. Nonetheless they succeeded to

98 Garrido Aranda (1983), op. cit., p. 526.

move to the Indies, to settle there, and in the case of Mexico, they were even able to build an important city. Monterrey is the third largest metropolitan area and a significant industrial and business centre today. It is located in the northern state of Nuevo León, a region that also owes its name to Iberian Jews of the Carvajal family. Even when the inquisitorial laws of *Nueva España* punished them for over three centuries, which caused them to conceal their religious identity, their name and contributions to Mexico survived.

In spite of the obstacles the Jews faced in New Spain, their presence, deeds, influence, and names have resounded through Mexican history. Nowadays, we find the *Alteños* of Jalisco, who might trace their origins to the scattered of Israel, who arrived in Mexico from diverse Iberian latitudes. Their Sephardic origin may be a myth for many, yet, one with enough historical documentation and a surplus of oral history at the foundation, hence turning it into a truthful one. The *Alteños*, like the Novohispanic Jews, are also *sui-generis*. They are a Mexico within Mexico—a people with a rich historical past that links them, widely, to the most eminent noble houses of Spain. However this is so only on paper, for plenty of *Alteños* are far from belonging to the real Old Christian Spanish nobility of Late Medieval Spain. Instead, many among them may trace their lineage down in time to the oldest Sephardic houses of *Hispania*, particularly from those who reached Mexico from the regions of Andalusia and Extremadura. This allows us to see the outcome through time and across space of the Linajudos' *savoir-faire*. Their marvellous skills continue to make many fall into the genealogical traps that they set centuries ago.

The Sephardic origin of the *Alteños* is a regional myth that holds within itself the necessary historical evidence, particularly if this is approached by a rigorous genealogical examination. This may undoubtedly contribute to the historical reconstruction of a fraction of the rich Jewish Novohispanic past. Today, the Catholicism among the *Alteños* is as colourful as their own history, but their Sephardic origin has reverberated through time by vivid oral transmission carried on by generations. This, in turn, has been kept alive by strict endogamy, practised through the centuries. Thus, Spaniards brought Catholicism in its free and public form with them to Colonial Mexico. Their *españolía* was expressed through their language, traditions, culture, cuisine, and religion openly; and Judaism came in the most punishable and clandestine manner. The Jews succeeded in maintaining and perpetuating their religious tradition, at least during the first two centuries of the Novohispanic period, despite the constant harassment of the Holy Office, and it flourished underground. Records in both Mexican and Spanish archives demonstrate, that the only religious tradition structurally forbidden in *Nueva España* was Judaism.

As for Protestantism, it was also present and active in Colonial Mexico, to a lesser degree than Judaism, but to a larger extent than Islām. We can see British and particularly French Protestant influences in the translation of Bibles during the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth.[99] With regard to the Inquisition *vis-à-vis* Protestantism in New Spain, the prominent historian Richard E. Greenleaf (1930–2011) concluded, that the main objective of the Holy Tribunal was to encourage Protestants to convert to Catholicism.[100] According to him, the threat it posed to the Novohispanic Church was not serious, especially during the late Colonial period, and "the cleavage of religious unity had not resulted in the world cataclysm that had been feared by the Hapsburg monarchs of Spain and the Roman Catholic Church alike."[101] When the Bourbons became Kings of Spain, the issue with regard to this branch of Christianity was but dead, causing the Crown and the Church to pay little attention to Protestantism in the *Españas* altogether,[102] as Greenleaf further explained. Perhaps, this is why Mexico's archives contain files that are associated with Protestantism by the hundreds, giving veracity to their presence in that period of Mexican history.

To conclude, let us turn to the *Tārīkh-e Hindī Gharbī* (The History of the Western Indies), which first appeared around 1580 in Venice and Vienna, and whose authorship is unknown. Often used as an example that illustrates the connection between the New World and the Middle East, this work does not show evidence to support the claims that an Islamic community existed or Muslims or Moriscos flooded into Mexico in the three hundred centuries of colonial rule. The document does however showcase, Ibrāhīm Müteferrika (1674–1745), the first Ottoman printer, who in 1730 produced five hundred copies of the manuscript, the first time it was widely published. After this torrent of printed copies, reproductions are rare. For over the centuries, written information in the Ottoman realms about the Americas emerged mainly from this very work, whose bulk consists of quotation of earlier Islamic writers, such

99 AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición, Edictos de Inquisición* (43), Vol. 1, f. 49, "Edicto en donde publican una larga lista de libros y papeles prohibidos, la mayoría en idioma francés, escritos por herejes defensores de los errores de Lutero, Calvino y otros sectarios," 1745.

100 Richard E. Greenleaf, "Historiography of the Mexican Inquisition: Evolution of Interpretations and Methodologies," in: Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz, *Cultural Encounters. The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991, pp. 248–276.

101 Richard E. Greenleaf, "North American Protestants and the Mexican Inquisition, 1765–1820," *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (Spring 1966), pp. 186–199.

102 Ibid., p. 186.

as Qazvīnī (1203–1283) and Ibn al-Wardī (1292–1349), as well as of translations of chunks and bits from the works of the chroniclers of Indies, such as López de Gómara (1511–1566) and Fernández de Oviedo (1478–1557). Even when these were used, only their Italian versions served the purpose of the author of the *Tārīkh-e Hindī Gharbī*.[103] Translating the chroniclers of the Spaniards was common in that epoch. For instance, a Jewish intellectual named Yōsef Ha'Cohen (1496–1575), acquainted with the chronicles of Gómara, produced a translation in Hebrew through which he recounted the conquest of Mexico.[104] However, a translation of literary compositions cannot be taken as reliable evidence of actual contact between the figures in the pages of those works and the society for whom they were translated. Hence, evoking the words of Professor Serge Gruzinski in his work *Quelle heure est-il là-bas?* (2008), we can summarise that Colonial Mexico and the Islamic World "est une histoire de mondes qui se croisent sans jamais se rencontrer."[105]

103 Thomas D. Goodrich, "*Tarihi-i Hind-i Garbi*: An Ottoman Book on the New World," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 107, No. 2, (1987), pp. 317–319.

104 See: Moshe Lazar (Ed.), *Yosef ha'Kohen, Sefer ha-Indi'ah ha-Hadasha*, Lancaster: Hotsa'at Labirintos, 2002; and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Aux origines de l'histoire globale: Leçon inaugurale prononcée le jeudi 28 novembre 2013," Paris: Collège de France, 2014, available at: https://books.openedition.org/cdf/3606, (last accessed May 15, 2020).

105 (A history of worlds that crossed, without ever meeting), Serge Gruzinski, *Quelle heure est-il là-bas?* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2008, p. 11.

CHAPTER 5

The *Corps Expéditionnaire Français* of Napoleon III and an Islamic Resurgence in Mexico (1862–1867): Reassessing the Question

The second French occupation of Mexico (1861–1867) was, officially, the consequence of a moratorium by President Juárez (1806–1872) on interest payments that Mexico owed to French, British and Spanish creditors. In October 1861, Napoléon III sent a French military force to Mexico under the command of Jurien de La Gravière (1812–1892) to enforce the claims of France. Negotiations with the government of Juárez failed. War was declared. General de Lorencez (1814–1892) took command of the French army and the rest is history. However, history is constantly in revision. This chapter aims to revise history, because, as shown here below, some contemporary scholars presume a resurgence of Islām with the arrival of the French Expeditionary Forces, and a second historical phase of *taqiyyah* in Mexico:

1. Islam surfaced again among the French imperial troops that backed the second French intervention in Mexico. The French colonial army included an Egyptian division and a number of Algerian soldiers, some of whom stayed behind after the fall of the Second Empire.[1]
2. En la segunda etapa se puede seguir hablando de un disimulo pertinente [...] Se vincula con la inmigración de Musulmanes, sobre todo de origen árabe [...] o como pasó durante la intervención Francesa, cuando un batallón de 447 negros de Sudán partió de Egipto a México.[2]
3. El Islam como tradición religiosa llega al continente [Americas] de la mano del cristianismo [...] Aparece de nuevo entre las tropas que arriban a México con la intervención francesa en el siglo XIX, pues su ejército incluía 4300 sudaneses prestados por Egipto y 500 argelinos, algunos de los cuales permanecieron en el país una vez caído el Segundo Imperio.[3]

1 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 145.

2 (In the second stage one can continue talking about a pertinent dissimulation [...] It is linked to the immigration of Muslims, especially of Arab origin [...] or as it happened during the French intervention, when a battalion of 447 blacks from Sudan left Egypt for Mexico), Medina, (2014), op. cit., pp. 36–38.

3 (Islām as a religious tradition arrives to the continent [Americas] hand in hand with Christianity [...] It appears again among the troops that arrived in Mexico with the French inter-

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> 4. Durante la intervención francesa y el Imperio de Maximiliano, el Emperador, para controlar al país y combatir a las fuerzas juaristas, conformó un batallón de soldados zuavos, pertenecientes a las tribus argelinas [...] Tampoco hay estudios sobre los zuavos. En este caso, ninguno regresó a su país de origen.[4]

I will argue that to better assess the religious and cultural influence that the Muslim soldiers of the French Expeditionary Corps might have had on Mexican society during the 1862–1867 campaign, it is necessary to examine the battle structure and number of Muslim troops that the French Army brought to Mexico. We then need to compare this data with the whole population of Mexico in this period in order to discern the potential effect these troops may have had. However, if the vision and attitudes of the Muslim soldiers of France to Christians within the French Army as well as in Mexican society, and vice versa are not reviewed, then the attempt falls short. Affirming an Islamic resurgence in Mexico and a new period of *taqiyyah* practise as a consequence of the second French military occupation of Mexico certainly poses several questions. Firstly, there is an inconsistency with regard to the two propositions, because the former implies 'to reveal; to surface', whereas the latter 'to conceal', thus there is a contradiction at the very core of this claim. To clarify this, we need to define the verbs 'to surface; to appear again' before delving further into this pronouncement. The *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* defines the verb 'to surface' as follows: "To become obvious after having been hidden for a while; to arise; to put back on path; to wake up or get up after being asleep."[5] Geometry provides us with an additional and perhaps useful definition of the noun 'surface,'—as a continuous set of points that has length and breadth, but lacks thickness. The concept is developed in the following manner:

> A point, mathematically speaking, is a place having position, but no extent, since it has no length, no breadth or thickness. When this is in motion, it produces a line, which has length, but neither breadth or thick-

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vention in the nineteenth century, as the French army included 4,300 Sudanese lent by Egypt and 500 Algerians, some of whom remained in the country [Mexico] after the Second Empire fell), Pastor de María y Campos (2011), op. cit., p. 54.

4 (During the French intervention and the Maximilian Empire, the Emperor, to control the country and fight the Juarista forces, formed a battalion of Zouave soldiers, belonging to the Algerian tribes [...] Neither are there studies on the Zouaves, nor did any of them return to their country of origin), Zaraoui (2011), op. cit., pp. 338–339.

5 "To Surface," *Oxford Learner's Dictionary*, available at: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/surface_2 (last accessed on April 9, 2020).

> ness. A line in motion in any direction except along itself produces surface, which has length and breadth, but not thickness.[6]

Similarly, Islām in Colonial Mexico is set in scholarly works at a very specific 'point' in history (the Spanish conquest of Mexico); which is apparently in 'motion,' thus giving it 'length' (the Colonial period); and paradoxically even 'breadth' (Novohispanic society and culture). As a result, this 'motion,' presumably stirred up again by the second French intervention of Mexico, is argued to have caused both Islām to resurface as well as a new wave of *taqiyyah*. However, there is no evidential 'thickness' (solid historical corroboration) as geometry defines this abstraction.

It is an undeniable historical fact that France used foreign soldiers during her nineteenth century colonial adventures in Mexico. However, only a small fraction of the troops that occupied it during 1862–1867 were Muslims. This can be seen in the historical documentation on the *Ordre de Bataille* of the French Army in Mexico at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris and at the archives of the *Service historique de la Défense* (SHD) in Vincennes. From these sources we learn of one particular corps that belonged to *l'Armée d'Afrique* (the army of Africa) in which the soldiers were considered to be among the most notorious troops of nineteenth century France: *Les Zouaves*. Volunteers, enthusiastic lovers of adventurous imperialistic life that the French were craving for in North Africa in the first half of the nineteenth century made up these legendary regiments. About their initial recruitment chronicles on the second French intervention of Mexico recount: "Le recrutement d'abord n'amène dans les rangs que des volontaires qui se sentent une vocation pour le genre de vie aventureux que l'on mène en Afrique."[7]

Their story begins in June 1830, at the time France invaded Algiers. A month later, Algeria capitulated and General Clauzel (1772–1842) saw the utility in putting indigenous Algerians in the service of France. On March twenty-first, 1831, an ordinance approved the formation of the first two *Zouaves* battalions.[8] Their original recruitment however, was not an easy task, and eventually, *Zouave* troops were chosen from a vast range of participants coming mainly

6 Nathaniel Bowditch, *The American Practical Navigator: an Epitome of Navigation*, Bethesda: National Imagery and Mapping Agency, 2002, p. 317.

7 (Recruitment at first, did not bring any others, but volunteers into the ranks, who felt a vocation for the adventurous kind of life that one leads in Africa), Louis Noir, *Campagne du Mexique. Puebla: Souvenirs d'un Zouave*, Paris: Achille Faure, 1867, p. 9.

8 Eugène-Emile-Edouard Perret, *Les Français en Afrique: Récits Algériens par E. Perret, Ancien Capitaine de Zouaves, 1830–1848*, Tome I, Paris: Bloud & Barral, 1887, p. 104.

from the Expeditionary French Forces, particularly volunteer French soldiers who had fought in previous campaigns and who were thirsty for new thrills in Algeria.[9] At their birth, the *Zouave Corps* was divided into two forces. The First Battalion was exclusively composed of French people, mainly Parisians, while the Second Battalion included Algerian indigenous peoples in its lines, although the officers were French in both. The purpose was to provide additional tools to the French army and to help it to maintain order among the local population of Algeria, as well as to collect taxes for the the French government. A mercenary tribe of Kabyle origin was at the disposal of whoever offered them a salary: the *Zwāwah*[10] (زواوة). It belonged to a well known confederation of Kabyle tribes that inhabited Algeria, and it had a long historical record of lending martial services to Berber principalities.[11] France did not hesitate to pay for their assistance and so the *Zouaves* regiments were born. Successors of the Algerian mercenary tribes, they earned renown in the French Army for their bravery. From that moment on, the name *Zouave* has been linked to elite military units at the service of France composed solely of soldiers of Arab or Muslim origin, but the reality is a bit more complex than that. This misconception has been appraised not only by contemporary historiography, but it is as old as the early days of this military Corps, and even considered by Muslims themselves as far back as 1854: "Belle nuit d'été du 14 juin 1854 [...] On regardait les Zouaves avec curiosité, et plus d'une fois les musulmans les prenant pour des Arabes, souvent même pour des pèlerins de la Mecque."[12] At their genesis that is indeed what France intended them to be, namely, an indigenous Algerian force, but the effort was in vain.

The *Zouaves* engaged in the most legendary battle of the second French intervention in Mexico; the May fifth, 1862 assault on the Mexican Forts of *Loreto* and *Guadalupe*. This fight, generally known as the *Batalla de Puebla*, or simply as *Cinco de Mayo*, is a historical event that is commemorated each year on both sides of the *Rio Grande*. Even today, it is considered great folklore

9 Victor Louis Jean François Belhomme, *Histoire de l'Infanterie en France*, Tome 5, Paris: H. Charles-Lavauzelle, 1893, p. 152.

10 Paul Laurencin, *Nos Zouaves: Historique, Organisations, Faits d'Armes, Les Régiments, Vie Intime*, Paris: J. Rothschild Éditeur, 1888, pp. 6–10.

11 A. Marjoulet, *Historique du 3e régiment de Zouaves rédigé par le Lieutenant A. Marjoulet, d'après les ordres du Colonel Lucas*, Paris; Limoges: Henri Charles-Lavauzelle Imprimerie et Librairie Militaires, 1887, p. 8.

12 (Beautiful summer night of June 14, 1854 [...] they looked at the Zouaves with curiosity, and more than once the Muslims took them for Arabs, often even for pilgrims to Mecca), Jean Joseph Gustave Cler, *Souvenirs d'un officier du 2e de Zouaves*, Paris: Michel Lévy Frères Éditeurs, 1869, p. 116.

among Mexicans, particularly in the Untied States. The *Zouaves*, with a surplus of bravery, assaulted these Mexican fortifications of Puebla, but as the French chronicles narrate, they had little luck on their side, for they were crushed in battle: "Ils furent écrasés."[13] On August twenty-third, 1862, new French forces arrived in Mexico with a part of the *1er Zouaves* regiment. From the moment of their arrival at Veracruz, these troops experienced a rough time, mainly due to the harsh climatic conditions and the numerous illnesses that plagued Mexican lands. The First Regiment of *Zouaves* operated in Mexico until 1866, and thereafter it returned to France, from where it went on to Algeria.[14] During the first days of November 1862, a French vessel named *Wagram* docked in the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico, carrying aboard the *3e Zouaves* regiment.[15] Immediately afterwards it went into action. Its duties were to protect Veracruz, and on March ninth, 1863, it performed heroically against the Mexican troops of General Ignacio Comonfort (1812–1863) in the epic *Batalla de San Lorenzo*.[16]

Years before, precisely on March seventh, 1833, a reorganisation of the *Zouaves* took place and the two original battalions were reunified into one single corps. Little by little the *Zouaves* became a melange of French troops and Algerian indigenous soldiers, but since the commanders were French, it ultimately became a force of exclusively French personnel. However, this was mainly due to frequent desertion of indigenous Algerian troops, which made the recruitment of Algerians an even more complicated task. On top of that, French soldiers and officers in the *Zouave* corps mistrusted the indigenous Algerians, and language barriers were also an operative and administrative challenge for the French army.[17] These were further obstacles in the recruitment of native Algerian personnel into the *Zouave* corps, which ultimately resulted in the formulation of a new military ordinance on December seventh, 1841.[18] According to this, a new unit for indigenous Algerian soldiers was created: *Les*

13 Auguste Charles Philippe Blanchot, *L'Intervention Française au Mexique: Mémoires*, Vol. 1, Paris: E. Nourry, 1911, p. 52.

14 Service historique de la Défense (Henceforth: SHD), GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique. Etat-Major Général. Ordre Général No. 16, 1e Zouaves," Mexico, January 23, 1867.

15 Frédéric Japy, *Lettres d'un soldat à sa mère, 1849–1870. Afrique, Crimée, Italie, Mexique*, Montbéliard: Société anonyme d'imprimerie montbéliardaise, 1910, p. 187.

16 SHD, GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique. EtatMajor Général. Ordre Général No. 23, 3e Zouaves," Mexico, January 31, 1867.

17 Marjoulet (1887), op. cit., p. 11.

18 L. Darier-Chatelain, *Historique du 3e Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens*, Constantine: Georges Heim, 1888, p. 1.

Tirailleurs Algériens, who were going to be known as the *Turcos*.[19] From this moment onwards, the history of the *Tirailleurs* became distinct from that of the *Zouaves*.[20]

Records of the French Army at the *Service historique de la Défense* recount the story of the *Zouaves* in Mexico. Through the *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, these sources provide us with very detailed reports about their endeavours in Mexico. For instance, we learn about the precise time of their arrival, their missions, and their departure off the coasts of Veracruz back to Europe. One extract from this documentation reads:

> Le 2e de Zouaves est le 1er Régiment arrivé au Mexique. Un bataillon y débarquais à Vera Cruz le 7 janvier 1862. Etabli dans les Terres Chauds pendant les 2 premiers mois de son séjour, il paya un long tribut aux funestes influences de ce climat mortel. Avec le Général de Lorencez, il prend part le 5 mai à la mémorable attaque de Puebla [...] Compagnons d'infortune le 5 mai 1862 devant le forts de Guadaloupe [...] C'est à ce brave régiment, c'est à ses infatigables Zouaves, qu'est due la pacification de cet état [...] Au mois de novembre 1864 [...] au moment où il quitte le Mexique, le Marechal lui adresse un dernier signe d'adieu et lui cri au non de tous: 2e régiment de Zouaves, merci de la large part de gloire que vous avez faite à l'armée du Mexique, bonne chance sur le nouveau théâtre ou vous allez désormais combattre et triompher.
>
> Mexico, le 13 mars 1865
> Le Maréchal Ct. en Chef
> Signé: Bazaine.[21]

19 Laurencin (1888), op. cit., p. 11; and Perret (1887), op. cit., pp. 118, 135.

20 J.O. Publication, *Le livre d'or des Tirailleurs Indigènes de la Province d'Alger; ou, Fastes et Services des Bataillons d'Alger et de Titheri, devenus 1er Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens*, Algers: Bastide, 1866, p. 7.

21 (The *2e Zouaves* is the First Regiment that arrived in Mexico. A battalion landed there at Vera Cruz on January seventh, 1862. Established in the *Hotlands* during the first two months of its arrival, it succumbed to the fatal influences of the deadly climate. With General Lorencez, it took part on May fifth in the memorable attack on Puebla [...] Companions of misfortune on May fifth, 1862 in front of the forts of Guadalupe [...] The pacification of this state is due to this brave regiment, to the indefatigable *Zouaves* [...] In November 1864 [...] At the moment that it left Mexico, the Marshal sent it a last farewell sign and shouted to it in the name of everyone, 'second regiment of *Zouaves*, thank you for the large share of glory that you have contributed to in the army of Mexico, good luck for the new theater where you will now fight and triumph'. Mexico, March thirteenth, 1865. The Marshal Cpt. in Chief. Signed: Bazaine), SHD, GR7G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des*

By 1864, orders were issued to restrict the total number of French Expeditionary Forces in Mexico to twenty-five thousand men.[22] The *2e Zouaves* regiment, the first of its corps to have arrived in Mexico, were also among the first ones to leave it.[23] Even so, the commencement of the repatriation of *Zouaves* troops had begun as early as 1863. On January eighteenth, 1863, the *Wagram* carried a contingent aboard back to Europe, among them *Zouaves* from the First and Second Regiments.[24] Subsequently, another contingent sailed off the Mexican coasts on board the *Rhône* towards the city of Oran on March eighteenth, 1865. It consisted of 947 soldiers of the Second Regiment of *Zouaves*.[25] Repatriation carried on throughout the years of the campaign due to the reforms in Algeria during the 1860s, and the *Zouaves* continued to leave Mexico at any given moment that France needed their support either in Africa or Europe. The reality of their daily lives however, was different and more complex than simple heroic battles or of soldiers wishing to stay in a recently conquered land; and although some French soldiers from diverse units of the Expeditionary Corps did indeed stay in Mexico, this was rather the exception, and not the rule:

> Tirons-nous vite de là le plus honorablement possible. Pour cela, il faudrait être francs et avouer ses erreurs. Ici, tout le monde se dégoûte et aspire au retour en France [...] nous n'avons aucune sympathie au Mexique, tous les habitants nous détestent, quoique nous soyons de race latine, et voudraient nous voir bien loin. Nous sommes tous fatigués du Mexique, aussi bien que le Mexique est fatigué de nous. Les populations dans toutes les villes que nous traversons nous accueillent froidement.[26]

Divisions, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Ordre Général No. 15, 2e. Zouaves," Mexico, March 13, 1865.

22 SHD, GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Ordre Général No. 58," Mexico, September 18, 1864.

23 Japy (1910), op. cit., p. 259.

24 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'Armée*, Section 159, "Débarquement du *Wagram*, État Numérique des Militaires du Corps Expéditionnaires du Mexique," Marseille, January 18, 1863.

25 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'Armée*, Section 1450, "Repatriement du *Rhône*, 1865," March 27, 1865.

26 (Let's get out of here as honourably as possible. For this, one would have to be frank and admit mistakes. Here, everyone is disgusted and aspires to return to France [...] we have no sympathy in Mexico, all the locals hate us, even though we are of Latin race, they would like to see us far away. We are all tired of Mexico, and Mexico is tired of us. People in all the cities that we pass through welcome us coldly), Japy (1910), op. cit., pp. 217, 244, 252.

There is enough evidence of the expression of the desires of the troops with regard to not going to Mexico or to leaving it. As for the victors of Crimea and Lombardy, at the time of their arrival in Mexico they were far from being an Algerian native force per se.

By the second half of the nineteenth century a good number of adventurous non-Muslim men had already joined the lines of the *Zouaves* regiments, among them French men who resided in Algeria. Consequently, when France invaded Mexico in 1862, the *Zouaves Corps* was already composed of a number of non-Muslim soldiers, French men who even considered themselves descendants of the ancient Gaul warriors:

> En 1842 les indigènes disparurent presque entièrement de nos rangs. Les meilleurs, les plus vigoureux et les plus braves soldats de l'armée d'Afrique, entrerait dans un corps séduisant à plus d'un titre pour des Français. Uniforme, façon de vivre, liberté plus grande que dans les garnisons de France et même d'Algérie, certitude de se trouver par tout où il y aurait un coup de fusil à tirer, gloire à acquérir, tout cela était bien fait pour attirer dans les rangs des zouaves les descendants de ces Gaulois, nos premiers pères. Cet esprit gaulois qui, à toutes les époques, est venu en aide au soldat français et lui fait traverser avec courage les moments les plus difficiles.[27]

L'Armée d'Afrique was not an indigenous force, but rather an array of French military personnel, whose name reflected its geographical station. It is imperative to stress that due to the French colonial presence in North Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century, many of its military units took names that evoked the regions in which they had been deployed. Hence, the collection of French Forces in North Africa took the name of *l'Armée d'Afrique*, in a similar way that the Expeditionary Forces in Mexico were called *Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique*. The *Zouave* regiment's composition is thus far from being a solely Algerian military unit fighting for the French flag. Neither were the *Bataillons d'infanterie légère d'Afrique* (African Light Infantry Battalions),

27 (In 1842 the indigenous [Algerians] disappeared almost entirely from our ranks. The best, the most vigorous and brave soldiers of the African army, would enter a life seductive in more ways than one for the French. Uniform, way of life, greater freedom than in the garrisons of France and even of Algeria, certainty of being in everything where there would be a gunshot to be fired, glory to be acquired, all that was to attract it in the ranks of the Zouaves the descendants of these Gauls, our first fathers. This Gaul spirit, which at all epochs, came to the aid of the French soldier and made him traverse the most difficult of times with courage), Cler (1869), op. cit., pp. 3, 160.

better known as *Bat d'Af*, military units exclusively composed of indigenous Muslim or African soldiers; nor were these detachments, contrary to the popular belief, strictly disciplinary units. They nevertheless welcomed into their ranks young men already convicted in the civilian sector or sanctioned from the entire French Army:

> Les pénitenciers militaires sont des établissements destinés à renfermer les condamnés pour plus d'un an, pour délit de droit commun, et qui, à l'expiration de leur peine, sont envoyés dans les bataillons d'infanterie légère d'Afrique.[28]

This observation is important, for it may aid us to avoid common errors when studying Islām and its effect on the socio-religious and cultural life of nineteenth century Mexico. Mexican historiography has not produced an in-depth study of the *Zouaves* in Mexico. However, there is sufficient secondary literature and archival documentation that strongly demonstrates that affirming "ninguno regresó a su país de origen,"[29] after the second occupation of Mexico by France, is a considerable error in academia.

War in itself is the most gruesome of human deeds, and when health risks and extreme climatic conditions are added to it, the battle becomes even harder. In a precarious nineteenth century Mexico, the violent struggle of engaging the enemy in a *machete versus baïonnette* manner while taking cover from artillery cannons, was only one type of foe that the French would face. Besides fighting Mexican forces, the Expeditionary Corps of Napoleon III had to contend with other deadly challenges: illnesses and extreme weather. In the Mexico of those days, diseases like typhus, dysentery, yellow fever or black vomit were sworn enemies of anybody who crossed their way. These maladies[30] took a high toll and collected expensive fees from the French contingent, just like they did with the American troops during the 1846–1848 US-Mexico War. For instance, from August to October 1866, the yellow fever alone took the lives of one hundred Algerian soldiers from the six hundred men left in the battal-

28 (Military penitentiaries are establishments intended to contain those convicted for more than one year, for common crimes, and who, at the end of their sentence, are sent to the light infantry battalions of Africa), Amédée Le Faure, *Les Lois militaires de la France, commentées et annotées d'après les discussions législatives et les principaux auteurs militaires, comparées avec les législations étrangères*, Paris: J. Dumaine, 1876, p. 471.

29 Zeraoui (2011), op. cit., p. 339.

30 For a study on the sanitary challenges the French Army faced during the Mexican campaign see: Jean Baptiste Fuzier, *Aperçu sur les Expéditions de Chine, Cochinchine, Syrie et Mexique: Suivi d'une Étude sur la Fièvre Jaune*, Paris: G. Masson Éditeur, 1877.

ion of *Tirailleurs Algériens* by then.[31] These epidemics were only a part of the challenge that the French contingent faced in the course of the Mexican expedition.

Another health issue that quickly became an enemy too difficult to fight, but easy for these soldiers to fall for, was venereal diseases. On September fifth, 1863, General Forey went to see his hospitalized troops. His visit is described with concern and sorrow: "Il a été frappé de la quantité d'hommes atteints de maladies vénériennes qu'il y a trouvés."[32] This crude reality was present throughout the entire military campaign, and it did not discriminate between battalions and regiments. Illnesses were thus a common terror of the time. A document dated 1867, recounts the return to the port of Brest on March thirtieth of that year of a French vessel named *La Garonne* which carried 547 passengers on board. At the time of embarkment, among them was General Neigre, and 387 sick soldiers, of which 200 had venereal diseases.[33] Hence, maladies accompanied the French troops even on their way back home. The French were victims of this and continued to succumb. Jean B. Fuzier (1828–1880), a doctor-ethnologist who was in Veracruz during the time of the French expedition stated:

> L'époque du débarquement de ces troupes coïncide avec le commencement de la saison épidémique de la fièvre jaune. Les détachements qui ont fait un séjour même de courte durée font des pertes, et des hommes contaminés sont morts après deux ou trois jours de marche. La dysenterie est endémique au Mexique, surtout dans les régions que nous occupons.[34]

Thus the shadow of death promenaded and was always latent through disease of all types, harsh weather, and enemy fire, in both camps. Probably this is why as early as August twenty-sixth, 1863, Victor Margueritte (1823–1870), a French colonel in the third Regiment of *Chasseurs d'Afrique*, wrote to General de Fénelon saying: "Le Mexique, mon général, n'est sympathique à personne

31 Darier-Chatelain (1888), op. cit., p. 282.

32 (He was struck by the number of men with venereal diseases that he found there), SHD, GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique No. 3: Ordres Généraux du Mars 1863 au 1er Juin, 1864, No. 198," Mexico, September 5, 1863.

33 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'Armée*, Section 1069, "No. 452," March 31, 1867.

34 (The time of the landing of these troops coincided with the beginning of the epidemic season of yellow fever. The detachments that stayed, even for a short duration made losses, and contaminated men died after two or three days of walking. Dysentery is endemic in Mexico, especially in the regions that we occupy), Fuzier (1877), op. cit., pp. 110, 125.

dans l'armée"[35] (Mexico my general, is not sympathetic to anyone in the army). However, to better combat the climatic challenges and diseases that plagued the French expeditionary contingent, France resorted to the favours of Egypt.

General Gustave Léon Niox (1840–1921), who participated in the French expedition and was awarded the title of Grand Officer of the famous *Légion d'Honneur*,[36] recounted in his chronicles that the military force sent by Napoleon III to Mexico began to sail towards the coasts of Veracruz in November 1861. According to him, the first contingent totaled 2,400 troops and was placed under the command of Rear-Admiral Edmond Jurien de la Gravière (1812–1892). A second one left for Mexico between January and February of 1862, and sailed under the command of General Charles Ferdinand Latrille (1814–1892), better known as the *Compte de Lorencez*, the officer who led the French forces in the *Batalla de Puebla*. This force counted 4,711 soldiers who embarked on eleven ships. During March and April of 1862, a third detachment departed under the command of General Félix Charles Douay (1816–1879), numbering only 431 soldiers sailed in three vessels. During June and July of 1862, a fourth fleet with 3,416 men travelled to the Gulf of Mexico and General Élie-Frédéric Forey (1804–1872) was in charge. Nine vessels transported these troops, some of which had been employed to do transport missions more than once, such as the *Finistére* and the *Forfait*. A fifth task group, divided in five flotillas, joined the Expeditionary French Forces and left for Mexico between August and December of 1862. The first convoy carried 5,824 men, among them, General Xavier Jean Marie Clément de Laumière (1812–1863), General Baron Neigre (1805–1875), General François Achille Bazaine (1811–1888), Marshal of France (1864), and General Armand Alexandre de Castagny (1807–1900), some of the most prominent French military figures of the Mexican campaign. The second convoy, composed of five vessels, carried aboard a total of 5,125 men. In the third convoy consisting of 3,521, were transported in six vessels, of which one particular ship was of high relevance: the *Fontenoy*. It was aboard this that the battalion of *Tirailleurs Algériens* arrived in Mexico. The fourth convoy carried 2,086 and the fifth, 3,351 soldiers; among them 450 of the *Bataillon Égyptien*, who sailed on board the *Seine* and not all of which were combatants. A sixth

35 "Letter from Colonel Victor Margueritte to General de Fénelon" (In French), August 26, 1863, in: Victor Margueritte, *Un grand Français: Le Général Margueritte; avec des pages de Paul Margueritte extraits de: Mon père, Centenaire Algérien*, Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1930, p. 148.

36 Archives Nationales de France (Online site), Dossier: LH/1992/12, "Niox Gustave Léon, 2 Août, 1840," available at: http://www2.culture.gouv.fr/LH/LH172/PG/FRDAFAN83_OL1992012V001.htm (last accessed April 10, 2020).

detachment departed on February 1863, with 6,326 men; and from March to June 1863, several independent deployments reached the Mexican coasts with 1,302 men. In total, according to Niox, the entire French naval group embarked and sent to the Mexican campaign was composed of 38,493 servicemen.[37] With regard to the *Fontenoy*, it left the port of Toulon for Alger on September third, 1862, from where it departed again on September ninth, 1862, this time towards the coast of Veracruz. It reached this Mexican port on October twenty-eighth, 1862,[38] carrying aboard it a total number of 825 men belonging to the *1st Regiment of African Hunters* and the battalion of *Tirailleurs Algériens*.[39]

The French forces in Mexico were organised in two divisions,[40] but the Algerian Battalion, known as the *Tirailleurs Algériens*, was not always attached to the same division. For instance, on August thirtieth, 1862, the General Staff of the French Expeditionary Forces ordered the *Tirailleurs* to be placed in the Second Brigade of the First Division, *Division Bazaine*, under the command of General Alexandre de Castagny.[41] On November first, 1863, the Battalion of *Tirailleurs Algériens* was placed under the command of General Neigre in the First Brigade of the Second Division, *Division Douay*.[42] By 1864, the *Tirailleurs* were deployed under the command of General Douay and operated in the State of Jalisco under the provisional orders of Baron Neigre, whose headquarters were mobile and operated from Morelia to Durango.[43] Hence, the Algerians were often in movement and were not confined to one specific geographical area. As a part of their duties, these troops also served as translators for the Egyptian Battalion, since "they succeeded in understanding their language."[44]

While contemporary Mexican scholars affirm that the Algerians fighting for France in Mexico during the military campaign of 1862–1867 numbered

37 Gustave Léon Niox, *Expédition du Mexique, 1861–1867, Récit Politique et Militaire*, Paris: J. Dumaine, 1874, pp. 737–739.

38 SHD, GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Ordre Général No. 19," January 24, 1867.

39 Niox (1874), op. cit., p. 738.

40 SHD, GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps expéditionnaire du Mexique, Nos. 1 à 11. Ordres généraux, (Gal. Forey), Mois de Août et d'Octobre. Du 30 Août au 25 Octobre 1862: Tableau d'organisation du Corps expéditionnaire du Mexique. Ordre général No. 11," Martinique, August 30, 1862.

41 SHD, GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Ordres Généraux du Août au 25 Octobre, 1862, Ordre Général No. 11," August 30, 1862.

42 SHD, GR7-G126, "Ordre Général No. 58", op. cit.; and "Ordre Général No. 19," op. cit.

43 Niox (1874), op. cit., pp. 481, 505.

44 Ibid., pp. 246.

500 soldiers,[45] the French archives give us a slightly different account on the total number of Algerian soldiers, their missions, their whereabouts and their endeavours:

> Le bataillon de tirailleurs algériens destiné à faire l'expédition du Mexique est formé par décision ministérielle du 12 juillet 1862 [...] à l'effectif de 34 officiers et 700 hommes de troupe. Embarqué en Alger le 9 7bre 1862 à bord le Fontenoy, le bataillon débarqué le 27 8bre à Vera Cruz. La fièvre jaune sévit dans les détachements de La Soledad et de La Tejeria, mais sans ébranler le moral de cet énergique bataillon. Le 22 8bre il descend à Vera-Cruz; le Vomito a cessé, mais 2 officiers et 110 hommes sont morts. Depuis cette époque le bataillon séjourne autour de Vera Cruz, déjouant les embuscades des guérillas et assurant le passage des convois. Plus que aucune autre troupe, le bataillon de tirailleurs algériens a pris la large part de travaux et des luttes de l'expédition du Mexique. Surtout ou il y a eu de rudes combats à livrer, partout où il a fallu affronter le climat meurtrier des tropiques, partout le tirailleurs ont soutenu glorieusement l'honneur du nom français. Retournez donc vers votre patrie, braves tirailleurs, fiers de devoir accomplis.
>
> Mexico le 24 janvier 1867
> Le Maréchal commandant en chef
> Signé: Bazaine.[46]

45 Pastor de María y Campos (2011), op. cit., p. 54.

46 (The Algerian rifleman battalion intended for the Mexican expedition was formed by the ministerial designation of July twelfth, 1862 [...] with thirty-four officers and 700 troops. The battalion embarked in Algiers on September ninth, 1862, on board the *Fontenoy* and disembarked on October twenty-seventh in Vera-Cruz. Yellow fever raged in the detachments of *La Soledad* and *La Tejeria*, but without shaking the morale of this energetic battalion. On October twenty-second, it went down to Vera-Cruz; the Vomit stopped, but two officers and 110 men died. Since that time, the battalion has been hovering around Vera-Cruz, foiling the ambushes of the guerrillas and ensuring the passage of the convoys. More than any other troop, the battalion of Algerian infantrymen took the large share of work and the struggles of the Mexican expedition. Especially where there was hard fighting, wherever it was necessary, and they faced the deadly climate of the tropics. Everywhere the *Tirailleurs* held the honor of the French name gloriously. Return then to your homeland, brave *Tirailleurs*, proud of duty accomplished.), GR7-G126, *Registres d'Ordres Généraux et des Divisions*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Ordre Général No. 19," January 24, 1867.

The *Tirailleurs Algériens* are not the *Zouaves*. During the second French occupation of Mexico the Algerian Battalion was organized in six companies and a General Staff, whose headquarters were in the city of Córdoba, Veracruz. However, they did not always operate in an organic manner, and their missions, although concentrated in the Veracruz area, took them to diverse regions of Mexico. Hence, due to its mobility across the country and because of its religious background, it is possible to infer that Mexicans might have witnessed religious practise amongst these troops. However this is not enough if we want to affirm an Islamic resurgence as consequence of their presence in this Catholic country. Furthermore, presuming that the 700 troops of the *Tirailleurs Algériens* were all Muslims and that they all survived the Mexican campaign, they would form about 2.98755 % of the entire French forces in Mexico. If the total number of these troops is placed tête-à-tête the number of Mexican inhabitants, then the percentage is 0.01369614 % *vis-à-vis* the population of Mexico in 1862. The figures make it difficult to conceive of an Islamic revival in Mexico as a consequence of the presence of these Algerian troops.

How can we measure the religious performance among the *Tirailleurs Algériens*? How many of them stayed in Mexico after the French ended the campaign? A part of Mexican academia claims that a number of Algerian soldiers did indeed stay after the fall of the Second Empire.[47] This seems to imply a potential direct effect that these troops had on the resurgence of Islām in Mexico in the decade of 1860. But how could such a minuscule fraction, as shown above, have caused the resurgence of Islām in such an extensive territorial surface as nineteenth century Mexico was, and in such greatly troubled times? If the net number of Algerian troops at the end of the second French occupation of Mexico is to be taken, after having subtracted the soldiers who unfortunately died in Mexico, the fraction would become even smaller than the figure mentioned above. With it, the potential impact that those individuals may have had on Mexican society would also be greatly reduced. This leads to further inquiries. What were the means that these soldiers used to bring about an Islamic resurgence in Mexico? Did Muslim soldiers in the French Army go to Mexico to promote *da'wa* over and above fighting for the French flag? Where and how is this resurgence documented? How is it measured?

There were cases in which personnel from the *Tirailleurs Algériens* obtained their release from the Expeditionary Corps while still in Mexico. Despite that, these troops decided to continue fighting for the French flag by joining the

47 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 145.

French contraguerrilla units.[48] Documentation in the French archives does not show a great number of Algerians who wished to or indeed stayed on after the second Mexican empire collapsed. Certainly there were a given number of French troops who stayed in Mexico of their own will, but the fighting spirit of the Algerian battalion which excelled in the French forces deployed in Mexico makes the possibility of their continued presence there even more remote. The diminished number of the troops in this particular force can be seen, not only as a result of death due to illness, but also because of the battles that they fought. For instance, as the chronicles tell us, many Algerians soldiers perished on December twenty-second, 1864, in one of the most notorious fights, the *Battle of San Pedro* in the state of Sinaloa.[49] The small number of remaining soldiers in this battalion should make us reflect on the Muslim input that these particular troops may have had in Mexico, and if the output of this was as substantial enough to have generated an Islamic resurrection, as a result of which Islām resurfaced and came out of a long period of hiding.

According to a General Order issued by the General Staff of the French Expeditionary Corps, the Battalion of *Tirailleurs Algériens* was expected to return to Africa on January twenty-fourth, 1867. In August of 1866, its evacuation from the fighting areas of Mexico began, and the different companies of the *Bataillon de Tirailleurs Algériens* started to gradually collect in the port of Veracruz, from where they would embark at the end of February 1867, back to North Africa.[50] On April fourth, 1867, the General Staff of the *Armée d'Algerie* reported the arrival of the French vessel *Le Var* at the port of Al-Marsā al-Kabīr. It anchored on March twenty-eighth of the same year, bringing aboard it 150 *Tirailleurs Algériens*. On March thirtieth, 1867, another 860 soldiers belonging to both the Second Battalion of Africa and the Battalion of the *Tirailleurs Algériens* arrived at Alger on board of the vessel *Le Calvados*.[51] In this ship, two of the companies of the Algerian Battalion were aboard. According to Eric de Fleurian, General and military historian, these two companies had been ordered on June twenty-sixth, 1862, to form a part of the *Tirailleurs Algériens* battalion that was destined for Mexico. In total the force consisted of 240 soldiers at the time of their deployment.[52]

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48 J.O. Publication (1866), op. cit., p. 436.

49 Darier-Chatelain (1888), op. cit., p. 273.

50 Eric de Fleurian, "Historique Sommaire: 1er Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens, 1842–1964," *Tirailleurs d'hier et d'ajourd'hui*, May 16, 2016, available at: http://www.les-tirailleurs.fr/documents/3cb24445-6e8b-4894-9772c71775 1b0150/afficher (last accessed April 8, 2020).

51 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'Armée*, Section 1159, "Rapatriements 1867: Note pour le Bureau de l'Infanterie," Alger, April 4, 1867.

52 Eric de Fleurian, "1er Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens, 1842–1907," *Tirailleurs d'hier et*

As mentioned above, a gradual repatriation of these troops had already begun already in December 1865;[53] and continued through March 1866.[54] Other sources tell us that a force of Algerian riflemen was back in Alger as early in the campaign as April seventh, 1863.[55] On April thirteenth, 1867, the French Army reported an additional return of 134 *Tirailleurs Algériens*, this time aboard the vessel *L'Eure*, which had arrived in Algeria on March thirteenth, 1867.[56] During the final stages of the Mexican expedition "l' armée d' Algérie avait été considérablement diminuée."[57] The second Mexican empire collapsed in June 1867, by which time the Algerian and Egyptian battalions had been already embarked for Europe and carried on to North Africa. Hence, after the repatriation of the French Expeditionary Forces only two types of men were left behind in Mexico: those to whom France had given permission to settle in the occupied country, and deserters.

Desertion, absent without leave (AWOL), and missed in action (MIA) are terms that accompany the realities of war. They are both situations in which the soldier is not physically present. Yet, these concepts are not interchangeable. A main difference between them is time and intent. The latter, is a classification assigned to military personnel who may have been killed or captured by enemy forces during hostilities, and neither their remains nor grave has been positively identified. The second French occupation of Mexico was not alien to these realities, and furthermore, like many military campaigns, it had its quota of deserters in both phases of the conflict. The deserters were soldiers that belonged to all the echelons of the French army, some of whom even succeeded in holding posts in the Mexican military.[58] French records on the Mexican campaign recount one of the reasons for desertion from the French Expeditionary Corps: the promises that Mexican General Jesús González Ortega (1822–1881) made to the French troops. Ortega approached the troops of Napoleon III promis-

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d'ajourd'hui, April 4, 2016, p. 18, available at: http://www.les-tirailleurs.fr/documents/983e85ed-975c-407b-82c8-826322e76fd1/afficher (last accessed April 8, 2020).

53 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'Armée*, "État Numérique des Militaires venant du Mexique su le transport *Le Var*, debarqué à Brest," December 5, 1865.

54 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'Armée*, "État Numérique des Militaires venant du Mexique su le transport *Le Jura*, debarqué à Brest," March 22, 1866.

55 De Fleurian (2016), op. cit., p. 7.

56 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'Armée*, Section 2729–2730, "Note pour le bureau de l'Infanterie," April 13, 1867.

57 (The army of Algeria had been considerable reduced), Belhomme (1893), op. cit., p. 267.

58 F. de La Barreyrie, *Révélations sur l'Intervention Française au Mexique de 1866 à 1867*, Paris: Weil et Bloch, 1868, pp. 24, 66, 72; and Henry Rivière, *La Marine Française au Mexique*, Paris: Challamel Ainé, 1881, p. 135.

ing them that if they abandoned their military units, they would be welcomed in and by Mexico with open arms and would be allowed to go and search for fortune in the vast Mexican territory. The French Generals coined this movement as "une manœuvre de guerre qui n'est pas ordinaire"[59] (a non-ordinary war manoeuvre). The reasons for which men in the French Corps decided to abandon their military duties vary, and the above serves to illustrate only one of them. However, the offer made to the French troops by Mexican generals did not seem to have been fruitful.

Lt. Col. Napoléon Boyer (1820–1888) heavily criticized General Forey. He was eager to finish the French military enterprise in Mexico, as soon as possible. On August second, 1863, he wrote: "We aspire return, and I do not know even a single official in the entire army that wishes to stay in Mexico."[60] Similarly, on November ninth, 1863, the French Captain Joseph Émile Vanson (1825–1900) stated, "in the army we all are disgusted by this ugly imbroglio."[61] This shows that men in the French Expeditionary Forces were not so enthusiastic about staying in Mexico. It was witnessed as early as the initial days, particularly in the foreign regiments, many of whose members abandoned their units while still in France, as soon as they knew that they would be deployed in Mexico: "Les désertions se sont beaucoup multipliées dans le dépôt des régiment étrangers depuis que le départ prochain d'un détachement pour le Mexique a été annoncé."[62] On the other hand, archival material shows that there were other deserters, who after having abandoned their units on Mexican soil, eventually changed their minds and decided to rejoin their squadrons anew. This was the case of a man named Jean Kramp, who decided to leave his troops and stay in Mexico at the moment that his unit embarked to return to France on February twenty-fourth, 1867, but only to reappear later on September twenty-third of the same year.[63] I must clarify that these examples do not point to a Mexico free of French soldiers post June 1867. Instead, they emphasise that the Army of Napoleon III, including the Algerian and Egyptian soldiers did not favour Mexico as a destination for their war efforts.

As for Algerian, Sudanese and Egyptians deserters, this was a quite an insignificant number. Therefore, it is not an easy task to outline the manner in

59 Blanchot (1911), op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 220–221, 233.

60 Jean Meyer, *El Gran Juego o ¿Qué estamos haciendo aquí? Los Oficiales Franceses en México, 1861–1867*, México: Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, 2000, p. 11.

61 Ibid., p. 19.

62 (The desertions have multiplied a lot in the depot of the foreign regiment since the upcoming departure of a detachment for Mexico was announced), SHD, GR7-G92, *Section 1307*, "Régiment Étranger," April 15, 1865.

63 SHD, GR7-G92, "État nominatif des militaires disparus," 1866.

which these Muslims soldiers may have adapted to the extremely different cultural, religious, linguistic and even dietary habits of Mexico. The extent to which nineteenth century Mexico may have served as an appropriate space for these Muslim soldiers to maintain a modus vivendi is debatable and remains largely unverified. It is not clear how these few men could have caused Islām to resurface in accordance with their socio-religious world vision. In spite of France protecting their religious liberties, they found it difficult to practise their faith in Mexico during the entire military campaign. Therefore, the idea that Muslim soldiers in the French Army were the ones that caused an Islām long hidden in Mexico to resurface is unfathomable. I did not find the necessary documentation to measure the scope, range and magnitude of such a process during the second intervention by France. With this in mind, and in light of archival sources, it may only be possible to infer that in this period, a certain number of Muslim individuals arrived once more to Mesoamerica. This is an assertion that grammatically, theologically, and historically differs utterly from affirming a resurgence of Islām in Mexico.

Examining the Convention of Miramar provides us with information about the number of troops that France disposed at the service of Mexico. This accord was signed on April tenth, 1864, between Napoleon III and Maximilian I. It stipulated the number of French troops that were to stay on Mexican soil once the campaign concluded and Maximilian was established as Emperor of Mexico. The agreement stated that the French foreign regiment would receive a number no more than 8000 soldiers, without including the *Tirailleurs Algériens* and the Battalion of *Nègres Égyptiens*.[64] Furthermore, these men were to stay in Mexico only temporarily. The *Légionnaires*, soldiers of the Foreign Legion would remain in Mexico for an extra period of six years after the French Army's withdrawal, unless decided otherwise.[65] However, by February 1867, the biggest bulk of the French Foreign Legion had already left Mexican soil. Only 1,517 *Légionnaires* remained in Mexico, a force that was supported by, and included in it, regular soldiers of the Mexican Army.[66]

Solène Garotin of the *Université de Nantes* and *La Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* carried out a thorough examination of the soldiers of the

64 SHD, GR7-G92, *Section 753*, "Minute de la Lettre écrite par le Ministre des Affairs Étrangers," May 30, 1865.

65 Léonce Détroyat, *L'Intervention française au Mexique, accompagnée de documents inédits et d'un long mémoire adressé par l'empereur Maximilien à l'empereur Napoléon, et remis à Paris par l'impératrice Charlotte*, Paris: Amyot, 1868, pp. 215–217.

66 René Doumic and Berger-Levrault, *Historique du régiment de marche de la Légion étrangère*, Nancy: BergerLevrault, 1926, pp. 14–15.

French Expeditionary Corps that remained in Mexico after the collapse of the Second Mexican Empire (1863–1867).[67] She outlines the origin and social profile of the men who decided to continue with the Mexican adventure, either by entering the army of Emperor Maximilian, or by integrating into Mexico's army or civil society. Garotin presents a corpus of about 3000 men, which were added to the number of French immigrants to Mexico in nineteenth century. From this perspective, it is more accurate to affirm that the French Expeditionary Forces were an influence that created quite a different socio-cultural effect than the revival of a Mexican crypto-Islamic tradition. This, some scholars refer to as the 'Frenchification'[68] of Mexico, which was particularly visible under the governance of General Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911). The Mexico of Díaz was still striving to construct its identity as an independent nation-state at this stage of history, and the outcome of France's second intervention would serve this effort greatly. Moreover, Mexico also wanted to rebuild its war-shattered infrastructure. Thus, in the eagerness for modernity, new cultural horizons, intellectual revival, and identity, the strategy that dominated at that time was to look beyond the borders at other countries that would serve as a source to emulate. For General Díaz, France was exactly that country.

Asserting that a quota of Muslim soldiers from the French Expeditionary Corps stayed in Mexico supposes a number substantial enough as to cause Islām to resurface. Yet, the number of deserters from the Algerian and Egyptian Battalions, as in the archival cases on Moriscos in Colonial Mexico, adds up to a handful of scattered individuals. My research shows that among these, virtually none were granted permission to settle in Mexico. Documents in the box *GR7-G92* at the *SHD* provide a detailed account of the soldiers from the French Army and the forces at the service of Emperor Maxmillian I that were allowed to stay. With very small numerical differences at times these documents show the "total des militaires non rentrés" is 345.[69] They belonged to diverse units

67 Solène Garotin, "Intervention française et migration (1861–1867): le cas des soldats du corps expéditonnaire de l'Empire restés au Mexique," *Ph.D. Thesis*, Université de Nantes, La Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 2010.

68 For an illustration on the *Frenchification* of Mexico see: Javier Pérez Siller and Chantal Cramaussel (Eds.), *México Francia: Memoria de una sensibilidad común. Siglos XIX–XX*, Vol. II, México: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos, 1993; and Nicolás de Neymet, "La Intervención después de la Intervención: Los viajeros Franceses en México y el recuerdo del Imperio de Napoleón III, 1870–1910," pp. 367–392, in: Patricia Galeana (Ed.), *El Impacto de la Intervención Francesa en México*, México: Siglo XXI, 2011.

69 SHD, GR7-G92, "Ministère de la Guerre: État récapitulatif et nominatif par corps, des militaires français restés au Mexique aprés avoir été détaché dans l'armée de l'Empereur Maximilien," n/d.

of the French Expeditionary Corps, but among them, only four belonged to the battalion of *Tirailleurs Algériens*: Sergeant Moncai, and three regular soldiers named Dutailly, Alphonse Tricher, and De Perry. Although possible, their nomenclature makes it hard to affirm their Muslim origin. Additionally, the *Légion Franco-Mexicaine*, which functioned as an auxiliary corps placed at the disposal of the Mexican government, furnishes us with further information on the soldiers that France permitted to reside in Mexico. Although it is imperative to remember that this was not a military force composed of soldiers from the French army only. This military contingent had a non-foreigner character so that no one, other than the Mexican Government, could represent it as a direct agent of a power: "Il faut que ce corps auxiliaire [...] n'ait pas le caractère exclusivement étranger. Cette Légion portera le nom de Légion Franco-Mexicaine."[70] For France it was important to avoid leaving foreigners from its armed forces in Mexico. Consequently, from 1864, it reduced its soldiers in Mexico and formed a military force with a Mexican majority. The *GR7-G92* box also includes a detailed list of the French soldiers who received permission by France to reside in Mexico after being released from their military duties. Unfortunately, reporting this information in detail here goes beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is enough is to mention that they do not surpass 725 soldiers from diverse units of the French army. However, it must be underlined that when their surnames are read, apparently, none evoke any of Arabic or Muslim origin, and no soldier is found to have belonged to the Egyptian and Sudanese Battalion.

The *GR7-G92* contains another list that numbers the soldiers from the *Régiment Étranger* that stayed in Mexico, some of whom served in the *Batallón de Cazadores*, as well as in other Mexican infantry units. They numbered 135 troops, of which is possible to also find those who were executed amongst them.[71] Again, there is no evidence of any name of Muslim or Arabic origin. What is found though, is several family names such as Abraham, Ahronson, David, Fried, Gross, Solomon, Strauss, etc., amongst the French troops in these lists. These surnames may denote a Hebraic origin or point to an inkling of

70 (It is necessary that this auxiliary corps [...] does not have the exclusively foreign character. This Legion will be called Franco-Mexican Legion), SHD, GR7-G92, "Ministère de la Guerre: Organisation d'un corps auxiliaire à mettre à la disposition du Gouvernement Mexicain," July 27, 1864.

71 SHD, GR7-G92, "Régiment Étranger: État nominatif des sous-officiers, caporaux et soldats restés au Mexique dans le Bataillons de *Cazadores* et dans les Bataillons d'Infanterie Mexicaine," Mascara, December 23, 1867.

Jewishness.[72] Does it follow that we can thus conclude that a crypto-Judaism resurfaced in Mexico with the arrival of the French from 1862 to1867? Such a suggestion would go beyond the limits of the intellectual and enter the realm of imagination. History is not an exact discipline. Therefore, after having performed this brief historical exercise, we can conclude that it is difficult to literally know the fate of each of the Muslim troops fighting for France in Mexico in the period 1862–1867. If soldiers from these Muslim military units did indeed stay in Mexico, surely it was only a handful of scattered men, as is demonstrated by primary sources. Beyond this however, we should ask if France and Maxmillian I were interested in allowing the promotion of any other religious tradition besides Catholicism in Mexican society, and if so, to what degree? In this regard we see that on December twenty-eighth, 1865, the French Captain Émile Vanson's wrote: "L' Empereur Maximilien a décrété que la fête de Guadalupe sarait à l'avenir une des trois fêtes nationales du Mexique."[73] So what place could an alien religious tradition have had; one that a very small percentage of the entire French contingent in a Mexico professed, and when Catholicism seems to have been promoted even by its foreign ruler?

My historical review illustrates that even though there were Muslim soldiers in *l'Armée d'Afrique* who participated in the second French occupation of Mexico, their religious impact on Mexican society has feeble evidential support. Therefore I take a different approach, from the one promoted by current academic works. I propose a reassessment of the Expeditionary Forces of Napoleon III and the Muslim troops in the Mexican campaign. I consider this is necessary in order to demonstrate how Islām was awakened and resurfaced in Mexico. Unless supported by documentation, such a claim will remain largely challenged. Challenging it will prevent us from abusing history and from creating 'une reverie historique', as the French rightly say. As for the Zouaves, if there are indeed no comprehensive studies, then allow this very humble contribution to serve as a modest invitation and point of departure to anyone interested in this subject.

72 On the Jewish family names in Europe see: Michel Roblin, "Quelques remarques sur les noms de famille des Juifs en Europe Orientale," *Revue internationale d'onomastique*, 2e année N°4, (décembre 1950). pp. 291–298.

73 (The Emperor Maximilien has decreed that the feast of Guadalupe would soon be one of the three national feasts of Mexico), Émile Vanson, *Crimée, Italie, Mexique, Lettres de Campagnes 1854–1867*, Paris, Nancy: BergerLevrault & Co. Éditeurs, 1905, p. 284.

CHAPTER 6

Le Bataillon Nègre Égyptien and the Resurfacing of Islām in Mexico (1862–1867): Rethinking the Equation

From November 1861, to June 1863, the French Expeditionary Corps had lost 1410 men, some from disease and others due to Mexico's harsh climate.[1] France hoped to have a corps capable of withstanding the climatic conditions and sanitary challenges of Mexico. The thinking was that the weather in Egypt and Sudan could help in composing a military force of men who could endure the hardships of the Mexican campaign better than the French troops. On December twentieth, 1862, a ministerial dispatch arrived in France, which read: "Dépeche ministérielle [...] portant avis de l'envoi au Mexique d'un Bataillon de Nègres mis à la disposition de la France par le Vice-Roi d'Egypt."[2] Three days later, a vessel left the port of Toulon for Alexandria with the aim of picking up the Egyptian Battalion that Muḥammad Saʿīd Pasha (1822–1863), the Wāli of Egypt and Sudan (1854–1863), had lent France in support of her expedition to Mexico.[3] The story of the *Bataillon Nègre Égyptien* (Black Egyptian battalion) in Mexico, whose number adds up to between 447[4] and 500 men,[5] depending on the source, is perhaps best illustrated by the extensive historical work on the military endeavours of this force in Mexico that Prince ʿUmar Ṭūsūn (1872–1944) composed in 1933. This narrative, entitled *Buṭūlat-u al-ūrṭah as-Sūdānīyah al-Miṣrīyah fī ḥarb al-Miksīk*, reports that upon the request by France, Egypt responded by providing a force composed of 453 soldiers.[6] Thus,

1 R. Kirk, "The Sudanese in Mexico," *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. 24, (1941), pp. 113–130.

2 (Ministerial dispatch [...] informing of the sending of a Battalion of Negroes to Mexico by the Viceroy of Egypt, placed at the disposal of France), SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Instructions sur l'administration du Bat.on de Nègres Égyptiens: Corps expéditionnaire au Mexique. Etat major général. Administration du Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens. Arrêté," Acatzingo, March 11, 1863.

3 Niox (1874), op. cit., p. 739.

4 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Procès verbal constatant la réception du dit bataillon au jour de son embarquement en rade d'Alexandrie à bord du navire *La Seine*," January 8, 1863, f. 1.

5 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Administration: Lettre au Monsieur le maréchal," n/d.

6 ʿUmar Ṭūsūn, *Buṭūlat-u al-ūrṭah as-Sūdānīyah al-Miṣrīyah fī ḥarb al-Miksīk*, Al-Iskandarīyah: Maṭbaʿat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, 1933, pp. 3, 4.

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the *Black Battalion*, as the French nicknamed it, embarked on its transatlantic adventure to Mexico on January eighth, 1863, aboard *La Seine*.[7] One could see this adventure rather in the sense of exploitation, since the men had no idea of the destination and nature of their mission at the moment of initial embarkment:

> Dès leur départ d'Egypte, ils ont montré beaucoup d'abattement et d'apathie [...] l'incertitude où ils se trouvaient sur leur sort, car le gouvernement du Vice-Roi les avait embarques sans leur indiquer le but de leur voyage.[8]

The French archives tell of their arrival in Mexico on April fifteenth, 1863, in a report called "Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens arrivé à Vera Cruz le 15 avril 1863."[9] Yet, historiographic consensus based on other French archival documentation states that the Egyptian Battalion reached Veracruz on February twenty-fourth, 1863,[10] bringing with it, a large number of Sudanese troops.[11] Amongst them was a man named Muḥammad Sagr, who functioned as the translator of the Egyptian Battalion. He outlined the composition of this military unit, while still aboard the *Seine* on the way to Mexico as follows: one Battalion commander, one translator with the rank of captain, one captain, one lieutenant, two sergeant-majors, six sergeants, fifteen corporals and 420 regular soldiers. The total was 447 people,[12] among them, a group of twenty children aged fifteen to twenty years, who had been taken as musicians.[13] Gen-

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7 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Administration: 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865," n/d.

8 (As soon as they left Egypt, they showed a lot of dejection and apathy [...] the uncertainty they had about their fate, because the government of the Viceroy had enlisted them without telling them the purpose of their trip), SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique, moral et sanitaire du dit bataillon," Veracruz, February 24, 1863, f. 6.

9 (Battalion of black Egyptians arrived to Veracruz on April fifteenth, 1863), SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Instructions sur l'administration du Bat.on de Nègres Égyptiens: Bataillon nègre Égyptien. Ordre," Veracruz, April 16, 1863.

10 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Contrôle Annuel: Infanterie, Bataillon Égyptien; État-Major. Contrôle Nominatif des Officiers, Sous-Officiers, Caporaux, Soldats et Enfants de Troupe," 1863.

11 Niox (1874), op. cit., p. 329.

12 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Procès verbal ... January 8, 1863," op. cit.

13 SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique ... February 24, 1863," op. cit., f. 6.

eral Niox however, recounted that these kids were as young as ten years old.[14] With time, *Le Bataillon Nègre* earned its reputation as a disciplined unit of brave and brutal soldiers, especially due to its effective performance in the contra-guerrilla efforts of Colonel Du Pin (1814–1868). But this force arrived in Mexico as a disorganised and undisciplined military unit with no operational framework, poorly geared, with "esprits faibles" (low spirits), and with certain surly attitudes towards Christians, rather than as an "elite corps":[15]

> La discipline parait faible, les officiers et sous officiers sont mal obéis [...] le petit nombre de leurs gradés en est assurément une cause, mais on doit surtout l'attribuer à la manière dont ceux ci sont généralement choisis. Ils sont mous, apathiques, peu disciplinés [...] en présence de l'épidémie qui règne en permanence à la Vera Cruz, elle pourra frapper beaucoup leur moral et peut être donner lieu à ces esprits faibles et plein de prévention contre nous, et de bâtir plus d'un opinion absurde à l'encontre des chrétiens [...] Ces considérations me paraissent devoir conseiller de les étudier d'abord avant de leur confier un service important.[16]

Egyptian military doctrine of those years dictated that a 'company' was formed by about one hundred men,[17] but the *Bataillon Nègre* was not divided in company formations at the time of its departure; instead, it left as a single group in disarray, until the French officers arranged it upon arrival at Veracruz. This is when its cadre was divided into four companies placed under a General Staff.[18] Its original organisation was rather primitive and its recruitment had been problematic from the very beginning, as an official report indicates:

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14 Niox (1847), op. cit., p. 245.

15 John P. Dunn, *Khedive Ismail's Army*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 34.

16 (Discipline seems weak; officers and non-commissioned officers are badly obeyed [...] the small number of their officers is certainly a cause of this, but we must, above all, attribute it to the way in which they were generally chosen. They are soft, apathetic, poorly disciplined [...] in the presence of the epidemic, which reigns permanently at Vera Cruz. It will hit their morale a lot and may give a space to these weak minds to take a full defensive state against us, and to build more than one absurd opinion against Christians [...] These considerations seem to me to have to advise you to study them first before entrusting them with an important service.), SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique ... February 24, 1863," op. cit., ff. 8–10.

17 Ibid., f. 4.

18 SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps expéditionnaire du Mexique. Bat.on Nègre Égyptien. Effectifs et organisation, années 1863–1867: Inspection Générales de 1863. Bataillon Nègre Égyptien. Rapport sur l'organisation des services et l'ensemble du Bataillon," Veracruz, Décembre 2, 1863.

> Lorsque le gouvernement égyptien veut compléter ses cadres, il fait une promotion monstre qui pousse quelquefois d'emblée un sous-officier au grade de Capitaine. Semblable proposition avait été faite pour le Bataillon, il en serait résulté que des caporaux seraient devenus lieutenants. Je ne pense pas que l'on puisse être plus primitif en matière d'organisation.[19]

From the onset of its mission, the Egyptian-Sudanese troops of this battalion were destined to become a unit that operated principally as an auxiliary force to the French Expeditionary Corps. To ease the process of recruitment for the Mexican mission, the Egyptian Army of Saʿīd Pasha promoted members in its ranks. Apparently necessary to persuade soldiers, this distorted the military operative realities of the battalion, but it helped advance the agenda of France and Egypt. Another "promotion monstre" to the Egyptian-Sudanese troops can be found in modern Mexican scholarly works, which, as the government of the Khedive of Egypt, has enhanced the class of this Egyptian auxiliary corps by classifying it as a "division"[20] at times, and as a contingent of "4300 Sudanese soldiers"[21] on other occasions. This might seem to be an erroneous misapplication of terms and numbers, since the real size of the Egyptian battalion does not add up to the personnel required to form a real division. The purpose of this apparent promotion is not aimed at any further recruitment of conscripts to the *Bataillon Nègre Égyptien*. Is it there to suggest a greater number of Muslim figures into the historiographic account, as if the larger the number, the stronger the effect of the resurgence of Islām would be? Generally, during those times an "Egyptian division contained three infantry regiments and an artillery battalion, but totalled about 8,864 soldiers."[22] In other instances it was also composed by formations ranging from eight to sixteen battalions.[23] The previ-

19 (Monstrous promotions in the Egyptian government are a part the process of re-structuring, as a result of which, sometimes a non-commissioned officer rises to the rank of captain. A similar proposal was made for the Battalion, which would have resulted in corporals becoming lieutenants. I do not think you could be more primitive when it comes to organisation.), SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique … February 24, 1863," op. cit., f. 8.

20 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 145.

21 Pastor de María y Campos (2011), op. cit., p. 54.

22 See: Dunn (2005), op. cit., p. 193; and James Carlile McCoan, *Egypt Under Ismail*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1889, pp. 213–214.

23 Valentine Baker Pacha (Lieut.-General), *War in Bulgaria: a Narrative of Personal Experiences*, Vol. I, With Plans and Maps, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1879, pp. 118–119.

ously mentioned academic assessment differs greatly, in historical or military terms, since neither of the two divisions that composed the French Expeditionary Corps in Mexico was an 'Egyptian Division', nor were the Sudanese and Egyptian troops lent to France by Egypt 4300 men, but scarcely 450 soldiers which is a military structure no larger than a battalion.

When the total number of 38,493 soldiers that General Léon Niox numbered in his historical recount are placed next to the Egyptian and Sudanese troops that went to Mexico with the French contingent, it is evident that the *Bataillon Nègre Égyptien* accounted for only the 1.16904% of the entire French expeditionary forces there. With a population in the Mexico of 1862 of 8,396,524 people[24] across a territorial area of 141,247 square-leagues,[25] it is difficult to assess the impact that this Egyptian force may have had upon the resurgence of an Islamic tradition there at this time. Additionally, if the Algerian Muslims that fought for France during this military campaign were also counted, and presuming that indeed they numbered 500 soldiers,[26] they would count for 1.29893% of the entire Napoleonic Army in Mexico. Furthermore, if the official number of Arabs, assuming they were practising Muslims, living in Mexico by 1862 is considered, then we can add an impressive number of eight individuals. According to the 1862 register of the population made by José María Pérez Hernández (1820–1879), eight Arabs were present at the time in Mexico.[27] These numbers are insufficient to be the of cause an Islamic resurgence in the predominantly Catholic society of the 1860s in Mexico.

Another common misconception is to believe that soldiers of African origin fighting on behalf of France in Mexico were all Muslim. We must recall that many soldiers in the French Expeditionary Corps were from the Antilles, of African descent, and had no Arab or Muslim background whatsoever. The Egyptian and Sudanese troops are also often mistaken for *Zouaves* or *Tirailleurs Algériens*, perhaps due to the uniform they wore. General Forey specified the way the Egyptian and Sudanese soldiers had to dress and the battle gear they were entitled to receive in the fifth article of the *Complément à l'arrêté du 11 Mars 1863, relatif à l'organisation du Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*.[28] Their mili-

24 José María Pérez Hernández, *Estadística de la República Mejicana*, Guadalajara: Tip. del Gobierno, 1862, p. 63.

25 Ibid., p. 61.

26 Pastor de María y Campos (2011), op. cit., p. 54.

27 Pérez Hernández (1862), op. cit., p. 68.

28 (Supplement to the decree of March 11, 1863, relating to the organization of the Black Egyptian Battalion), SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Administration: Complément à l'arrêté du 11 Mars, 1863, relatif à l'organisation du Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens," May 19, 1863.

tary equipment was very much like the *Zouaves'*. However, these uniforms and military gear were not something they wore when they departed from Egypt. Records in the archives of the French armed forces tell us that the Egyptian and Sudanese troops did not necessarily embark at Alexandria in uniforms standard for regular infantry. Instead, they were dispatched in "white cotton slacks, jacket, and greatcoat with ammunition belt and pouch, [and] shortly after their arrival to Veracruz these were replaced by uniforms based on those of the *Tirailleurs Algériens*."[29] Although these troops were poorly dressed and armed, there were also some exceptions, this is to say, those who apparently embarked virtually unclothed: "47 hommes de service qui ne sont pas habillés et des 20 enfants de troupe."[30] Besides the uniform, the Egyptian Battalion diverged, operatively speaking, from the French army, and its behaviour and attitudes towards the latter were not always favourable in the eyes of the French officers. Consequently, altercations often arose between them, mainly because of cultural differences, although the French officers had received orders to treat the members of the Egyptian battalion with utmost softness and respect. An example of this is found in a report given by the stewardship assistant of the French Expeditionary Forces, which was issued on February twenty-fourth, 1862, right on the day of their arrival in Mexico:

> L'énergie, l'activité et le moral des hommes que me paraissent pas en harmonie avec leur constitution physique [...] Leur contact avec nos marins n'a pas donné une idée favorable de leur caractère. Ordre avait été donné à l'équipage de les traiter avec la plus grande douceur. Un fait grave paraît pourtant en ressortir: c'est un levain de mépris que tout musulman professe pour le chrétien. Le plus souvent, ils ont cherché à frapper avec leur souliers à la figure et à cracher au visage, signe de mépris chez eux comme chez nous.[31]

29 Richard Hill and Peter Hogg, *A Black Corps d'Élite: an Egyptian Sudanese Conscript Battalion with the French Army in Mexico, 1863–1867, and its Survivors in Subsequent African History*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995, p. 36.

30 (Fourty-seven servicemen who were not dressed and twenty troop children), SHD, GR7-G224, "Procès verbal ... January 8, 1863," op. cit., f. 2.

31 (The energy, the activity and the morale of these men do not seem to me to be in harmony with their physical constitution [...] Their contact with our sailors did not give a favourable idea of their character. Orders had been given to the crew to treat them with the greatest gentleness. A grave fact seems to come out of it: the level of contempt that every Muslim professes for the Christian. Most often, they hit faces with their shoes and

Similarly, this brief report gives us an inkling of the world-view, that as Muslims, the soldiers of the Egyptian battalion had towards those professing a different faith from their own. Such attitudes were not only held with regard to their brothers-in-arms, but also to Mexico's Christian society. Hence, there is little doubt that religion influenced the Egyptian battalion's behaviour. For instance, a particular Mexican Catholic church located in the city of Gómez Palacio records the presence of these Muslim troops on the doorstep of this chapel. The Egyptian battalion carved an Arabic inscription on it that reads: "Bismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm."[32] The animosity however, seems to have been mutual.

For the French, Mexicans had "un haine odieuse contre l'étranger"[33] (an odious hatred towards foreigners), and that ill feeling was going to be directed in a special manner towards the *Bataillon Nègre*. Since its arrival to Mexico these soldiers suffered a major challenge besides diseases, language barriers, and climatological hardships—the performance of their religion. The Mexican people had suffered abysmally due to socio-cultural differences through different periods in history, and so their perception of these invaders in the nineteenth century was not positive. Mutual distrust between the foreign troops and the local population manifested in the shooting of a Sudanese guard in April of 1863, unleashing the fury of the entire Egyptian contingent as consequence. In revenge, Sudanese and Egyptian troops stormed the nearby houses killing several Mexican civilians, children and women alike, without discrimination. Such actions caused Mexican opponents to the French interventions to consider the Sudanese and Egyptian soldiers with special disdain and to contemplate them as "savages and cruel."[34] We can see for instance, that Mexican historiography of that epoch does not regularly give emphasis to the Egyptian and Sudanese soldiers, but when it does, it describes them in very racial terms and depicts them as "barbarians."[35] This can be seen in the writings of the Mexican Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Paula del Paso y Troncoso (1842–1916), who fought in Puebla and was taken as prisoner to France afterwards. Furthermore, interaction between the Egyptian battalion and Mexicans was scarce, which might

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spit in their face, a sign of scorn among them and for us at home), SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique … February 24, 1863," op. cit., ff. 6–7.

32 (In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful), Ṭūsūn (1933), op. cit., p. 89.

33 Archives Nationales de France, *Fonds Napoléon, xve–xxe siècles*, "Documents diplomatiques (notes sur le Mexique, analyse du courrier du Mexique)," op. cit., f. 24.

34 Hill and Hogg (1995), op. cit., pp. 47–49.

35 Francisco de Paula del Paso y Troncoso, *Diario de las Operaciones Militares del Sitio de Puebla en 1863*, México: Secretaría de Guerra y Marina, 1909, p. 395.

have created an unfavourable ambiance for the public performing of the former's religion; and consequently for a revival of the argued Islamic tradition long concealed in Mexico. Richard Leslie Hill (1901–1996) and Peter Hogg illustrate these social difficulties as follows:

> The Sudanese formed a unit too small to support a full-time Imam, and nothing in the record points to the existence of any exterior religious presence. A volunteer of sufficient literacy would be available among the troops to lead the prayers or read from the Quran at the funeral of a fallen brother.[36]

Wine, since its consumption is forbidden in Islām, is another important hint concerning Muslims in general in the French Army in Mexico. Chronicles of the time tell us that before disembarking on Mexican coasts, the French Armada stopped in the Antilles, where reinforcements and supplies awaited them. For example, upon arrival at the Islands of Guadalupe and Martinique provisions were taken: "… *et surtout des meilleurs vins du pays*."[37] This alcoholic beverage, which was present in the French contingent's victuals, should be the first indication pointing at the presence and number of Muslims soldiers amongst the French troops. On this matter, evidence in the French archives demonstrate that it was indispensable for France not to hurt the religious opinions of its Muslim soldiers, and to assure them that the diet of the troops in the Egyptian battalion was a little different from the rest of the French forces and according to the religious standard of their faith:

> Le vin et l'eau de vie ont été supprimés et remplacés par une ration de sucre et de café. Une seconde ration de riz, leur principale nourriture, leur a été accordé, on a introduit également dans leurs rations, l'huile et le vinaigre nécessaires à l'assaisonnement. Les bœufs qui leur sont distribués sont tués par un de leurs bouchers et suivant les règles tracées par le Coran […] ils refusent obstinément la viande tuée par les chrétiens.[38]

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36 Hill and Hogg, (1995), op. cit., p. 37.

37 (and especially the best wines of the country), Lodoïx Enduran, *France et Mexique, Histoire de l'Expédition des Français au Mexique*, Limoges: Eugène Ardant et C. Thibaut, 1866, p. 10.

38 (The wine and brandy were removed and replaced with a ration of sugar and coffee. A second ration of rice, their main food, were given to them, and also in their rations, the oil and vinegar necessary for seasoning were introduced. The meat which is distributed to them is provided by one of their butchers and according to the rules laid down by the Qur'ān […] they refuse obstinately animals killed by Christians), SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon*

While difficulty in finding an *Imām* could have been the case with regard to the ecclesiastical realities of the Egyptian Battalion and the *Tirailleurs Algériens* during their time in Mexico, the dietary observance in accordance to Islamic tenets indicates that France safeguarded the religious freedoms of its Muslim soldiers. This was in accordance with the government of Maxmillian I who supported freedom of religion. Therefore, how can we account for a second stage of *taqiyyah* in nineteenth century Mexico, linked to the immigration of Muslims, especially of Arab origin [...] or as it happened during the French intervention, when a battalion of 447 blacks from Sudan left Egypt for Mexico?[39] Henry Rivière (1827–1883), a ship captain in the French fleet during the Mexican campaign, gives additional information about the hardships that the *Bataillon Nègre* faced in Mexico:

> La position des Égyptiens était excessivement pénible. Nul ne leur parlait, ne les recevait. S'ils passaient dans la rue, on les évitait ou l'on fermait devant eux la porte des maisons. L'aversion mexicaine pour nous s'y manifestait par ces protestations silencieuses qui peuvent d'abord être méprisées ou dédaignées, mais qui finissent par gêner et attrister les gens les plus insouciants. Nos matelots et nos soldats résistaient; mais chose bizarre, les Égyptiens tournaient à la nostalgie et mouraient.[40]

If the *Bataillon Nègre Égyptien* showed scorn for Christianity in general, either *vis-à-vis* the French troops or for Mexico's society, Mexicans reflected a similar, yet passive disdain towards its troops, which worried the French:

> Ils vont se trouver en outre en présence de la population mexicaine, peut être remplie elle-même de préjudes religieux, et qui pourra n'avoir pas envers ces infidèles les ménagements que l'on pourra commander à nos soldats.[41]

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de Nègres Égyptiens, "Corps expéditionnaire du Mexique. Bat.on Nègre Égyptien. Effectifs et organisation, années 1863–1867: Inspection Générales de 1863 ... Veracruz, Décembre 2, 1863," op. cit.

39 Medina, (2014), op. cit., pp. 36–38.

40 (The position of the Egyptians was extremely painful. No one spoke to them or received them. If they passed in the street, they were ignored or the doors of the houses closed before them. The Mexican aversion to us was manifested by these silent protests, which may at first be despised or scorned, but which end up bothering and saddening the most carefree people. Our sailors and our soldiers resisted; but the weird thing is that the Egyptians turned to nostalgia and died), Rivière (1881), op. cit., p. 92.

41 (They will also find themselves in the presence of the Mexican population, who may be

The details mentioned above might point to a possible danger that the Egyptian battalion faced when living in the middle of Mexican society, mostly due to the religious prejudges of the latter. This could suggest that *taqiyyah* was perhaps needed, but did Muslim soldiers in the French army have a reason to conceal their religious beliefs? Their creed was encouraged and protected by the French army. Was *taqiyyah* necessary, especially when 'the Mexican aversion' to them was manifested by silent protests and by avoiding them altogether as the documentation in the French archives reveal?

It should be determined if we speak here of an Islām embedded in Mexico, namely, of the resurgence of this monotheistic religion from within its ethnoreligious mosaic as a direct product of the second French intervention. On the other hand, are we looking at a watered down practise of Islām by a minuscule fraction of the French Expeditionary Forces, which apparently did not mingle with the local Catholic population? Before asserting any affirmation on either of these two positions, I repeat that it is necessary to delineate the conceptual difference between Muslim and Islām; one as a form of identity of an individual; the other, as a collective socio-religious system established on five basic pillars,[42] which provide it with a theological and political framework, and as a way of life. I will reason however, in light of the archives, that it is more accurate to point to the individual level, rather than claiming a general resurfacing of Islām in nineteenth-century Mexico.

The Egyptian battalion also faced colossal linguistic barriers. The French had many problems in communicating with its soldiers. The interpreter was insufficient and could only be used to give the most ordinary and simple instructions, but still it was almost impossible to translate general ideas to this military force.[43] Archival files illustrate this issue as follows:

> Considérant que pas un des officiers, sous officiers et soldats appartenant au bataillon de nègres, ne sait lire ni écrire, ni parler le français, et qu'il est dès lors, impossible de constituer un conseil d'administration pour être chargé de l'application de nos règles administratives.[44]

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filled with religious prejudices itself, and who may not have the kindness towards these infidels that we can order our soldiers to show), SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique … February 24, 1863," op. cit., f. 9.

42 For a reference see: Henri Lammens, *L'Islam: Croyances et institutions*, Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1926.

43 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique … February twenty-fourth, 1863," op. cit., f. 10.

44 (Considering that not one of the officers, the NCOs, and soldiers belonging to the Egyptian battalion can read, write, or speak French, it is therefore impossible to constitute a

To ease this communication problem, in December 1863, a group of twelve Algerian soldiers was attached to the Egyptian battalion to serve as translators.[45] An interesting, yet odd historiographical account tells us that the "Algerians were wrestling with the Egyptian interpreter over dialectical differences [and that] these simple Muslim soldiers may not have known much Arabic."[46] In contrast to this statement, sources in the French archives give us, once again, a slightly different report, in which this argued linguistic difficulty between Algerian soldiers in the French Army and the Egyptian battalion due to dialectic differences was not of considerable magnitude:

> Les différences qui existent entre les deux dialectes, algérien et égyptien, ne sont pas considérables. Un officier qui connaîtra bien le premier se mettra facilement au courant de celui des soldats du Vice Roi.[47]

For a resurgence of Islām in nineteenth century Mexico to take place, the former had to be present, in any form, prior to the arrival of the French, or brought by the French Army and installed as a 'little tradition' in Mexico. Then, a given degree of social interaction would have been necessary between the Islamic faction of the French Army and Mexico's muslims. For that to occur, there must have been a certain level of communication. In the 1860s, the level of education in France was higher than in Mexico. Nevertheless, the French Expeditionary Forces faced many linguistic barriers *vis-à-vis* the Egyptian battalion and mutual understanding was difficult. How could Islām resurface with these linguistic hurdles in a virtually illiterate nineteenth century Catholic Mexico?

Information in Mexican bibliography with regard to this battalion points to troops that stayed in Mexico after the fall of the Second Mexican Empire.[48] This might be a possibility, yet one that cannot be asserted without a thor-

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board of directors to be in charge of the application of our administrative rules), SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique: Instructions sur l'administration du Bat.on de Nègres Égyptiens: De l'Administration, article 2, personnel d'admin.on," Acatzingo, March eleventh, 1863.

45 SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps expéditionnaire du Mexique. Bat.on Nègre Égyptien. Effectifs et organisation, années 1863–1867: Inspection Générales de 1863 … Veracruz, Décembre 2, 1863," op. cit.

46 Hill and Hogg (1995), op. cit., p. 49.

47 (The differences that exist between the two dialects, Algerian and Egyptian, are not considerable. An officer who knows the first well, will easily get acquainted with the language of the soldiers of the Viceroy), SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique … February twenty-fourth, 1863," op. cit., f. 11.

48 Pastor de María y Campos (2015), op. cit., p. 145; and Pastor de María y Campos (2011), op. cit., p. 54.

ough investigation of the chronology of battles fought by this force. A record in the French archives tells that at the time of departure from Alexandria, the detachment was composed of 446 personnel in total.[49] During its journey across the Atlantic, it suffered its first loss, not due to enemy fire, but due to disease, which took the lives of five soldiers. At their arrival at Martinique, the yellow fever became a passenger aboard.[50] Another fifteen soldiers fell victim to diverse illnesses shortly after their landing in Veracruz, and seventy-eight soldiers were taken straight to hospital upon docking. Among these was Jabrallāh Muḥammad Afandī,[51] the commanding officer of the Egyptian battalion.[52] As mentioned before, nobody was immune to the Mexican climate and to the common illnesses of the region. As early as December first, 1863, the *Bataillon Nègre* had 395 soldiers. By the end of that year disease had taken its toll, at a cost of forty-seven deaths, raising early doubts among the French Generals about whether the Sudanese and Egyptian soldiers could stand the climate and diseases of Mexico after all. Hence, its original force began to be depleted from the time of its embarkment and transatlantic crossing to its arrival and settling in Veracruz. This, without having seen combat yet, and facing the enemy in the battle-field would also come at a cost. During the end of 1866 and beginning of 1867, Mexico's weather continued to be the cause of the suffering of the Algerian and Egyptian forces: "Les troupes que nous avons en garnison à la Vera Cruz, Tirailleurs et Egyptiens, venant tous des pays chauds, souffrent beaucoup des changements brusques de températures."[53] The French thought that coming from distinct hot weather latitudes would make both Algerians and Egyptian forces endure the hardships of the climate, but this was not the case.

By mid December 1866, the Egyptian battalion counted 338 men, of whom twenty-four were hospitalised, one was prisoner in San Juan de Ulúa, two were

49 SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps expéditionnaire du Mexique. Bat.on Nègre Égyptien. Effectifs et organisation, années 1863–1867: Inspection Générale de 1863 … Veracruz, December 2, 1863," op. cit.

50 SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Rapport sur l'organisation, l'état physique … February 24, 1863," op. cit., f. 12.

51 Kirk (1941), op. cit., p. 119.

52 Ṭūsūn (1933), op. cit., p. 4.

53 (The troops that we have in garrison at Vera Cruz, Tirailleurs and Egyptians, all coming from hot countries, suffer a lot from the sudden changes in temperatures), SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Commandement Supérieur de la Vera Cruz. Bataillon Egyptien. Bataillon de noirs sénégalais: Rapport sur la situation politique et général du cercle de Vera Cruz pendant la 2éme quinzaine du mois de décembre 1866," Veracruz, January 4, 1867.

missing, and eight had deserted.[54] A month later, the situation remained the same among these troops, although seven soldiers were still hospitalised.[55] By February sixteenth, 1867, one soldier had died and only five soldiers remained in hospital, whereas the number of deserters continued to be eight and the missing troops were still two. This brought the total down to 337.[56] In the second quarter review of the *1867 Feullie de journées* of the Egyptian battalion, the composition of this military force, from April to May, is mentioned as 323 soldiers, of which fourteen were deserters, seven were in prison, and one more was hospitalised.[57] On March third, 1867, the entire Egyptian battalion assembled in Veracruz and General Bazaine reviewed its members. On March eleventh, 1867, the French handed the fortifications of Veracruz to the Mexican Army.[58] According to the account by General Niox, they left this Mexican port a day after, to sail to Europe with 363 people aboard the *La Seine*.[59] Among them were the survivors of the Egyptian battalion, who would sail back home via France. Their adventures in Mexico were over. *La Seine* reached the French coast of Toulon on May first, 1867.[60] After this, "two further stragglers [from the Egyptian battalion] left Mexico on having been liberated from jail."[61] On May twenty-seventh, 1867, Lieutenant Baron, the man who administered *Bataillon Nègre Égyptien* in its last years in Mexico delivered it back to the Egyptian government in Alexandria.[62]

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54 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique. Bat.on nègre égyptien. Correspondances divers. Année 1867, Infanterie, No. 98. Bataillon Nègre Égyptien. Etat-Major. Contrôle nominatif: Bataillon nègre égyptien, situation du bataillon au 16 décembre 1866," Veracruz, December 16, 1866.

55 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique. Bat.on nègre égyptien. Correspondances divers. Année 1867, Infanterie, No. 98. Bataillon Nègre Égyptien. Etat-Major. Contrôle nominatif: Bataillon Nègre Égyptien, situation du bataillon au 16 Janvier 1867," Veracruz, January 16, 1867.

56 SHD, GR7-G224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Corps Expéditionnaire du Mexique. Bat.on nègre égyptien. Correspondances divers. Année 1867, Infanterie, No. 98. Bataillon Nègre Égyptien. Etat-Major. Contrôle nominatif: Bataillon Nègre Égyptien, situation du bataillon au 1er Février 1867," Veracruz, February 1, 1867.

57 SHD, GR7-G225, *Infanterie de Ligne: Bataillon Nègre Égyptien*, "Département d'Armée du Mexique: Revue du 2e trimestre 1867 pour l'armée. Feuille de journées des officiers, sous-officiers, caporaux, soldats, et enfans de troupe de la dite Compagnie, présentant les mutations et mouvements survenus pendant les mois d'Avril et Mai 1867," 1867.

58 SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Procès verbal de la remise de la place de Vera Cruz," March 11, 1867.

59 "Relevé des Embarquements pour le rapatriement du Corps Expéditionnaire, Veracruz, March 12, 1867," in: Niox (1874) op. cit., p. 761.

60 SHD, GR7-G97, *Rapatriement de l'armée*, "*Seine*, arrivé à Toulon le 1er Mai 1867," n/p, 1867.

61 Kirk (1941), op. cit., p. 129.

62 SHD, GR7–224, *Bataillon de Nègres Égyptiens*, "Commandement Supérieur de la Vera Cruz.

As for the fate of the deserters from the Egyptian battalion, their whereabouts are blurry, but they might have been taken prisoners by Mexican forces and shot. This is what happened to the nine French soldiers from the 31st Infantry Line Regiment,[63] who were reported as "disappeared." Subsequently, two of them succeeded in returning to their military units and reported that the rest had been caught by Mexican troops and put to death. A similar destiny awaited fifty soldiers of the Seventh Battalion of Hunters. Archival documentation tells us that they were first reported as "missing," but were prisoners of war. They were executed afterwards, except for one, a man named Pierre Adolphe Bret, who survived. He eventually got married and remained in Aguascalientes, Mexico, where he continued to live after the French Expeditionary Forces were repatriated.[64] In this manner, we see that disappearing, as many still do in contemporary Mexico, was also a common state of affairs in those days; and in a war-torn country it should be no surprise if the defenders executed the invaders whenever the latter were found by the former. A similar misfortune could have indeed overtaken the Sudanese and Egyptian troops. Even so, Mexican academic circles insist that the outcome of adventures of the Egyptian battalion in Mexico took a different turn:

> De los 447 individuos embarcados en Alejandría el 8 de enero de 1863, regresaron a esa ciudad, el 27 de mayo de 1867, 321 personas. Esto quiere decir que 126 egipcios se quedaron para siempre en México [...] Al parecer, este contingente de musulmanes egipcios y sudaneses terminó integrándose totalmente en la sociedad mexicana.[65]

Indeed such a number did stay on in Mexico, but definitely not all of them could be counted as alive. The Egyptian and Sudanese soldiers that Egypt lent to

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Bataillon Egyptien. Bataillon de noirs sénégalais: Mitre. de la guerre, Cabinet du Ministre. Corresp. gale.," Toulon, June 26, 1867.

63 SHD, GR7-G92, *Troupes à mettre à la disposition du Gouv.t mexicaine. Légion Etrangère. Prisonniers mexicains*, "État rectificatif ou complémentaire concernant les militaires détachés au 4e Bat. de Cazadores de México et disparus, 31e régiment d'infanterie de ligne," April 4, 1868.

64 SHD, GR7-G92, *Troupes à mettre à la disposition du Gouv.t mexicaine. Légion Etrangère. Prisonniers mexicains*, "État rectificatif ou complémentaire concernant les militaires détachés aux bataillons de chasseurs mexicains appartenant au 7e bataillon de chasseurs a pied, qui ne sont pas rentrés au corps," December 7, 1867.

65 (Of the 447 individuals who embarked in Alexandria on January eighth, 1863, 321 returned to that city, on May twenty-seventh, 1867. This means that 126 Egyptians stayed on in Mexico [...] Apparently, this contingent of Egyptian and Sudanese Muslims ended up integrating fully into Mexican society), Zeraoui (2011), op. cit., pp. 338–339.

France were flesh and bone, and were not immune to disease, extreme weather or enemy fire as documentation has demonstrated. It is unfathomable that any military force would invade a country on the other side of the planet with a given number of soldiers and eventually, after the years of combat, that these would all remain unhurt, or alive.

With regard this particular military force, the contents of two boxes, coded *GR7-G224* and *GR7-G225*, at the archives of the *Service historique de la Défense*, in Vincennes, France are worth referring to. They provide very valuable information through its quarterly reviews and journals. Movements have been recorded here of the number of its soldiers, from the time of their embarkment in Alexandria, the landing at Veracruz, to their departure from Mexico. The material in these boxes will help future researchers to further reconstruct the acts and deeds of these brave Egyptians and Sudanese soldiers who sailed half the world to fight for a cause and a flag that was not theirs. Without analysing this content thoroughly, we are neither in a position to assert the direct impact of this military force on the awakening of a supposedly sleeping Mexican Islamic tradition nor the fate of these intrepid troops in the aftermath of battle. As far as the latter is concerned, one should ask how fourteen deserters may have caused Islām to resurface in nineteenth century Mexico, with or without *taqiyyah*, when they themselves may not have even survived. This is an enigma that this book has failed to resolve. Therefore, when studying Islām in Early Independent Mexico and its resurgence as product of the second French occupation, it is imperative to begin to research at the place of origin of this military endeavour: France. This European country treasures very rich archives and a variety of valuable historical documentation concerning her interventions in Mexico. There are meticulous personal details of each combatant and other explicit historic curiosities, such as the type of food, military gear, clothing, and the rations of wine each soldier in the French Army was entitled to get. As the researchers go through each of these records, they will find that besides the 453 troops of the *Bataillon égyptien* and the few hundred Algerian soldiers, almost no Arab or Muslim name echoes in the lists of French combatants.

Instead, as in the Novohispanic case, once more, many Jewish family names are to be seen, this time of those who came to Mexico not searching for refuge, but to heroically fight for France. It would be incoherent however, to regard this as a 'Judaisation' of Mexico. What is more, it would constitute a distortion of Mexico's rich history. Neither should we homogeneously classify the entirety of the Algerian and Egyptian battalions as Muslim troops, since many of their officers and sub-officers were non-Muslim soldiers of European origin. As for those soldiers from the entire Expeditionary Forces who remained in Mexico, documentation tells us that only some of them obtained permission to settle

there when the French abandoned their imperialistic dreams. However, it is difficult to imagine that those licenses were issued to Muslim soldiers. Yet, if those of them who may have received permission to stay in Mexico were few, the number of its deserters was even less. The lists of those men who went to Mexico to fight for France and ran away from their military duties are found in the archives of the *Service historique de la Défense*, in Vincennes, France.

Indeed many combatants in the French army came from North Africa, but we cannot presume that all those who came from that region of the world were Muslim. It is also imperative to remember that at the time of the second French intervention in Mexico, Paris had already performed inroads into the African continent, several French individuals of European origin had settled there, many of whom were drafted into the army. It should be emphasised that there is one distinct feature shared by Arab Muslims that may help us identify their ethnoreligious background: their surnames. The second French occupation of Mexico did not take place in Late Medieval or Early Modern Spain, when Jews and Muslims often had to change their family names to survive. Thus this aspect may serve as a guide or indication to future researches, who are looking for the Islamic origin of the troops that fought and died for *La France* in Mexico.

As mentioned before, one of the after effects of the second intervention was the 'Frenchification' of Mexico, which illustrates the need for identity and belonging in nineteenth century Mexico and how it approached what was considered foreign in order to satisfy these needs. In contemporary Mexico, this thinking apparently continues, and Islām has become a facet of that unresolved equation. As for Mexicans, while the 1846–1848 Mexico-US war is remembered as a trauma, and echoes till today in their collective psyche, 'Frenchification', however limited, as a product of the second French occupation, revolutionised Mexican society culturally, intellectually and technologically. Mexico strived to become more like France, and it saw this European country as a prototype to follow. Eventually, France no longer had to resort to physical force to conquer Mexico, but resorted to soft-power as a strategy, crafted into its diplomacy. The result was the conquest of the heart of Mexico. General Porfirio Díaz, who bravely fought the forces of Napoleon III, not only in Puebla, but through the entire Mexican campaign, pursued the *afrancesamiento* of his country during his presidency (1876–1911). Of the many social and cultural contributions that the French intervention made to Mexico, none took shape or form as a resurgence of a crypto-Islamic tradition supposedly hidden in it since the times of the *Colonia*. To conclude, I quote the words of F. de La Barreyrie, the former editor of the Mexican newspaper *Orizaba*, who on September twentieth, 1868, wrote: "Le 13 Mars 1867, l'intervention française au Mexique avait cessé

d'exister. Avait-elle rempli sa tâche?"[66] In a similar spirit I ask: did the Muslim troops that fought for France in Mexico during the 1862–1867 occupation fulfill the role that has been accorded to them by contemporary Mexican scholars? Were they behind the resurgence of Islām in Mexico? Failing this, did they restart a new phase of *taqiyyah* in this predominantly Catholic country, when after many years of inner struggle and war, people were finally enjoying a certain degree of freedom of religious expression?

66 (On March thirteenth, 1867, the French intervention in Mexico ceased to exist. Had she fulfilled her task?), De La Barreyrie (1868), op. cit., p. v.

CONCLUSION

A Reappraisal of Claims versus Evidence

Twenty-first century Mexico is a colorful multicultural, linguistically diversified, multi-religious country where dynamic Muslim congregations, mosques and Islamic institutions, both Shi'ite and Sunni, can be found across its regions. The *Ummat al-Mu'minīn* in today's Mexican Republic is composed of a majority of new converts of non-Arabic or Islamic ancestry. However, there is no continuity or link between the Muslims of modern Mexico and those who lived on the Iberian Peninsula, and those who might have lived in New Spain in the period that my research covers. Islām in Mexico is a contemporary organic religious tradition, rather than one with historical depth rooted in the colonial past. Currently, it is a diverse socio-religious phenomenon that did not have official visibility in the public sphere before the second half of the twentieth-century. But even if Islām was not found in *Nueva España* as a 'religious tradition,' it does form an integral part of twenty-first century Mexico. Although invisible in the public spheres of Colonial and Early Independent Mexico, today it is visible and embedded in its vibrant sociocultural mosaic and the theological and aesthetic ramifications of Islām can be appreciated across the vastitude of Mexican territory. It is thus an indivisible part of Mexico's present and future, and contributes fruitfully to its diversity in a dynamic and important way.

Any research dealing with Muslims and Islām in Colonial Mexico should begin, even if briefly, on the Iberian Peninsula. This is so because we cannot speak about the Novohispanic Viceroyalty without referring to Spain. Neither can we understand the heretics that the Viceroyal authorities persecuted without observing their counterparts across the Atlantic. How the *prohibidos* saw and related to Spain is an additional observation to consider when researching our subject. From this perspective, we must look at *Hispania* as a territory conquered and occupied by alien forces in the year 711—different in culture, language, religion, and cosmovision. Although the modus vivendi of the forces that penetrated the Iberian Peninsula at the beginning of the eighth century differed from that of locals, over time, both locals and foreigners learned to live with each other, and ultimately influenced and shaped the lives of one another. However, this does not mean that the origin of locals and foreigners was the same, even when they mingled socially and mixed ethnically at times. Yet, one aspect that the conquered and conquerors recognised was how they identified

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the territory on which their people lived. The designations used to refer to the Iberian Peninsula were *Hispania*, *Eshbbaña*, *Sepharad*, as these are recorded in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim sources. The three holding one meaning, Spain.

Within the corpus of Judaic texts, the oldest mention related to *Sepharad* (Spain in modern Hebrew) is recorded in the Biblical script in the first chapter, verse twenty, of the book of Obadiah. The *Ms Hébreu 12*, which is a manuscript of the Late Middle Ages at the *Bibliothèque national de France*, contains the Masoretic order that the Spanish Jews followed.[1] In this manuscript, the Biblical source with regard to *Sepharad* reads as follows: "Ve'galut Yerūshalaim āsher bi'Sepharad yarshū ēt ʿarey ha'Negev."[2] The word *Sepharad* here is rendered as *Espamiya* in the *Targum Jonathan*,[3] which is one of the earliest Aramaic translations of the Biblical corpus.[4] Jewish Biblical exegetes from the Middle Ages outside Spain identified *Sepharad*/*Espamiya* with what seems to be the geographical location of the Iberian Peninsula. This is the case of Rabbi David Kimhi[5] (ca. 1160–1235), one of the most influential rabbinical commentators, who expounds on *Sepharad* in the following manner: "Ve'ārtzot Sepharad she'kōriyn Spaniyā."[6]

Christian Spanish sources, such as the *Ms Espagnol 65: Fueros de Navarra* (General Charters of Navarra), a set of laws whose origins date to the Early Medieval Ages, and which functioned as a sort of customary law, identified *Espanya* as the general name of the territory occupied by the Moros after they

1 Salomon Munk, *Catalogues des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque Impériale/Manuscrits orientaux*, Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1886, p. 2.

2 (And the captivity of Jerusalem, that is in *Sepharad*, shall possess the cities of the Negev), *Ms Hébreu 12*. *Bible. A.T.* (*hébreu*). *Burgos. Bible A.T. Prophètes et Hagiographes* (*hébreu*). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Hébreu 12*, Year: 1250–1275, f. 114r.

3 The term 'Targum' refers to a variety of early translations of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic. *Targum Onqelos* to the Pentateuch and *Targum Jonathan* to the Prophets, but Targumic literature includes several other corpora. For a reference see: Alexander Sperber (Ed.), *The Bible in Aramaic Based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts, Vol. II, The Former Prophets According to Targum Jonathan*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959; Paul V.M. Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011; and Samson H. Levey, "The Date of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets," *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 21, Fasc. 2, (Apr., 1971), pp. 186–196.

4 *Ms Hébreu 96. Bible. A.T. Prophètes postérieurs* (*araméen*). *Targum*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Hébreu 96*, XIV–XVe siècle, f. 147r.

5 On the biblical exegesis of Rabbi David Kimhi (also known by the acronym *RaDaK*) see: Mordechai Z. Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003.

6 (And the lands of *Sepharad* which are called *Spaniyā*), *Ms Hébreu 196. David Kimhi. Recueil de commentaires sur la Bible*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Hébreu 196*, Year: 1439, f. 216v.

conquered it.[7] The *Ms Espagnol 383*, a sixteenth century document, mentions the name of *España* and describes its geographical boundaries and extension: "Toda la tierra de España q se extiende desde los montes Pireneos al estrecho de Gibraltar, y desde el Oceano al Mar Mediterraneo tiene de cerco 2600 millas q son 868 leguas españolas."[8] Seventeenth-century Christian sources, such as the *Ms Espagnol 121*, identify the territory of *Hespaña* as a geographical location, along with *Cataluña*, which fell under Moorish occupation.[9] Islamic sources also recognise the identification of the territory of *Hispania* on the Iberian Peninsula. For instance, the *Ms Arabe 774* contains an illustration of this called "La īshlā dē Eshbbaña."[10] Thus, Christian, Jews, and Muslims in *Hispania* were not only well aware of their distinctive origins, but they were conscious of the Spanish character, at least on the level of nomenclature, of the territory on which they lived, namely, *España*.

As for the term *al-Andalus*, the Spanish Arabist Miguel Cruz Hernández (1920–2020) proposed: "Fue un invento oriental; aquí con Hispania o Spania habría bastado."[11] However, these historical facts should not cause us to *hispanizar* (Hispanicise) the conquerors that occupied Spain for over eight centuries. Doing so, even with the noble intention of integration in the Spanish historical narrative might result in the confinement of Islamic Studies as a

7 *Ms Espagnol 65: Fueros de Navarre*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 65*, Year: 1301–1400, f. 1r.

8 (All the land of Spain that extends from the Pyrenees mountains to the Strait of Gibraltar; and from the Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, it has a fence of 2,600 miles that are 868 Spanish leagues), *Ms Espagnol 383*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 383*, Year: 1501–1700, f. 1r.

9 Rafael Cervera, *Discursos históricos de la fundación y nombre de la ynsigne ciudad de Barcelona, de sus yglesias, templos y lugares píos, de los tribunales de los Reyes y otros que residen en ella como superiores en el Principado de Cataluña, condados de Rossellon y Cerdania, de los mas notables hechos y empresas de sus Condes, Reyes y Señores, con assistencia de sus ciudadanos y naturales, dispuestos por anales, desde su principio, año doscientos y treynta antes de la venida al mundo de Nuestro Señor Jhesu Cristo, hasta el año mil seyscientos y veynte y uno despues de su sancto nacimiento. Divididos en dos tomos. Compuestos y recogidos por Rafael Cervera, Ciudadano honrrado desta ciudad y Receptor del officio de Maestre Racional de su casa y corte del Rey nuestro señor*, T. 1. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 121*, Year: 1601–1700, f. 136r.

10 Naṣr ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *Recueil en aljamiado avec quelques fragments en Arabe*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, *Ms Arabe 774*, Year: 1501–1600, f. 278r.

11 (It was an oriental invention; here with *Hispania* or *Spania*, it would have been enough), Miguel Cruz Hernández, *El Islam de Al-Andalus: Historia y estructura de su realidad social*, Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo Árabe, 1992, p. 23 (n. 1).

discipline, which I consider indispensable for this study, and the marginalisation of the methodological repertoire that its tools could offer. Furthermore, it might produce inaccurate historiographies and academic vice, for nothing is easier than manipulating the historical narrative when one is sure to have a devoted public in place. This is therefore, a delicate matter, by which the good will of the researcher, who aspires to be inclusive, or on the contrary, promote a set agenda, may end up excluding the subject of study altogether. In other words, *hispanizar* the Islamic and Arabic element from the history of Spain subtracts from the special and distinctive character of those who penetrated and occupied the Iberian Peninsula from 711 to 1492. On this point, Cruz Hernández stated:

> El Islam de al-Andalus es un hecho histórico de gran valor intrínseco y de transcendental importancia para la vida social de los pueblos de la península Ibérica. Formado a partir de los años 711 al 756 de la era cristiana, su defunción política fue certificada en las Capitulaciones del 25 de noviembre de 1491 y proclamada públicamente los días 1 y 2 de enero de 1492, aunque su agonía social se prolongase hasta la inicua expulsión de los moriscos entre 1609 y 1615. Mas, por otra parte, es un caso muy singular en el desarrollo del mundo musulmán: es el único que habiendo alcanzado cumbres sociales, y concretamente culturales, tan altas o más altas que las otras regiones islámicas, acaba desapareciendo como entidad política y como grupo social.[12]

This presumes the Islām of the Iberian Peninsula, its practitioners in it and their fate as a singular collectivity in a very practical and broad manner.

Another historical reality is that our heretics on the Iberian Peninsula did not forget their national identity and where they belonged. Hence, it is possible to find new converts well aware of their Hebrew lineage, or those amongst them who were conscious of belonging to *Al-Ummah al-ʿArabīyah*. For this reason, we must refrain from 'Hispanicising' the subjects of the study, and the socio-

12 (The Islam of al-Andalus is a historical fact of great intrinsic value and of transcendental importance for the social life of the peoples of the Iberian Peninsula. Formed from the years 711 to 756 of the Christian era, its political death was certified in the capitulations of November twenty-fifth, 1491 and publicly proclaimed on January first and second, 1492, although its social agony lasted until the iniquitous expulsion of the Moriscos between 1609 and 1615. But, on the other hand, it is a very unique case in the development of the Muslim world: it is the only one that, having reached social, and specifically cultural peaks, as high or higher than the other Islamic regions, ends up disappearing as a political entity and as a social group), Cruz Hernández (1992), op. cit., p. 9.

cultural and religious baggage of this population should be separated from the whole for the purpose of particular examination. But beyond that, this is necessary simply because one cannot comprehend the history of Spain, particularly from the Medieval to the Modern Period, without knowing and acknowledging its Islamic and Arabic facets as individual and distinctive historical, social, ethnic, linguistic, and religious components of a greater puzzle, as Spanish society was in the epoch in question. Thus, the unique character of Muslims in Spain becomes clearer by observing both Mālikī jurisprudence, and the conditions for membership in the Islamic *Ummah* and its historical association through the concept of kinship. On the latter Cruz Hernández stressed: "Es imposible concebir correctamente la estructura política del alAndalus, como de cualquier otra sociedad política islámica, sin tener una idea correcta de la umma real."[13] Therefore, it is important to start by observing these concepts if one wishes to have a clearer picture of the Islamic society of Spain, but more importantly, because if an influx of Muslims indeed arrived in Colonial Mexico from *Hispania*, then religious parallelisms should be found between them in Spain and New Spain as in the case of the *Judeoconversos*. On the Islamic *Ummah*, Wael Abu-ʿUksa of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem states:

> The rise of nationalism had a great impact on the meaning of the Arabic words used to designate communities and groups and on terms used to express collective belonging: *milla, umma, ṭā'ifa, qabīla, jins, sha'b, jumhūr, qawm, and waṭan* [...] The word *Umma* had been used extensively since the emergence of Islam. The word, which basically implies the unification of a group of people, was transformed in the Qur'an in conjunction with the conceptual evolution of the religious community established by the Prophet Muhammad.[14]

Understanding these terms may contribute to a better comprehension of how the Muslims who occupied *Hispania* in 711, and the Moriscos, some of whom arguably found refuge in Colonial Mexico, might have perceived their ethnoreligious background and collective alignment. Regarding this, the Qurʾān 3:110 declares: "You are the best community [*Kuntum khayra ummatin*] singled out for people [*ukhrijat lilnnāsi*], you order what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in God. If the people of the book had also believed [*Walaū āmana āhlu*

13 (It is impossible to correctly conceive the political structure of al-Andalus, as of any other Islamic political society, without having a correct idea of the real umma), Ibid., p. 283.

14 Wael Abu-ʿUksa, *Freedom in the Arab Word: Concepts and Ideologies in Arabic Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 127–128.

l-kitabi], it would have been better for them."[15] For the Arabic reader the word *Ummah* differs from *Āhl*, and it refers to a sense of common affiliation, a sort of supra-natural community. When this is associated with Islām, it alludes to the collectivity of Islamic peoples, whose adherence is, in this case, by way of belief, or in simpler words, to the the commonwealth of Muslim believers.

We may gain a deeper understanding of the concept of *Ummah* through the Arabic word *ʿāqila*, which can be understood as tribe, community, lien, social adherence—or the Arabian *gens*. In a juridical context it designates the Arabic tribe, the civil *lien* that unifies its members, but also a collective liability. By Islamic parameters the *Ummah* is thus the mother tribe.[16] As Halperin Donghi explained: "Así, de la solidaridad religiosa [...] nacía una solidaridad política y nacional [...] Primera manifestación de esos vínculos entre los moriscos y el Islam: las relaciones que guardan con las tierras musulmanas."[17] Khalīl ibn Isḥāq al-Jundī, a fourteenth-century Egyptian *Mālikī* scholar of jurisprudence provides additional insights in his *Mukhtaṣar* (handbook of legal treatises). This legal corpus, which was familiar to the Muslim of the Maġrib and Spain, expounds on the previously mentioned concept of solidarity; the *Ummah*, and the protections of Muslims as follows:

> La solidarité offensive et défensive de tous les membres de la tribu fut la base sur laquelle reposa toute la société arabe et la condition nécessaire de son existence. L'opprobre et l'infamie couvraient jusqu'aux descendants de ceux qui manquaient à ce devoir social [...] Mahomet n'abolit pas cette institution, mais il en modifia profondément le caractère. Le lien religieux qui en avait été l'origine fut remplacé par celui de la nouvelle communion; le lien civil et politique resta. L'Islamisme proclama que le

15 Abdel Haleem (2005), op. cit., p. 42.

16 See: Khalīl ibn Isḥāq al-Jundī, *Code Musulman, par Khalil. Rite Malekite.–Statut Réel. Text Arabe et Nouvelle Traduction par N. Seignette, Interprète militaire, licencié en droit* (Henceforth: *Code Musulman*), Constantine, Alger, Paris: Callamel Ainé, Éditeur, 1878, pp. 708–712; Theodore P. Ion, "Roman Law and Mohammedan Jurisprudence: II," *The Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (Jan., 1908), pp. 197–214; and Yanagihashi Hiroyuki, "Solidarity in an Islamic Socielty: 'Aṣaba, Family, and the Community," in: Yanagihashi Hiroyuki (Ed.), *The Concept of Territory in Islamic Law and Throught*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 51–68.

17 (Thus, from religious solidarity [...] a political and national solidarity was born [...] The first manifestation of these links between Moriscos and Islām: the relations they keep with Muslim lands), Halperin Donghi (2008), op. cit., p. 105.

> droit de protection appartenait à tous les Musulmans sans distinction et même aux femmes; mais il leur interdit de prendre un Païen pour protecteur.[18]

This idea illustrates the conditions for Arab tribal membership and Islamic collective affiliation, but it goes beyond that, and suggests that Mudéjares were seemingly performing something forbidden by Islamic legal parameters, namely, being protected by pagans.

The *Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*[19] further shows that the Islamic *corpus juris* and the explanation of the Qurʾān must be within the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence.[20] Muslims in Spain knew this principle as well as the principle of *Hijrah* (migration), which Mālikī jurists evoked in order to encourage Muslims to migrate from Christian to Muslim lands, as early as the Almohad period. Alan Verskin of the University of Rhode Island explains that the concept of *Hijrah* is central to Islamic collective memory, and it continued to have profound religious and political impact on the course of Islamic history.[21] Moreover, this was an obligatory principle and Muslims were instructed and encouraged to leave Christian territories. The *Ms 6016* of the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* (BNE) states: "No bibas si espossible en tierra de ynfieles ni entre ellos, ni entierra de sin justicia, ni acompañes con malos muçilimes."[22] Therefore, during the Spanish Reconquista Mālikī jurists considered the *Mudéjar ʿulamā* as illegitimate

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18 (The offensive and defensive solidarity of all members of the tribe was the basis on which all Arab society and the necessary condition for its existence rested. The stigma and infamy included even the descendants of those who failed in this social duty [...] Mohammad did not abolish this institution, but he modified its character profoundly. The new communion replaced the original religious bond, while the civil and political bond remained. Islamism proclaimed that the right to protection belonged to all Muslims, without distinction and even to women; but it forbade them to take a pagan for their protector), *Code Musulman*, pp. 712–714.

19 The Arabic text was officially printed in the West by order of the French government, and included a French translation compiled in six volumes, which was undertaken from 1848 to 1854. However, a new translation by N. Siegnette, a military translator and lawyer at the service of France, rendered a more accurate work, although it did not include the work of Khalīl in its entirety. Yet, his efforts provided a window of opportunity for those in the West, particularly during the nineteenth century, to become well acquainted with Islamic legal aspects.

20 *Code Musulman*, p. xii.

21 Alan Verskin, *Islamic Law and the Crisis of the Reconquista: The Debate on the Status of Muslim Communities in Christendom*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015, p. 31.

22 (Do no live, if possible, in land of infidels, nor among them, nor in land of no justice, nor must you be in the company of bad Muslims), Içа ibn Jābir, *Memorial y sumario de los mandamientos y debedamientos de nuestra santa ley y çunna* [*Manuscrito*] */ por Don Yçe de*

holders of communal authority. They also were less willing to tolerate them, and demanded Mudéjar immigration to territories within *Dār al-Islām*.[23]

On Morisco migration, I suggest we consider two relevant historical aspects: the manner of their expulsion, particularly *vis-à-vis* the Jews in 1492; and the relation Moriscos had with Muslim lands and group solidarity as product of their belief. Concerning the former, while we have analysed it in the previous chapters, perhaps one aspect is worth recalling. This has to do with the facility that the Moriscos were awarded when leaving Spain at the hour of their expulsion. The *Ms Espagnol 338* at the *Bibliothèque national de France* provides us with an account that clarifies this:

> Que ningun cristiano viejo ni soldado, ansy natural del Reyno como fuera del, sea ossado tratar mal de obras ni de palabra, ny de llegar á sus haziendas a ninguno de los dichos moriscos ny a sus mugeres ni hijos ni a persona dellos [...] y para que entiendan los Moriscos que la intencion de su Mag. es solo echarlos de sus Reynos y que no se les hace vejacion en el viaje, y que se les pone en tierra en la costa de Berberia, permitimos que diez de los dichos moriscos que se embarcaren en el primer viage, vuelvan para que den noticia dello a los demás y que en cada embarcacion se haga lo mismo.[24]

The *Ms Espagnol 354*, found at the *Département des manuscrits* of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, is an additional source that sheds light on this matter:

> Año de 1480. concedió el papa sixto 4 la inquisición para España. Fue la primera en Sevilla por los alumbrados. Los primeros inquisidores se

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Chebir (Henceforth: *Ms 6016 BNE*). Biblioteca Nacional de España. Inventario General de Manuscritos. *Ms 6016*, Year: 1501–1600, f. 6r.

23 Alan Verskin, "The Evolution of the Mālikī Jurists' Attitudes to the Mudéjar Leadership," *Der Islam*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (2013), pp. 44–64.

24 (That no old Christian or soldier, whether of the kingdom or from outside of it, dare to mistreat, in deed or word, nor to reach out to the haciendas, or to the spouses, or children, or any person from the mentioned Moriscos [...] and so that the Moriscos understand that the intention of his majesty is only to expel them from his kingdoms and that they are not humiliated on the trip, and that they are to be placed ashore on the Barbary coast, we allow ten of these Moriscos to embark on the first voyage, to return so that they give news of this to the others, and that in each boat the same be done), *Ms Espagnol 338: Mémoires pour l'Histoire d'Espagne* (Henceforth: *Ms Espagnol 338*). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 338*, Year: 1601–1700, f. 222r.

> llamaron Fray Miguel de Morillo y el bachiller Frai Juan de San Martin—frailes dominicos. Desde el año de 1481 asta el de 88 qmaron en Sevilla mas de 6V Judíos, y reconciliaron mas de 5V. El año de 1492 fue mandado por los reyes catolicos q todos los Judíos qdentro de seis meses nose convirtiésen, saliesen del reyno sin llebar oro ni plata [...] crese que abía en España mas de cien mill cassas de Judíos.[25]

The prohibition to exit Spain with valuable items cannot be applied to the Moriscos, because while they were permitted to carry personal belongings and monetary goods with them, Jews were forbidden to do so. Yet, this does not mean that Jewish money did not exit Spain whatsoever, as is evident in previously mentioned source: "Cuando el Turco bió en Constantinopla gente tan rica, dizen q dixo que eran locos los que los hechaban de sus reynos."[26] From these brief illustrations, it is possible to draw additional conclusions beyond the general approach that the Spanish authorities had towards the expelled minorities. The Ottoman Empire were the main destinations of the expelled, both Muslim and Jewish, and as far as the former goes, their ability to afford the journey is evident. If Jews, whose theological collective solidarity and ethnoreligious affiliation differed from that of Muslims, nonetheless decided to take refuge in Ottoman lands, Moriscos, should have chosen, ipso facto, a similar destination at the time of their expulsion.

The *Ms Espagnol 338* (BnF) furnishes us with additional information and illustrates the will of the Spanish crown to allow the passage of Moriscos to other geographic locations: "Su Mag.d es servido y tiene por bien que si alguno de los dichos moriscos quisiere passar a otros Reynos lo puedan hazer."[27] Such royal desire was fulfilled, and it was recorded in this manuscript in the form

25 (In 1480 Pope Sixtus IV granted the inquisition for Spain. It was the first in Sevilla for the *alumbrados*. The first inquisitors were called Fray Miguel de Morillo and the bachelor Fray Juan de San Martin—who were Dominican friars. From the year 1481, until the year 1488, more than sixty-six Jews were burned in Seville, and more than fifty-five were reconciled. In 1492, the Catholic kings ordered all Jews who did not convert within six months, to leave the kingdom without carrying any gold or silver [...] It is believed that there were more than one-hundred-thousand Jewish homes in Spain), *Ms Espagnol 354*. "Notes sur l'expulsion des Juifs." Letter. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 354*, Year: 1601–1700, f. 211v.

26 (When the Turk saw in Constantinople so rich people, they say he said that those who expel them from their kingdoms were crazy), Ibid.

27 (His Majesty is well served and considers it proper that if any Moriscos want to pass to other kingdoms, they can do so), *Ms Espagnol 338*, f. 222v.

of a letter that Gastón de Moncada y Gralla (1554–1626), *Segundo Marqués de Aytona* and Viceroy of Aragon wrote:

> Su Mag.d ha mandado por justas causas que a ello se han movido hechar deste Reyno los Moriscos que hay en el y aviendoseles dado licencia que se fuessen por donde quisiessen han escogido algunos haser su viage por Francia como lo hizieron muchos de Castilla. Por Navarra se les ha permitido no aviendose hallado inconveniente ni parescido que podia recibirse disgusto en esse Reyno [...] se sirva de dar lugar a que esta gente haga su viage a donde quisiere por essa parte [...] Carag.a 14 de Junio, 1610. Signe. El Marques de Aytona.[28]

One of the main routes that Moriscos took to reach the Ottoman Empire was through the region of Canfranc, in Aragon. Cardaillac mentioned this, and explained that even before the expulsion of the Moriscos, they used to pass through the French district of Languedoc on their way to Muslims lands.[29] In the same way, on June sixteenth, 1610, the Spanish king ordered the Viceroy of Aragon, "al salir deste [kingdom] no les hagan bexaciones los naturales ni gente de guerra."[30]

A manuscript from the collection *Dupuy*[31] recounts the number of Moriscos who crossed into France, and places the figure at thirty-thousand individuals.[32] Their transit through France was coordinated with the principality of Béarn. An ordered passage was allowed so as to avoid damage to the territory due to the large number of people who wished to cross. References are mentioned in a 1610 correspondence of Antoine de Loménie (1560–1638) as follows:

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28 (His Majesty has commanded, for just causes, the expulsion of the Moriscos from his kingdom, and having been given permission to go wherever they wanted, some have chosen to make their trip through France, as many from Castilla did. They have been allowed through Navarre and have not found any inconvenience or resemblance of this in that kingdom [...] Please allow these people to make their trip through whichever area that they want to [...] Zaragoza, June 14, 1610. Signed, El Marquis of Aytona), Ibid., f. 225r.

29 Louis Cardaillac, "Le Passage des Morisques en Languedoc," *Annales du Midi Révue de la France Méridionale*, Vol. 83, No. 103 (1971), pp. 259–298.

30 (When leaving, do not humiliate them, or the the natives or the people of war), *Ms Espagnol 338*, f. 226r.

31 On the subject see: Suzanne Solente, "Les manuscrits des Dupuy à la Bibliothèque National," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, Vol. 88, (1927), pp. 177–250.

32 *Dupuy 15. Instruction à* [*Antoine*] *de Loménie, sur le passage des Morisques en France, 1610*. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits, *Dupuy 15. Mémoires pour l'histoire d'Espagne.—Vol. 11*, Year: 1510–1630, f. 63r.

> Mais bien sera il à craindre que sy on leur refuse le passaige avec ordre, ils le prennent avec désordre au grand dommage des lieux où ils passeront, ou que les chassant ils ne souffrent plutôt la mort que de retourner en Espagne. Qu'il est mal aysé de les empêscher quand ils l'entreprendront pour la faveur de la saison où nous sommes en laquelle il n'y a point de neiges aux montaignes, au contre sont maintenus couvertes de pasteurs et de bestails ce quy leur peut faciliter les chemin autrement fort difficile [...] ces morisques réfugiés en Béarn ne manqueront pas de trouver passaige en autre endroit de la France.[33]

Although many Moriscos stayed in Spain,[34] just as many *Judeoconversos* did, there were others who were determined to abandon it. Morisco communities rejected Catholic Spain and all that it represented to such an extent that some preferred death if their aim to leave was not achieved. Colonial Mexico was an extension of the Catholic realm that they tried so much to avoid. Along with these realities, the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the Battle of Lepanto (1571) acted as a magnet on the collective consciousness of Muslims and Jews on the Iberian Peninsula. Eventually, the magnetism generated by these occurrences would repel Catholic Spain and attract these minorities to the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the conquest of Constantinople aroused apocalyptical expectations in Jewish and Muslim communities alike.[35] Mudéjares shared these feelings as well. What is more, both Jews and Muslims perceived these events as a messianic prophecy unfolding before their eyes.[36] Hence, it is perhaps worth asking why Moriscos would prefer to take the risk by crossing the Atlantic

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33 (Anyway we should be afraid that if we refuse them passage with order, they will pass in disorder, to great damage of the places they will journey through; or that, by driving them out, they would rather suffer death than returning to Spain. How difficult it is to prevent them, considering that they will go about it taking advantage of the season we are in. There is no snow on the mountains. On the contrary, they are now covered with grass and cattle, which can facilitate the otherwise very difficult path [...] These Moriscos who took refuge in Béarn will not fail to find passage to another part of France), Ibid., ff. 63v–64r.

34 Recent investigations on the matter propose a radical revision concerning the expulsion of Moriscos since 1609. Contrary to common belief, thousands of Moriscos stayed on the Iberian Peninsula and managed to evade, through different means, the royal decrees against them. They also succeeded in accumulating great wealth and reached social positions in Spanish public office. For a concise study on the subject see: Soria Mesa, "Los moriscos que se quedaron."

35 Yitzhak Baer, *Historia de los judíos en la España* Cristiana, (Vol. 2), Madrid: Altalena, 1981, p. 540.

36 See: Wiegers (1994), op. cit., pp. 90–91.

clandestinely, when they were allowed, in an organised and secure manner, coordinated between Spain and France, to move to locations in line with their ethnoreligious background.

As I have pointed out earlier, the Arabic language is often seen as an additional fundamental sign of Islām and/or Arabic ethnicity in that period in contemporary literature. I conclude that such a vague and daring presumption is not in line with academic inquiry. Muslims in *Hispania* mastered Romance since the earliest times of Islām in Spain. Common people, and educated elites spoke the Romance vernacular which was also called *laṭīniyya*.[37] This demonstrates that linguistically, there was a clear mutual *convivencia* between Christians, Jews, and Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula. On this mutuality, Gerard Wiegers of the University of Amsterdam suggests: "The data on Christians and Jews of al-Andalus seems to indicate that in the field of their literary cultures Arabization took place to a certain extent."[38] Thus, Christians, Jews, and Muslims were well acquainted with each other's languages and culture, and therefore, we find a variety of individuals born on the Iberian Peninsula who were multi-lingual. This reaffirms the previously made observation that speaking Arabic cannot be taken whatsoever as proof of Islamic or Arabic background, for Arabic speakers are not intrinsically Muslims, and Muslims are not intrinsically Arabic speakers.

On the linguistic *savoir-faire* of Moriscos per se, Cook explains, "in fact, some officials requested Moriscos for their perceived skills as interpreters or artisans [...] authorities requested their participation in local projects, as interpreters or as artisans, occupations traditionally associated with Moriscos [...] due to their perceived linguistic abilities or skills."[39] While this might have happened in Colonial Mexico to a sporadic and limited extent, it was certainly not the norm. It should be remembered that by early sixteenth century many Moriscos had already lost their own national language. With regard to the Moriscos of Aragón, Cardaillac affirmed that they lacked "science et bon jugement, non par manque de foi mais pour avoir perdu l'usage de la langue arabe."[40] Cardaillac words resonate with the *Ms 6016* (BNE) as is evident here:

37 Ibid., p. 29.

38 Ibid., p. 37.

39 Cook (2016), op. cit., pp. 4, 47.

40 (Science and discernment, not by lack of faith, but for having lost the use of Arabic language), Louis Cardaillac, *Morisques et chrétiens, un affrontement polémique (1492–1640)*, Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1977, p. 154.

> Los muçilimes de España, con grande sujeción y apremio y grandes tributos, fatigas y trabajos andescaydo desus rriquezas y sean perdido las escuelas del arabigo. Y para reparo de sus daños muchos amigos mios [...] con grande clemencia merrogaron que quisiere en Románce recopilar y taduzir tan señalada lectura de nuestra santa ley y çuna.[41]

This document demonstrates that not only were Arabic language learning centers lost in Spain, but it also illuminates the fact that Romance was needed to instruct their coreligionists in the Islamic faith.

Moriscos were not the only ones on the Iberian Peninsula who could provide the services of interpreter. Pieter Sjoerd Van Koningsveld of Leiden University concludes, "thus, in medieval Christian Spain, three religious minorities [Muslims, Jews and Mozarabic Christians] were the direct heirs of the old Andalusian civilization and of Arabic culture in general."[42] Van Koningsveld's important analysis on Andalusian-Arabic manuscripts makes it possible for us to see that it was not only Muslims who mastered Arabic language, culture, and science in *Hispania*. Van Koningsveld further asserts on this issue:

> The Jews emerge from these Andalusian-Arabic MSS as the main heirs of the specifically secular, purely scientific elements of the Arabic civilization in medieval Christian Spain [...] Together with the Judeo-Arabic materials, the Andalusian-Arabic MSS point to the historical role, indeed the *key-role*, played by Jewish scholars in the process of transmission of Arabic science to the West.[43]

This reflection in itself should justify a systemic attempt to distinguish between Arabic language as a *savoir-faire*, and Arabic language as an indicative of Muslimness or ethnicity. As general knowledge and skill, no minority group in *Hispania* enjoyed a monopoly over this language. To conclude, it is perhaps useful to recall a letter addressed to the Muslims in the Maġrib that Aben Daud

41 (The muslims of Spain, with great subjection and compulsion, and great tributes, weariness and hardships, have their richness deteriorated and the schools of Arabic have been lost. And to repair the damage, many friends of mine [...] with much clemency have begged me to compile and translate the so distinguished lecture of our holy law and Sunnah in Romance), *Ms 6016 BNE*, f. 2r.

42 P.Sj. van Koningsveld, "Andalusian-Arabic Manuscripts from Christian Spain: A Comparative Intercultural Approach," in: Joel L. Kraemer (Ed.), *Israel Oriental Studies XII*, Leiden, New York, Köln: E.J. Brill, 1992, pp. 75–112.

43 Ibid., pp. 93–94.

wrote during the *Alpujarras* revolt. He was born in Granada, and was one of the authors of the rebellion. He said, "quien pierde la lengua árabiga pierde su ley."[44] Hence, in light of the historical facts presented here, the analysis of Islamic principles, and the criterion for Arabic tribal affiliation, it is difficult to envision a vast Morisco migration to New Spain. This is particularly so if Moriscos are categorised as crypto-Muslims who denied religion by word, but continued to practise Islām wholeheartedly in secret on both sides of the Atlantic.

As I have mentioned, contemporary literature signals *taqiyyah* as the means Muslims employed for the gestation, birth, and development of a Novohispanic Islamic tradition and its resurgence in Early Independent Mexico. I support the view that many obscure areas on the subject of Morisco secrecy, social and religious, in the Iberian worlds remain to be explored. However some key observations should be made before embarking on this path. Firstly a meticulous examination of the characteristics of what is coined as the clandestine or secret life of the Morisco, and in this particular case, their *taqiyyah*, theological, theoretical, and practical knowledge is absolutely necessary. Secondly, investigating if dissimulation was honorable or immoral in that period, given the social reality, will aid in achieving this objective. We find, for instance, that seventeenth-century Spanish sources defined the word *disimular* and *disimulación* negatively as "vellaco, dissimulado, el que encubre su malicia."[45] On the other hand, writers such as Torquatto Acetto (1598–1641) and Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611), contemporaries of the Moriscos, pointed to dissimulation as a desired virtue. For the former, to dissimulate was a necessity *vis-à-vis* the hardships of the times,[46] while the latter stated:

> Doctores enseñan que la mentira siempre es peccado: y que por ninguna cosa del mundo se deve mentir, aora sea de palabra que propiamente se llama mentira, aora con obras y señales exteriores que llaman simulaciõ

44 (Whoever loses the Arabic language loses its law), Luis del Mármol Carvajal, *Historia del rebelión y castigo de los moriscos del reyno de Granada. Dirigida a don Juan de Cérdenas y Zuñiga, Conde de Miranda, Marqués de la Bañeza, del consejo del Estado del Rey N.S. y su presidente en los dos reales consejos de Castilla y de Italia*, (Segunda impresión, Tomo I, Libro Tercero, Capítulo IX), Madrid: Imprenta de Sancha, 1797, p. 218.

45 (Knave, concealed, the one who covers his malice), Sebastian de Cobarruvias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Madrid: Luis Sanchez, impressor del Rey, 1611, p. 323.

46 Torquato Accetto, *La disimulación honesta* (Estudio preliminar, traducción y notas de Sebastián Torres), Buenos Aires: El Cuenco de Plata, 2005, p. 55.

> [...] No es mentira el callar y guardar en sus consejos y acciones grandissimo secreto [...] Tãpoco es mentira, sino prudencia el dissimular muchas cosas.[47]

Modern scholars who have researched extensively on the subject, such as Bernabé Pons, rightly suggest that among those blurry areas, the uniformity of the Moriscos' Islamic lives is still a field awaiting further and deeper examination. Bernabé Pons also proposes critical interrogations on the subject on the whole, which are worthy of our consideration:

> Le Morisque qui se souvient à peine de certaines prières, est-il le même qui endoctrine une communauté? Comment mesure-t-on le degré d'adhésion à l'islam d'un individu officiellement chrétien? Comment le mesuraient les propres Morisques? En outre, la toujours nécessaire différenciation géographique contribue ici à rendre le panorama plus varié [...] Et finalement, dans de nombreux cas, les problèmes que la société chrétienne des XVIe et XVIIe siècles rencontre avec les Morisques ne sont pas à proprement parler religieux, mais sociaux: le Morisque n'est pas seulement un être suspecté car l'on présuppose son adhésion à l'islam, mais à cause de sons sang «impur» qui l'exclut de la société.[48]

We speak of a society, officially Christian, but composed of Jewish, Muslim, Protestant and members of other orthodoxies, ruled by social imperatives that

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47 (Doctors teach that the lie is always a sin, and that for nothing in the world should we lie—now be it in words, that is properly called a lie, now with work and external signs which they call simulation [...] It is not a lie to be silent and to keep a great secret through advice and actions [...] It is not a lie either to hide many things, but it is prudence), Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *Tratado de la religión y virtudes que deve tener el Principe Christiano, para governar y conservar sus Estados, contra lo que Nicolas Machiavelo y los políticos deste tiempo enseñan*, Madrid: La Emprenta de P. Madrigal, 1595, p. 288.

48 (The Morisco who hardly remembers certain prayers, is he the same one who indoctrinates a community? How to measure the degree of adherence to Islam of an officially Christian individual? How did the Moriscos themselves measure it? In addition, the still necessary geographical differentiation contributes here to making the panorama more varied [...] And finally, in many cases, the problems that the Christian society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries encountered with the Moriscos are not strictly speaking religious, but social: the Morisco is not only a suspected being because one presupposes his adherence to Islam, but because of his "impure" blood which excludes him from society), Luis F. Bernabé Pons, "La vie secrète des Morisques," in: Youssef El Alaoui (Dir.), *Morisques (1501–1614) Une histoire si familière*, Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2017, pp. 87–106.

went beyond religiosity in many cases. An example of this is the law of the purity of blood, by which everyone was conscious of the degree of dissimulation needed to survive, to keep oneself afloat socially, and to transcend the realities imposed by the legal 'throne-altar' framework. Moreover, the Spain of my study was composed of a society in which outward appearance was virtually everything. It was, what Bernabé Pons calls, "a frame of apparences."[49] Hence, dissimulation was not proper for any particular heretic group, nor was it a human behaviour derived merely from theological sources, but rather from social reality and hindrance that behoved the entirety of its members. Dissimulation was thus, as Soria-Mesa emphasised, "the capacity of recovery" of the *conversos*, and hence, these realities "no son la excepción, son la norma."[50]

Thus, we need to seriously reconsider the concept of *Morisco-taqiyyah* in a Colonial and Early Independent Mexican context. The reader should rethink the entire idea anew. I further argue that clandestinity, time and the undersized Morisco community that might have existed in Mesoamerica eventually led, *velis nolis*, to the erosion of a potential Islamic *savoir-faire* that they may have taken with them to that region of the world. An additional fact to highlight is, that within Morisco community itself there was no uniformity on the Iberian Peninsula. Then, how can we find it in Colonial Mexico? When speaking of Moriscos in the entirety of the Spanish worlds, the discussion around *taqiyyah* cannot be imposed only, on the religious and theological sphere. It appears as if the last decades have witnessed a debate on the identity of Moriscos pivoting around the concept of *taqiyyah* and their presumed secretive lives. Once again I refer to the analysis of Bernabé Pons who suggests, "a seemingly Christian life on the outside was compatible with the conservation, in the intimacy of life, with different belief."[51] However, for this to occur, the practitioner must exist in a given space-time continum.

The previous observation applies completely to the *Judeoconverso* case in Mexico, particularly during the seventeenth century, in which the expulsion of the Moriscos also took place. Heretics shared the same geographical and conceptual space in Spain as well as in New Spain. Why then do we not we see a parallel with regard to Islām (*Dīn*) in a Colonial Mexican framework? Moriscos and other persecuted minorities on the Iberian Peninsula were fully conscious of the transformation and adaptation required in order to preserve their integrity. No religious ruling was needed for them to do what they may have instinctively done, just as any human who sees himself in danger does,

49 Ibid., p. 90.

50 (They are not the exception, they are the norm), Soria Mesa (2014), op. cit., p. 401.

51 Bernabé Pons, "La vie secrète des Morisques," in: Youssef El Alaoui (2017), op. cit., p. 91.

to protect his life and that of his family and community. While Muslims are obliged, in principle, to affirm their faith, there are legal exemptions that permit them to pass over such obligations in case they face danger. To better understand them, I suggest we refer to the analysis by Devin Stewart of *Emory* of the concepts of *ikrāh* (religious coercion) and *taqiyyah*.[52] However, accepting that *taqiyyah* was mandatory for Moriscos because of a *fatwā* issued by a Mufti in 1504, and resulted in its adoption by the totality of this ethnoreligious group is ambiguous. Such a claim cries out for further examination.[53] I suggest that if we are to depart from the assumption that Moriscos were fully acquainted both theoretically and empirically with the Islamic principle of *taqiyyah*, which is considered a Shi'ite practise and performed mainly by the *Āhlu al-bayt*, then we could infer that they may also have known the principles of Islamic jurisprudence in general. Moriscos knew the warnings on religious double standards that were issued in legal treatises. This is illustrated in the *Ms 2076* (BNE) as, "qualquier que biviere encubierta de otra ley o semejante deboltura de poca fe y mala usança y que ni es moro ni christiano ni judio matenlo y si lo negase nonseacreydo."[54] On heresy and denial of the Islamic faith the *Mukhtaṣar* of *Khalīl* states a similar legality, judicial process, and punishment:

> Tout musulman qui renie sa foi, soit ouvertement, soit implicitement, par des paroles ou des actes qui en referment ou en inférent le désaveu, est coupable d'apostasie. Un délai de trois jours sera donné au coupable, pendant lequel il ne subira ni la faim, ni la soif, ni aucune torture corporelle, encore qu'il ne montre aucun repentir. Si, pendant ce délai, il revient à la foi, il sera relaxé. Faute de repentir et de rétraction dans le délai fixé, l'apostat sera mis à mort. Tout musulman qui s'est fait chrétien à l'étranger, soit qu'il ait été fait prisonnier ou autrement, est présumé avoir volontairement apostasié, jusqu'à preuve du contraire.[55]

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52 Devin Stewart, "Dissimulation in Sunni Islam and Morisco *Taqiyya*. La disimulación en el islam sunní y la *taqiyya* morisca,"*Al-Qantara*, Vol. 34, No. 2, (July–December, 2013), pp. 439–490.

53 For a succinct analysis on this *fatwā* see the study of Bernabé Pons, "La vie secrète des Morisques," in: Youssef El Alaoui (2017), op. cit., 92–102.

54 (Anyone who lives under the cover of another law or any other belief of little faith and bad usage, who is not Moorish, Christian or Jewish, kill him; and if he denies, do not believe him), Içа ibn Jābir, *Breviario çunni o ceremoniario de la seta de Mahoma para conosçer y qualificar las çeremonias de moros* [*Manuscrito*] / *Yça Jedih*. Biblioteca Nacional de España. Inventario General de Manuscritos. *Ms 2076*, Year: 1501–1600, f. 55v.

55 (Any Muslim who denies his faith, either openly or implicitly, by words or acts which close or infer its disavowal, is guilty of apostasy. A period of three days will be given to the culprit,

Were Moriscos aware of these tenets? Did they know the word *taqiyyah* and its Islamic legal context, and if yes, then to what extent? If they did not, why is *taqiyyah* presented in scholarly writings as a major facet of Morisco belief and as a practise which permitted them to pass over Islamic theological dictum? Was *taqiyyah* used as an organic communal practise or as an individual means of resistance? On the latter Stephen Haliczer of Northern Illinois University explains:

> The fact is that the Moriscos of Valencia, like their counterparts in Castile, lived in a society dominated by Hispano-Christian culture, language, and religion, and in spite of the doctrine of taqiyya embraced by Islamic theologians, ordinary Moriscos inevitably came to accept a Hispano-Christian frame of reference even if they continued to resist or reject most aspects of Christianity itself.[56]

Indeed, the parishioners of the Muslim faith in Spain resisted the adversities that they faced. Yet, as Halperin Donghi mentioned, "si esa resistencia fue a la postre exitosa no fue tan sólo por haber adoptado—si así puede decirse—una táctica elástica."[57] From this perspective we should question if it is possible to speak of an all-out homologous *taqiyyah* performance among Moriscos on the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas in general. If so, in what form, and until when, particularly when existing documentation indicates that Islamic theologians on the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa substantially differed between themselves in this regard. Available documentation does not suffice to provide a concrete answer that is either applicable to the Novohispanic case per se, or to the alleged *taqiyyah* performance during the Second Mexican Empire (1862–1867). Cardaillac's works, along with Harvey's,[58] set a precedent, and they

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during which he will not suffer hunger, thirst, or any bodily torture, although he shows no repentance. If during this time he returns to the faith, he will be released. Without repentance and retraction within the time limit, the apostate will be put to death. Any Muslim who has become a Christian abroad, whether taken prisoner or otherwise, is presumed to have voluntarily apostatized, until the contrary is proven), "Titre XXIX, Du Sacrilége. Chapitre Premier. De l'Apostasie. Section 1er.—Caractère de l'infraction. Arts. 1902, 1906, 1907, 1924," in: *Code Musulman*, pp. 577–579, 583.

56 Stephen Haliczer, *Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia, 1478–1834*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990, p. 248.

57 (If that resistance was ultimately successful, it was not only because it adopted—if it can be said so—an elastic tactic), Halperin Donghi (2008), op. cit., p. 94.

58 Luis Fernando Bernabé Pons, "Bibliografía de Leonard P. Harvey," *Sharq al-Andalus*, No. 16–17, (1999–2002), pp. 13–20.

became the standard references on the subject. Since their publication, allusions to *taqiyyah* are presented in contemporary historiography on Moriscos on both sides of the Atlantic as a quasi obligation. Certainly their academic contributions are superb, and their scientific works are something for which we must be grateful. They are undoubtedly a source for anyone interested in the study of Medieval and Early Modern Spain in general. Yet, this does not mean that these works are not questionable, with a daring, yet humble intention to gain clarity on such a blurry subject like *taqiyyah* in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico. This is particularly so when there is no Arabic or Spanish source that explicitly or implicitly expresses either the word *taqiyyah* or the command on Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula to perform it organically. However, in 1995, Harvey provided what seems to be an answer:

> No soy todavía capaz de ofrecer un ejemplo de la palabra árabe [*taqiyyah*] en un texto referido a la persecución de los moriscos, pero aquí está el concepto expresado claramente en romance (*buena disimulança*). Mi fuente es un pasaje de una de las obras del Mancebo de Arévalo (manuscrito Cambridge Dd.9.49).[59]

Thus, Harvey cited from the Mancebo de Arévalo's *El breve compendio de nuestra santa ley alçunna* (Ms. Cambridge Dd.9.49) "buāsh todo kaba dābasho dābuwāna dishimulansa."[60] This is arguably supreme proof of *taqiyyah* performance on the Iberian Peninsula. His study undoubtedly contributed to the academic position on the subject.[61]

However, the words 'disimulo' (dissimulation), 'disimulada' (dissimulated), or even the verb 'disimular' (to dissimulate) are not inherently Islamic. These are found not only in Iberian sources but also in those that belong to Colonial Mexico and as late as the seventeenth century, and were uttered not solely by

59 (I am not yet able to offer an example of the Arabic word [*taqiyyah*] in a text referring to the persecution of the Moors, but here is the concept clearly expressed in romance: 'good dissimulation'. My source is a passage from one of the Mancebo de Arévalo works: Cambridge Dd.9.49 manuscript), Harvey (1995), op. cit., p. 562.

60 (For everything fits under a good dissimulation), Baray de Reminjo, and Mancebo de Arévalo, *El breve compendio de nuestra santa ley alçunna que acopilo el honrrado sabidor alfaqui de la aljama'a de los muslimes de Cadrete que se llamaba Baray de Reminjo*. (*Kabbituloh shāgundo dāla ōrdān kādābān shāgīr loshkashadosh*/ Second chapter, of the order that the marrieds must follow), *Ms. Cambridge Dd.9.49*, f. 126v.

61 For an analysis of Harvey on the *Ms Cambridge Dd.9.49* see: L.P. Harvey, "Un manuscrito aljamiado en la Biblioteca de la Universidad de Cambridge," *Al-Andalus*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (Jan 1, 1958), pp. 49–74.

Muslims but also by Jews, as archival sources demonstrate: "Guardaba aquello con tanta propiedad [...] que tenia dissimulo tan grande y recato.[62] Isabel de Gómez disimulada.[63] ¿Te acuerdas de aquellos hebreos que estuvieron en nuestra tierra en traje de armenios para disimular?"[64] Can we tell then that Jews in seventeenth century Mexico were familiarised with *taqiyyah*? Claiming so would be undoubtedly a senselessness pronouncement.

The works of Mancebo de Arévalo furnish us with interesting details, such as his travels through the Iberian Peninsula, or about rich Moorish landowners, Morisco spies, or Christian priests with friendly relations to Moriscos, as well as rites performed in Mecca, and the manner by which Moriscos resisted Christian oppression.[65] However, I suggest that this citation from the *Ms. Cambridge Dd.9.49* must be interpreted with utmost caution, particularly in the Colonial Mexican context, but not exclusive to it. I propose two main reasons for this. My first concern has to do with the nature of Mancebo de Arévalo's Islamic learning. My second, as rightly proposed by Wiegers, with his relationship to the works of Yça Gidelli, a fifteenth-century *faqīh* from Segovia.[66] While the latter is beyond the scope of this work, I recommend for those interested in this subject, to refer to Wiegers. With regard to the former I agree that beyond the fascinating narratives in the writings of Mancebo de Arévalo's, his work in *El breve compendio de nuestra santa ley alçunna* allows us to see that "he quotes freely from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim works, and a large number of Islamic authorities, [yet] such quotations are largely spurious."[67] Furthermore, Wiegers indicates that Mancebo de Arévalo may have enjoyed a Christian education, and although he may have been able to recite the Qur'ān, his ability to consult Arabic sources is dubious. This should suffice to question the extent of Mancebo de Arévalo Islamic knowledge.

There is however, an additional major problem concerning the work of Mancebo de Arévalo, which as Wiegers points out and has to do with "the iden-

62 (He kept that [Judaism] very properly [...] he had a concealed and great dissimulation), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 2, Leg. 8, "Precesso y Caussa Criminal contra Doña Maria de Campos natural de Montemor en Portugal, por observante de la Lei de Moisen," 1646, f. 196v.

63 (Isabel de Gómez, dissimulated), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 4, op. cit., f. 413.

64 (Do you remember those Hebrews who were in our land wearing Armenian suits to dissimulate?), AGN, *Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición* (61), Vol. 1498 (23), Exp. 3, op. cit., ff. 308v–309.

65 Thomas and Chesworth (2014), op. cit., p. 163.

66 Wiegers (1994), op. cit., p. 153.

67 Thomas and Chesworth (2014), op. cit., p. 163.

tification of the sources on which his works were based."[68] As Gregorio Fonseca Antuña expresses, "¿Son fiables tales indicaciones? Hace tiempo que me hice esta pregunta al descubrir que, en gran parte, las obras del Mancebo es deudora de 'La imitación de Cristo' de Tomás de Kempis de donde toma capítulos enteros."[69] Wiegers in turn suggests:

> This implies that in his other works el Mancebo de Arévalo is unlikely to have quoted accurately, but that he attached the names of all sorts of well-known Muslim authorities to statements which he derived from other, even non-Muslim sources [...] it can be concluded that the testimony of el Mancebo regarding the identity of his sources should be viewed with utmost care.[70]

Let these observations serve to question the source that Harvey used as an ultimate proof of Morisco *taqiyyah* standards, specifically "since we have no evidence of the study of Ḥadīth in Christian Spain."[71] A biopsy in this particular case does not suffice to effectuate an entire and accurate diagnosis, even more so when the sources of inspiration of Mancebo de Arévalo indicate a lack of authenticity or are of dubious origin. Hence, proposing *taqiyyah* as proof of the existence of an organic Novohispanic Islamic tradition and to present through it, ipso facto, a continued history that extends from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries in Mexico, is virtually impossible to validate. No solid evidence allows us to point in that direction.

I will add that neither do the few inquisitorial trials scattered through time and the social accusations against Moriscos in Colonial Mexico provide us with a well-founded base to build a historiography of *taqiyyah* as an organic practise in New Spain. Islām claims to be the "true religion in God's eyes"[72] and Muslim tradition asserts that God gave Islām to humanity due to its facility of practise. The *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in the *Kitāb al-Eīmān* (Book of Faith), says, "religion is very easy [*Ad-dīnu yusrun*]. And the Prophet states that, for Allāh, 'the most beloved religion is the tolerant *Ḥanīfiya*' (Islamic Monotheism i.e., to

68 Wiegers (1994), op. cit., pp. 163–165.

69 (Are such indications reliable? I asked myself this question a long time ago when I discovered that, to a large extent, the works of Mancebo are indebted to 'The Imitation of Christ' by Thomas de Kempis from where it takes entire chapters), Gregorio Fonseca Antuña, *Sumario de la relación y ejercicio espiritual sacado y declarado por el Mancebo de Arévalo en nuestra lengua castellana*, Madrid: Fundación Menéndez Pidal, D.L. 2002, p. 34.

70 Wiegers (1994), op. cit., p. 166.

71 Ibid., p. 160.

72 "Qur'ān 3:19," in: Abdel Haleem (2005), op. cit., p. 35.

believe in the oneness of Allāh and to worship Him)."[73] In Islām, the concept of *Ḥanīfi* may be meant for for an individual who returned to Abraham's belief. In pre-Islamic times during the state of *Jāhilīyah*—an age of total idolatry and ignorance (Qur'ān 3:154), utter paganism (Qur'ān 5:50), absolute barbarism (Qur'ān 33:33), total lawlessness (Qur'ān 48:26), and when Mecca was known for its pagan way of life, there were nonetheless *Ḥanīfi* individuals who used to profess the Abrahamic way. If Moriscos indeed brought an Islām that was guarded and transmitted through a Novohispanic Islamic tradition into Mexico from Spain, then the references mentioned here should be reflected across the Colonial Mexican spectrum as well. A part of the theological knowledge, both theoretical and empirical, of the Moriscos on the Iberian Peninsula, is known to us by the inquisitorial trials and the testimonies of witnesses and defendants. García-Arenal presents an interesting point in this regard:

> Las delaciones de los testigos y sobre todo las acusaciones inquisitoriales y confesiones de los reos permiten analizar qué prácticas musulmanas conservaban los moriscos, en qué grado y forma. Una religión fuertemente ritual, como es la islámica, debía acompañar paso a paso la vida del cristiano nuevo; desde el nacimiento hasta la muerte los actos de su vida reciben consagración religiosa, toda la vida cotidiana se halla envuelta e impregnada por la religión. Sin embargo, tal y como aparece en los procesos, el ritual y el culto morisco se encuentra singularmente empobrecido [...] En la práctica de la «zala» se manifiesta lo empobrecido de la cultura religiosa de estas gentes. De estas tan mencionadas «açoras del handulila» o del «alhandululey» se desconoce el significado. Pocos son los que dan muestras de un conocimiento mínimo de la lengua árabe o de una comprensión de las oraciones [...] Como vemos, el Islam morisco está extraordinariamente empobrecido y deteriorado. Los reos de los procesos que estudiamos son gente modesta e inculta [...] de conocimientos religiosos casi nulos.[74]

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73 Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Ed. and Trans.), *The Translation Of The Meanings Of Sahîh Al Bukhari Arabic-English*, Vol. 1, Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997, p. 74.

74 (The denunciations of the witnesses and especially the inquisitorial accusations and confessions of the inmates permit us to analyse what Muslim practices the Moriscos conserved, in what degree and form. A strongly ritual religion, such as Islām, had to accompany the life of the new Christian step by step; from birth to death the acts of his life receive religious consecration and all daily life is enveloped and impregnated by religion. However, as it appears in the processes, the ritual and cult of the Moriscos is found to be singularly impoverished [...] the impoverishment of the religious culture of these peoples is manifested in the practice of "zala". Of these much mentioned the meaning "açoras del

On the manner by which Inquisitors defined Islām and on the signs of *Islamismo*, Cook adds:

> The terminology used to refer to Islam, as the "sect of Muhammad," the "law of the Moors," or the "law of Muhammad," reflects the biased of ecclesiastical officials regarding Islam and presents a point of view that was also widespread. These records supplied images of Moriscos that individuals also drew upon when crafting accusations during local disputes.[75]

When we place the reasoning of the previously mentioned quranic and ḥadīth sources alongside the content of the Spanish inquisitorial processes concerning Moriscos, then it is possible to give veracity to the lack of Islamic knowledge that they may have possessed at the time of their expulsion. If we add the biased and preconceived images of both the inquisitorial authorities and Spanish societies to this, imagining a continued Islamic practise in Colonial Mexico becomes even harder. However, if the case was otherwise, namely, if Moriscos did guard and continue to practise their faith at home during the Colonial period in Mexico, then the preservation of religion (*Dīn*) could have indeed taken place, and ipso facto, we could speak of a real Islamic Novohispanic tradition. If this was held true, then we would be able to find, as the work by James S. Amelang of the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* is titled, *Historias paralelas: Judeoconversos y moriscos en la España moderna*,[76] namely, parallel histories between Moriscos and Judeoconversos. Unfortunately, the parallel between them in Colonial Mexico seems to rest only in the attitudes that the Inquisition and Christian society held towards them, and even in that sphere, it is not so accurate. Thus, we can deduce that faced with expulsion from Spain, Muslims tended to prefer locations in which they could have found a parallel with their collective ethnoreligious world-view. Statistically speaking this was the *norm*, while those few and dispersed Moriscos in the Viceroyalty of New Spain may rightly be considered as the *deviation*. This can explain why it is virtually impossible to find quality traces of Islām (*Dīn*) in Colonial Mexico, and all

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handulila" or "alhandululey" is unknown. There are few who show a minimal knowledge of the Arabic language or an understanding of prayers [...] As we see, Moriscos' Islām is extraordinarily impoverished and deteriorated. The inmates of the processes we study are modest and uneducated people [...] of a religious knowledge next to nil), García-Arenal (1987), op. cit., pp. 46, 53, 64.

75 Cook (2016), op. cit., p. 17.

76 James S. Amelang, *Historias paralelas: Judeoconversos y moriscos en la España moderna*, Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2011.

we find there are scattered sources of Morisco categorizations, many of whom had a religious affiliation that differed from the one shared by the *Ummat al-Islām*.

On Islām as *Dīn*, the *Ms Espagnol 387* (BnF) contains thirteen articles "que el buen muçlim esta obligado acreer y tener por fe."[77] The second article reads:

> Somos obligados a seguir los usos y costumbres del dicho profeta bienaventurado [Mohammad] y de su compañía porque supieron y entendieron mejor nuestra santa ley y somos obligados a dexar todos los usos y costumbres delas otras naciones.[78]

A nineteenth-century copy of the *Kitāb segoviano o Breviario sunni* attributed to Içа ibn Jābir (*Ms Madrid 1585 Biblioteca Nacional de España*) contains a replica of these articles and concerning the way of life a Muslim is obliged to conduct, it says:

> Aprende la ley y enseñala a todo el mundo que por ello seras el dia del juicio demandado o alumbrado [...] no uses las platicas, usos y costumbres de los Cristianos ni sus trajes ni semejanzas ni de los pecadores y seras libre de los pecados infernales, cumpliras y guardaras los dichos y doctrinas, usos, costumbres, abitos y trajes de aquel escelente y bien abenturado Mohammed.[79]

These principles occupied an important place in the life of Muslims in Christian Spain.[80] From this perspective, *taqiyyah*, as a standardized dissimulation for Moriscos with an outwardly Christian modus vivendi in Colonial Mexico, is a complex fact to prove.

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77 (Articles that the good Muslim is obliged to believe and have for faith), *Ms Espagnol 397: Traité de la croyance, des pratiques et de la morale des Musulmans, par Mohammed Devera, de la ville d'Albarrazin, au royaume d'Aragon*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 397*, Year: 1601–1700, ff. 5v–10r.

78 (We are obliged to follow the mores and customs of the aforesaid blessed prophet [Mohammad] and of his company because they knew and understood our holy law better and we are obliged to abandon all the uses and customs of other nations), Ibid., f. 6r.

79 (Learn the law and teach it to the whole world because for this reason you will be sued or enlightened on the day of judgement [...] do not use the speech, habits and customs of Christians, or their attire, or the semblance of sinners, and you will be delivered from infernal sins. You will fulfill and keep the sayings and doctrines, uses, customs, habits, and attire of that excellent blessed Mohammad), Içа ibn Jābir, *Kitāb segoviano o Breviario sunni*. Biblioteca Nacional de España. Inventario General de Manuscritos. *Ms 1585*, Year: 1801–1900, f. 3rv.

80 Wiegers (1994), op. cit., p. 93.

Concerning pre-Columbian Islām in the Americas, the *Ms Espagnol 173* (BnF) presents a very interesting fact:

> El templo es como torre cuadrada [...] al pie de aquella misma torre estaba un cercado de piedra y cal, muy bien lucido y almenado, enmedio del cual habia una cruz de cal tan alta como diez palmos, á la cual tenían y adoraban [...] tal era la religion de estos Acuzamilanos, y no se pudo saber donde, ni como tomaron deboción con aquel Dios de cruz porque o hay ni rastro ni señal en aq.a Ysla, ni en otra parte de Yndias, qe. se haya predicado el Evangelio [...] Estos de Azucamil estimaron mucho de alli adelante la cruz.[81]

Along with this riveting recount, this manuscript illustrates the manner in which Hernán Cortés and his men described the indigenous temples and the cult performed in them by the aboriginals in what is today the Mexican Caribbean: "Ascientan o pintan sus dioses [...] son muchos, y muy diferentes."[82] The same source recounts a description of those temples provided by the *Conquistadores* as "capilla" (chapel) y "sacristía" (sacristy), and it describes the pre-Hispanic rituals as performances which included: "sacrificios de sangre de codornices y otras aves, y de perros, y algunas veces de hombres."[83] The depiction by Spanish chroniclers of the temples in the Americas follows a similar pattern. This is to say, they are described as colorful places full of idols and painted images. Conversely, let us remember that Islamic norms and jurisprudence that Muslims knew on the Iberian Peninsula, such as the *Muwattā* of

81 (The temple is like a squared tower [...] at the bottom of that same tower there was an enclosure of stone and lime, very lucid and crenelated, in the middle of which there was a cross of lime, as high as ten hands, which they had and adored [...] such was the religion of those Acuzamilianos, and it was not possible to know from where, nor how they devoted themselves to that god of the cross, because there is no trace or signal on that island, nor in any other part of the Indies which indicated that the Gospel had been preached there [...] Hereon, those people from Azucamil esteemed the cross greatly), Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, *Conquista de Mexico y otros reynos y provincias de la Nueva España que hizo el gran capitan Fernando Cortes. Su autor D. Domingo de San Anton Muñon Quauhtlehuannitzin, alias Chimalpain. Se halla la copia original de esta historia* (*que hasta ahora no se ha descubierto su autor ni dado a luz*), *en letra antigua, en la libreria del colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo de la ciudad de Mexico. Se trasunto para el señor Dom Baltazar de Ceniselli, teniente coronel de dragones provinciales de Puebla de los Angeles, año de 1766*. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits, *Ms Espagnol 173*, Year: 1766, ff. 33–34.

82 (They place and paint their gods [...] they are plenty, and very different), Ibid., f. 33.

83 (Sacrifices of quails' blood and other birds, and of dogs, and sometimes of men), Ibid.

Imam Mālik bin Anas (711–795 C.E.),[84] indicate an important Islamic principle, which is that "angels [and the divine presence] do not enter a house which contains pictures or images."[85]

Now, let us reflect for a moment on the depiction of the temples of the Azucamil peoples provided by the illustrations of the *Ms Espagnol 173*. If we allow ourselves to follow a similar line of thought as that which propose the existence of a pre-Hispanic Islamic practise in the Americas, then we could infer, from what the *Ms Espagnol 173* recounts, that we have concrete evidence of pre-Hispanic Christianity in the Americas. Certainly, such a bold affirmation would be placed immediately in the sphere of absurdity. Contrary to the interpretation given by those theories to what Colón imagined as *Mosques*, against the content of the *Ms Espagnol 173* we are seemingly facing not the imaginative realm of the chroniclers, but rather vivid and real depictions of temples, ritual artifacts and ceremonies of locals, such as the cross and its veneration. Neither did the protagonists of the *Ms Espagnol 173* pick words such as *cruz* randomly because that was all they knew or had in their cognitive repertoire from where they could compare the encountered objects.

Furthermore, when we resort to Islamic jurisprudence, we realise that in the Mohammedan faith, as well as in Christianity, no sacrifices of any living being are permitted, let alone human sacrifices. In the case of Islām, dog sacrifices and idolatry in particular are an abomination. Correspondingly in the Novohispanic case, comparative standards between *Moros* and *Indios* were nothing but the projection of Muslim and Islamic figures in the imagination of the *Conquistadores* onto the Chichimeca.[86]

To conclude, I will argue that we must look at first-rate compositions, such as Cook's *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America* (2016), which is mentioned as a recent general reference of Moriscos in the Americas. However, if we want to examine and demonstrate the genesis, development, and presence of Islām (*Dīn*) in New Spain and, by virtue of the fact, its existence as a continual organic 'religious tradition in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico' *stricto sensu*, which is at the epicenter of study of this present

84 For an analysis see: Umar F. Abd-Allah Wymann-Landgraf, *Mālik and Medina: Islamic Legal Reasoning in the Formative Period*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013.

85 Imam Malik ibn Anas, *Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The First Formulation of Islamic Law* (*Translated by Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley*), London and New York: Routledge, 1989, p. 407.

86 Karoline P. Cook, "Muslims and Chichimeca in New Spain: The Debates over Just War and Slavery/Musulmanes y chichimecas en la Nueva España: Los debates sobre la guerra justa y la esclavitud indígena," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, Vol. 70, No. 1, (January–June, 2013), pp. 15–38.

text, we may find the richness of Cook's work somehow arid. Since as Cook herself states with regard to her own work, "most of this book has focused on the experiences of individuals accused of descending from Muslims and labeled Moriscos."[87] This in itself is a different subject, that although associated to a certain extent with my research, differs on its object of study. As we have previously discussed, such accusations, libels, and slander may indeed, and rightly so, take us to the court of History. But scientific judgement may due to the lack of admissible proof and evidence demonstrate that this trail *in absentia* to be, *prima facie*, effete and hence infertile. What is more, many such imputations against the Moriscos of Mexico, in spite of the fact that they became lawsuits, are often proven, by existing evidence, to be hearsay rather than factual proof of criminal offense. Consequently, in a Novohispanic context we cannot categorise Moriscos only as Muslims. Neither can we equalize the former with the history of today's Mexican Muslim community—as some scholars envision. The history of Islām and the history of the Moriscos, although intertwined, are not intrinsically parallel.

Inquisitorial trials against Moriscos in Colonial Mexico are historical facts in the happening itself of the event and the situation that took place in a given time and space. The *Archivo General de la Nación* (Mexico) contains the largest collection in Latin America of cases of heresy and it serves to illustrate this argument. Yet, in substance, particularly where the burden of proof is concerned, neither the case file nor the caseload on these litigations against Moriscos and suspected descendants of Muslims is convincing. Case law in this regard, as a legal precedent akin to law which springs from tradition and judicial decisions in the inquisitorial legal rulings in Colonial Mexico against Moriscos, indicates that being qualified as such or accused of so, did not merit the same punishment that other heretics faced. Novohispanic society's accusations against *prohibidos* in general may be correctly categorised as class action in a legal sense. Although a lawsuit resulted, almost as a general norm, the unfolding, in the vast majority of cases, signals a weak 'cause of action'.

From this perspective, it is perhaps worth adding that for imputations to have effect, a court must have found that the claims of the class members contain questions of law or facts in common before the lawsuit could proceed as a class action. Probably this is why, in New Spain, it was fundamentally unfeasible to indict and prosecute accused Moriscos or suspected Muslims on the same level inquisitorial authorities did with Jews and Protestants. Therefore we return to the same point of departure: an almost impossibility, *de jure*, of con-

87 Cook (2016), op. cit., p. 163.

viction on grounds of Islamic association in Colonial and Early Independent Mexico, concluding ipso facto, that 'Islām as a religious tradition arrived in the Americas hand in hand with Christianity' is a void statement. I mentioned both phases of the history of this Latin American country in which Roman Catholicism was the only official and allowed creed, and therefore professing any other belief was punishable by law. In any of them was a Novohispanic Islamic tradition found blameworthy.

Hence, the outcome of these types of allegations against Moriscos rendered the defendant, as examined in the evidence presented, as well as considering the corpus of this work, unremittingly absolved in most instances. Deposition and *affidavit* in such cases would not pose strong evidential input either, so as to be placed before the court of historiography to yield a positive result on what concerns the subject(s) and object of study with which I have occupied myself. Moreover, no 'victim personal statements (VPS)' neither do statements of Morisco victims exist in a continuous organic fashion, but only in a modest or disjointed way on the Novohispanic temporal space, so as to point to the existence of a colonial Islamic religious tradition in Mexico. On the other hand, there are plenty of such indications where other heretics are concerned, as in the notable cases of *Judeoconversos* in seventeenth-century Mexico. But this is history and not the exact sciences. Hence the need for further examination is always at the disposition of all parties involved in the hearing, this being academics or the public in general.

Concerning the hearing itself, and this in the shape of historical narrative, this work merely intended, humbly, to participate in it. I aspire to make a modest contribution to providing a different and fresh debate on this academic litigation. To some degree I offer to provide a socio-historical justice to those defendants who faced the incriminatory and discriminatory power of the Inquisition in *pro se* during the Colonial age in Mexico. The Inquisition violated the most basic rights of the accused in the name of a twisted *moral superiority* and religious dogma, as History has correctly proved. As for the Novohispanic Moriscos, under the light that the archives and sources have shed upon our desks and working tables, I state that they have not absconded. Conversely, there is solid evidence which proves that they were simply not there in the manner depicted by modern historiography. This is why that the *corpus delicti* attributed to them was not found in the archives. But if they were responsible for creating a Novohispanic Islamic tradition, then History has ruled that they are, until this day, on parole. Hence, let the information hereby presented serve as evidence to persuade the fact finder, judge, jury, or simply the intellectually curious readers, themselves the *Grand Jury* in this historiographic exercise, and to aid them decide the case in favour of one side or

the other. Having said this, then please allow the pages of this book to act, if not as attorney of the Moriscos, then as a party litigant on behalf of the *heretics* in general.

In light of the historical facts and realities I have presented here, how can we accept a "wide range of cultural and social facets of an Islam present in the very conception of a New World and the very pulse of this hemisphere ever since [which are supposed to] reveal that these Americas are part of an Islamic world and that Muslims are integral to these Americas,"[88] in general, and in a Novohispanic context in particular? How could few scattered Moriscos in the Novohispanic time-space continum, whose religious affiliation is doubtful, and a fewer number of categorised Muslims in Colonial Mexico have contributed towards the claim made above? From the three groups of *prohibidos* in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, Moriscos and Muslims are the exception, rather than the rule itself. For all evidence found thus far that might *incriminate* them for bringing Islām from the Old World into Mesoamerican lands, guarding it, developing it, and transmitting it in secret there from the early sixteenth century to the second half of the nineteenth century, which consequently gave birth to a Novohispanic Islamic tradition that is kept underground but revived with the second French occupation of Mexico, is flawed and hence exculpatory. As the Mexican Imām Carlos Isa Rojas, spiritual leader of the *Islamic Center Al-Hikmah* in Mexico City correctly affirmed, "el Islam en México es algo nuevo"[89] (Islām in Mexico is something new). Finally, I will state, that this work is not a bench trial. Neither are the final resolutions on the subject *per curiam*, although in the courts of academia per se, this often seems to be the case. Ultimately, this book is intended merely as an *amicus curiae*, who seats itself in the jury of historical evidence on behalf of historiographic veracity, and who invites the readers of its pages to think *de novo* on the genesis of Islām; to revisit the development, as a religious tradition, of this important creed, in this beautiful, complex, historically rich and culturally diverse colorful country named Mexico.

88 Logroño Narbona, Pinto, and Karam (2015), op. cit., p. 2.

89 "Islam en México e Inicio de Ramadán 2012," Youtube Video: 3:54, Posted by: *Verdadero Islam*, August 6, 2012, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFEUnuhCocE, (last accessed May 23, 2020).

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