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TOWARDS A RECONSTRUCTION
OF THE INTELLECTUAL PAST
‘Alī Ibn Sālim al-Wardānī and his “al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah”

The account of ‘Alī Ibn Sālim al-Wardānī’s trip to Spain is in some respects unique in the Tunisian literature of the time. Firstly, it is the only description of a journey to Andalusia by a writer from Ifrīqīya, and, secondly, it is the only “riḥlah fī ṭalab al-‘ilm” (account of a trip) to Spain in the entire nineteenth-century Arabic literature. The expedition in which al-Wardānī participated was the first in the series of missions aimed at the scrutiny of the inventory of European libraries and a description of the Arabic items in their possession.

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY TUNISIA

The nineteenth century can be considered as a breakthrough in the political, social, and cultural situation of Tunisia, which, at that time, was part of the Ottoman state.¹ However, the new developments had both positive and negative manifestations. Despite Aḥmad Bey’s (d. 1855) attempts at military and economic reform, following the example of the Egyptian viceroy Muḥammad ‘Alī,² the beylik³ of Tunis was falling into an increasing economic crisis. It was caused by both natural phenomena and the rivalry of European powers, as well as by the evident mismanagement by the authorities, in particular the Prime Minister Muṣṭafā Khaznadār (1817–1878), who significantly contributed to Tunisia’s fall into a debt spiral, which led to the country’s bankruptcy and eventual subordination to France as a result of the Treaty of Bārdaw (Bardo) in 1881 and the Convention of al-Marsá in 1883. Such a turn of events was impossible to prevent even by the attempted reforms of Khayr al-Dīn Pasha

¹ See Kenneth P e r k i n s, *A History of Modern Tunisia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 15–78; Habib B o u l a r è s, *Histoire de la Tunisie: Les grandes dates de la préhistoire à la révolution* (Tunis: Cérés Éditions, 2011), 418–522; Muḥammad al-Hādī a l - S k

^{h a r t f.} *Tārīkh Tūnus* (Tūnus: Dār Sarās li-al-Nashr, 1993), 95–114; Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ I b n M u ṣ ṭ a f á, *al-Uṭhmānīyūn fī Tūnus 1505–1957: al-Tārīkh. al-Āthār. al-Nās wa-sulūkatuhum* (Tūnus: Nuqūsh ‘Arabīyah, 2021), 6–192; Andrzej D z i u b i Ń s k i, *Historia Tunezji* (Wrocław, Warszawa and Kraków: Ossolineum. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1994), 216–77.

² See P e r k i n s, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 19.

³ The beylik was an Ottoman administrative unit.

(ca. 1820–1890),⁴ one of the most enlightened people of his era in the region, who had to return to Istanbul in 1878 and continued his activity there, however, in a different capacity.

On the other hand, Tunisia was following the path of Algeria, though it never became a French colony (it was only a protectorate), which, nevertheless, did not change much: Tunisia lost its autonomy and the ability to independently determine its fate. “The bey state and its administration did not change, but behind them stood the French observers delegated by the resident general, who regulated the actions of both the bey and the chief secretary of the central administration and Tunisian ministers. Civilian observers resided in the *wilāyats* (governorates) to monitor the actions of governors and other officials.”⁵ Only defense and foreign policy issues were fully taken over by Paris. In practice, though, local authorities ceased to have any say in the matters related to the growing aspirations of the Tunisian people to become independent. Thus, gaining political autonomy was yet to be a long process.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw attempts not only at political and economic reforms, but also at social and cultural ones.⁶ Khayr al-Dīn and people who shared his mindset contributed to the Tunisian revival (*al-Nahḍah*), which was obviously modelled on the processes that had already begun in Egypt. Literature, the press, and education were developing, the most important manifestation of which was probably the founding of the al-Ṣādiqīyah College.⁷ The school was officially established in 1875 by Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq

⁴ Khayr al-Dīn Pasha expressed his progressive views in a comprehensive work entitled *Aqḥam al-masālik fī maʿrifat al-mamālik* (The surest path to knowledge concerning the condition of countries). See *The Surest Path: The Political Treatise of a Nineteenth-century Muslim Statesman; A Translation of the Introduction to “The Surest Path to Knowledge Concerning the Condition of Countries” by Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi*, ed. Leon Carl Brown (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967). On the subject, see also Gerard S. van Krieken, *Khayr al-Dīn et la Tunisie, 1850–1881* (Leiden: Brill, 1976); Mongi S m i d a, *Khereddine: ministre réformateur, 1873–1877* (Tunis: Maison tunisienne de l’édition, 1970); Magdalena L e w i c k a, *Świat islamu, Europa i reformy: “Prolegomena” Ḥayr ad-Dīna at-Tūnusīego* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2017).

⁵ ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Sharīf, “al-Baḥṯ ‘an al-makhtūṭāt wa-al-riḥlah al-‘ilmīyah,” in ʿAlī Ibn Sālim al-Wardānī. *Al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Sharīf (Tūnus: al-Dār al-Tūnusīyah li-al-Nashr, 1984), 100. All translations are my own.

⁶ This aspect of the situation in Tunisia in the nineteenth century was best described, in a concise yet comprehensive manner, by Józef Bielański. See Józef B i e l a w s k i, “Wprowadzenie do historii i kultury Maghrebu,” in Józef B i e l a w s k i, Jolanta K o z ł o w s k a, Ewa M a c h u t - M e n d e c k a, and Krystyna S k a r z y Ń s k a - B o c h e Ń s k a, *Nowa i współczesna literatura arabska 19 i 20 w.: Literatura arabskiego Maghrebu* (Warszawa: PWN, 1989), 72–78.

⁷ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, v. 1, s.v. “Al-Ṣādiqiyya” (by M[ansour] Souissi), (Leiden: Brill, 2001, CD-ROM); Noureddine S r a ĩ e b, “Le collège Sadiki de Tunis et les nouvelles élites,” *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, no. 72 (1994): 37–52; I b n M u ṣ ṭ a f á, *Al-Uḥmāniyyūn fī Tūnus 1505–1957*, 158–61; B i e l a w s k i, “Wprowadzenie do historii i kultury

(1813–1882), the bey of Tunis, but its actual founder was Khayr al-Dīn. Albert Hourani describes that institution as “a secondary school set up on the model of a *lycée*.”⁸ Discussing the school’s profile, Magdalena Lewicka writes that it was modelled on similar European institutions, and its “teaching staff comprised local teachers, who were professors in the college, and lecturers from abroad. The curriculum included subjects such as: the Arabic Language, Arabic Literature, Traditional Muslim Sciences ... but also foreign languages and empirical sciences: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Natural Sciences.”⁹ The school was free to attend and, as it would turn out, many of its graduates became outstanding figures in the history of Tunisia, among them Habib Burgiba, the father of the country’s independence. The Khaldūnīyah scientific institute, founded in 1896, was also of great importance.¹⁰

In the context of the nineteenth-century Tunisia, it is also worth mentioning the *al-Hāḍīrah* (The capital), the first independent weekly magazine which was launched in Tunis after the French protectorate had been established. The founders of the *al-Hāḍīrah* were ‘Alī Bū Shūshah (1859–1917), a political and cultural activist, and Sālim Bū Ḥājib (1827–1924), the ‘*ālim* of al-Zaytūnah. The first issue of the weekly was published on August 2, 1888, and the final one in 1911. While the *al-Hāḍīrah* was politically moderate, it had a reformist character.¹¹

Such was the political and cultural situation in Tunisia during ‘Alī al-Wardānī’s lifetime.

‘ALĪ AL-WARDĀNĪ

A closer study of the history of Tunisian culture shows that ‘Alī al-Wardānī (1861–1905) was among its most outstanding nineteenth-century representatives. And yet, analyses of his output are practically absent from the contem-

Maghrebu,” 73–75; Lewicka, *Świat islamu, Europa i reformy*, 48–49. For the Arabic text of the declaration on the opening of the school, see, e.g., “al-Madrasah al-Ṣādiqiyah,” https://areq.net/m/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9.html.

⁸ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 302.

⁹ Lewicka, *Świat islamu, Europa i reformy*, 48–49.

¹⁰ See Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 71.

¹¹ See Bielawski, “Wprowadzenie do historii i kultury Maghrebu,” 73–74; Filīb Tarrāzī, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfah al-arabīyah* (Bayrūt: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Adabīyah, 1913), vol. 3, 250; Mohamed Charfi and Patrick Camiller, *Islam and Liberty: The Historical Misunderstanding* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2005), 23; Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 70–71. See also Ons Debbech, *Les voyageurs tunisiens en France au XIXe siècle* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2016), 109–12. Debbech writes that the weekly was discontinued in 1910. See *ibidem*, 109.

porary discourse within the field of Arabic studies. Interestingly, though, Arabic travel literature of the period is relatively popular among researchers, however, their interest is usually limited to the study of works of either Egyptians or the inhabitants of Greater Syria. The only references to al-Wardānī in Western research are, apparently, a chapter in Henri Pérès's book from 1937¹² and mere mentions of al-Wardānī's name accompanied by his short biography in Ons Debbech's monograph.¹³ Definitely much more has been written about al-Wardānī in Arabic by Tunisians themselves. However, the information on his life is very scarce.

According to most sources (and as indicated by his *nisbah*), Sīdī 'Alī Sālim al-Wardānī al-Tūnusī¹⁴ was born in 1861 in the town of Wardānīn¹⁵ or Ukūdah¹⁶ in the al-Sāhil region, whose capital is Sūsah (*Dā'irat Sūsah*). Nothing is known about his childhood. All his biographers say is that he moved to Tunis "at an early age" and began studying in the al-Ṣādiqīyah College. There, he learned Turkish, French, and Italian, which proved crucial to his future career.

As an outstanding disciple of the al-Ṣādiqīyah, he attracted the attention of Khayr al-Dīn Pasha, the prime minister of the beylik of Tunis at the time. The politician invited 'Alī to dine with him on several occasions, and soon employed him in his office (*dīwān*) as his personal secretary.¹⁷ After his forced resignation, Khayr al-Dīn went to Istanbul¹⁸ and took al-Wardānī with him, having hired him as an interpreter. He also provided al-Wardānī with accommodation in his own house. While in Istanbul, Khayr al-Dīn introduced al-Wardānī to many important figures of the political and cultural life of the Ottoman capital, and soon to the sultan himself, recommending him as a trans-

¹² See Henri Pérès, *L'Espagne vue par les voyageurs musulmans de 1610 à 1930* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1937), 62–72.

¹³ See Debbech, *Les voyageurs tunisiens en France au XIXe siècle*, 192–93. For the biography of al-Wardānī, see also 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Sharīf, "al-Baḥṭh 'an al-makḥṭūṭāt wa-al-riḥlah al-ilmīyah," in 'Alī Ibn Sālim al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, ed. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Sharīf (Tūnus: al-Dār al-Tūnusīyah li-al-Nashr, 1984), 11–28; al-Ṣādiq al-Zamarlī, *Alī al-Wardānī (1861–1905): al-Fannān, al-ālim wa-al-shā'ir*, in al-Ṣādiq al-Zamarlī, *Ālām tūnusīyūn* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1986), 113–20; Muḥammad Maḥfūz, *Tarājim al-mu'allifīn al-tūnusīyīn* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1986), vol. 5, 128–29; Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-Ālām* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 2002), vol. 4, 290; Muṣṭafā al-Sattī, "al-Adīb al-tūnusī 'Alī al-Wardānī mukallifan min al-sulṭān bi-himmaḥ ilmīyah fī Isbānyā," *Leaders*, August 10, 2018, [Leaders, https://ar.leaders.com.tn](https://ar.leaders.com.tn).

¹⁴ This is how his full name is spelled by Henri Pérès. See Pérès, *L'Espagne vue par les voyageurs musulmans de 1610 à 1930*, 62.

¹⁵ Wardānīn is a town located south of Sūsah, currently in the Munastīr wilāyah.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Maḥfūz, *Tarājim al-mu'allifīn al-tūnusīyīn*, 128; al-Zamarlī, *Alī al-Wardānī (1861–1905)*, 113; al-Sattī, "al-Adīb al-tūnusī 'Alī al-Wardānī mukallifan min al-sulṭān bi-himmaḥ ilmīyah fī Isbānyā." Ukūda is located north of Sūsah, currently in the Sūsah wilāyah.

¹⁷ See al-Zamarlī, *Alī al-Wardānī (1861–1905)*, 114; Maḥfūz, *Tarājim al-mu'allifīn al-tūnusīyīn*, 128.

¹⁸ From 1878 to 1879, Khayr al-Dīn held the office of Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

lator in the planned delegation to Europe, the purpose of which was to search for collections of Arabic manuscripts there.¹⁹

After returning from the expedition, al-Wardānī settled in Istanbul, but due to his mother's illness he soon had to return to Tunis. Immediately on his return, he took the position of a translator at the Ministry of Justice, and then one of a secretary at the State Council.²⁰

Al-Wardānī was also known as a poet, an author of *rubā'īyats* written in the style characteristic of the classical representatives of this genre. Among his most famous poems was *Qaṣīdat al-Wardānī*, a satire of bey 'Alī III, written after he had signed the Convention of al-Marsá.²¹ Unfortunately, none of al-Wardānī's poems has survived till today. Since he left no descendants, apparently there was no one to take care of his poetic legacy.²² He also published many articles in the local press, mainly in the weekly *al-Ḥāḍirah*. As an active participant in the cultural life of his country, he took part in meetings at the literary salon run by the Egyptian Princess Nāzilī,²³ who in the mid-1890s moved from Cairo to Tunis and arranged her palace in al-Marsá so as to make it resemble her residence in Cairo. The place became an important center for the reformist cultural movement in Tunisia.²⁴ After al-Wardānī's untimely death, many friends of his dedicated elegies and memoirs to him.²⁵

“AL-RIḤLAH AL-ANDALUSĪYAH”

As is generally recognized, travel literature (*riḥlah*) has been an important part of Arabic literature since its earliest times²⁶ and it gained its classic shape

¹⁹ Such a claim was made, among others, by Maḥfūz. See Maḥfūz, *Tarājim al-mu'allifīn al-tūnusīyīn*, 128. Al-Wardānī himself does not mention the role of Khayr al-Dīn, but states that the person who recommended him was the minister called Munīf Pasha. See al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 31.

²⁰ See al-Zamrālī, *Alī al-Wardānī (1861–1905)*, 119; Maḥfūz, *Tarājim al-mu'allifīn al-tūnusīyīn*, 129. Pérès writes that al-Wardānī was a translator at the government's General Secretariat. See Pérès, *L'Espagne vue par les voyageurs musulmans de 1610 à 1930*, 63. The terminology provided by the Arab authors is ambiguous.

²¹ See Ezzeddein Knani, “A' lām Ukūda,” Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/Ezzedine.Knani1/posts/1146023618769030/>.

²² See al-Zamrālī, *Alī al-Wardānī (1861–1905)*, 120.

²³ Nāzilī Fāḍil (1853–1913) was an Egyptian princess of the house of Muḥammad 'Alī, a controversial reform activist in Egypt and Tunisia. See Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālā, *A' lām an-nisā' fī 'ālamay al-'Arab wa-al-islām*, s.v. “Nāzilī Bint Muṣṭafā Fāḍil” (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, n.d.), vol. 5, 158–59.

²⁴ See 'Amr Ṭalāt, “Nāzilī Fāḍil: A amīrat al-tanwīr am 'āmīlat al-iḥtilāl?” Ravi-Magazine, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180930154100/http://rawi-magazine.com:80/ar/articles/nazlyfadel/>.

²⁵ See Maḥfūz, *Tarājim al-mu'allifīn al-tūnusīyīn*, 129.

²⁶ See, e.g., *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, v. 1, s.v. “riḥla” (by I[an] R. Netton); *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol. 2, s.v. “travel literature” (by Clifford E. Bos-

in the work of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1304–1369),²⁷ who lived in the territory of today's Morocco. In the following centuries, *riḥlah* developed and flourished as a genre already in the entire Maghreb, however, not necessarily taking the shape given to it by Baṭṭūṭa, whose accounts were determined by the background of his travels. Within the genre of *riḥlah*, one can distinguish pieces relating (1) trips for educational purposes (*fīṭalab al-‘ilm*: seeking for knowledge), (2) pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina (*al-riḥlah al-ḥijāzīyah*), and (3) trips for political purposes (traditionally called *sifārah*). Descriptions of various journeys were written down almost from the beginning of Arab-Muslim culture and served the purpose of cultural and political exchange with Europe and other parts of the world. However, as Daniel Newman observes, traveling to Europe for tourism (*siyāḥah*) was discussed in the Arab world perhaps only beginning with the end of the nineteenth century.²⁸

Regarding the modern travels undertaken by Tunisians to Europe, a noteworthy case is the description of Sulaymān Agha's diplomatic journey to France in 1777, which was not written down by the diplomat himself, but by the translator and orientalist Pierre Ruffin, who accompanied him there.²⁹

The nineteenth-century travels of Arabs to Europe and their descriptions of this continent are usually, and rightly so, associated with al-Nahḍah, the so-called Arab awakening. However, researchers frequently focus their interest merely on the travels of the Egyptian Rifa‘ah Rāfi‘ al-Tahtāwī and the Lebanese Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, disregarding the accounts of travelers from other parts of the Arab world. Moreover, according to Newman, while most nineteenth-century descriptions of Europe written by Arabs were made in Egypt (twelve of them have been published³⁰ and five remain in

worth), ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 778–80.

²⁷ “With the Riḥla of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa we reach the peak in the articulation of a genre which we should perceive much more in terms of a literary art form than a formal geography.” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. “riḥla.”

²⁸ See Daniel Newman, “Myths and Realities in Muslim Alterist Discourse: Arab Travellers in Europe in the Age of the Nahda (19th c.)” *Chronos* 6 (2002): 32.

²⁹ See *Le journal de Suleiman agha, envoyé du bey de Tunis à Paris en 1777*, ed. Mehdi Jerard (Tunis: Al Massira, 2020), 5.

³⁰ See Rifa‘ah Rāfi‘ al-Tahtāwī, *Talkhīṣ al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz* (Būlāq: n.p., 1834); ‘Alī Muḥammad, *‘Ilm al-dīn* (al-Iskandarīya: Maṭba‘at al-Mahrūsah, 1882); Ḥasan Tawfīq al-Adl, *al-Riḥlah al-Birlīnīyah* (al-Qāhirah: Nizārat al-Ma‘ārif, 1887–1889); Muḥammad Sharīf al-Saym, *Riḥlah ilā ‘Urūbā* (al-Qāhirah: 1888–1980); Ḥamza Fath Allāh al-Misrī, *Bākūrat al-kalām alā ḥuqūq al-nisā’ fī al-islām* (Būlāq: n.p., 1890); Maḥmūd ‘Umar al-Bājūrī, *al-Durar al-baḥīyah fī al-riḥlah al-‘urubīyah* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba‘at Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, 1891); Yaḥyā Sa‘nū, *Maḥāmid al-Faransī wa-waṣf Bārīs* (Paris: Impr. Lefebvre, 1981); Muḥammad Amīn Fakrī, *Irshād al-alibbā’ ilā maḥāsīn ‘Urubbā* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba‘at al-Muqtaṭaf, 1892); Aḥmad Zakī, *al-Safar ilā al-mu’tamar* (Būlāq: n.p., 1893); Aḥmad Shawqī, *Amālī fī al-mu’tamar* (Būlāq: n.p., 1895);

manuscript³¹), Tunisia comes second with five such descriptions published. Their authors were, respectively: Sulaymān al-Ḥarāyirī (1824–1875),³² Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnusī,³³ Muḥammad Bayram V (1840–1889),³⁴ Muḥammad al-Sanūsī (1850–1900),³⁵ and Muḥammad Ibn al-Khūja (d. 1907/8).³⁶ The three remaining works are available only in manuscript.³⁷

Ons Debbech, on the other hand, seeks for the turning point in the attitude of the Tunisians towards the West in Aḥmad Bey's trip to France of 1846. Aḥmad Bey was the first ruler of Tunis to personally travel to Europe. "The year 1846 is a milestone in the collective memory of Tunisian intellectuals because it symbolizes the first attempt to open up to the Other."³⁸ There is no direct account of this journey, but its concise description was provided by the eminent Tunisian scholar Aḥmad Ibn Abī al-Ḍiyāf in his historical encyclopedia *Ithāf ahl al-zamān*³⁹ as late as in 1963.

The account of 'Alī Ibn Sālim al-Wardānī's trip to Spain, which is the main theme discussed in this paper, is in some respects unique in the Tunisian literature of the time.⁴⁰ Firstly, it is the only description of a journey to Andalusia by a writer from Ifrīqiya, and, secondly, it is the only *riḥlah fī ṭalab al-'ilm* (account of a trip) to Spain in the entire nineteenth-century Arabic literature. It is not without significance in this context that, in the nineteenth century, Spain was not a popular destination for Arabs, who would usually consider places such as Paris or London as worth visiting.⁴¹ However, Andalusia was visited not only by al-Wardānī, but also by the Palestinian Rūḥī al-Khālīdī

'Alī Bāshā Abū al-Fuṭūḥ, *Siyāhat Miṣrī fī Ḍubbā sanat 1900* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba'at al-Mawsū'āt, 1900); Aḥmad Zakī, *al-Dunyā fī Bārīz: L'Univers à Paris* (Būlāq: n.p., 1900).

³¹ See, e.g., Newman, "Myths and Realities in Muslim Alterist Discourse," 24.

³² See Sulaymān al-Ḥarāyirī, *Arḍ al-Baḍā'i al-'Amm* (Paris: G. Jousset, Clet et Cie, 1867).

³³ See Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnusī, *Aqwam al-masālik fī ma'rifat al-mamālik* (Tūnus: Maṭba'at al-Dawlah, 1868).

³⁴ See Muḥammad Bayram V, *Ṣafwat al-i'tibār bi-mustawḍa' al-amṣār wa-al-aqtār* (al-Qāhirah: al-Maṭba'ah al-I'lāmīyah, 1887–1889).

³⁵ See Muḥammad al-Sanūsī, *al-Istiḷā'āt al-bārisīyah fī ma'raḍ sanat 1889* (Tūnus: al-Maṭba'ah al-Rasmīyah, 1982).

³⁶ See Muḥammad Ibn al-Khūja, *Sulūk al-ibrīz fī masālik Bārīz* (Tūnus: al-Maṭba'ah al-Rasmīyah, 1900).

³⁷ Newman, apparently, considers al-Wardānī's journey, together with other such accounts, as unpublished, because they were not published as separate books at the time. See Newman, "Myths and Realities in Muslim Alterist Discourse," 24.

³⁸ Debbech, *Les voyageurs tunisiens en France au XIXe siècle*, 32.

³⁹ See Aḥmad Ibn Abī al-Ḍiyāf, *Ithāf ahl al-zamān bi-akhbār mulūk Tūnus wa-'ahd al-amān* (Tūnus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 1963), vol. 4, 92–112.

⁴⁰ While it remains debatable whether the work in question should be classified as an instance of Ottoman literature in Arabic, I have not encountered any objections of the kind.

⁴¹ See al-Sharīf, "al-Baḥṭh 'an al-makhtū'āt wa-al-riḥlah al-'ilmīyah," 13.

(1864–1913),⁴² the Moroccan Aḥmad al-Kardūdī (ca. 1825–1900),⁴³ and the Egyptian Aḥmad Zakī (1867–1934),⁴⁴ all of whom left written records of their travels. None of these works were published at the time of their origin and they were written for political (*sifārah*) rather than educational purposes.

However, Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Shinqīṭī, with whom al-Wardānī traveled, did not leave a record of his trip. It can be suspected that, back then, the belief that Andalusia was a “paradise lost” for the Muslims was not as common as it is today.⁴⁵ However, the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the beginning of this awareness.⁴⁶

Al-Wardānī’s account first appeared in print, as a series of columns, in the issues of the weekly *al-Ḥādirah*⁴⁷ published between 1888 and 1890. However, for inexplicable reasons, Ons Debbech describes the pieces as instances of Tunisian epistolary literature,⁴⁸ which is obviously a wrong classification, since they were published after the author’s return from Europe, so they were by no means *travel letters*. Rather, one may get the impression that they are written in the style characteristic of memoirs, which may partly justify the various inaccuracies they contain. The memoirs are written in plain prose, although *sajʿ* (rhymed prose) was dominant in Tunisian literature in the nineteenth century.⁴⁹

The expedition in which al-Wardānī took part was associated with the figure of the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid (1841–1918), who was supposedly very interested in gathering information about Arabic manuscripts in the collections of European libraries⁵⁰ and, since mid-1880s began sending missions to Europe for that purpose. The expedition in which al-Wardānī participated was the first

⁴² See Rūḥī al-Khālīdī, *Riḥlat al-muqaddasī ilā jazīrat al-Andalus*, in Rūḥī al-Khālīdī, *Kutubuh, maqālātuh wa-muntakhabāt min makhṭūṭātih* (al-Quds: Muʿassasat al-Dirāsāt al-Filistīniyah and al-Maktabah al-Khālīdīyah, 2021), vol. 2, 1069–84.

⁴³ See Aḥmad al-Kardūdī, *al-Tuḥfah al-saniyah li-al-ḥadrah al-Ḥasanīyah bi-al-Mamlakah al-Isbanyūliyah* (al-Ribāt: al-Maktabah al-Malakīyah, 1963).

⁴⁴ See Aḥmad Zakī, *al-Safar ilā al-muʿtamar* (London: al-Hindāwī, 2013), 221–58. The first edition of his work was published in 1893.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Ḥusayn Muʿnis, *Riḥlat al-Andalus. Ḥadīth al-firdaws al-mafqūd* (Juddah: al-Dār al-Suʿūdīyah li-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 1985). Muʿnis’s work also comprises an account of a trip to Andalusia.

⁴⁶ See al-Sharīf, “al-Baḥṭh al-makhṭūṭāt wa-al-riḥlah al-ʿilmīyah,” 14.

⁴⁷ For a list of the issues, see al-Sharīf, “al-Baḥṭh al-makhṭūṭāt wa-al-riḥlah al-ʿilmīyah,” 18.

⁴⁸ See Debbech, 112.

⁴⁹ See *ibidem*, 114.

⁵⁰ Sultan Abdülhamid was famous for his sympathy for the pan-Islamic project. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, v. 1, s.v. “Abd al-Ḥamīd II” (by Jean Deny); Engin Deniz Akarlı, “The Tangled Ends of an Empire and Its Sultan,” in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 268–73. The Sultan’s initiative to have European libraries explored in the search for Arabic manuscripts can be seen as part of that effort. Among others, al-Wardānī emphasized the sultan’s interest in science and its advancements. See al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 31.

in the series of missions aimed at the scrutiny of the inventory of European libraries and a description of the Arabic items in their possession. A high official suggested that Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Shinqīṭī⁵¹ would be the man suitable for such a task, and al-Shinqīṭī accepted the sultan's proposal, but he set several conditions, for instance, he was to be accompanied by a *muezzin* and a cook, and he would receive an appropriate remuneration upon the completion of his task.⁵² The sultan conceded to al-Shinqīṭī's demands. Then al-Wardānī was included in the delegation as an interpreter, but the two men apparently did not like each other, because, as Muḥammad Ibn al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī writes: "They remained hostile to each other all the way."⁵³ The animosity between the two men, as one can read in various sources, might have been the reason why there was no mention, in al-Wardānī's account, of al-Shinqīṭī's participation in the delegation. However, the fact is that al-Wardānī did not mention any other names either. Moreover, based on his account, one might even get the impression that al-Wardānī was himself the most important member of the group. The entire account is written in the first-person plural (*nahnu*), which can mean either "I" (*pluralis maiesticus* or *pluralis modestiae*) or "we" in the plural. All that remains of al-Shinqīṭī's stay in Spain is his notes and remarks on the manuscripts he found in the Escorial, Seville, and Granada, as well as three poems in a work about his various research travels.⁵⁴ His notes are stored in the collection of manuscripts in the National Library in Tunis.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ibn al-Talāmīd al-Turkuzī al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1904) was a scholar, writer, and poet of Mauritanian descent. After returning from a trip to Europe, he moved to Egypt, where he successively held several high positions in the field of science and education. He collected a large library of valuable manuscripts, which was included as a separate collection in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah in Cairo. See P é r è s, *L'Espagne vue par les voyageurs musulmans de 1610 a 1930*, 55–61; Khayr al-Dīn al-Zirikli, *al-Aḷām* (Bayrūt: Dār al-ʿIlm li-al-Malāyīn, 2002), vol. 7, 89–90; Hamāh Allāh Wuld al-Sālim, *Hujāj wa-muhājirūn (ulamā' bilād Shinqīṭ—Mūrītānyā—fī al-bilād al-arabīyah wa-Turkyā)* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2011), 181. For a most extensive biographical note on Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ibn al-Talāmīd al-Turkuzī al-Shinqīṭī, see Muḥammad Ibn al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā' Shinqīṭ* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, 1989), 381–96.

⁵² See al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Wasīṭ fī tarājim udabā' Shinqīṭ*, 392.

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ See Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Ḥamāsah al-saniyah al-kāmilah al-maziyah fī al-riḥlah al-ʿilmīyah al-Shinqīṭīyah al-Turkuzīyah* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭbaʿat al-Mawsūʿāt, 1901), part 1, 19–24. The first and third poems are dedicated to Andalusia, and the second one to Paris. The ones inspired by Andalusia were translated into French by Pérès, who also discussed al-Shinqīṭī's notes on the manuscripts he had found in Spain. See Pérès, 58–61.

⁵⁵ Catalogue number 18675. See *Fatāwā al-Imām al-Shāṭibī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Ajḫān (al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-ʿUbaykān, 2001), 344. According to Muḥammad Ibn al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, having returned from the expedition, Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Shinqīṭī demanded the promised remuneration for his work. As he did not receive it, he did not hand over the results of his work to the sultan, who then ordered him to go to Medina. See ibidem, 392–93.

Although the title of al-Wardānī's account invokes Andalusia, the narrative itself includes extensive sections also on the other regions through which its author has traveled. The route of the expedition led through Izmir, Messina and Marseille, Bordeaux, Irun, Madrid, Toledo, Seville, Granada, Córdoba, Valencia, Barcelona, and Paris. Since al-Wardānī does not describe the expedition's return home from Barcelona in more detail, the account can be divided into three parts, the first comprising a description of the route from Istanbul to the French-Spanish border (in Irun),⁵⁶ the second exclusively on Spain,⁵⁷ and the third relating the group's return to Turkey, including, among others, a slightly longer description of Paris.⁵⁸ Thus the section discussing specifically Andalusia is rather concise, and not even half the account is focused on that part of the journey.⁵⁹

The expedition left Turkey on September 8, 1887, and reached Irun on September 19. Having embarked on their return journey, the participants in the mission arrived in Paris on November 28 and reached Constantinople on December 25. Interestingly, although a stay in London was planned,⁶⁰ the group did not reach Great Britain, and al-Wardānī does not explain the reasons for the change in the original plan.

Here, I shall focus on the Spanish part of the journey precisely for the fact that, as already mentioned, Spain was rarely a destination of the nineteenth-century Arab travelers.

Having arrived in Spain in September 1887, the group took a direct train from Irun to Madrid (*Madrīd*) and reached their destination in fifteen hours. In his description of the scenery of the railway line, al-Wardānī writes about the numerous tunnels they passed and about the dangers the landscape posed for the travelers, making it easy for robbers to attack them, a problem with which the Spanish government was not able to cope.⁶¹ The expedition arrived in the Spanish capital on September 20. Al-Wardānī mentions a visit to the Ottoman embassy and continues with a description of Madrid, a city located in the central part of Spain and surrounded by a desert (*ṣaḥrā'*). He then briefly notes the Arabo-Islamic past of the city, called *Majrīt* in Arabic. Back then, he writes, Madrid was a small village, and it was only King Philip II (who reigned from 1556 to 1598) who made it the capital of Spain. Describing the city's modern, European-style buildings, al-Wardānī mentions that some of them have historic inscriptions in Arabic. He emphasizes the good condition of the city's streets,

⁵⁶ See al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 33–39.

⁵⁷ See *ibidem*, 39–74.

⁵⁸ See *ibidem*, 75–76.

⁵⁹ See *ibidem*, 53–70.

⁶⁰ See *ibidem*, 31.

⁶¹ See *ibidem*, 41.

noting that some are very wide, while others resemble the streets of Arabic cities; however, there are no Arab monuments there.

The Arab visitor describes the city's inhabitants as nice and open to foreigners, but he is surprised by the number of the poor and beggars. At this point he criticizes Europeans who disapprove of the presence of beggars in Middle Eastern cities and observes that the situation is even worse in Europe.⁶²

On the next three pages, al-Wardānī relates his impressions of the places he visited while carrying through his mission. The first institution where he did his research was the Public Library (*al-Maktabah al-'Umūmīyah*). He briefly describes the way it is organized and states that he has found about five hundred Arabic books there, of which, however, only a dozen or so caught his interest. After visiting the Public Library, he stopped at a museum which he calls *Dār al-Tuḥaf al-Filibīnīyah* (Museum of Philippine Collections).⁶³ While his description of the museum exhibits the usual characteristics of his style and focuses on the facts rather than expresses the emotions he experienced, it is more than likely that it was his first visit to a place of that kind and that Philippine collections as such were also new to him.⁶⁴

Interestingly, his style changes to more emotional as he proceeds to describe a bullfight (*corrida*)⁶⁵ he witnessed. Al-Wardānī's account of the event introduces his first socio-political remarks about Spain, some of which relate to the psychology of bullfighting (political and sociological observations recur throughout his *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*).

Al-Wardānī's vivid description of the bullfight is likely to be the first attempt at a characterization of such entertainment in Arabic literature. The passage in question is among the more extensive ones focused on a single, particular topic. Having studied the entire text of the *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, one may even get the impression that the bullfight he saw was what interested al-Wardānī most in Spain, or rather what he found most disturbing, yet simultaneously astonishing. Much as it is emotional, one can see in his description of bullfighting an effort to distance himself from the actual events he saw: he does relate the course of the show in detail, but also characterizes its clearly defined rules that must not be broken. Then he proceeds to discussing the economic aspect of bullfighting, which, in his opinion, has a negative impact on the development of the country, since it distracts the Spaniards from work. They take too too many days off to watch *corridas* and are more interested in such

⁶² See *ibidem*, 42.

⁶³ Today's Naval Museum of Madrid. See Museo Naval, <https://armada.defensa.gob.es/ArmadaPortal/page/Portal/ArmadaEspañola/cienciaorgano/prefLang-es/01cienciamuseo>.

⁶⁴ See al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 42–44.

⁶⁵ See *ibidem*, 45–49.

spectacles than in the development of their homeland.⁶⁶ However, al-Wardānī sees one positive socio-psychological effect of bullfighting: it builds up boldness and courage in the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, “which, however, should be properly channeled.”⁶⁷ While al-Wardānī does not elaborate further on this point, one may read his remark as a suggestion that the bravery and the endurance of the Spanish are not, in his opinion, put to good use.

From Madrid, al-Wardānī went to the Royal Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. He describes the royal palace in some detail⁶⁸ and moves on to the characteristics of its Arabic collections. He sees a recurring error in his contemporary studies which frequently describe these collections as coming from Andalusia. Al-Wardānī points out that they actually originate from Morocco. He also notes that the Arab-Muslim Collection in El Escorial includes not only manuscripts, but also coins.

On October 19, the delegation left the Spanish capital for Toledo (*Tulay-tula*). Al-Wardānī’s description of the city is very sparse,⁶⁹ if not encyclopedic. While his attention is directed to the few traces of former Muslim presence in the city, he does not fail to notice the very poor condition of the streets. Not only does he find the city neglected, but his hopes for interesting manuscript collections there do not turn out realistic: in fact, there is almost nothing left of them. The next day the Arab visitors returned to Madrid to leave for Seville (*Ishbīlīya*), which took place on October 20.

On the way, al-Wardānī noticed a poor condition of the olive trees when compared to those in Tunisia.⁷⁰ However, his description of Seville and its monuments covers only one-and-a-half pages⁷¹ even though the party stayed there until October 26. In fact, al-Wardānī’s description of the city is as perfunctory as was that of Toledo, the only buildings that attracted his attention being the Giralda tower (which was a former minaret) and the castle. A walk around the castle and its gardens brought to his mind fragments of two poems he quotes directly in the text of his account.⁷² The collections of Arabic books al-Wardānī found in Seville’s libraries turned out to be very modest.

The next place the visitors explored was Granada (*Gharnāta*). Its description, or rather that of the Alhambra, is quite extensive in *al-Riḥlah al-*

⁶⁶ See *ibidem*, 49.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ See *ibidem*, 50–51.

⁶⁹ See *ibidem*, 53–55.

⁷⁰ Interestingly, a similar observation was made in Spain by the Moroccan Aḥmad al-Kardūdī, who also compared the poor olive trees there to the lavish ones in his homeland. See al-Kardūdī, *al-Tuḥfah al-saniyah li-al-ḥadrah al-Ḥasanīyah bi-al-Mamlakah al-Ishbanyūliyah*, 79.

⁷¹ See al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 56–57.

⁷² See *ibidem*, 57.

Andalusīyah and it covers almost eight pages.⁷³ After giving encyclopedic details about the city, al-Wardānī continues with a lengthy, detailed passage on the Alhambra.⁷⁴ The description of the greatest Muslim monument in Spain was certainly interesting to the Arab readers of his *riḥlah*. He gives (sometimes very detailed) information on the most important parts of the architectural complex, quotes some of the inscriptions carved in the walls,⁷⁵ and includes many historical details. The passages in question almost read like a tourist guide.⁷⁶

On October 29, the travelers set off for Córdoba (*Qurtuba*). Al-Wardānī begins his description of the city by saying that it is “the home of the Islamic Umayyad Caliphate and [has been] under the Andalusian government for about five centuries; it had many diligent scholars, legendary sages, and early theologians. Yet no places of theirs are left and there are no narrations about them. If the Muhammadan [sic!] came, he will see only mere traces, and the ruins will speak to him in the language of extinction.”⁷⁷

Al-Wardānī’s impressions of Córdoba take almost five pages.⁷⁸ He says that the city is built partly in the European and partly in the Arabic styles. Having reached the main destination of his journey, he was surprised to find that nothing remained in Córdoba of the formerly rich Arab libraries. Among the preserved Muslim architectural monuments, he describes the famous bridge and the mosque. The passage on latter is very detailed and takes one-and-a-half pages.

The last Andalusian city visited by the delegation was Valencia (*Balinsīyah*).⁷⁹ Al-Wardānī describes it primarily as an important port and trading center of Spain and, again, mentions its remaining Muslim architectural monuments: two gates and the adjacent defensive buildings.

The final “Spanish” chapter of the *riḥlah*, entitled *Barshilūna* (Barcelona),⁸⁰ is particularly interesting even though al-Wardānī’s impressions of Barcelona take merely nine lines, in which he emphasizes the diligence of the Barcelonians, whom he contrasts, in this respect, with the inhabitants of the other parts of Spain (*dā’imat al-shughl wa-al-a’māl bi-’āks sābiqatihā*). He also mentions that he found neither Arabic monuments nor Arabic books in the city. However, the chapter in question comprises his interesting observations of

⁷³ See *ibidem*, 58–65.

⁷⁴ Before stopping at the Alhambra, al-Wardānī visited the city’s libraries, where there were only few Arabic books. However, he found seven of them worthy of attention. See *ibidem*, 58.

⁷⁵ al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 65.

⁷⁶ It is perhaps worth noting that al-Wardānī’s description of the Alhambra most closely resembles the classical Arabic *prosimetrum*.

⁷⁷ al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 65.

⁷⁸ See *ibidem*, 65–69.

⁷⁹ See *ibidem*, 69–70.

⁸⁰ See *ibidem*, 71–74.

a more general nature. He has discovered Arabic influences on the Spanish language,⁸¹ on the way women dress, and on certain customs of the Spanish society.⁸² Equally interesting are al-Wardānī's observations regarding the domain of political life. As he phrases it, he has noticed a "strange custom"⁸³: after a political party seizes power, there is a complete replacement of the administration, which causes instability, because it is the administrative circles which are responsible for the condition of the state.⁸⁴ The second political issue al-Wardānī raises is the excessive role of the Church. He observes that while the clergy constitutes a higher social class and is well-educated, it impedes progress in science as well as the dissemination of knowledge in the society.⁸⁵ He also complains that, due to their high role in the Spanish society, Catholic priests are forceful towards the followers of other religions and would like to convert everyone to Christianity. Al-Wardānī himself was an object of such an attempt.⁸⁶

The Moroccan scholar Bū Shu'ayb al-Sāwirī described al-Wardānī's trip to Andalusia as "two journeys in one."⁸⁷ The first was real and took place in a specific historical situation; the other was symbolic: it was a journey deep into the history of Arab-Muslim Spain and, to al-Wardānī, it revived spiritual links between his conceptual universe and Spain's Muslim past. However, al-Sāwirī's interpretation may be considered in terms of wishful thinking, since al-Wardānī does not express a longing for the Andalusia of the past and describes the region matter-of-factly, without a special nostalgia for its Muslim past.

In fact, al-Wardānī's description of Andalusia is not only cursory and simplistic, but it is also laden with errors, which Pérès discusses in detail.⁸⁸ Al-Wardānī points to the Arab-Muslim past of Andalusia in a very balanced manner, somewhat sentimentally stating that the fate of civilization is such that in one epoch it prevails and in another it falls into ruin, or even oblivion. He expresses also some regret about such a course of history, for instance, in the description of Córdoba.⁸⁹

Al-Wardānī is very pleased that the sites in Andalusia which are testimonies to the Muslim glory are visited with such interest by Europeans, in

⁸¹ See *ibidem*, 71.

⁸² See, *ibidem*, 71–72.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, 73.

⁸⁴ See, *ibidem*.

⁸⁵ See *ibidem*, 74.

⁸⁶ See *ibidem*.

⁸⁷ Bū Shu'ayb al-Sāwirī, "Sūrat Isbānyā fī al-riḥlāt al-maghribīyah," *Īlāf*, <https://elaph.com/Web/ElaphLiterature/2005/6/70875.htm>.

⁸⁸ See Pérès, *L'Espagne vue par les voyageurs musulmans de 1610 a 1930*.

⁸⁹ See al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 66.

particular by the English,⁹⁰ and that these places, as well as Arabic manuscripts, are subject to extensive study by Western scholars.⁹¹ He does not refer directly to the scholarly work of Gustave Le Bon, but it is most probably Le Bon's *La Civilisation des Arabes*⁹² he has in mind.⁹³

However, I do not see in al-Wardānī's *riḥlah* many traces of such a "double journey" in the sense the Moroccan researcher apparently implies.

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Al-Wardānī's account is considered by Tunisian scholars among the most important literary works of the period not only in the context of travel literature, but also as an important contribution to the history of Tunisian culture. Al-Wardānī himself is regarded as a leading figure of the nineteenth-century intellectual life of the country. However, his accomplishments and his modest but important work have not been subject to extensive research in Western scholarship. Therefore, it is important to bring out the specific value of his book, which lies in that the reader will find in it, on the one hand, a unique view of Spain, differing significantly from other known Arab images of Europe of the time, for instance those compiled by Egyptian travelers. On the other hand, the reader will be confronted with a balanced image of Andalusia and its Muslim monuments, an image devoid of unnecessary emotions or dreams of a return to the lost lands of Islam.

Although al-Wardānī's account is not a comprehensive work, it deserves more attention also from Western scholars studying the Arab world's relations with Europe. However, I tend to believe that, in this aspect, scholarly attention should be paid primarily to the parts of the text which are not related to Andalusia. One can even hold that the passages of *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah* which directly refer to the title-theme of this work are its rather weak segment, as are al-Wardānī's remarks concerning the main goal of the expedition he relates, i.e., researching European libraries to find which Arabic manuscripts they have in their collections. In fact, from the vantage point of the intended research, the expedition in which he participated turned out to be not very successful. In their inventories, al-Wardānī and al-Shinqīṭī included over four hundred interesting manuscripts. The manuscripts were mainly located in the Public Library in Madrid and in the Escorial Library (there were four hundred and

⁹⁰ See *ibidem*, 58.

⁹¹ See *ibidem*, 50.

⁹² See Gustave Le Bon, *La Civilisation des Arabes* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1884).

⁹³ See al-Wardānī, *al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*, 59.

seven of them in total, according to al-Shinqīfī). Contrary to the expectations, Andalusia turned out to be a rather poor source of Arabic manuscripts, as they found only three of them in Seville and seven in Granada.⁹⁴ Al-Wardānī does not provide any information about the Parisian libraries, but probably the travelers did not do any research in the French capital.

Although al-Wardānī does not devote much space to discussing political or social issues in the countries he is visiting, he shows himself as a keen observer of the social and political life, primarily in Spain, but also in France. In general, his work hardly manifests an admiration of the West, which has been emphasized by the Arab commentators of his book.⁹⁵ Al-Wardānī does not seem to be easily astonished by what he encounters in Europe, which may be related to the fact that he was a student of Khayr al-Dīn, who had probably passed on to him his knowledge of the European civilization of the period. Al-Wardānī does not emphasize the civilizational differences between the Arab world and Europe, although he is certainly aware of them. At the same time, however, he does not cut himself off from reality, as was the case with al-Kardūdī, who, contrary to the facts, would point to the superiority of the Arab-Muslim civilization over the Western one, also in terms of technology, because, in his opinion, technological advancements would soon lead to the collapse of the West.⁹⁶ Al-Wardānī manifests his dignity by not falling to his knees before Europe but at the same time does not indulge in self-admiration, and therein lies the great value of his somewhat forgotten work.

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⁹⁴ For a list of thirty seven manuscripts, see P é r è s, *L’Espagne vue par les voyageurs musulmans de 1610 a 1930*, 63. See also al - W a r d ā n ī, *al-Riḡlah al-Andalusīyah*, 77–79.

⁹⁵ See, e.g., al - S a t t ī, “al-Adḡb al-tūnusī ‘Alī al-Wardānī mukallifan min al-sultān bi-him-mah ‘ilmīyah fī Isbānyā.”

⁹⁶ See al - K a r d ū d ī, *al-Tuḡfah*, 92.

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ABSTRACT / ABSTRAKT

Marek M. DZIEKAN, Towards a Reconstruction of the Intellectual Past: ʿAlī Ibn Sālim al-Wardānī and His *Al-Riḥlah al-Andalusīyah*

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The aim of the paper is a presentation and analysis of the account made by ʿAlī al-Wardānī, a Tunisian official and writer, of his trip to Spain in 1887. While the nineteenth-century Arab travel literature is quite rich and an object of extensive research, al-Wardānī’s journey was only briefly discussed in 1937 by Henri Pérès and has not been studied more deeply since that time. Al-Wardānī came from Tunisia and arrived in Istanbul together with Khayr al-Dīn, who highly appreciated his talents. During his service in Turkey, Sultan Abdūlamid sent a group of intellectuals to study collections of Arabic manuscripts in Eu-

rope. Al-Wardānī found himself as a translator in a group led by Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Shinqīṭī, which had the aim of examining, among other things, the Arab collections at El Escorial and in Andalusian libraries. The result of the expedition was a report prepared for the sultan by al-Shinqīṭī and a memoir of the journey written by al-Wardānī, the latter originally published in parts in various issues of the journal *al-Ḥāḍirah* from 1888 to 1890 and as a separate, fully edited book only in 1984.

Keywords: ‘Alī al-Wardānī, Tunis, Spain, Andalusia, journey

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Marek M. DZIEKAN, Ku rekonstrukcji przeszłości intelektualnej. ‘Alī Ibn Sālim al-Wardānī i jego *Ar-Rihla al-Andalusiyya*

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Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie i próba analizy relacji ‘Alego al-Wardānīego, tunezyjskiego urzędnika i pisarza, z jego podróży do Hiszpanii w roku 1887. Chociaż dziewiętnastowieczna arabska literatura podróżnicza jest dość bogata i pozostaje przedmiotem badań naukowych, podróż Al-Wardānīego pomijana jest w arabistyce i została jedynie omówiona (dość pobieżnie) przez Henri Pérèsa w roku 1937. Al-Wardānī przybył z Tunezji do Stambułu wraz z Hayr ad-Dīnem, który wysoko cenił jego umiejętności. Podczas służby Tunezyjczyka w Turcji sułtan Abdūlamid wysłał grupę wykształconych ludzi do zbadania europejskich zbiorów rękopisów arabskich. Al-Wardānī znalazł się jako tłumacz w grupie kierowanej przez Muḥammada Maḥmūda aš-Šinqīṭīego, której celem było zbadanie między innymi zbiorów w Escorialu i w bibliotekach andaluzyjskich. Efektem tej wyprawy był raport sporządzony dla sułtana przez Aš-Šinqīṭīego oraz dokonany przez Al-Wardānīego opis podróży, wydrukowany pierwotnie w gazecie „Al-Ḥāḍira” w latach 1888-1890, a zredagowany w całości i opublikowany jako książka dopiero w roku 1984.

Słowa kluczowe: ‘Alī al-Wardānī, Tunezja, Hiszpania, Andaluzyja, podróż

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