

Quarantine in Ceuta and Malta in the travel writings of the late eighteenth-century Moroccan ambassador Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassî

Malika Ezzahidi

Introduction

Interest in public health on the southern littoral of the Mediterranean Sea began to decline by the end of what is considered as the golden age of medieval Islamic medicine between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries. Before this occurred, hospitals (*bîmâristâns*) had played a central role in the treatment of the sick in major Islamic cities.¹ In the case of Morocco, for example, Marrakech and Fez hospitals flourished during the Almohad (1147–1269) and the Marinid (1269–1465) eras. The same applies for Egypt's Qalawun Hospital in Cairo, built in the 1280s, which could provide care for up to 8,000 patients. Separate quarters in these hospitals were reserved so that the people with contagious diseases could be isolated from other patients. Many Islamic cities had been also equipped with sophisticated water supply and sewage systems, while the so-called *hisba* administration dealt with the supervision of food weight, price and quality in markets, the control of the sacrifice of animals in slaughterhouses and the organisation of street cleansing – keeping a close eye on public morality too.² Finally, the great Islamic physicians enjoyed a wide reputation throughout Western Europe, where their influence was spread by an abundant literature that testified to the vitality of Arab-Muslim medicine.

In contrast with Islamic decline, in Europe strict and stringent sanitary measures were pioneered following the Black Plague – measures which had an enormous demographic impact on the entire

Mediterranean area during the fourteenth century and beyond. Yet it was only from the seventeenth century that maritime quarantine – generally understood as an isolation period for men, vessels and cargos – came to be seriously applied in almost all Mediterranean ports of Europe.³ This helped to limit the number of epidemic cycles and later contributed to the disappearance of the plague, which by contrast continued to be widespread throughout the East until the 1840s.⁴ Certainly, maritime quarantine was also known and implemented from the eighteenth century in various Islamic countries, as European commercial expansionism began to be felt and local rulers sought to stop the epidemic risk associated with its progression. As Nancy E. Gallagher has shown for the case of Tunisia, the beys refused entry of foreign vessels arriving from countries struck by plague to local ports from at least 1722 and armed conflicts developed occasionally with states such as Venice over disagreements on quarantine measures.⁵ But, in practice, maritime quarantine in Islamic countries was neither widespread geographically, nor uncontroversial beyond minority groups favourable to modernisation.

Only a handful of first-person accounts of Muslims who were subjected to quarantine in the eighteenth century have been identified by historians. This chapter analyses those contained in the travel writings of the Moroccan ambassador Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassî (d. 1799). Al-Meknassî acted as a prominent agent intervening in the multiple and complex foreign policy affairs that characterised the reigns of the sultans Muhammad III (1757–1790) and Moulay Slimane (1792–1822).⁶ His diplomatic activities explained his frequent travels throughout the Mediterranean to Spain, Italy, Malta or the Ottoman Empire, which served as the basis for three classic travel diaries (*rihlas*). In them, Al-Meknassî devoted only a handful of paragraphs to his experiences on quarantine, but they nevertheless give an invaluable account of the reactions of a Muslim and a diplomat to the anti-epidemic measures routinely imposed on the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Through the analysis of these short excerpts, referring to the quarantine he endured at Spain's Ceuta and Malta's Valletta, I will try to show how the Moroccan ambassador was alive to the political as well as the medical implications of quarantine either in the relations with European countries, or within Moroccan society and power elites.

A glimpse of epidemics and quarantine in eighteenth-century Morocco

During the eighteenth century, Morocco, like the rest of the Islamic countries, remained hesitant and somewhat inattentive to the development of sanitary measures needed to protect the population from the importation of 'exotic' epidemics. Throughout this century, the Alawite sultanate had to face cycles of plague⁷ which limited demographic and economic growth and provoked crises of which chroniclers left accurate descriptions.⁸ After the severe outbreak during Moulay Ismail's reign, which struck in the years 1678–80, Morocco showed signs of recovery, despite the fact that the disease was still diffused in Algeria and Tunisia until the end of the century. However, the epidemic reappeared again in March 1742, coming across the eastern border with Algeria, first striking Taza (a small city in the northeast) and subsequently spreading to all of the main northern cities including Tetouan, Asilah and Tangier. Due to the civil war waged between the Alawite crown princes from Moulay Ismail's death in 1727 until the late 1740s, the armies, moving from Tetouan and Tangier toward Fes, contributed to the propagation of the epidemic in other regions of the country.⁹ Taking the city of Tangier as an example, its chroniclers narrated how it was savagely hit by plague between 1742 and 1744, with the number of victims ranging between thirty to forty persons a day and rising up to seventy during summer, according to Henri-Paul Joseph Renault, a French doctor who carried out research on the history of Arab and Islamic medicine, especially in Morocco.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the most serious plague epidemic which struck the country occurred in 1799–1800, during Moulay Slimane's reign.¹¹ The city of Marrakech, for example, lost 50,000 of its 60,000 inhabitants according to the French hygienist Lucien Raynaud, who published a classic book on the history of medicine and public health in Morocco.¹² The Spanish traveller Domingo Badía/Alí Bey el Abbasi, during his visit in 1803, would describe the city as 'deserted by the scourge of plague', estimating its population as a meagre 30,000 people.¹³ Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassî would himself die in the course of this epidemic, as I will mention later.

In these tragic circumstances, the *makhzen* (central government) often took practical measures to reduce the risk of contagion: the isolation of patients, sometimes the incineration of contaminated buildings,

but also the evacuation of cities, without forgetting, of course, the ample use of traditional and 'religious medicine' (the so-called 'medicine of the Prophet').¹⁴ Everything showed that these measures were not as effective as those applied in the European quarantine systems. However, when political stability returned to Morocco during the reign of Muhammad III, the first steps were slowly taken to develop a similar system in the country. For example, the Peace and Commerce Treaty signed with Spain in 1767 established that the Moroccan vessels arriving to Spanish ports would undergo quarantine 'unless Spanish consuls [in Morocco] have given security of its perfect health condition.'¹⁵ But it would only be at the beginning of Moulay Slimane's reign that the European consular representatives in Tangier set up in 1792–93 a *Junta de Cónsules* (consular board) to discuss all kinds of affairs which affected them in common, including the eventual quarantine measures that would be advisable to take against the arrival of epidemics to the city and the country in general.¹⁶ The *Junta* succeeded, for example, in forcing the sultan to set up a sanitary cordon on the border with Algeria in 1793¹⁷ and around the cities of Melilla and Tetouan in 1799.¹⁸ One of the forts of Tangier was designated in April 1799 as a site for the observation of passengers debarking in the city.¹⁹ The consular board preceded the International Sanitary Council that was set up in Tangier on the 28 April 1840, an organ which received a delegation of Sultan Moulay Abderrahman ibn Hicham for 'maintaining the public health upon the coast of this Empire, to make all rules and take all measures to reach this end'.²⁰ Over the following years, the board extended its activities to the rest of the Moroccan ports open to foreign trade, with the appointment of a health inspector charged with monitoring incoming ships and especially those carrying pilgrims.²¹

Quarantine in Ibn Uthmân's travel writings

During the second half of the eighteenth century, a new sultan, Muhammad ibn Abdallah, took power in Morocco, ruling the country from 1757 until 1790. The period under his administration is known as the 'quiet period' by medical historians, given the remarkable decline in the frequency of epidemics – especially of plague – experienced by the population. This was just another effect of the main aim of the sultan, which was to restructure the state on a new basis.²² His attention was directed

mainly to increasing tax revenues and strengthening the economy, so he developed an ambitious foreign trade policy for which he deployed an active diplomacy towards the European powers, particularly those of the Mediterranean because of their geographic proximity and close historical relations.²³ To achieve his objectives, he first had to overcome obstacles that prevented the normalisation of these bilateral relations, such as the old troublesome issues of piracy and captives. For this purpose, he signed treaties with France, Spain, Portugal, Venice, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, through which he achieved a relevant position for himself and Morocco in the international sphere – though this did not prevent him from launching military campaigns against the Spanish and Portuguese enclaves located in the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of the sultanate. As historian Ramón Lourido summarised, Muhammad III succeeded in ‘taking his country away from the chaos and isolation in which it found itself, both in relation to the European and the Muslim world’.²⁴

In this context of diplomatic negotiations, Muhammad III appointed the *makhzen* official Muhammad Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassî to visit the court of King Carlos III of Spain in 1779. The son of a religious scholar, Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassî was born in the old imperial city of Meknes in the first half of the eighteenth century and received a classical higher education at the prestigious Qarawiyîn University of Fez. He later managed to hold an office of secretary in the palace of the sultan, by whom he would be appointed ambassador three times. After the death of Muhammad III in 1790, Ibn Uthmân used his experience in the service of Moulay Al Yazid (1790–92) and his successor Moulay Slimane. He became very popular among Europeans; the sources testify that the French consul in Tangier, Louis de Chénier,²⁵ wrote in a letter to his ambassador that the death of Ibn Uthmân was a great loss to all the nations of Europe because he was a loyal friend. This letter came just after Ibn Uthmân had reached the zenith of his diplomatic activities through his intervention in the signing of the Treaty of Meknes with Spain on 1 March 1799, one of the most important agreements in Moroccan history due to its lasting impact on the sultanate’s relations with Europe during the nineteenth century.²⁶

The main tasks of Ibn Uthmân during his first diplomatic mission as ambassador to Spain in 1779 were to obtain the freedom of Muslim captives held in that country, all of them Algerians, as well as to

negotiate a new treaty of peace and commerce which restored the good bilateral relations after the Moroccan siege of Melilla in 1774–76 had interrupted them. He carried out his diplomatic mission in Aranjuez, the summer residency of King Carlos III located south of Madrid. The treaty was signed on 30 May 1780.²⁷ Two years later, Ibn Uthmân was chosen again for a double diplomatic mission, this time to proceed to Malta for talks with the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St John, Emmanuel de Rohan, who ruled over the island,²⁸ and also to Naples as ambassador to the court of King Ferdinando IV (1759–1825), son of Carlos III of Spain. The Neapolitan king eagerly waited for him to negotiate a peace and commerce treaty similar to that signed in Aranjuez, which would be signed in Naples on 18 October 1782.²⁹ The visit to Malta aimed to obtain the liberation of Muslim captives, but was also in connection to the devolution by the sultan of Morocco of merchandise captured by Moroccan pirates to Maltese merchants in 1779.³⁰

The diplomatic activities of Ibn Uthmân are not, however, the main subject of this chapter: I have written about them elsewhere.³¹ My main purpose here is actually to analyse the ambassador's personal experiences of the quarantine he underwent in two Mediterranean port cities, first in Spain's Ceuta in 1779, then in Valletta, the main port of Malta, in 1782. Ibn Uthmân became widely known for his travel books in eighteenth-century Europe. He was among the few Moroccan ambassadors who produced those literary texts known as *rihla* (travel diaries). As he left Morocco for the first time in 1779 and began to learn about different countries and cultures, he started writing his first book *Al Iksir Fî Fîkâk Al Asîr* (Elixir for the captive's release), in which he reported everything he saw and witnessed in Spain.³² He would also leave a valuable travel account that traced his adventure and his diplomatic experiences in Malta in 1782, as well as in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where he visited Naples and spent a few months in Sicily. This second book is entitled *al Bâdr as-Sâfir li Hidâyat al-mûsafîr* (The full moon guiding the traveller to release captives from the infidel enemy).³³ In both these publications, quarantine is shown as the first medical-cultural practice which the ambassador was forced to confront in his travels to European countries. So how did he perceive it? A couple of pages from his writings allow us to analyse this man's response – which embodies Islamic culture on the one hand, and the Moroccan *makhzen*

elite's views on the other – to the sanitary measures taken in Europe to protect the health of the population and the merchandise of commercial interchange.

The Moroccan ambassador left the imperial city of Rabat, located on the Atlantic coast, to reach Ceuta (*Sebta*), the Spanish enclave on the Strait of Gibraltar, on 13 November 1779. Ibn Uthmân's first remark in his writings is about the military fortifications that the Spanish authorities had built around the city during the time of Moulay Ismail's siege. To enter the walled city, he had to cross a suspended wooden bridge attached to chains separating Ceuta from the rest of Morocco. To his surprise, he was then subjected to quarantine for a period of fourteen days.³⁴ Local authorities granted him the privilege of undergoing isolation in a villa, which he described as being among the most beautiful residences of the king of Spain in the city. He began his narration by giving the following general definition of quarantine, as well as some details about its actual implementation:

This quarantine, according to them, means that anyone who comes to them should reside for forty days in a place they have prepared for this purpose. He can neither go out nor receive anyone to avoid contagion because they suspected our country – may God protect it – being hit by the epidemic. However, that was not the case; they establish the quarantine prudently for fear of doubt during this period. Anyone contaminated will not be allowed to enter their territory and a doctor comes to examine him. Once declared free, he can then access the city and get in touch with locals. Among their provisions too, if one of their citizens encounters a person from a foreign country and is suspected to be contaminated, he is also obliged to undergo quarantine ... Frankly, they are too strict in this matter, even food is served from a distance to avoid physical contact.³⁵

In reality, the health measures applied to Ibn Uthmân in Ceuta were not that severe, as the ambassador was entitled to receive daily visits from important figures, such as the governor of the city, General José Orcañita. His experience was of a sort of a 'semi-quarantine' endurance because the Spanish authorities were keen on showing their respect to the representative of the sultan of Morocco, a constant during the whole duration of the ambassador's travel.³⁶ It is not said in the diary if his entourage received the same privileged treatment or had to endure a stricter confinement. In any case, Ibn Uthmân spent fourteen days at

the villa and twenty-seven days in Ceuta before departing for Cádiz in mid December, from where he reached Madrid on 12 January 1780. He walked around the city and described the military fortifications. He also wrote about military parades which he watched from his residence every day. Muslim captives went to visit him and he promised to free them from their imprisonment.

In 1782, the ambassador Ibn Uthmân would again be subjected to a period of quarantine, this time in the port of Valletta, in Malta. His ship left Tangier's bay on 19 March bound for the Spanish port of Cádiz. The authorities of this city may have exempted him from quarantine, as nothing else is mentioned in his narrative other than that he was allowed to disembark upon arrival in port. He described the ceremonies and the warm welcome the local authorities granted him. In his opinion, such fine treatment was due to the friendly relations he had struck with the Spanish authorities during his first mission there in 1779–80.³⁷ Ibn Uthmân stayed in Cádiz for twenty-six days; then, he boarded a Spanish ship for Malta. He devoted a few pages of his book to narrate his crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, the risks encountered in the Strait of Gibraltar and the strong currents of the Gulf of Lion.³⁸ After twenty-two days of trying navigation, the ambassador and his entourage landed in Valletta, Malta's main port. Upon verification of his identity, the Malta port authorities obliged all of them to undergo a twenty-day quarantine, which Ibn Uthmân only reluctantly accepted, as shown in the dialogue with someone who came to meet him on behalf of the Grand Master:

He said: You must purge the quarantine. I replied: Why are you forcing us to do it while we have come directly from Spain? Contrary to your suspicion, our country is safe and sound! If it had been otherwise, the Spaniards would have prohibited us from entering their territory before you. He replied: It is an obligation for all those who come to us because you have certainly met the Spanish warships, which in their turn had contacted a ship from a suspected country ... Now you stay under quarantine for twenty days in a mansion prepared for you. I replied: I refuse to go down and will spend the twenty days on board of my ship.³⁹

Ibn Uthmân also wrote in his diary that the Maltese authorities assigned a servant to him because of his status as ambassador, a Christian agent who was sent on board his vessel, specifically to take care of his personal needs. But he did not approve of this act since, according to the laws of

quarantine, from the first contact with the ship's crew and passengers, this servant would not be allowed to disembark again. Actually, he suspected that 'this Christian was there to spy on us and see if we had a patient we hid on board'.⁴⁰ To describe Malta's quarantine, Ibn Uthmân used the same quotation I extracted from his first travel book, adding a few particular details about some purification methods applied by the Maltese health personnel to passengers 'during quarantine'. He described, for example, how they subjected them to a process of fumigation, with a kind of incense made out of sulphur with a composition seemingly made of 'dog and cat waste'. Also, when a quarantined person wished to send a letter, they got hold of it by using a wooden stick, and before opening and reading it, the letter was soaked in vinegar and then 'fragranced'.⁴¹ Once his period of quarantine was finally over, Ibn Uthmân went ashore and the Maltese authorities prepared for him a residence which was 'worthy of his person'. After three days of rest, he presented his letter of appointment to the Grand Master, for he was eager to begin the negotiations for the purchase of Muslim captives.⁴²

Quarantine and Ibn Uthmân's identities

The few precious pages on quarantine contained in Ibn Uthmân's travel writings, which present the first-hand testimony of a person from the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea in the eighteenth century, allows us to draw the following conclusions. First, despite his status of *makhzen* official and his title of ambassador, Ibn Uthmân was not exempted from quarantine, especially in Malta. He himself wrote that the strict Maltese quarantine regulations *in vigore* at the port of Valletta were never breached, reinforcing in this way the reputation of Malta's lazaretto at that time as a place where the most strict quarantine was implemented – as John Chircop argues in his Chapter 8 within this volume.⁴³ With regard to the special treatment that the Spanish authorities granted him in Ceuta (only fourteen days of 'semi-quarantine') and Cádiz (exempted), it seems to us that this was not only due to the respect they had for the sultan of Morocco, as Ibn Uthmân argued in his narrative, but also because they were well informed about the epidemic situation in his country of origin, which had been free from plague during the period 1778–82. It is true that historical sources confirm the existence of a 'great famine' during those years⁴⁴ – the worst

of the century in the country according to Raynaud⁴⁵ – so the European consuls feared the outbreak of a serious plague epidemic at any moment, and this would finally occur in 1786. But at the time of Ibn Uthmân's travel to Malta, the plague was absent from Morocco.

Second, Ibn Uthmân was the first Moroccan traveller to leave his readers an account of quarantine in Europe. For a long time before him, especially during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, numerous Moroccans travelled to Europe as emissaries or ambassadors, some of them leaving records and chronicles of their travel experiences.⁴⁶ However, neither Muhammad ben Abd Alwahab al Ghassani, ambassador of the Sultan Moulay Ismail in Spain in 1690, nor Ahmad al Mehdi Al Ghazzal, ambassador of Sidi Muhammad ibn Abdallah in the same country in 1766, nor others mention quarantine.⁴⁷ For us, this raises the question of the actual standpoint of the *makhzen* elite of Ibn Uthmân's time in relation to some aspects of Christian Europe's 'modernisation'. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a division arose between those who rejected any Western influence and those who encouraged the state to adopt novelties developed in Europe – including those in medicine and public health. Such division was mainly due to the dominance of Islamic thought in all spheres of Moroccan society and administration at that time, especially through the intervention of the *ulama*⁴⁸ (religious experts), given the crucial role they played in Muslim society – having the power to issue *fatwas*.⁴⁹

For example, with regard to quarantine, in the eighteenth century, Ahmed Ibn Ajiba (1748–1809), a contemporary of Ibn Uthmân, was among the first who refused all protection measures against epidemics, and especially quarantine. In his manuscript *Silk ad-dûrar fî dikr al-qadâ wâ al-qâdâr*,⁵⁰ he explained his rejection of all measures taken by 'man' to escape 'one's fate', based on the widespread interpretation of the plague as a punishment from God for human misconduct. Accordingly, 'man' would have no other recourse against the disease but God. In spite of this, when the plague struck Morocco in 1799, he refused to follow the advice of the authorities and fled from Tetouan, while all his children succumbed to the epidemic. He himself would die of plague in 1809. Yet, we often notice that in the eighteenth century the view of the *ulama* was the same as that of *makhzen* officials – and Ibn Uthmân was one of them – since they had all attended the same religious schools in the big cities of Morocco (Marrakech, Rabat and Meknes) and, of course, the

famous Qarawiyîn University in Fez. In this high institution of learning, the curriculum had remained unchanged for centuries, revolving around religious studies while scientific knowledge was downplayed – merely a shadow of the golden age of Arab-Islamic science.⁵¹

Moreover, Ibn Uthmân's writings reflect considerable concern and dissatisfaction with quarantine, especially in Malta. In his opinion, quarantine was an obstacle that came to delay a diplomatic mission he considered as being particularly 'noble' and important because it aimed to release Muslim captives from the hands of 'infidel enemies', and more precisely from the island of Malta, at the time being perceived as a 'nest of pirates' – such was the expression used in his narrative.⁵² From this point of view, quarantine assisted Maltese piracy practices that targeted shipping/commerce – particularly that flying the Muslim flag – throughout the Mediterranean. This position continued to prevail even during the second half of the nineteenth century. Muhammad An-Nasiri (1835–97), a renowned Moroccan historian and statesman, wrote about quarantine:

Today, if we look at this quarantine, it is clear that it has material and religious advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it contributes to the protection of the countries that use it against the damage caused by the epidemic, and we notice that this objective is not always achieved. On the other hand, quarantine touches so obviously and blatantly the interests of traders and travellers, it also comes to disturb the confidence and beliefs of people in their destiny ...⁵³

To summarise the abovementioned points, I would argue that quarantine, on the one hand, acted as a marker of otherness by which the Moroccan ambassador Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassî was identified as a Muslim, though significant differences existed in the degree of alterity experienced in Spain and Malta due to the diversity in quarantine procedures and the state of bilateral relations – among other factors. His subjective opinion on quarantine, on the other hand, was also one of the means through which Ibn Uthmân situated himself within the *makhzen* elite at a time when a division between those who declared themselves in favour of European-style modernisation and those who advocated a rejection of European novelties was already visible. In this sense, although he criticised and loathed the isolation practices he was obliged to endure, he seems to have regarded quarantine as a sanitary

measure indicative of the modern era. To understand why he did not express the need to see it implemented in Morocco we should nevertheless take into account that his travel diaries were originally written at the request of the sultans themselves, and for this reason they avoided any real criticism of existing measures in Morocco and refrained from proposing any changes to things as they were. Somewhat paradoxically, Ibn Uthmân would die in Marrakech in 1799 during the great plague epidemic of 1799–1800.⁵⁴ The introduction of the disease in Morocco was possible because Sultan Moulay Suleiman refused the suggestion of the *Junta de Cónsules* of Tangier to impose sanitary isolation on the ships carrying pilgrims returning from Mecca. It would not be the last time, since he allowed the Moroccan *hajjis* to disembark in 1818, this time because among them there happened to be his two sons; plague ravaged Morocco again as it had done two decades earlier.⁵⁵ The conflict between quarantine and the religious and class identity of the larger sector of the *makhzen* elite was often resolved at the expense of the former, symbolically overruling those who, as Ibn Uthmân, had been used to the practice of compromise between his beliefs and ideas and those of the Europeans.

Notes

- 1 Bel Kamel Al bidaouia, 'ALwadaâ Tibî Saâdi' in *Al maarifa Tibia watarikh Al Amrad ft Al Maghreb* (Conference proceedings), Casablanca, King Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud Foundation – Editions Okad, 2011, 32.
- 2 Caroline Stone, 'The Muhtasib', *Saudi Aramco World*, September/October 1977, 22–25; R.P. Buckley, 'The Muhtasib' *Arabica* 39, 1, 1992, 59–117; Cl. Cahen, M. Talbi, R. Mantran, A.K.S. Lambton and A.S. Bazmee Ansari, 'Hisba', in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, Brill, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-de-l-islam/hisba-COM_0293 (accessed 2 April 2017).
- 3 The Valletta lazaretto complex was constructed in 1643 on an *isolotto* named Manoel Island, although one must mention that quarantine was already being used in the Valletta harbour in the 1520s and that during the 1592 plague one finds evidence of a makeshift lazaretto set up on this island. It was Venice which was the first to set up a lazaretto in 1403. Marseille's lazaretto was built in 1526, Livorno's in 1590–95, Naples' in 1626 and Ragusa's in 1642. Anne Brogini, *Malte, Frontière de la Chrétienté*

- (1530–1670), Rome, École Française de Rome, 2006, 567; Daniel Panzac, *Quarantaines et Lazarets*, Aix-en-Provence, Édisud, 1986, 34.
- 4 Elizabeth Longuenesse, Silvia Chiffolleau, Nabil Kronfol and Omar Dewachi, 'Santé publique et métiers du médecin au monde arabe: vue historique', in *Al Mustakbal Al Arabi*, 2014, Fasc. Unique, 11.
 - 5 Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, *Medicine and Power in Tunisia, 1780–1900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, 23–24.
 - 6 On Morocco's foreign policy in this period, see Jacques Caillé, *Les accords internationaux du sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Abdallah: 1757–1790*, Paris, Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1960; Ramón Lourido, *Marruecos y el mundo exterior en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII*, Madrid, Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo Árabe, 1989.
 - 7 For a chronology of the main outbreaks of plague and cholera and of the famine crisis until the end of the nineteenth century, see Louis Raynaud, *Étude sur l'hygiène et la médecine au Maroc*, Alger, Léon, 1902.
 - 8 Mohammed Kenbib (ed.), *La Grande Encyclopédie du Maroc, Histoire*, Rabat, GEM, 1987, 109–113. The main chroniclers of this period are: Abu Al Kasem Zayani, *Attûrjomân Al Mûghreb*, trans. Houdas, 1886; and Al Duayyif Ribati, *Tarikh Al Dawla Saaida*, Rabat, Dar Al maturate, 1986.
 - 9 Mohammed Amine El-Bezzaz, *Tarekh al majâa wa al awbiae bi al Maghreb* [History of famines and epidemics in Morocco in 18th and 19th centuries] [in Arabic], Rabat, Université Mohammed V, 1992, 54.
 - 10 Henry-Paul-Joseph Renaud, 'Les pestes du milieu du XVIIIe siècle', *Hespéris XXVI*, 1939, 293–319.
 - 11 Henry-Paul-Joseph Renaud, 'La peste de 1799 d'après des document inédites', *Hespéris I*, 1921, 160.
 - 12 Raynaud, *Étude sur l'hygiène*, 81.
 - 13 Domingo Badía/Ali Bey, *Viajes de Ali Bey*, Madrid, Compañía Literaria, 1996, 170.
 - 14 Driss Moussaoui and Michel Roux-Dessarps (eds), *Histoire de la médecine au Maroc et dans les pays arabes et musulmans*, Casablanca, Najah el-Jadida, 1995.
 - 15 Alejandro del Cantillo, *Tratados, convenios y declaraciones de paz y de comercio que han hecho con las potencias extranjeros los monarcas españoles de la casa de Borbón desde el año 1700 hasta el día*, Madrid, Imprenta de Alegría y Charlain, 1843, 506.
 - 16 Mohammed Amine El-Bezzaz, *The International Sanitary Council of Morocco, 1792–1929* [in Arabic], Rabat, Université Mohammed V, 2000, 85–87.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, 48.

- 18 Raynaud, *Étude sur l'hygiène*, 63.
- 19 Michel-Pierre Roux, *Mogador, Essaouira. Acteur et témoin pour l'histoire de la santé*, Marrakech, El Watanya, 1996, 29.
- 20 El-Bezzaz, *The International Sanitary Council of Morocco*, 151–186; Mohammed Amine El-Bezzaz, 'Les débuts de la réglementation sanitaire de pèlerinage Marocain à la Mecque (1831–1866)', *Hesperis-Tamuda* XXII, 1984, 94.
- 21 Ibid.; Francisco Javier Martínez, 'La sanidad en Marruecos a mediados del siglo XIX', *Medicina & Historia* 1, 2005, 1–15.
- 22 Kenbib, *La Grande Encyclopédie du Maroc*, 111–112; Jacques Caillé, *La petite histoire de Rabat*, Rabat, Université Mohammed V, 2012, 132–133; Jaques Caillé, *Les Accords Internationaux de Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah*, Rabat, Librairie Générale de Droits, 1960.
- 23 Lourido, *Marruecos y el mundo exterior*, 145.
- 24 Ibid., 717.
- 25 Jacques Caillé, *Le Consulat de Tanger (des origines à 1830)*, Paris, Pedone, 1967.
- 26 Jean-Louis Miège, *Le Maroc et l'Europe (1830–1894). Tome II. L'ouverture*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1961, 19–38.
- 27 Vicente Rodríguez Casado, 'La embajada del Talbe Sidi Mohamed ben Otman en 1780', *Hispania* 3, 1943, 598–611.
- 28 This Grand Master was of French origin. He ruled the Maltese island from 1775 to 1797 as the penultimate Grand Master of the Order of the Knights Hospitallers in Malta. Ibn Uthmân devoted a few pages to his relationship with him in his diary *Al Badr asâfir*.
- 29 Lourido, *Marruecos y el mundo exterior*, 504.
- 30 Ibid., 525.
- 31 Malika Ezzahidi, 'Le rachat des captifs Musulmans à Malte en 1782, d'après le récit de voyage d'Ibn Uthmân Al Meknassi', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 87, 2013, 221–228; 'Le voyage diplomatique en Europe, Rihlatu "al badr asâfir" comme modèle', in *Proceedings of the symposium Al Rihla entre l'Orient et l'Occident*, Rabat, Université Mohammed V, 2003, 110, 159–170.
- 32 Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassi, *Al Iksir Fi Fikak Al Asîr*, Mohammed Al Fassi edition, Rabat, University Centre for Scientific Research, 1965.
- 33 Ibn Uthmân Al-Meknassi, *Al Bâdr as-Sâfir li Hidâyat al-Mûsafîr ila Fâkâk al-Asârâ mina al-'Aduww al-Kafir*, Malika Ezzahidi edition, Mohammedia, Université Hassan II, 2005. This work won the 'Ibn Battuta Award' (dedicated to travel literature in the Arab and Muslim world), awarded by the Center Irtiyad al Afak, based in Abu Dhabi and London (2nd edition, 2013).
- 34 Ibn Uthmân, *Al Iksir Fi Fikak Al Asîr*, 9.

- 35 Ibid., 10.
- 36 Lourido, *Marruecos y el mundo exterior*, 444.
- 37 Ibn Uthmân, *Al Iksir Fi Fikak Al Asir*, 10.
- 38 Ibn Uthmân, *Al Bâdr as-Sâfir*, 126.
- 39 Ibid., 130.
- 40 There were two quarantine sites in Valletta: one in the Grand Harbour under the ramparts of the city, for those who could not or did not want to spend quarantine on board their vessels. The other was the lazaretto at Marsamxett at the western part of the Grand Harbour. The ambassador might have spent his quarantine in the latter according to his account. Ibid., 140.
- 41 Ibid., 131.
- 42 Ezzahidi, 'Le rachat des captifs Musulmans', 130.
- 43 Carmen Depasquale has claimed that 'no one was exempt from [Malta's] quarantine; ambassadors, ministers, consuls, knights, all should submit to it' (author's translation). 'La Quarantaine à Malte au XVII et XVIIIe siècles dans les mémoires, journaux et récits de quelques voyageurs', *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du Nord* XIX, 2, 2009, 159.
- 44 Zayani, *Attûrjomân Al Mûghreb*, 82–83.
- 45 Raynaud, *Étude sur l'hygiène*, 75.
- 46 Abdelmajid Kaddouri, *Moroccan Ambassadors in Europe, 1610–1922* [in Arabic], Rabat, Université Mohammed V, 1995.
- 47 Ahmed Ben Kassem Al Hajari, *Naser Addin Aalaalqawm al kafîrîn*, Mohamed Razouk edition, Casablanca, 1987. Al Ghassani was ambassador to the King Carlos II of Spain in 1690 and Al Ghazal was ambassador to the King of Spain Carlos III in 1766: Muhammad Ben Abdelwahhab al-Ghassani, *Rihlat al-wazir fi iftikak al-assir*, Abderrahim Benhadda edition, Tokyo, Research institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 2005; Ahmed al-Mehdi al-Ghazal, *Natijât al ijtihad fi al mohadana wa al-Fihad*, Ismail al-Gharbi edition, Bayrut, Dar al-Gharbal-Islami, 1980.
- 48 The *ulama* were scholars of the religious sciences who saw themselves as the guardians of the faith and jurisprudence (*shari'a*). In the absence of a formal Muslim clergy, they represented a sort of religious aristocracy whose acquiescence was necessary not only for the religious but also for the secular policies of the sultan. Mohammed El Mansour, 'Les Oulemas et le Makzen dans le Maroc précolonial', in Jean-Claude Santucci (ed.), *Le Maroc actuel*, Aix-en-Provence, IREMAM, 1992, 3–15.
- 49 'Fatwa' in Islam is a legal opinion given by an expert of Islamic law on a particular issue. The opinion is often issued following the request of an individual or a group of people.

- 50 Jeans-Louis Michou, *Le Sofî marocain Ibn Ajiba (1746–1809) et son Mi'raj* [n.p.], 1990.
- 51 Lulat, Y.G.-M., *A History of African Higher Education from Antiquity to the Present: A Critical Synthesis*, Westport and London, Praeger, 2005.
- 52 Ibn Uthmân, *Al Bâdr as-Sâfir*, 28.
- 53 Ahmed Ben Khaled An-Nasiri, *Al istiksa, Li Akhbar Douali Al-Maghrib Al-Aksa*, Casablanca, vol. 5, 1997, 184.
- 54 Renaud, 'La peste de 1799', 160.
- 55 Raynaud, *Étude sur l'hygiène*, 82.