Translation as Means of Self-representation in Weimar Berlin Muslim Journals[1]

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> In order to facilitate mutual understanding between the Orient and Occident, it is necessary for European-educated *Moslimin* to convey the voice of their peoples and the goals of their movements to Europeans.[2]

With this programmatic appeal to self-representation, the Syrian student and anticolonialist Muhammad ʿAbd al-Nafiʿ Shalabi (1901–1933, Tschelebi)[3] promoted his newly founded German journal *Islam-Echo* at the Spanish embassy in Berlin in 1927. By then, Tschelebi, who had arrived in Berlin in the early 1920s, had become a central figure among the anticolonial and pan-Islamic activists, missionaries, students, diplomats, traders, converts, and former prisoners of war from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia who gathered in Berlin after the First World War during the Weimar Period. Many of them were perceived by German society primarily as Muslims or, as in Tschelebi's case, defined themselves as such or performed as representatives of 'Islam'. In striving for self-presentation and in negotiating their relationship with 'Europe', multiple forms of translation were, as I will argue in this chapter, a key instrument.

1 This chapter is based on my master's thesis "Arabische und muslimische Zeitschriften als Medien multipler Übersetzungstätigkeiten im Berlin der Zwischenkriegszeit", Freie Universität Berlin, 2021.

2 Tschelebi, Nafi: Letter to the Spanish Embassy in Berlin, 23 April 1927, *Nachlass Prof. Dr. Gerhard Höpp, Leibniz Zentrum Moderner Orient* (NGH), 11.05.070, 25 [Author's translation from German, emphasis added].

3 In the following, I will transcribe names after the first mention in the form that was mostly used by the persons concerned in the context of the Berlin journals. Urdu names will be transcribed as used in European-language contexts by the individuals concerned. Names of journals and organizations will also be rendered in the transcription chosen by their publishers/founders/members.

Previous studies of these individuals and their activities and networks have been carried out mainly within the framework of research on "Islam in Europe in the Interwar Period", depicting this period as marked by transformations that continue to have an impact to this day. Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad, and Mehdi Sajid, for example, have characterized the interwar years as a "crucial time of global entanglements", a time in which Europe became a "borderless, cross-cultural, multi-ethnic and a plurinational sphere for their political and intellectual action, a place where discussions on Islam took shape."[4] European metropolises in particular became hubs of local and global networks in which, as Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain argue, the structural and ideological foundations of what today is often discursively negotiated as 'European Islam' were constituted.[5]

Berlin's emergence as one of these urban hubs was a result of both pragmatic and ideological factors. Although the German Empire had undertaken a highly instrumentalizing, racist, and ambivalent policy toward Islam in the context of its colonial ambitions and the First World War,[6] its self-staging as a 'friend of Islam'[7] and the logic it propagated of the need to close ranks against the common enemies of England and France during its wartime alliance with the Ottoman Empire persisted even after Germany's defeat and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The fact that Germany had to cede its colonies under the Treaty of Versailles added to the coalition-building hopes of nationalist and anti-colonial activists. Thus, in the opening issue of the pan-Islamic journal *Liwa-el-Islam* (Banner of Islam, 1921–1922) the Berlin-based editors expressed their hope that "the German people, who are not imperialist-minded today despite their power, will hear us and help us in our struggle with our rapists and oppressors, such as the English, French, etc."[8] The German authorities indeed largely tolerated the public activities of anti-colonialists and Mus-

4 Bekim Agai/Umar Ryad/Mehdi Sajid: "Introduction: Towards a Trans-Cultural History of Muslims in Interwar Europe", in: Bekim Agai/Umar Ryad/Mehdi Sajid (eds): *Muslims in Interwar Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 1–17, here 4–5.

5 Nathalie Clayer/Eric Germain: "Part II. Towards the Building of 'European Islam'", in: Nathalie Clayer/Eric Germain (eds.): *Islam in Inter-War Europe* (London: Hurst, 2008), 119–127.

6 Suzanne L. Marchand: *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 356–386; Rebekka Habermas: "Debates on Islam in Imperial Germany", in: David Motadel (ed.): *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 231–253; Anna-Elisabeth Hampel/Nike Löble: "Zwischen Ressource und Gefahr. Ambivalente Konzeptionalisierungen des Islams in deutscher Wissenschaft und Politik während des Ersten Weltkriegs und in der DDR", in: Leonie Stenske/Tom Bioly (eds.): *Muslimisches Leben in Ostdeutschland* (Leipzig: Universität Leipzig, 2021), 145–180, here 148–151.

7 Wilhem II already laid the foundation of this rhetoric in a speech he gave during his "Orientreise" in 1889 (See Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 341).

8 Author unknown (N.N.): "Die Tendenz unserer Zeitschrift [The tendecy of our journal]", *Liwa-el-Islam* (German), 15 June 1921.

lim reformers on their territory until 1933, as demonstrating support for the political concerns of non-European actors was one of the few ways for Germany to regain foreign policy influence. This way, it offered a space to escape the control and censorship of British and French authorities on the one hand and traditional religious elites on the other.

Furthermore, hyperinflation made Germany a particularly affordable place, while its universities still enjoyed a good reputation among foreign students. The enormous political and economic shifts and insecurities in Germany in the aftermath of World War I did not only create pragmatic advantages for immigrants – and especially political activists. In fact, the previous political and religious system had been thrown into doubt by Germany's defeat, creating, as Gerdien Jonkers put it in her analysis of the Ahmadiyya in interwar Berlin, a "spiritual vacuum".[9] The capital in particular attracted activists, avant-garde artists, reformers, and diverse political and religious groups from all over the world who tried to fill this vacuum with their ideas and forge alliances or assert themselves against others. Muslims and people from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia came to Berlin to take part in these flourishing intellectual discourses, or just to pursue business opportunities or to study. Many of them saw an opportunity to "propagate Islam in Europe – as a religious belief and as a political project that would help to formulate a vision for the future after the devastating years of the war."[10] As members of urban intellectual elites, most of these Muslims had much in common in terms of lifestyle and discourses with their counterparts from Berlin, Paris, or London. Nevertheless, they expressed awareness that they were seen as members of a group that deviated from the supposed civilizational norm that 'Europe' claimed for itself. Almost all of them were politically and ideologically influenced by the colonial systems in their countries of origin, where this hegemonic logic operated. Many of them acted self-confidently as representatives of the interests of colonized people, the 'Islamic world', or the 'East', which were striving for emancipation.[11] They rarely fixed on only one of these national, regional, religious, and political identities, rather switching and combining emphases according to the context of their arguments and strategies.

Compared to France or Britain, where most Muslim people continued to be soldiers, workers, and sailors from the (respective) colonies, or in Southeastern Europe

9 Gerdien Jonker: "In Search of Religious Modernity: Conversion to Islam in Interwar Berlin", in: Bekim Agai/Umar Ryad/Mehdi Sajid (eds): *Muslims in Interwar Europe* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 18–46, here 19.

10 Heike Liebau: "Navigating Knowledge, Negotiating Positions. The Kheiri Brothers on Nation and Islam", in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 45:3 (2019), 341–361, here 352.

11 On the self-understanding of Arab students in Berlin, see Götz Nordbruch: "Arab Students in Weimar Republic – Politics and Thought Beyond Borders", in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 49:2 (2014), 275–295.

with its large Muslim populations, it was still only a relatively small number of, according to David Motadel, between 1300 to 3000 Muslims who lived in Germany.[12] However, endowed with the privileges and capacities of the intellectual urban elite, these made Berlin the intellectual and cultural center of Muslim life in interwar Europe and created, in Jonker's words, "an amalgam of Islamic flavoured modernity."[13] A variety of organizations and journals founded by them bear witness to their strong activism and the multi-layered networks that connected them globally and locally along anti-colonial, religious, national, and transnational lines. These organizations and journals represent a broad cross-section of the heterogeneity of Muslim life in interwar Berlin. Nevertheless, we have to keep in mind that they leave out the perspectives of those Berlin-based Muslims who did not engage in public or intellectual discourses and organizations, which might include some former prisoners of war, women, and people who focused on their personal business during their brief stays in Germany.

The multitude of journals published by Muslims in Berlin during this period gives us a glimpse of how they acted as agents of their reformist and anti-colonial agendas, forging alliances between Muslims and non-Muslim Germans and other Europeans by bringing together local and global discourses. The journals were a platform and instrument of exchange and community building. Although Gerhard Höpp has listed and described the corpus of these journals in his basic research on Muslim life in the Weimar Republic,[14] and although they have already been used as sources in existing studies to illustrate the agendas of the people behind them, in many cases, we do not know much about these journals' authors, editorial processes, and their circulation and reception. In most cases, no in-depth analyses of their contents have yet been undertaken. The goal of this chapter is to contribute to filling this gap by, for the first time, examining these journals as sites of translation. This approach makes it possible to learn more about the contents and structures of these journals and, furthermore, to analyze their intellectual and social contexts. It builds

12 According to Motadel, in the 1920s more than 10,000 Muslims lived in Great Britain, more than 100,000 in France (see David Motadel: "The Making of Muslim Communities in Western Europe, 1914–1939", in: Nordbruch, Götz/Umar Ryad (eds.): *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe. Muslim Activists and Thinkers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 13–44, here 17). The exact number is difficult to estimate because not all Muslims have left traces through registration in official or organizational records. Furthermore, as many of them only stayed for a short time, their number also fluctuated.

13 Gerdien Jonker: *The Ahmadiyya Quest for Religious Progress. Missionizing Europe 1900–1965* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 5.

14 Among others: Gerhard Höpp: *Arabische und islamische Periodika in Berlin und Brandenburg: 1915–1945. Geschichtlicher Abriß und Bibliographie* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1994); Gerhard Höpp: "Zwischen Moschee und Demonstration. Muslime in Berlin, 1922–1930", in: *Moslemische Revue* 10:3/4 (1990), 135–146, 230–238.

on insights into Muslim life in interwar Berlin at the "complex intersection of local and global conditions,"[15] as described above, and helps to better understand the complex strategies used by the journals' contributors to negotiate these conditions.

On both the pragmatic/infrastructural and ideological levels, translations are an expression of the transculturality, transnationality, and ambiguity that characterized these networks and discourses, as well as of the shifts that occurred between competition and (pragmatic) coalition building. I consider translation here – as Lawrence Venuti put it in his influential work *The Translator's Invisibility*, a seminal contribution to the merging of translation studies with approaches from the cultural turn and postcolonial studies – as "a cultural political practice";[16] an act of knowledge production and transmission embedded in its political, social, and ideological contexts.[17] In this regard, I understand translation not as a neutral and technical interlingual transfer of texts and words, but as a broader process of selection, functionalization, partiality, and omission, in which decisions are made about which content is presented to which target groups and how.[18] With these questions in mind, the positions, intentions, assumptions about target groups, and agency of translators become key in understanding translations.

Considering the contributors to the Berlin journals as agents who used translation as a means to follow their agendas, to build networks, and to form a discourse, I examine which texts and which contents of knowledge traditions were made available in which languages and forms to which target groups and why. Building on approaches from postcolonial translation studies not only allows me to gain a broad understanding of translation, but also accounts for the particular power constellations in which the translations were created.

The Berlin Muslim journals are a good example of how the power implications of translations are particularly evident in contexts characterized by large hierarchical divides: In imperial, colonial, and orientalist structures, translations can serve as a means of control and dominance, on the one hand, and resistance, on the other, though they can rarely be clearly assigned to either pole or understood in a static,

15 Götz Nordbruch/Umar Ryad: "Introduction" in: Götz Nordbruch/Umar Ryad (eds): *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe. Muslim Activists and Thinkers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1–12, here 7.

16 Lawrence Venuti: *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation* (London/New York: Routledge, 2014 [1995]), 19.

17 See also Susan Bassnett: *Translation* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 30–32, 84, 131, 152. Maria Tymoczko/Edwin Gentzler: "Introduction", in: Maria Tymoczko/Edwin Gentzler (eds.): *Translation and power* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020), xi–xxviii, here xxviii.

18 Bassnett, *Translation*, 30–32; Richard Jacquemond/Samah Selim: "Translating in the Arab world", in: *The Translator* 21:2 (2015), 121–131, here 121–122.

dualistic relationship.[19] In these contexts, translations also play an important role in the demarcation, hierarchization, and overcoming of 'cultural identities'.[20] The translation phenomena that can be found in and around the journals of the interwar period resume a history of ambivalent instrumentalization of translation in Germany's relationship with the 'Islamic world': In the context of German "Islampolitik",[21] especially in the pronouncement that fighting against the Entente was "jihad", during the First World War, propaganda material was produced and translated into various 'Islamic' languages.[22] Native speakers who were mobilized to support German non-Muslim scholars in this production and translation of propaganda material, often tried to follow their own nationalist agendas during this collaboration. After the war, not only did some of the Muslim and German propagandists of this alliance remained influential, so did the use of translations as a means of propaganda and coalition building, despite the shifts in conditions and agendas.

In my analysis, I will try to give an impression of how these conditions and agendas were shaped by the ambivalent position of colonized people on the continent of the colonial powers and of Muslims in a society that was marked by orientalist and racist stereotypes, especially concerning Islam. Many anti-colonialists and Muslims in interwar Berlin felt impelled to take a self-confident position vis-à-vis 'Europe', its hegemonic claims and the values projected onto it. Umar Ryad and Götz Nordbruch characterize this relationship as one of "ambiguity that implied both fascination and rejection."[23] 'Europe', together with 'the East' and 'the West', presented less a territorially and ideally delimited entity than a site of projections, a "shifting metaphor".[24] An analysis of the discourses around these conceptual projection surfaces cannot always avoid citing them. However, in doing so we must always take into account their strongly constructed and constructing character.

Bringing together the research that has so far been done on "Islam in Interwar Europe" with theoretical approaches from (postcolonial) translation studies, I will show how Muslims in Berlin used different forms of translation and multilingualism

19 Shaden M. Tageldin: *Disarming words. Empire and the seductions of translation in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 2–3.

20 For further consultation see Bassnett, *Translation*; Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*.

21 A term that was coined, among others, by the German Orientalist and politician Carl Heinrich Becker, in an article of the same name in 1915.

22 Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 437–441; Habermas, "Debates on Islam", 246–252. On Germany's Islam-related propaganda in the First World War, especially towards Muslim prisoners of war in the so-called "Halbmondlager", see Gerhard Höpp: *Muslime in der Mark: als Kriegsgefangene und Internierte in Wünsdorf und Zossen, 1914–1924* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1997); Samuel Krug: *Die 'Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient' im Kontext globaler Verflechtungen (1914–1921)* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2020).

23 Nordbruch/Ryad, "Introduction", 4.

24 Ibid.

to engage in discourses about 'Islam', 'the East and the West', modernity and imperialism and to challenge Christian European narratives, thereby making translation a key tool in their program of self-representation. The ambiguity of these individuals is reflected in the way their translations adopt orientalist and colonial discourses and structures in order to disrupt and confuse them.

In the first part of this chapter, to provide an insight into the positions and social contexts of the translators, I will provide an overview of the central figures, structures, and networks of Muslims in Weimar Berlin. As we often know little or nothing about the concrete figures behind translations, assumptions about their intentions often must be made based on what we know about the main groups and their entanglements in Berlin. Building on this, in the second part, I will analyze how these translations were used to address different target groups and push certain agendas. Rather than looking at the details of specific translations, e.g., word selection or terminological and typographic choices, I will identify certain key translation phenomena in the journals by selecting and analyzing particularly telling examples. In the final section, I will consider the resonance that the translation practices of Muslims within their journals had in the non-Muslim environment and how these reactions reflected the power relationships in which the translations were produced.

Muslim Networks and Infrastructures in Berlin

In most cases, Muslims – as with other people from the Middle East and North Africa – only stayed in Berlin for a couple of years, and – after finishing their studies, their business, or their missionary activities – went back to their countries of origin or on to other metropolises. While some had already been in Germany during the war as political allies, businessmen or prisoners of war, the bulk came and left after 1918, and especially from the early 1920s onward. In his network analysis of the "making of Muslim communities", Motadel distinguishes between "associations and organizations as legal spaces", "the construction of communicative and intellectual spaces" and "mosques as physical religious spaces".[25] The number of organizations that Motadel describes as "legal spaces" and "hybrid constructs, combining Islamic purposes with European forms of organization",[26] exceeded 20. With ca. 15 journals that can be considered "communicative and intellectual spaces", Berlin was the European city with the largest concentration of journals published by Muslims.[27] Both journals and organizations were intended, on one hand, to ease networking between Muslim communities and to create spaces of solidarity and encounter, and, on the

25 Motadel, "Making of Muslim Communties", 15.

26 Ibid., 23.

27 This figure is based on the bibliography in: Höpp, *Periodika*, 59–110.

other hand, to be visible to the outside world and represent common interests.[28] This public visibility was increased by the establishment of physical spaces. In the interwar period, the mosque of the Lahore Ahmadiyya at Fehrbelliner Platz, inaugurated in 1925 as the first dedicated mosque built in the city of Berlin, stood out as an architectural symbol of Muslim presence in the city's urban space.

The journals and organizations reflected the diverse networks that used them as a means of institutionalization. These included migration and diaspora networks organized along ethnic or national lines; professional, student, and trade associations; and branches of international networks and organizations that sought to bring together different Muslim groups in the name of either primarily political or primarily religious common interests. Individuals often associated themselves with several of these organizations and published in a variety of journals, thereby identifying with different national, regional, religious, or political group identities and highlighting unity or differences according to the context of their arguments. Among the nationalist groups, the Turkish[29] and Egyptian[30] ones are particularly noteworthy. They often considered themselves as branches of nationalist parties and organizations in their countries of origin, such as the Egyptian *Watani Party*, but also joined together for common anti-colonial and often pan-Islamic and pan-Oriental goals in organizations such as the *Orient-Klub*, which was founded in 1920.[31] The most successful attempts to gather as many Muslims as possible under one roof were undertaken by the Indian brothers Sattar (1855–1944) and Abdul Jabbar Kheiri (1880–1958?) who founded the ostensibly apolitical *Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin* (Islamic Community of Berlin) in 1922, with more than 1800 members from 40 different countries,[32] and by the Syrian anti-colonialist student Tschelebi, who founded the *Islam-Institut* in 1927 as a more political and by then also more successful alternative to the *Gemeinde*.

The fact that religious (Christian/missionary) and political-territorial expansion were so closely linked in the European imperial projects also strengthened the linkage of religious (Islamic) and political (anti-colonial) elements in the resistance against these hegemonic claims and in the search for alliances. This was one reason why pan-Islamism had become a central hope of many Muslim anti-colonialists

28 Motadel, "Making of Muslim Communities", 23.

29 Among the Turkish nationalists, exiled members of the Committee of Unity and Progress like Mehmed Talaat (1874–1921) played a central role as former wartime allies of the Germans. See Höpp, *Periodika*, 25–26.

30 Höpp, *Periodika*, 18–22; Nordbruch, "Arab Students", 284–285.

31 See Höpp, *Periodika*, 25–26.

32 See Liebau, "Navigating Knowledge", 341–354; Höpp, "Moschee und Demonstration", 136–140, 234–237; Nordbruch, "Arab Students", 285–286.

and nationalists.[33] Therefore, as we will see later, people whose activism primarily dealt with political topics often also made reference to Islam, considered rather as a political or 'civilizational' factor than as a religion.

The quest to demonstrate a far-reaching (pan-Islamic or – as many non-Muslims preferred – pan-Arabic) unity towards (Christian) Europe was opposed by particular and competing interests of national and religious groups, which wanted to lobby for and assert their own interests against those of other groups. We may consider, for instance, the major schisms that came about in the wake of the dissolution of the caliphate by the Turkish National Assembly in 1924, which was interpreted by some as a betrayal of the pan-Islamic idea and the demolition of its last bastion. Furthermore, the relationship between the *Aḥmadiyyah Anjuman-i Ishāʿat-i Islām Lahore* (Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement for the Propagation of Islam) community and the rest of the Muslim community was, especially in the early 1920s, characterized by rivalry or even hostility. The Lahore Ahmadiyya had established its mission center in mainland Europe in Berlin in 1922 and presented itself as largely apolitical. Its institutional presence was expanded on several levels over many years via the publication over many years of the journal *Moslemische Revue* (Muslim Revue, 1924–1940) and the founding of the *Deutsch-Moslemische Gesellschaft* (German-Muslim Society) in 1930. While, in the early 1920s, the Lahore Ahmadiyya was accused – as happened in many parallel cases in other countries – of collaboration with the colonial powers and deviation from Islamic teachings, over time a pragmatic coexistence and the will to represent united interests to the non-Muslim surroundings prevailed.[34] We will see later that pragmatic coalitions such as these were a crucial factor in how and why translations came about; though translations were also used to foreground a particular point of view over that of others.

In addition to this internal coalition building, various Muslims in Berlin also sought alliances with non-Muslim Germans and international actors from different ideological camps. These included, for example, some of the anti-colonial activists engaged in the *League against Imperialism and for National Independence*, founded in Brussels in 1927 to function as a hub and trans-national, trans-sectarian network of anti-imperialists with communist affiliations.[35]

Alongside their professional and everyday interactions with non-Muslim Germans, some Muslims also found political support both among policy makers and

33 See Umar Ryad: "Anti-Imperialism and the Pan-Islamic Movement", in: David Motadel (ed.): *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 131–149, here 146–147.

34 For further information on the Ahmadiyya's activities in interwar Berlin see Gerdien Jonker: *On the Margins. Jews and Muslims in Interwar Berlin* (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2020); Jonker, *Ahmadiyya Quest*.

35 See Höpp, *Periodika*, 40. For further consultation see Fredrik Petersson: "Hub of the Anti-Imperialist Movement. The League against Imperialism and Berlin, 1927–1933", in: *Interventions* 16:1 (2014), 49–71.

scholars. Many of them, such as Georg Kampffmeyer (1864–1936), were associated with institutions that had been founded under the 'utility of scholarship' paradigm to serve German political and imperial interests towards the 'Islamic world', such as the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde* (German Society for the Study of Islam) or the *Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen* (Seminar for Oriental Languages). In addition to demonstrating political sympathies with Arab national movements, the exchange with foreign Muslims in Berlin offered these scholars a favorable "opportunity for personal contact with Orientals and at the same time for foreign-language studies […], especially in view of our being cut off from still wide areas of the Islamic Orient."[36]

Outside the academic community, some Germans also developed a romanticizing attraction to 'the East' or 'the Orient', which was portrayed as the spiritual antithesis to the vacuous 'West' or 'Occident' and through which criticism of the latter could be exercised during the post-war ideological crisis.[37] This sentiment was seen as an opportunity, especially by missionaries, to gain converts with whom they built up especially intimate relationships and who played an important role as bridge builders, which often included translational practices.

On the other hand, Muslims also faced manifest negative stereotypes and hostility: '*Völkisch*' nationalists railed against the "propagation of Islam" and the presence of Muslims in Germany and reproduced racist stereotypes in their periodicals.[38] At the same time, Muslims were the targets of violent racist attacks, as were other people from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.[39] Muslims resisted these hostilities not only in the press and in the courts, [40] but sometimes – as in the case of the Human-zoo-like Tripoli Fair at the Berlin Zoo in 1927 – by writing joint letters of protest to leading politicians.[41]

Coverage of Muslim life in Berlin in the German media often reflected the ambivalent prejudices of the German population, characterized by both romanticizing fascinations and racist imageries of threat.

With the Nazis' seizure of power in 1933 and their concomitant policy of '*Gleichschaltung*' –the Nazification of all areas of society – the conditions for Muslim life and public activities in Germany changed considerably and were characterized by severely restricted agency and strict control, which was no longer comparable to the

36 Hans J. Bassewitz: "Orientklub in Berlin", in: *Nachrichten zur vertraulichen Kenntnis der persönlichen Mitglieder der Gesellschaft* 1:1 (1921), 5–6. [Author's translation from German to English].

37 Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 428–435.

38 Höpp, Periodika, 31–35.

39 Marchand, *German Orientalism*, 484.

40 Höpp, *Periodika*, 31–35.

41 Nordbruch, "Arab Students", 289–90.

relatively liberal conditions of the Weimar period.[42] This period will not be discussed in this paper.

Berlin Muslim Journals as Sites of Translation

By the interwar period, journals were already established as a relatively affordable and widely available media of global intellectual exchange. They enabled ideas to be 'transplanted' into different contexts, "imagined linkages"[43] to be created, and intellectual elites to participate in translocal discourses such as pan-Islamism and Islamic reform movements.[44] In addition, journals provided an international and local platform for the networking of editors, printers, authors, and readers, which often preceded or replaced the (more complicated/formalized) founding of organizations, as was the case for Berlin's Muslims. For diaspora groups, the function of journals in establishing group identity was particularly strong. David Motadel explains it as follows:

> The journals reflected an emerging Islamic internationalism, which was particularly promoted by Muslims in Europe. Indeed, among diaspora groups, the imagined global umma seemed to be more important as a reference point than it was in the Islamic world itself. This is reflected in the journals' languages, their subjects, their contributors, and their distribution. […] They frequently discussed global Muslim issues, such as the caliphate question, Pan-Islamic anti-imperialism, or the Palestine conflict.[45]

While the focus on such political and religious topics primarily served the journals' purpose of internal exchange among Muslims locally and worldwide, these publications also had a second function of external representation, directed at the non-

42 On the relationship between National Socialism and (people from) the Islamic and Arab world and the question collaboration and criticism, see, for instance, Peter Wien: "The Culpability of Exile: Arabs in Nazi Germany", in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 37:3 (2011), 332–358. On the role of different Muslim organizations in Berlin under National Socialism, see Bernd Bauknecht: "Muslime in Deutschland von 1920 bis 1945", in: *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 9:1 (2001), 41–81, here 60–80.

43 Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016 [1983]), 33. For further discussion of the infrastructure of journal distribution, see Ami Ayalon: *The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 97–153.

44 Prominent examples include the *al-Manār* published by Rashid Riḍa (1865–1935) and the *al-ʿUrwa al-wuthqa* published from Paris by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897). See Motadel, "Making of Muslim Communities", 24; Ryad, "Anti-Imperialism and the Pan-Islamic Movement", 136.

45 Motadel, "Making of Muslim Communities", 27.

Muslim European and German communities. This function explains why the journals also sought to enlighten their readers about Islam in general and the Islamic-German or Islamic-European cultural and economic relationship. While some journals, such as Tschelebi's *Islam-Echo* (1927–1929), conveyed their positions by reporting on current political events, others, such as the Kheiri brothers' *Islam* and the Ahmadiyya's *Moslemische Revue*, discussed political-religious issues in more foundational terms. Some journals, like the short-lived Arabic *al-Hamama* (The Dove, 1923–1924) focused on cultural and scientific topics and discussed everyday questions of significance to Muslims and Arab émigrés living in Europe. In addition, the journals bear witness to the activities and networks of Berlin's Muslims: Announcements of lectures, religious festivals and excursions, advertisements for commercial enterprises and printing houses, reprints of public statements by Islamic organizations, etc. outline the everyday personal, political, and economic relations that existed.

The Berlin Muslim journals appeared in several languages and were often distributed internationally in European metropolises as well as in Muslim-majority countries outside Europe, especially in the Near and Middle East and among the core lands of Muslim journalism such as Egypt. The multilingual journals *Liwa-el-Islam* and *Azadi-yi sharq* (Freedom of the East, 1921–1930) were sent to a particularly large number of countries.[46] However, we know little about the readership in these countries – neither qualitatively nor quantitatively.

Marfa Heimbach deduces the primary functions of the periodicals from their languages: While pan-Islamic organs tended to be multilingual, nationalist publications tended to be monolingual.[47] The underlying logic of choosing language(s) according to target group can be taken further: While journals intended primarily for exchange with the surrounding society were published in their languages (German, English, French, etc.), those for international, intra-Muslim exchange tended to be published in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu. However, 'European languages' could also serve as common languages of communication for Muslims from different linguistic communities. This explains the existence in Berlin, alongside exclusively German journals, of English journals such as *The Crescent* (1923–1924), which were intended to address an audience across Europe.[48] Although the Berlin journals provide an insight into the diversity of Muslim intellectual life, they were created for the most part by and for members of an urban, intellectual, and largely

46 Höpp, *Periodika*, 29; Motadel, "Making of Muslim Communities", 26–27. Höpp and Motadel cite a British Foreign Office report that these two magazines were distributed in India, Iran, Egypt, Dubai, Qatar, Oman, and the Najd.

47 Marfa Heimbach: *Die Entwicklung der islamischen Gemeinschaft in Deutschland seit 1961* (Berlin: Schwarz, 2001), 32.

48 Motadel, "Making of Muslim Communities", 27.

male elite. Moreover, they make these people and their lives visible in a context where they often explicitly defined themselves as Muslim or anti-colonialist and emphasized Islam or their political activism as a unifying element. As a result, many other perspectives – such as those of many former prisoners of war, of Muslims not active in public life, or of many women – have not survived through them. Using journals as a source for historiographical research therefore runs the risk of reproducing the invisibility and subalternity of these groups.

Translations in the Berlin Muslims' journals took place on many levels, but often not in a way that is recognizable as such at first glance. The diverse interlingual and intertextual forms of translation found in the Berlin journals can be divided into three main phenomena, which I will illustrate below with exemplary cases and examine their possible functions in their discursive, social, and political contexts: 1) 'Internal' multilingualism of journals, 2) translations in the context of journalistic and political networks, and 3) translations of the Islamic tradition, primarily Qur'an and hadith.

The processes and actors behind the translations are very rarely if at all addressed or made apparent in the journals. The invisibility of this 'editorial authorship' is not uncommon in the information chains and editorial processes of international journalism. In addition to pragmatism, however, this invisibility also has a discursive-functional implication: It speaks for the naturalness with which a given interpretation was consciously or unconsciously perceived and offered as 'neutral', and thus also for a claim to interpretive sovereignty over highly contested political and religious matters. However, not knowing who exactly was responsible for translative knowledge production makes assumptions about the intentions behind them all the more speculative.

Multilingual Journals

In practical terms, publishing journals in multiple languages, as was the case with *Liwa-el-Islam* (see below), *Azadi-yi sharq* (Persian, Arabic, Turkish, occasionally German, English, and French), and *El-Islah* (The Reform, 1925–1926[?]; Urdu, Persian, Arabic, rarely German and English) increased the international circulation of the journals and enabled their insertion into the international journalistic discourses among the established centers of Muslim intellectual life. Furthermore, multilingualism also had important symbolic functions, as it demonstrated solidarity among different Muslim language communities in a pan-Islamic or pan-Oriental sense, usually against the backdrop of common anti-imperialist concerns. Moreover, multilingualism acknowledged that European discourses were embedded in global ones. German- and English-speaking audiences were considered on a par with others in these global discourses. Multilingualism was thus also an expression of multiperspectivity: Instead of recognizing German and English as universal

norms, these languages (and the civilizations with which they were symbolically associated) stood on equal footing with Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and others.

Multilingualism was practiced in two main ways: The first was to publish separate language issues of a given journal. Ideally, but rarely in practice, these were published parallel and contained similar content. The example of *Liwa-el-Islam* will be discussed below. The second way was to publish only one version of the journal, including articles in different languages in the same edition, as was the case, for instance, with *Azadi-yi sharq*. However, multilingualism usually did not mean that the contents of the journals were published completely in parallel and identically in different languages. Rather, the selection of articles published in a particular language was adapted to the assumed interests of the audience associated with that language. Translation between the different language editions was thus accompanied by decisions regarding the composition of the content for each language-defined target group determining which specific political and religious agendas should be propagated in that case. The primarily pro-Turkish but also generally pan-Islamic and anti-colonial journal *Liwa-el-Islam*, edited by Ilias Bragon, is a good example. It was published in Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and German in largely separate issues, with editorial articles appearing in (almost) all languages and other, more specific articles appearing in only one or two editions. While strong parallels in terms of content can be observed between the Persian and Turkish editions, with a focus on the Greek-Turkish War and Turkish nationalism, and, in the Persian edition, also on events in Afghanistan, Iran, and Russia, in the Arabic edition, this content gave way to articles on topics such as the Rif War and Mandate rule in Syria and Palestine. Some of the latter topics, as "condensation points of the anti-colonial activities of Arabs living in Berlin,"[49] found their place in the non-Arabic editions as well. The German edition, on the other hand, is notable for the fact that, in addition to articles by the editors, it also included articles by German non-Muslim authors, most of whom expressed sympathy for Turkey that still derived from the former wartime alliance.

Articles appearing in three or all four languages include key political editorials such as the renowned pan-Islamic politician and writer Shakib Arslan's (1869–1946) speech on "Eastern Solidarity",[50] which was published in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish – but not in German – and the article "Talaat Pasha and His Murderer", which appeared in Turkish, Persian, and – in a slightly shortened version – German.[51] Enver

49 Höpp, "Moschee und Demonstration", 232–232 [Author's translation from German].

50 Arabic: Shakib Arslan/N.N.: "al-Taḍāmun al-sharqī", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Turkish-Persian-Arabic), 15 April 1921, 22–24; Turkish: Id.: "Şarḳ aḳvamī ārāsandeh taḍāmun", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Turkish-Persian), 1 May 1921, 48–49; Persian: Id.: "Hamdastī-yi millathā-yi mašriq-zamīn", ibid., 54–55.

51 German: E.: "Talaat Pascha und sein Mörder", *Liwa-el-Islam* (German), 15 June 1921, 1–2; Turkish: E.: "Talʿat Pāşā ve ḳātil-e", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Turkish), 15 June 1921, 71–72; Persian: A./E.: "Ṭalʿat Pāšā va qātil-i ū", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Persian), 15 June 1921, 70–71.

Talaat (1874–1921) was shot dead by the Armenian Soghomon Tehlirian (1897–1960) in Berlin in March 1921 in revenge for his key role in the Armenian genocide. The incident and Tehlirian's subsequent acquittal by a German court provoked outrage in the Turkish nationalist community and among Germans who still held sympathy for their former Turkish allies. The case was accordingly covered in detail in order to promote this form of 'traditional' coalition building, to blame the German authorities for their betrayal of this longstanding Muslim and especially Turkish loyalty, and to invoke solidarity among Muslims. While the publication of the article in the German and Turkish editions is not surprising given this background, it is hard to explain why it appeared in the Persian edition but not in the Arabic one. This may be due to the rapprochement between Turkey and Iran during this period and the long rivalry between Arab and Turkish nationalism. It may also have to do with the fact that the article mentions that Tehlirian considered himself to be of Persian-Armenian origin. Ultimately, however, for this as for other articles, it can never be ruled out that practical considerations were decisive in determining which text could appear in which languages.[52]

Another example of content that was considered to be relevant and potentially unifying for all languages associated with a Muslim and anti-colonial readership, was a fatwa "on the question of whether, in view of the fact that the Emir of Mecca is in league with England and has assisted the English against the Muslims, the pilgrimage to Mecca remains a religious duty or ceases to be such until such time as the disgrace of infidel rule over the holy places is removed."[53] In 1922, it occupied large portions of several issues in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.[54] This prominent and extensive fatwa in several languages and by scholars from different countries is also an example of how religious Islamic authority has been used for anticolonial purposes. In all these cases, the authorship of the translation is not indicated.

Translation in international journalistic and political networks

Besides the translation of articles in multilingual journals, which can easily be traced, we can also assume that translation processes occurred in background editorial processes, i.e., in the exchange and transmission of information; this is simply common journalistic practice for both multilingual and monolingual journals. These

52 For example, the Persian and Turkish issues appeared more frequently than the Arabic and German ones, and often had very similar contents. This might be explained by the fact that the core members of the editorial staff were able to write (and therefore also translate) between these languages more easily than in Arabic or German.

53 Erich Pritsch: "Laufende Zeitschriften. Liwa-el-Islam", in: *Welt des Islams* 8:1 (1923), 27 [Author's translation from German to English].

54 Muhammad Barakatullah/Musa Jarullah/'Abd ar-Rashid Ibrahim: "Fatwa", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Arabic), 15 March 1922, 9–12; (Persian), 15 April 1922, 17–20; (Turkish), 1 June 1922, 25–26.

'background' translations – together with translations of readers' letters, advertisements, etc. – point to a well-functioning international journalistic network, which at the same time indicates the existence of established transnational alliances. This is also evident in references to other German and international – often Middle Eastern – journals, such as those found in the short news section and longer articles of *Liwa-el-Islam* or Tschelebi's *Islamische Gegenwar*t (Islamic Present, 1927–1929). In some cases, these journals are only referred to as the source of information, in others we find passages or entire articles quoted, reprinted, and therefore often translated. Translations of longer passages or entire articles from other journals are marked as such, but without mentioning who authored the translation. Once again, what was reproduced and translated often points to a specific agenda: For example, at the end of 1921, *Liwa-el-Islam* published an article in its Arabic, Turkish, and Persian editions that had first appeared in the Jerusalem journal *Lisān al-ʿarab*.[55] The article described how the Maronite dignitaries in Lebanon complained to Henri Gouraud (1867–1946), the French General and later High Commissioner for the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon, about the French Mandate regime and put him in his place when he visited them in the hope that they would help him put a stop to critical journalism in the country out of gratitude for French support for the Maronites. The article thus not only portrayed an important event of anti-colonial, trans-sectarian resistance, but also helped to publicize critical journalism, which was feared by the mandate authorities. Particularly against the background of the press censorship that German-Muslim journals frequently criticized, it can be assumed that the reproduction and translation of articles from the colonized territories was an expression of solidarity and resistance against such attempts at censorship. This journalistic exchange as a form of solidarity, made public through references, also existed among the Islamic journals and organizations published in Berlin.[56]

In addition to direct exchange among the various journals, there are also chains of information and translation between reporters or foreign correspondents and the

55 N.N.: "Uskut! Afkārukum mutasammama fī al-lubnān [Shut up, your thoughts are poisoned in Lebanon]", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Arabic), 15 November 1921, 118–120; N.N.: "Sākit! fikrhā-yi šumā dar Lubnān zahrdār šudih", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Persian), 15 November 1921, 142–143; "Ṣūṣ! Lubnāndeh fikrlarkun zaharleh nimṣadar", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Turkish), 15 December 1921, 57–58.

56 For example, *Liwa-el-Islam* printed an open letter from the *Egyptian Watani Party* branch in Berlin to the president of the government delegation, ʿAdli Yakan Basha, which was first published in *Die Aegyptische Korrespondenz* in German and Arabic. Zweigstelle der Ägyptischen Nationalpartei in Berlin: "Uebersetzung des offenen Schreibens (Manschur) der ägyptischen Nationalpartei in Berlin an den Präsidenten der offiziellen ägyptischen Abordnung Adly Yeghen Pascha", *Liwa-el-Islam* (German), 1 September 1921, 21–23; Shuʿbat al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī al-Miṣrī Bīrlīn: "Khitāb maftūḥ li-raʾīs al-wafd al-ḥukūmī ʿAdlī Yakan Bāshā", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Arabic), 1 September 1921, 96, 103–104.

central editorial offices of individual journals. Tschelebi's exclusively German-language *Islam-Echo* is a striking example of this. Tschelebi had established an international network during his hajj in 1926.[57] His journal is an expression of this network: The news section refers to "leading experts and its own [the *Echo*'s] representatives in the most important places in the Orient,"[58] who were probably Tschelebi's personal contacts and whose reports and notes were likely translated into German by him and his editorial staff. Using personal contacts as sources of information also made it possible to become independent of news agencies based in Western Europe, such as Reuters, which were already strong in the Middle East at the time. These were accused of conveying a distorted picture of events in the colonies due to the censorship of the colonial powers.[59] Tschelebi's network-based approach is an expression of his program to make non-European perspectives on political events in the Islamic world visible in Germany, i.e., to strengthen self-representation (see the quote on page 1). Tschelebi also highlighted this agenda in his other journal, *Die Islamische Gegenwart*: "It [the journal] is not and does not want to be one of those Orient journals that presents to Europeans opinions of unscientific Europeans about the Islamic Orient, rather it is the Islamic world itself that speaks through it."[60] To this end, Tschelebi established a series of essays in *Islam-Echo* beginning in June 1927 as an "attempt at an intellectual exchange between the press of Europe and that of the Orient" by selecting "journalistic representatives of that part of the Oriental press […] which usually never comes to Europe and remains unknown even to the correspondents in the capitals of the Orient"[61] and which, due to its rural location, provided an example of the limitations of European influence. A first such translated article, originally written by Yussuf Rudshuf and published in the journal *Najaf* in the Iraqi town of the same name, appeared under the title "The Fate of the Arab People."[62] Tschelebi's approach was welcomed by parts of the German expert community, namely the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde*. Its chairman and Tschelebi's supporter, Kampffmeyer, published some of the news from *Islam-Echo* in the news

57 Höpp, *Periodika*, 38.

58 Nameplate *Islam-Echo* [Author's translation from German to English]. These were located in Cairo, Mecca, Baghdad, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Beirut, Delhi, Teheran, etc.

59 Such a criticism is to be found in an article by the Egyptian organization *Freier Nil*: "Menschenschlächterei in Alexandrien [Slaughter in Alexandria]", *Liwa-el-Islam* (German), 1 October 1921, 26. On the growing importance of news agencies in the Middle East from the 1860s onward, see Ayalon, *Arabic Print Revolution*, 101.

60 N.N.: "Zur Einführung [Introduction]", *Die Islamische Gegenwart*, November 1927, 2 [Author's translation from German].

61 Islam-Echo: "An die Redaktionen [To the editorial department]", *Islam-Echo*, 27 June 27, 1927, 5 [Author's translation from German].

62 Yussuf Rudschuf: "Das Schicksal des Arabischen Volkes [The destiny of the Arabic people]", *Islam-Echo*, 27 June 1927, 5–7.

section of the *Gesellschaft's* journal *Welt des Islams*, because *Islam-Echo* offered "regular contact with the Arab press that has hitherto been lacking, a faithful picture of the intentions of the Islamic Orient, and an insight into those facts and developments in the Islamic Orient that appear important to the Muslim himself."[63] By providing a platform for the publications of Tschelebi and other Muslims in the journals he edited, Kampffmeyer extended the chain of journalistic information dissemination while simultaneously supporting – albeit under the paradigm of the utility of scholarship that he shared – his Muslim counterparts' claim to self-representation.

It is the claim to independent reporting, coupled with the aim of strengthening the political empowerment of the readership by making political documents available, that may also explain the frequent translation of political documents in the journals. Political documents such as treaties, open letters, and official speeches naturally appeared primarily in journals that had a political and anti-colonial focus. Some were summarized while others were printed in literal translation.[64] Thus, the selection of political texts reflects the anti-colonial and nationalist agendas of the editors.

Translating 'Islamic Tradition'

Compared to political texts, translations of texts from the Islamic tradition take up relatively little room in the primarily political and anticolonial journals. However, they served two essential functions in this context. First, they were selected and positioned to affirm Islamic solidarity. Second, the texts presented to showcase the Islamic tradition often implied a defense against Orientalist and Islamophobic prejudices and functioned as counter-translations to existing European translations,

63 N.N.: "Unabhängige Berichterstattung über die Gegenwartsentwicklungen der Islamwelt [Independent reporting in the world of Islam]", *Welt des Islams* (Nachrichten), 10:1 (1927), 1* [Author's translation from German]. The "Urkunden" section of *Welt des Islams* also published, among other political documents, (translated) reprints of open letters from Muslim Berlin organizations such as a pamphlet from the *Syrische Kolonie in Berlin*: "Protest der Syrer in Berlin. Abdruck eines Flugblatts. Heftiger Protest gegen die barbarischen Schandtaten der Franzosen in Syrien [Protest of the Syrians in Berlin, Copy of a pamphlet. Strong protest against the barbaric outrages of the French in Syria]", in: *Welt des Islams* 8:2–4 (1923), 133–134.

64 E.g. the Treaty of Ankara: "Das französisch-türkische Abkommen", *Liwa-el-Islam* (German), 15 November 1921, 31–32; "Farānsih-Tūrkiyā maḳāvalih-sī", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Turkish), 15 November 1921, 148–151; "'Ahd-nāmih-yi Turkiyā va Farānsih", *Liwa-el-Islam* (Persian), 15 December 1921, 148–151. Further examples include a Turkish Ministry Declaration: "Türkische Ministererklärungen über Politik, Wirtschaft und Aufbau der Türkei", *Islam-Echo,* 22 April 1927, 6–7; A memorandum of the Syrian Delegation to the League of Nations: Emir Schekib Arslan/Ihsan El Djabry/Riad E Soulh: "Denkschrift der syrischen Delegation an den Völkerbund (Genf, 12.9.1927)", *Islamische Gegenwart*, November 1927, 7–14; the 1927 Treaty of Jeddah: "Der Wortlaut des Vertrages Hedschas-England", *Islamische Gegenwart*, November 1927, 15–17.

which, in the view of many Muslims in Berlin, manifested these prejudices as a result of the fragmentary selection of translated texts, distortion, or ignorance of linguistic subtleties.[65] Countering these translations with translations from the Muslim perspective was thus an important means of negating an ascribed passive position and challenging not only stereotypical images of 'cultures' but also the idea of a separation and hierarchization of these 'cultures'. Therefore, instead of painting a picture of an archaic religion, the translations made by Muslims in Berlin emphasized the lively, tolerant, and universal character of an Islam that is compatible with modernity. This objective was addressed in an exemplary fashion by Tschelebi in his preface to *Islamische Gegenwart*, which was written for not only the open "enemies of Islam" but also its romanticizing "friends":

> The task of this journal should be to remove the grossest and most objectionable of these errors [about Islam, author's note]. It draws the justification for correction, which may seem presumptuous, from the fact that it is written by Muslims themselves. […] It is directed not only against the apparently malevolent enemies of Islam, but also against those all too well-meaning and exceedingly numerous friends who confront its world with a sentimentality that does not do justice to its essence.[66]

Thus, each issue of *Islamische Gegenwart*, which otherwise hardly dealt with religious topics, was preceded by Qurʾan and hadith excerpts in German translation. These portray the cohesion, clear monotheism, and noble moral compass of the Muslims (Qurʾan 12, 92, 16:20–22, etc.). Among them is a hadith transmitted by Bukhari: "A parable of the mutual love and solidarity of the Muslim is the organism; when one of its limbs is sick, the other limbs suffer through fever and sleeplessness."[67] The body metaphor taken up here is one of those motifs used by both Arab nationalists and Islamic reformist activists,[68] and it makes clear the central role ascribed to Islam

65 It was above all the representatives of the Ahmadiyya in Berlin who criticized how Islam had been "put at a disadvantage by its European translators" [Author's translation from German]. Khan Durrani: "Fatalismus und Islam [Fatalism and Islam]", *Moslemische Revue*, April 1926, 59–79, here 61. See also Maulana Sadr-ud-Din: *Der Koran. Arabisch-Deutsch. Übersetzung, Einleitung und Erklärung* (Berlin: Verlag der Moslemischen Revue, 1964 [1939]), VIII; Khalid Banning: "Über den Koran" [About the Qurʾan], *Moslemische Revue*, April 1925, 5–11.

66 N.N.: "Zur Einführung [Introduction]", *Die Islamische Gegenwart*, November 1927, 2 [Author's translation from German].

67 "Hadith, Bukhari", *Islamische Gegenwart*, June 1929, 33. Free Translation of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Chapter 71/Nr. 6011 [Author's translation from German]. German version in the source: "Ein Gleichnis für die gegenseitige Liebe und Solidarität der Muslimin ist der Organismus; wenn eines seiner Glieder krank ist, leiden die übrigen Glieder durch Fieber und Schlaflosigkeit."

68 Gudrun Krämer: *Der Vordere Orient und Nordafrika ab 1500* (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 2016), 485.

in its political and resistance potential by Muslim anti-colonialists and nationalists. Tschelebi also made this clear in 1927 in a statement on the aims of the student organization *Islamia*, in which he lamented that the division of the Islamic world into colonies disturbed "the unhindered blood circulation of the body of Islam,"[69] echoing thereby contemporary biologistic notions of human collectives as 'pure bodies'.[70]

Despite Tschelebi's stated intention to make himself independent of non-Muslim European representations of Islam, the Qur'an translations he uses in his journals are for the most part, and always without being marked as such, taken from the non-Muslim German Friedrich Rückert's 1888 translation, in which he attempted to imitate the poetic style of the Qur'an with German rhyme schemes.[71]

A different picture emerges with the Qurʾan and hadith translations of the Ahmadiyya, for which the selection, translation, and provision of Islamic sources in various languages constituted a cornerstone of their international missionary program on a practical and symbolic level. Therefore, the Ahmadiyya missionaries devoted much energy to producing their own translations. For example, the first Berlin Ahmadiyya Imam, Sadr-ud-Din (1881–1981), was the first Muslim to write a German translation of the Qurʾan. In its preface he writes:

> I am sure that the German public will welcome a translation written by a Muslim. After all, such a translation can be based on a thorough, solid knowledge of the religion, whose benchmark is the holy Qurʾan, whereas similar efforts from non-Muslim pens often lack the understanding that can only arise from complete spiritual harmony with the subject matter.[72]

In the Ahmadiyya's explicitly apolitical mouthpiece *Moslemische Revue*, numerous translations from the Qurʾan and hadith reflect its reformist understanding of Islam and its program of religious-intellectual dialogue between 'East' and 'West'. In the first issue of *Moslemische Revue*, the editors declared its 'enlightening' purpose "to educate Germans about the teachings of Islam and about the moral and social culture that this faith has brought to humanity."[73] The Ahmadiyya sought to assert Islam's claim to universalism by being as adaptable as possible to the specific intellectual context. Therefore, the Ahmadiyya's Qurʾan and hadith translations accommodated the reading habits of its target group in terms of content and style. Particular elements of the legitimization of authority in the Islamic tradition, such

69 Tschelebi 1927, quoted by Höpp, "Moschee und Demonstration", 234.

70 The German translation used by Seif is also found in a letter addressed by him to Friedrich Ebert on 6 June 1921, NGH 07.12.014, 93.

71 *Der Koran*, translated by Friedrich Rückert (Frankfurt a.M.: Sauerländer, 1888).

72 Sadr-ud-Din, *Koran*, VII [Author's translation from German].

73 N.N.: "Der Zweck der Zeitschrift [The purpose of the journal]", *Moslemische Revue*, April 1924, 1–2, here 1 [Author's translation from German].

as chains of transmission (isnād) of hadiths, took a back seat to forms and terminologies perceived in modern Western discourses as expressions of intellectual authority and universal validity: Liberty, equality, and fraternity; but also tolerance, democracy, socialism, gender equality, the striving for knowledge, the compatibility of Islam and science, and moral and corporeal purity. These are the buzzwords that the community around the mosque at Fehrbelliner Platz used with the intention of gaining a foothold within Berlin's intellectual discourse. The quotations from the Qurʾan and hadith thus selected were listed as references in longer articles or collected in the familiar form of aphoristic "collections of sayings".

Passages from Qurʾan and hadith that could have been interpreted as contradicting the above-mentioned 'values of modernity' were not translated or were omitted. For example, Sadr-ud-Din translates from Sura 2:228 to prove the legal equality of men and women, without translating the specific context of divorce law and menstruation or the part of the verse in which men are given a higher rank than women. To demonstrate this, this translation will be shown next to the Arabic original and a German translation of the whole Sura published by the German orientalist Lazarus Goldschmidt (1871–1950) in 1916:

> Es gebührt den Frauen dasselbe Recht, wie von ihnen die gleichen Pflichten verlangt werden. Und sie haben in gleicher Weise Rechte gegen die Männer, wie letztere solche gegen jene (d.h. die Frauen) haben.[74]

> Und die Geschiedenen sollen drei Menstruationen warten, auch ist es ihnen nicht zu verschweigen erlaubt, was Gott in ihrem Leib erschaffen, wenn sie an Gott glauben und an den Jüngsten Tag. Für die Männer aber ist es geziemender, daß sie sie wieder nehmen, falls diese es wünschen, und mit ihnen umgehen, wie ihnen nach Recht obliegt. Der Männer Rang ist jedoch über ihnen. Und Gott ist allmächtig und allweise.[75]

74 Sadr-ud-Din: "Die Stellung der Frau im Islam [The Position of Woman in Islam]", *Moslemische Revue*, July 1924, 63–73, here 64. English translation by the author: "Women are entitled to the same rights as the same duties are demanded from them. And they have rights against men in the same way as the latter have rights against those (i.e. women)."

75 Lazarus Goldschmidt: *Der Koran* (Berlin: Brandussche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1916), 36. English translation by the author: "And the divorced shall wait three menstruations, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what God has created in their wombs, if they believe in God and in the Last Day. But it is more appropriate for men to take them again, if they wish, and to treat them as is rightly their duty. But the men's rank is above them. And God is all-powerful and all-wise."

وَٱلْمُطَلَّقَٰتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَٰثَةَ قُرُوٓءٍ ۚ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَن يَكْتُمْنَ
مَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ فِىٓ أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِن كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَّ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ ۚ
وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوٓا۟ إِصْلَٰحًا ۚ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ
ٱلَّذِى عَلَيْهِنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ[76]

While displaying the similarity of 'Islamic' and 'European values', it was at the same time important to demonstrate just enough difference from and criticism of Europe to show Islam as the only way to realize common ideals and to satisfy Western needs for 'Eastern wisdom'. Thus, the Ahmadiyya mission in Europe and Germany represents a notable example of how Muslim reformers challenged Christian European claims to superiority and prejudice against Islam with an ambivalent strategy between subversion and adaptation.

The case of the Ahmadiyya also highlights the diversity of actors involved in translation processes: Translations that emerged in the Berlin Ahmadiyya community were often the joint work of 'Muslim-born', foreign Muslims and German converts. These processes of collaborative translation were another expression of how the Ahmadiyya practiced its program of intellectual 'dialogue between East and West.'

Moreover, the translations reveal the close cooperation and similarity between the publication, translation, and missionary activities of the Ahmadiyya's two European centers, Woking (near London) and Berlin: Because there is a large overlap not only in the selection of contents from the Qurʾan and hadith that were made available to a European public, but also in the manner of translation. In part, the English and German translations are so similar that it can be assumed that the earlier English translations made in Woking served as direct models for the German versions. A good example is a longer, dialogical hadith, which has been handed down via Bukhari, among others, and the essence of which was rendered by the Woking mission's founder Kamal-ud-Din (1870–1932) in the English booklet "Some of the Sayings of Mohammad" and by the editors of the *Moslemische Revue* in a collection of hadiths as follows:

> Charity is a duty unto every Muslim. He who hath not means thereto, let him do a good act or abstain from an evil one; that is his charity.[77]

76 The Arabic version is based on the 1924 Cairo Koran edition, as in the digital edition by Michael Marx, in collaboration with Tobias J. Jocham et al. (Corpus Coranicum, https://corpuscoranicum.de/de (accessed 15 May 2022).

77 Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din: *Some of the Sayings of Mohammad* (Woking: The Islamic Review Office, ca. 1920), 21.

> Mildtätigkeit ist eine Pflicht für jeden Moslem. Wer keine Mittel dazu hat, soll eine gute Tat vollbringen oder einer schlechten aus dem Wege gehen; das ist seine Wohltätigkeit.[78]

Such parallels demonstrate not only pragmatism and the close cooperation between the two European mission centers. They also suggest a unifying view of Europe as an interlocutor and mission destination with similar cultural and intellectual legacies, and thus similar requirements for missionary work. This becomes all the more clear as the invisible chain of translations and their copies reaches even further and beyond the Ahmadiyya network. For the above-mentioned English hadith translation is found, like many others, verbatim in an English hadith collection already published by Abdullah al-Mamun Al-Suhrawardy (1870–1935) in India in 1905.[79] This in turn had served Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) as a model for his short brochure of "Sayings of Muhammad" translated into Russian in 1910, in which he expressed his deep admiration for the universal spirituality and wisdom of this tradition.[80] The Christian Palestinian publicist Salim Qubʿain (1870–1951) then adapted Tolstoy's collection and 'translated it back' into Arabic in Cairo in 1915, recovering and compiling the Arabic originals, and thus "forging a hybrid authority that simultaneously draws on both the authority of the Islamic religious tradition as well as the most prominent of his European intellectual contemporaries."[81] The pan-Arabist Qubʿain went even further, seeing in Tolstoy's admiration for the hadith tradition evidence of the potential for "building an Arab identity able to reach beyond sectarian divisions to unite Arabs of different religious backgrounds within a single community."[82]

The Qurʾan and hadith translations in the Berlin Muslim journals, and specifically in the *Moslemische Revue*, were thus only one link in a chain of translations that unfolded between India, Russia, Egypt, London, and Berlin, providing legitimacy to pan-Islamic, pan-Arab, anti-colonial, universalist-spiritual arguments. While similar translation strategies in these chains testify of a strategy to frame and address 'Europe' as a civilizational entity with a similar history and culture, but also a common imperial debt, in other contexts – often also for missionary purposes or to prove the superiority of Islam – it was emphasized that Europe was divided as a civilization and politically and in need of the unifying power of Islam to overcome

78 N.N.: "Sprüche des Propheten", *Moslemische Revue*, January 1927, 48.

79 Abdullah al-Mamun al-Suhrawardy: *The Sayings of Muhammed. With Foreword by Mahatma Gandhi* (London: Archibald Constable and Co, 1905), 58.

80 Lev N. Tolstoy: *Izrečenija Magometa, ne vošedšie v Koran* [Sayings of Muhammad which were not included into the Qurʾan] (Moscow: Posrednik, 1910).

81 Spencer Scoville: "Translating Orientalism into the Arabic Nahda", in: *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 38 (2018), 11–36, here 26.

82 Ibid., 28.

its crisis.[83] The Ahmadiyya's translation practices are thus also exemplary of a more widespread ambivalent addressing of Europe as either 'divided' or 'united' according to the argumentative strategy currently being pursued.

Resonances in the non-Muslim Environment: Between Fascination, Support, Rejection, and Securitization

Inquiring into translators' agendas also throws up the question of how well they succeeded in reaching their target groups and making their voices heard. The exchanges that we know took place between Muslim journals in Berlin and Europe – advertisements, readers' letters, copied articles, etc. – suggest that the journals, including their translations, fulfilled the role of enabling internal discourse among Muslims in Europe. In addition to this 'internal' target group, the examples mentioned so far also reveal clearly that the Berlin journals did not fail in their aim of finding resonance in the non-Muslim environment as well: Be it in the local press, which showed a sometimes benevolent, sometimes exoticizing, and sometimes hostile interest in the activities of Muslims in Germany; be it in the reception by contemporary scholars of Islam, such as Kampffmeyer, who supported their activism and redistributed some of their writings; or by people who decided to convert, partly because of the access to the Islamic tradition created by the journals and their translations.[84] The attempt to convey a picture of 'Islam as seen by Muslims' and to fight negative stereotypes was appreciated by some non-converts as well. For example, in a review of the *Moslemische Revue* for the protestant journal *Neues Sächsisches Kirchenblatt*, the reviewer Hermann Meltzer, a teacher from Zwickau, not only analyzed their translations from the Qurʾan, but also came to the conclusion that it would be good "not to judge it [Islam] according to preconceived and handed down opinions, but rather to let the Muhammadans tell us how they perceive their religion."[85] By contrast, conservatives such as Hans Mulzer, chairperson of the *Bund der Asienkämpfer*, an association of veterans of the so called 'Asia-corps' in the German army, described the "Islam pro-

83 This approach is also very prominently expressed in Jabbar and Sattar Kheiri's two-issue journal *Islam. Ein Wegweiser zur Rettung und zum Wiederaufbau*. [Islam. A Guide to Rescue and Recovery] (1922–1923).

84 This is described, for instance, in the conversion narratives of Hans Lohbauer: "Die Wahrheit [The Truth]", *Moslemische Revue*, January 1926, 34–38; and Mohammed Assad (Leopold) Weiss: "Mein Weg zum Islam [My Way to Islam]", *Islam-Echo*, 10 June 1926, 5–8.

85 Hermann Meltzer: "Eine deutsche muhammedanische Zeitschrift [A German Muhammadan Journal]", in: *Neues Sächsisches Kirchenblatt* 14 (1931), 211–218. [Author's translation from German].

paganda" of the Ahmadiyya and other Muslims in Berlin as "insolent".[86] Although reactions like those of Meltzer and Mulzer were limited to a relatively small part of the German population, they represent the ongoing polarity between 'dialogue' and 'rejection', 'fascination' and 'fear' in the discourse of 'Islam in Europe/Germany' which was precisely the situation that many Muslim translators were trying to address.

In addition, the journals and the people behind them, especially those with a decidedly political agenda, also attracted the attention of the German and European security authorities. These translated the journals into their language of security and categories of potential threat or usefulness: The former above all when it came to the potential for rebellion – both at the domestic level, and especially in the colonies; the latter when it came to building alliances that could be of use to foreign policy – especially for Germany. For this purpose, a number of articles and even full issues were translated and summarized, often by scholars who were asked to assess the political profile of the journal. For example, the orientalist Sebastian Beck (1878–1951) translated almost an entire edition of the multilingual *El-Islah*, published by the Indian pan-Islamist Muhammad Barakatullah (1859–1927), for the German Foreign Office.[87] In addition to anti-colonial and anti-Entente attitudes, the journals' so-called "Bolshevik aspirations"[88] were also monitored closely. Passages pointing to such aspirations were often singled out for translation and assessment, especially in the case of *Azadi-yi sharq*, which was classified by the Foreign Office as "stridently Mohammedan nationalist" and generally received the greatest attention from German and international security authorities.[89]

However, as long as the editors did not turn critical of Germany and were not suspected of carrying out "propaganda" for the Entente,[90] the German security

86 Mulzer in: *Mitteilungen des Bundes der Asienkämpfer* 4 (1925), 43, as quoted by Höpp, *Periodika*, 35 [Author's translation from German].

87 Sebastian Beck: "Bericht über die Zeitschrift 'el-Iṣlāḥ', 2. Jahrg. Nr. 7 vom März 1927 [Report on the journal 'el-Iṣlāḥ', 2nd Vol., No. 7 of March 1927]", 12 April 1927, NGH 07.12.025.

88 Schreiben an den Staatskommissar für öffentliche Ordnung [Letter to the State Commissioner for Public Order] Berlin, 22 November 1921, NGH 07.12.014, 141.

89 German Foreign Office cited in Höpp, *Periodika*, 29. Regulating the relationship of Muslims to communism and Russia required Western and Central European governments to perform a balancing act: In England and France, hopes were pinned on preventing communist sympathies among Muslim workers by promoting a sense of Islamic belonging. German authorities, in turn, observed such sympathies in Muslim journals with concern, but tolerated them, partly because they were interested in improved relations with Soviet Russia and especially in reaping the economic benefits (See Jonker, *On the Margins*, 26–27; Nathalie Clayer/Eric Germain: "Part III. From State Control to Foreign Policy. Introduction", in: Nathalie Clayer/Eric Germain (eds.): *Islam in Inter-War Europe* (London: Hurst, 2008), 216–228, here 220–228).

90 For example, one issue of *al-Hamama* was confiscated and the journal briefly banned after Kampffmeyer expressed suspicions to the Foreign Office that it was carrying out French propaganda (See Höpp, *Periodika*, 23).

authorities did not intervene on their own initiative, thereby using the support and freedom they granted Muslim anticolonial activists on German territory as a source of soft power abroad. In contrast, the British, French, Spanish, and Italian embassies in Berlin demanded intervention from the German authorities, which probably led, in the case of the *Azadi-yi sharq*, to warnings and ultimately, in 1926, to the adoption by the journal of a primarily economic focus.[91] In addition, European states criticized in the journals used their power to impose export and publication bans in the territories they controlled: *Azadi-yi sharq* was thus not allowed to be published in India, Iran, France, or Italy.[92] A ban was imposed on the export of *El-Islah* to India.[93] *Islam-Echo* also addressed press censorship and its own ban in Syria. [94]

Among other things, the security authorities' classifications of the Berlin Muslims' journals testify to us today that these journals did not operate and circulate in a secluded space, but were received by non-Muslims who adapted them to their own conceptual systems. Today, we can most readily speculate about the dissemination and reception of these journals outside of Germany using traces of official attempts to regulate them. The translations undertaken by the security authorities also served the function of observation and regulation, thereby reflecting the (imperial) power hierarchies and political conditions that created the framework within which the Muslim translators acted.

Conclusion

In Berlin, on the continent of the colonial powers, a surprisingly large number of Muslims found a place where they enjoyed unusual freedom to develop their anticolonial and reformist ideas and to shape the discourse on the relationship between 'Islam' and 'Europe'. Today, the journalistic traces of Muslim life in Weimar Berlin give us an impression of that discourse as a very polyphonic and interconnected one about how Islam was to be understood and lived in the modern, globalized world formed by imperialism. Muslims who shaped this discourse in Europe, for and in collaboration with a European non-Muslim audience, faced a particular challenge in responding to European epistemic logics, prejudices, and narratives of superiority. They had not only to defend themselves against this, but, at the same time,

91 Ibid., 18–20, 38–39.

92 Ibid., 28–29.

93 A "Note in the [British] Intelligence Bureau" (dated 20 October 1926) on this, with translations or summaries of articles from the journal, can be found in NGH 07.12.024.

94 N.N.: "Das 'Islam-Echo' in Syrien verboten! [The 'Islam-Echo' banned in Syria!]", *Islam-Echo*, 5 June 1927, 1–2.

to meet the standards set by 'the West' for the legitimation of worldviews and for their political demands. Translation in this context entailed a difficult balancing act of engaging with the logics and categories of a hierarchized discourse in order to simultaneously question and overcome them. Europe was to be addressed as a reference point and partner for a critical dialogue, but was not to be accepted as the central reference point. A binary understanding of these discourses as conformist or resistant does not do justice to this dynamic.

The ambivalence with which Muslims related to 'Europe' is reflected in the ambivalence with which their European environment reacted to their claim to self-representation: These reactions varied between rejection and fascination, between seeing the presence and intervention of Muslims as a threat or as enrichment. Both reactions were rooted in orientalist fantasies, which some were willing to question.

Translations were a central part and means of this discourse, even if they were mostly undertaken without being highlighted as such because they were seen as a natural part of the process. They always had both pragmatic and ideological implications. Thus, they not only testify to a well-functioning network between the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, and beyond, and to the political agendas of their contributors and editors, but also reflect the ambivalence described above by serving or challenging epistemological and linguistic habits. Whether in the 'internal' multilingualism of some journals, in the editorial translation processes of international journalistic networks, or in making texts of the 'Islamic tradition' available to a German audience, translations were always accompanied by processes of selection and omission in conscious or unconscious alignment with the translator's agenda, legitimation strategies, and the assumed expectations of the target audience. For anticolonialists, translation was a means of fostering independent reporting from colonialized territories and countering press censorship or the views of Western press agencies.

The program of Muslim self-representation, often presented with a demonstrative unity, should not obscure the fact that translations were also part of the Muslim contest over the authority to interpret Islam in the 'modern world' and to represent the Islamic world vis-à-vis Christian Europe.

Further exploration of this body of journals will not only allow us to gain a deeper understanding of the networks and polyphonic discourses to which they bear witness. The journals and the translation phenomena within them show us how these ongoing discourses can repeat themselves, but also how perspectives may be broadened, epistemic conventions may be challenged, and new questions asked.