ments for English rights as against France and Spain also used to justify English rights as against Indian tribes? How much English theorizing about colonization was successfully transplanted to North America, and how much had to be modified in response to conditions on the ground? To raise questions like these is not to criticize MacMillan but to praise him, for writing a book that will surely prompt others to pick up where he has left off.

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Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds,* New York: Hill and Wang, 2006. Pp. 435. $30.00 (ISBN 0-8090-9434-7).

Most readers acquainted with al-Hasan al-Wazzan (b. *circa* 1486–88), the polymath author of the *Libro de la Cosmographia et Geographia de Affrica* whose family was exiled from Granada to Fez in 1492, will know him through Amin Maalouf's novel *León l'Africain* (1986). Responding to factional strife in Beirut and his exile in France, Maalouf constructed his protagonist as an idealized cosmopolitan paradigm. The ghost of Maalouf's "Leo Africanus" is a persistent, if almost invisible, presence in Natalie Zemon Davis's more nuanced study, which addresses contemporary historiographical concerns with border-crossing also exemplified by Mercedes García-Arenal's and Gerard Wiegers's *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe* (2003). Her book is located at, and just beyond, the boundaries of empiricism, without venturing into fictional territory. But the relevance of al-Hasan's "writing across borders"(and especially of his *Geographia,* written in Italy after his capture by Spanish pirates in 1518) for continuing religious-cultural conflicts in the Mediterranean and Middle East resurfaces: when Davis writes that "for the myriad educated readers it reached over the centuries, [the *Geographia*] bore witness to the possibility of communication and curiosity in a world divided by violence" (260), she steps, more delicately, into the same ideological currents as Maalouf.

Davis's reconstruction of the life and cultural contexts of al-Hasan, or Yuhanna al-Asad, Yuhanna the Lion, to use the name he adopted after his conversion and baptism by Pope Leo X in 1520, is a magisterial study of fragmentary sources and, rather frequently, silence. Meticulous archival work—at the Escorial, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, and in Florence, Modena, Milan and elsewhere—is matched by exceptional methodological imagination. A full evocation of his life in the Maghreb calls for a resourceful narrative strategy: "We may imagine . . . ," Davis repeats, rhythmically, four consecutive times in a single paragraph (38–39). Strikingly, his nine years in Italy went largely "unrecorded by those who saw him, his presence unmemorialized by those whom he served or knew" (4). Asking what kind of person might invite such silence, Davis envisions a "trickster," flitting between Europe and Africa, Christianity and Islam, resembling the bird in a tale that al-Hasan concocts, living

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0738248000004375 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in the air until the king of the birds demands taxes, in the sea until the king of the fish requires them. Her protagonist is an amphibious, ambivalent creature.

One of the few things that grounds al-Hasan al-Wazzan appears to be his legal training. At the *madrasa* in Fez, *fiqh* (Sunni law and jurisprudence), as interpreted by the Malikite school, had been at the heart of the curriculum. One of the city's two great scholars was the jurist al-Wansharisi, then amassing a compilation of the decisions of the jurists of al-Andalus and the Maghreb. Such men played an important function in Fez, where the ruling Wattasid sultans sought legitimation from Malikite jurists, rather than calling upon any exceptional spiritual authority. In seeking guidance on Muslim worship and ethical conduct, al-Hasan al-Wazzan himself would always gravitate more toward the law than to internal, mystical devotion. In the course of his epic travels across northern Africa in the service of the sultan, and particularly during his journey of 1512–13, he had occasion to serve at least twice as ad hoc *qadi* (judge), not always earning the remuneration for which he might have wished: "after nine days sleeping on the bare ground, he was rewarded with onions, chickens, and an old goat" (52). Equally, in Rome, he discussed the comparison between shari'a and canon law with his catechizers, and Davis speculates that an attraction to the reconciled body of canon law may have proven one of the factors that drew Yuhanna al-Asad toward Europe, helping to explain why he did not choose to return to North Africa until after the city was sacked in 1527. The experience of exile may in turn have catalyzed a certain shift beyond a strictly Malikite position, whereby in the *Geographia* he conveyed "a somewhat prettified picture of the relations between the four legal schools" interpreting Sunni law (161).

How far, then, did al-Hasan transcend traditional identities? For his Christian captors, as Davis makes clear, he was essentially an instrument of Christian crusade against the "Turk." His three godfathers saw prophetic signs pointing toward a world in which Jews, Muslims, and the Indians of the New World alike would be united under the Pope. Nor should we overestimate al-Hasan's integration into Renaissance society; he remained on the margins of elite humanist circles. From his own perspective, conversion and assimilation may to some degree have been tactical necessities, the author suggests, and the process of border-crossing implied what she refers to—with no apparent irony—as a difficult "unmooring" (228). Nonetheless, in the dual cultural and linguistic roots of his written works, the neutrality with which he narrates warfare between Muslim and Christian, the balance with which he assesses the virtues and vices of 'Africa' (a European term), and his close connection with Jewish intellectuals, Davis perceives vestiges, at least, of Maalouf's cosmopolitan icon. Disabusing Europeans of their outlandish fantasies, al-Hasan united many African worlds through his own imagination and writing, and—she suggests in her epilogue—developed closer affinities with Rabelais than with his Maghrebi contemporaries, among whom, in the 1530s, he falls into the most absolute silence.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0738248000004375 Published online by Cambridge University Press