

The Hajj and Europe in the Age of Empire

Edited by

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Heinrich Freiherr von Maltzan's "My Pilgrimage to Mecca": A Critical Investigation*

Ulrike Freitag

Introduction

This chapter is a first probe into the Hajj-report by Heinrich Freiherr von Maltzan, published as 'My Pilgrimage to Mecca' (in German: *Meine Wallfahrt nach Mekka*) by Dyk'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig in 1865.¹ It is an initial reading of this intriguing travelogue, questioning its authenticity.

In the two volumes of the *Pilgrimage*, the author gives a most graphic account of his voyage to and adventures in Mecca. While some of the descriptions struck me as either exaggerated or inspired by Orientalist phantasies, I had little reason to doubt the overall veracity of von Maltzan's account. After all, a significant number of other European travellers had made their way to Mecca and had written about it by the time von Maltzan published his account. Probably because of the fact that non-Muslims were prohibited from visiting Mecca, it became a kind of particularly prized destination in the nineteenth century, so much so that the Meccan Shāfi'ī mufti and historian, Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān, reflected two and a half decades later on how to convince Europeans not to visit this particular city.² In addition, von Maltzan had, by the time he published the *Pilgrimage*, already established himself as an accomplished travel writer who

* I gladly acknowledge the support for this research of Ambassador Paul Freiherr von Maltzahn who lent me the diaries of Heinrich von Maltzan, of the late Wolfgang Dannemann in deciphering parts of the often hardly legible manuscript, of Christian Kübler for researching and providing me with copies of von Maltzan's other writings and of Constanze Fertig in bringing this chapter into its final shape.

- 1 In the following, I will use the reprint of the 1865 edition published by Georg Olms: Heinrich von Maltzan, "Meine Wallfahrt nach Mekka" (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004).
- 2 For (incomplete) overviews, see Arthur Jeffery, "Christians at Mecca," *The Muslim World* 19 (1929): 221–232; Aḥmad Muḥammad Maḥmūd, *al-Riḥlāt al-muḥarrama ilā Makka al-mukarrama wa-l-Madīna al-munawwara* (Jeddah, 1430/2008–2009) [Jamharat al-riḥlāt 3]; von Maltzan himself also supplies a list indicating the travels he knew of, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 4–6; Aḥmad Zaynī al-Daḥlān, *Khulāṣat al-kalām fi 'umarā' al-balad al-ḥarām* (Cairo: 1888),

had authored three volumes on North Africa. He went on to publish articles and books on the Arabian Peninsula and the Mahrī dialect as well as edited and commented critically on the travelogue of von Wrede. In addition, he was a prolific contributor to leading German geographical journals and newspapers, such as *Das Ausland* and *Geographische Mittheilungen*.

Personally, I was most interested in von Maltzan's description of Jeddah.³ When a descendant of his informed me about the existence of the author's diaries, my main initial impulse was to compare the diary entries with the published account in order to glean more direct information on his immediate impressions. This turned out to be slightly complicated, given the state of the diaries. They consist of four volumes, covering the years 1850–1851 (vol. I), 1852–1862 (vol. II), 1866–1869 (vol. III) and 1869–1871 (vol. IV). The size is between 16×23 and 17×21 centimeters, the writing mostly in *Kurrentschrift* (Gothic letters), in part faded, and with pages missing.

The Textual Evidence

In his preface to *Meine Wallfahrt nach Mekka*, dated November 14, 1864, von Maltzan explains that his journey, supposedly started in April 1860 by taking a boat from Malta to Alexandria, was only published after he learned of the death of an Algerian named 'Abd al-Raḥmān. This person, he states, had lent him his persona, and our author felt obliged to treat his voyage discreetly so as not to endanger 'Abd al-Raḥmān's life.⁴ If we believe von Maltzan, he was inspired to travel to Mecca by an encounter with Richard Francis Burton in Cairo in December 1853. Von Maltzan seems to have indeed been in Egypt at this time, according to his diary, although there is no recognisable entry for a meeting with Burton, who also spent the time from October 1853 to mid-January 1854 in that city.⁵

Von Maltzan's diary points to years of peripatetic wanderings with visits to most countries around the Mediterranean, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. According to his published book, he decided in spring 1860, after returning from Morocco and having spent several years in the North West of Africa, to

323. This concern is also reflected in the Ottoman archives, BOA, Y.PRK.TKM 45/16, 18 C 1307 (1889–1890) and Y.PRK.UM 64/7 11 B 1302.

3 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 224–323.

4 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, IV–V..

5 von Maltzan, *Diary*, vol. 2, 97–100; for Burton, see Mary S. Lovell, *A Rage to Live: A biography of Richard and Isabel Burton* (London: Little & Brown, 1998), 141–146.

undertake the journey to the Ḥijāz.⁶ According to the second volume of the diary, covering the years 1852–1862, it seems that von Maltzan did indeed spend several months in North Africa in 1852 and 53. However, a return to Morocco cannot be found after that date, and while he visited the Turkish and Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire in 1853–1854, he does not seem to have returned to North Africa (except for Egypt) until after the date of the purported journey. Of course, the diaries do not provide a full coverage of all days or months and are not fully legible, but at least so far, this part of the story seems questionable. Furthermore, the next recorded journey to Algiers, where von Maltzan allegedly bought his “Moorish” outfit and, more importantly, met the *hashish*-addicted ‘Abd al-Raḥmān who lent him his passport, was in October 1861, not spring 1860.⁷

These differences in chronology might of course have been the result of lapses of memory by the time von Maltzan was writing the book, and there might have been events that the diary did not record. However, the story of how von Maltzan convinced ‘Abd al-Raḥmān to obtain a pilgrimage passport for himself, which he then passed on to von Maltzan in return for the payment of sustenance and the expenses of a stay in Tunis (lest the scam might be detected) already sounds fairly fantastic. In particular, the differences in physical features between the Algerian and his German impersonator, on which von Maltzan himself dwells at some length, are truly remarkable.⁸

According to von Maltzan’s account, the sequence of events following the visit to Algiers was roughly as follows: von Maltzan travelled to Malta, assumed the personality of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and on 12 April 1860 boarded a steamer to Alexandria. He then continued his journey by train to Cairo, where he acquired a slave and, on April 23, boarded a boat to the province of Qīna in Upper Egypt.⁹ From there he crossed the desert to Quṣayr, then took a boat to Yanbu’ and continued by boat to Jeddah. All of these undertakings he describes with much love for detail, including the accompanying folklore, historical explanations and many other comments on all aspects of the voyage.¹⁰

In contrast, the diary tells us that our author spent the first month of 1860 in Vevey on Lake Geneva, then moved to neighbouring Vevytau and from there on 23 May 1860 to Luzern. There he stayed for some time, quite exactly when,

6 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 7 f.

7 von Maltzan, *Diary*, vol. 2, 254.

8 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 13–17.

9 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 17–30.

10 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 31–216.

according to the travelogue, he claims to have crossed the Red Sea.¹¹ And while spending time in Jeddah and Mecca according to the travelogue, von Maltzan's diary tells us that he climbed Swiss mountains before leaving for Nice on October 18, 1860. As a matter of fact, von Maltzan's next journey to the region, more precisely to Algiers, where he spent the time from mid-October 1861 to June 1862, took place over a year later.¹²

In publications, von Maltzan insists on the date of 1860 for his pilgrimage. Thus, two articles in *Allgemeine Zeitung* of 1865 consist basically of a précis of his travelogue. It is not entirely clear whether he himself was the author or whether this was a report by some journalist drawing his readers' attention to the newly published book.¹³ Similarly, the article in *Das Ausland* of 1865 was largely based on von Maltzan's own account as published in *Meine Wallfahrt*.¹⁴ There exists at least one other text, however, where von Maltzan himself reiterates the date: In his *Reise nach Südarabien*, published in 1873 and reporting a journey of 1870–1871 that led him to Aden, he compares Jeddah at the time of his visit in November and early December of 1870 to the state of the city "as it was ten years ago," i.e. in 1860.¹⁵ This second journey to Jeddah and Aden is, incidentally, confirmed by the last volume of the diary, in which he notes his arrival in Jeddah as November 20 and his departure as December 1, mentioning the start of Ramaḍān in November 1870, which is confirmed by the calendar.¹⁶ There also exist many notebook entries on people he met and information he gathered during this time, which confirm the authenticity of this later journey.¹⁷

11 von Maltzan, *Diary*, vol. 2, 229–233 cover the year 1860.

12 von Maltzan, *Diary*, vol. 2. Unfortunately, the diary is not paginated and a continuation of counting is impossible due to pages (possibly accounting for von Maltzan's finances) which have been cut out.

13 *Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 202–203 ("Beilage"), July 21, 1865, July 7, 1865.

14 *Das Ausland*. Überschau der neuesten Forschungen auf dem Gebiete der Natur-, Erd- und Völkerkunde, 38(35), September 2, 1865.

15 Heinrich von Maltzan, *Reise nach Südarabien und Geographische Forschungen im und über den südwestlichsten Theil Arabiens* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004; reprint of 1873 ed.), 46.

16 von Maltzan, *Diary*, vol. 4, 181–186.

17 Notebooks by von Maltzan, currently in the custody of Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin.

Von Maltzan as an Orientalist Travel-Writer and Researcher

One could, of course, dismiss the pilgrimage at this point with the argument that, according to his own diary, von Maltzan certainly did not travel to the Hijāz at the dates he indicates. However, given that he supposedly intended to protect his Algerian *alter ego*, one needs at least to ask whether he might have travelled at some other date, possibly between mid-1862 and late 1864. For this period, no diaries exist. This could reflect special caution shown by a traveller who was well aware of the danger that such a journey posed for non-Muslims, lest their identity be discovered. After all, von Maltzan is the author of a number of publications which found a positive echo in his own time, as well as the contributor to serious geographical publications. Thus, he cannot be dismissed as a kind of Karl May in the genre of non-fiction.¹⁸ So who was our author, and is there other evidence pointing to the likelihood of him truly having performed the Hajj?

Heinrich Freiherr von Maltzan was born in 1826 in Dresden, spent part of his childhood in Britain, part with his rather eccentric father in Germany. He then studied law, possibly also archeology and Oriental languages in Munich, Heidelberg, and Erlangen from 1846–1852.¹⁹ The death of his father provided him with considerable financial means which relieved him of the necessity to follow a gainful pursuit.²⁰ In 1852, he began to travel and is credited with authoring “attractive reports” about his exploits.²¹ The only one of these which cannot be linked to verifiable experiences—irrespective of the question to what extent these were embellished with Orientalist imaginings and information gleaned elsewhere—is indeed the *Pilgrimage*. Interestingly, it is praised by a late nineteenth-century biographer as a particularly interesting and learned work, whereas the Arabist Johann Fück (1894–1974), writing in the mid-1950s,

18 Karl May (1842–1912) was a successful German author of novels set mostly in the US and the Orient.

19 On his study of Oriental languages, see Friedrich Ratzel, “Maltzan, Heinrich Karl Eckard Helmuth von,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 20 (1884): 153–154. <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118932160.html?anchor=adb>; on archeology, see Maltza(h)nscher Familienverein, *Die Maltza(h)n 1194–1945. Der Lebensweg einer ostdeutschen Adelsfamilie* (Köln: 1979), 260.

20 Friedrich Embacher, *Lexikon der Reisen und Entdeckungen* (Amsterdam: Meridian, 1961, reprint of 1882 ed.), 198; according to *Die Maltza(h)n 1194–1945. Der Lebensweg einer ostdeutschen Adelsfamilie* (Köln 1979), 60, the wealth came from his mother’s side.

21 Franz Brümmer, *Lexikon der deutschen Dichter und Prosaisten vom Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart*, 6th ed., vol. 4, 354.

bases his rather unenthusiastic comment on Snouck Hurgronje's observation that von Maltzan's travelogue contained no new information but numerous imprecisions and "demonstrable lies."²² However, neither of them voiced any doubts regarding the historicity of the voyage itself.

The only one who does so to the best of my knowledge is a certain Muthanna al-Kurtass, a Saudi author (and German-trained former ship captain).²³ In his *Mecca and the Baron, Faith and Me*, he recounts how he read the book and took it to be comedy. When reading the foreword, he "was astonished to learn that it was not intended as humor."²⁴ Driven by an impulse to correct the wrong image of Muslims and Arabs widespread in Europe, the author strives to correct the views projected by von Maltzan, whom al-Kurtass takes to be "one of the greatest scholars on Islam in the nineteenth century."²⁵ While he does talk about von Maltzan's "alleged journey,"²⁶ al-Kurtass' book mostly resembles the yarn spun by sailors and thus does not attempt any systematic discussion of von Maltzan's journey.

A detailed analysis of von Maltzan's other travel reports and a comparison with his diaries would be beyond the scope of this article and constitutes a research project in its own right. However, and regardless of their accuracy or otherwise, the other journeys are all based on some first-hand experience of his. Thus, his *Reise nach Südarabien* contains detailed material about the trade of Jeddah, which he claims to have gleaned from a report of an Austrian named Rolph to the Austrian Ministry of Trade.²⁷ While I have not been able to locate this report yet, a closer look at the Austrian archives might reveal both its existence as well as tell us more about Rolph. Since von Maltzan mentions Rolph's connections to the customs officials of Jeddah as well as his knowledge of trade, he might have been connected to the Austrian Lloyd whose boats were regularly serving the port of Jeddah at the time.²⁸

22 Ratzel, "Maltzan"; Christian Snouck Hurgronje, "Über eine Reise nach Mekka," *Verspreide Geschriften*, vol. 3: *Geschriften betreffende Arabie en Turkije* (Bonn etc.: 1923), 48–63, here 48, fn. 1; Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz 1955), 197, note 501.

23 Muthanna al-Kurnass, *Mecca and the Baron, Faith and Me* (Milton Keynes: AuthorHouse, 2010), e-book edition, chapter 2, with a brief biographical account. He is also the author of *Sabir the Egyptian* (Milton Keynes: AuthorHouse, 2010), e-book edition.

24 Al-Kurnass, *Mecca and the Baron*, ch. 1.

25 Al-Kurnass, *Mecca and the Baron*, ch. 1. Al-Kurtass presumably quotes here from the foreword of an edition which I have not seen.

26 Al-Kurnass, *Mecca and the Baron*, ch. 17.

27 von Maltzan, *Reise nach Südarabien*, 80–87.

28 von Maltzan, *Reise nach Südarabien*, 44.

The fact that the French consul was asked to and accepted to act on behalf of Lloyd in October 1870 and January 1871, respectively (i.e. before and after von Maltzan's visit) might indicate that Lloyd usually had its own representatives.²⁹

At any rate, von Maltzan correctly names the governor (qā'im maqām) of Jeddah as Nūrī Pāshā. He comments on the major improvements in the city after the activities of the International Sanitary Commission.³⁰ Indeed, Nūrī Pāshā is praised in the consular archives for his works to improve sanitary conditions.³¹ More curious is von Maltzan's rather drastic comparison of the presently rather pleasant city with "the dirty, revolting pandemonium" of ten years earlier. This is not necessarily the impression one gets from reading his extensive description of the city in the *Wallfahrt*.³²

Von Maltzan also mentions that during his visit, an Armenian acted as British consul. This was probably a certain Sourian mentioned in the British consular documents.³³ In other words, this second Arabian journey seems to be authentic, even if not all details might be based on von Maltzan's own experiences and observations.

Similarly, von Maltzan's *Drei Jahre im Nordwesten von Afrika*³⁴ is based on his travels to and in Northwest Africa which can be confirmed in the diaries. He himself acknowledges that it was a series of individual journeys, rather than a solid stay of three years, which forms the basis of the information presented in the volumes. Thus, regardless of the information given therein, the volumes fall into the traditional category of geographical travel narratives. The second edition constitutes an update, following not only the popular demand for a

29 Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (MAE), Centre d'Archives de Nantes (CADN), Documents du Consulat Djeddah, Correspondence Générale, 2_MI_3228, Dubreuil (vice-consul) to MAE, Direction des Consulats, Constantinople, October 22, 1870, January 14 and June 2, 1871.

30 von Maltzan, *Reise nach Südarabien*, 46f.

31 MAE, CADN, Documents du Consulat Djeddah, Correspondence Générale, 2_MI_3228, Dubreuil (vice-consul) to MAE, Direction des Consulats, Constantinople, March 6, 1869.

32 von Maltzan, *Reise nach Südarabien*, 46.

33 von Maltzan, *Reise nach Südarabien*, 52f., and also his description of improvements tallies with French consular reports, c.f. MAE, CADN, 2_MI_3228, Dubreuil to MAE, November 23, 1869 and *passim*; Public Record Office, Foreign Office 195, where P. Sourian is mentioned as Acting Consul from January 1870.

34 von Maltzan, *Drei Jahre im Nordwesten von Afrika* (Leipzig: Dürr, 1863; 2nd ed. Leipzig: 1868), Introduction, p. III (verified in 1st ed.).

map but also taking into consideration the need for updated information in the absence of traditional guidebooks such as "*Baedeker*."³⁵

In addition to his travel writing, von Maltzan published poetry and literary prose on some of his journeys.³⁶ After 1865, we also find journalistic contributions by him about his journeys. His diaries contain hints at financial problems as well as an at times seemingly hypochondriac concern with his health.³⁷ At any rate, he seems to have suffered some serious physical or psychological problems, because, in 1874, he committed suicide in Pisa.

Clues Given by the Author?

Von Maltzan on Invented Travel Reports

The state of the diaries and their gaps do not allow a firm exclusion of a journey to Mecca at some time other than the one mentioned by him. Furthermore, attempts to find correspondence with his publisher about this book have been unsuccessful. Hence, a close reading of the text remains at present the only route towards ascertaining or falsifying the suspicion of an invented travelogue.³⁸ As a matter of fact, the author himself, in his 1873 edition of Adolph von Wrede's *Journey in Hadhramaut*, gives us an interesting account of why von Wrede's account was unlikely to have been invented.³⁹ Apart from an inscription which von Wrede had brought back, and a likely corroboration of his presence by other travellers, von Maltzan points to the geographically detailed nature of the descriptions. He grants that travel accounts can be wholly fabricated, adding that such texts tend to dwell on "wide-ranging, often novel-like accounts of detail." Let me quote him in some detail: They "thus achieve the end of producing a thick volume without compromising themselves, i.e. without giving geographical data the falsity of which might be proven all too early by the discovery of a true traveler."⁴⁰

Certainly, von Maltzan himself did not risk too much in his own descriptions, given in particular the detailed nature notably of Burckhardt's account which he could use as a sound basis. Interestingly, he criticises his predecessor harshly

35 Maltzan, *Drei Jahre*, IV.

36 Heinrich von Maltzan, *Pilgermuscheln. Gedichte eines Touristen* (Leipzig: Dürr, 1863); and Heinrich von Maltzan, *Das Grab der Christin* (Leipzig: Dürr, 1865).

37 von Maltzan, *Diary*, vol. 2.

38 I would like to thank Constanze Fertig for suggesting this and contacting Deutsche Nationalbibliothek with this enquiry.

39 Heinrich von Maltzan and Adolph von Wrede, *Adolph von Wrede's Reise in Hadhramaut, Beled Bery 'Issà und Beled al Hadschar* (Braunschweig: F. Vieweg und Sohn, 1873), 1–9.

40 von Maltzan and von Wrede, *Adolph von Wrede's Reise*, 5f.

(“God knows where he picked up this nonsense”) and claims superior knowledge, not least from Oriental writings, for example when it comes to the history of the Ka’ba.⁴¹ It is quite difficult to closely compare von Maltzan’s narrative with that of earlier travellers such as Carsten Niebuhr, Johann Burckhardt, or Richard Burton, as each emphasised different aspects in their descriptions. In addition, von Maltzan was able to consult a wide range of Arabic language accounts which he might have found in libraries in Germany or, indeed, in North Africa. Hence, a comparison does not yield any conclusive evidence regarding the authenticity of von Maltzan’s descriptions.

However, it is quite remarkable how much space von Maltzan devotes to considerations and supposed observations on household and sexual life as well as the general customs of the Meccans, much of which cannot be verified independently.⁴² Similarly, it is striking how different his quite sober and fact-oriented second account of the stay in Jeddah is from the first, which contains lengthy reflections on crazy Sufis, sexual deviation, alcohol consumption and many other phenomena, often with exaggerations which arouse suspicion. Could it be that his musings on the veracity of von Wrede’s account reflect his own insights from the time when he was composing his *Pilgrimage*? After all, he could have mixed and matched his own observations (of travelling on the Nile, which he did in December and January 1853/54), the extant travel literature on Egypt and the Ḥijāz, and his own vivid imagination.

There might have been yet another source, or rather sources, for his account, which could also explain why the identity of a Maghrebinian served him so well. When in Algiers from October 1861 to end of May 1862, von Maltzan took lessons in Qur’anic Arabic and, through his teacher, met a *ḥājj* with whom he spent most evenings.⁴³ Although the diary only mentions this in connection with the dramatic improvement of his Arabic, actually giving some phrases and thus not at all alluding to discussions about pilgrimage, von Maltzan most likely gained insights into all sorts of aspects of life. This might have comprised details about the pilgrimage, given that he emphasises this aspect of his companion’s identity.

A Curious Start and an Even More Curious Ending

Let us finally have a closer look at the initial and final reports which von Maltzan gives us of his Algerian interlocutor, who had helped him obtain an

41 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, 64f.

42 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, chapters 14 to 17.

43 von Maltzan, *Diary*, vol. 2, entries Jan. to April 1862 and inner page of back cover.

identity and passport. According to his account, he had met 'Abd al-Raḥmān at a "Thaleb(s)" before. Presumably, he means that a fellow student (*tālib*) had introduced him. Thus, he could seek him out without arousing too much suspicion. He describes 'Abd al-Raḥmān as a formerly somewhat wealthy individual who had become addicted to hashish⁴⁴ and thus spent his evenings on the edge of town in a basement coffeehouse. Von Maltzan allegedly offered him a sum sufficient to pay for 'Abd al-Raḥmān's absence from Algiers (so as not to arouse suspicion) and sufficient drug supply, which his interlocutor accepted gratefully.⁴⁵ The only problem with the deal was the different physique of the two men—von Maltzan being not only eleven years younger and blond, but also twenty centimeters taller than his *alter ego*.⁴⁶ He thus spends some time to describe his physical transformation, after all, the two men only had two similar features, according to our author.⁴⁷ In particular, von Maltzan claims that the borrowed pilgrim's passport described 'Abd al-Raḥmān as "domestique", i.e. domestic servant, which he claims was somewhat difficult to swallow (after all, von Maltzan was a nobleman of independent—albeit apparently limited—means).⁴⁸

Von Maltzan writes how his Meccan *muṭawwif* or pilgrims' guide spread the rumour of him being a disguised son of the Pasha of Algiers.⁴⁹ Among others, the *muṭawwif* is said to have informed a group of Algerians about this whilst von Maltzan visited a bathhouse after returning from 'Arafāt.⁵⁰ The Algerians thereupon critically scrutinised the supposed prince, tried in vain to engage him in a conversation and then held a whispered conversation. They discussed that the last Dey of Algiers had no sons and that they knew most wealthy Algerians. They hence concluded that von Maltzan was an impostor of sorts, and most likely a Westerner or potentially even a French spy. Our author claims to have overheard and understood, apparently quite in contrast to his *muṭawwif*. He thereupon made a rather hasty exit not just from the bath, but left Mecca for Jeddah as rapidly as possible. In this, he was aided by "this popular Oriental slowness" which led the Algerians to take their bath before pondering any potential denunciation.⁵¹

44 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, p. 9, mentions "Kif (the African opium-like hemp)".

45 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 8–12.

46 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 13–14.

47 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 15–16.

48 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 1, 16.

49 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, 116–117.

50 The following is based on the account in von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, 360–369.

51 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, 365.

While this story is not entirely unlikely—other travellers, including Snouck Hurgronje, were suspected of disguising as Muslims and had to leave the holy city head over heels—one wonders where von Maltzan had acquired such good Arabic that he could understand a whispered conversation in dialect. This is true for 1860—had he performed the journey in 1863 or 64, he could, of course, have made good use of his knowledge of Arabic (and presumably the dialect) acquired in 61–62. Even if the story of his hasty departure and the reasons therefore was invented, it might have been a device to add drama to his adventures and is no proof for the invention of the entire journey.

But what is one to make of the conclusion of the book? Von Maltzan recounts how he returned the passport to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. Given that the journey was supposedly (and quite atypically) undertaken alone instead of with a group of compatriots, this was needed as proof of his ventures. Von Maltzan ends this episode by quoting a lengthy letter, supposedly written by “this old smoker of Kif who never quite left his drunk state” to our author.⁵² It contains the ponderings of “Hadsch Abd-el-Rahman ben Mohamed” about the events.

Von Maltzan quotes ‘Abd al-Raḥmān as saying that he would have been most disturbed by the idea of lending an infidel the means to perform the pilgrimage. “However,” the text continues, “I am far from assuming that I myself did not visit mountain ‘Arafa and the Ka‘aba, and therefore I am tempted to believe that I am the true and you are the false pilgrim.”⁵³ He continues by describing how he was high with hashish in Tunis, and there had a divine revelation. In it, he saw himself performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. “Since all reality is but an appearance and God’s mercy (the high derived from smoking hashish) the only reality, it is undoubtable that I am the true pilgrim.”⁵⁴ The signature was followed by two verses praising the use of hashish as a higher bliss than the salvation resulting from the pilgrimage.

It is most curious that von Maltzan ends his travelogue by playing on notions of reality and dream, drug-induced high and pilgrimage-induced salvation. Is it possible that he is mocking his reader, alluding to some of the lesser documented aspects of his sojourns in the Orient (namely the potential participation in hashish or opium sessions) and alluding to the possibility of an imaginary pilgrimage? Again, the text itself contains no decisive information to this end, but it is a singular end to a pilgrimage fraught with question marks.

52 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, 371, the letter is quoted 371–373.

53 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, 372.

54 von Maltzan, *Meine Wallfahrt*, vol. 2, 372.

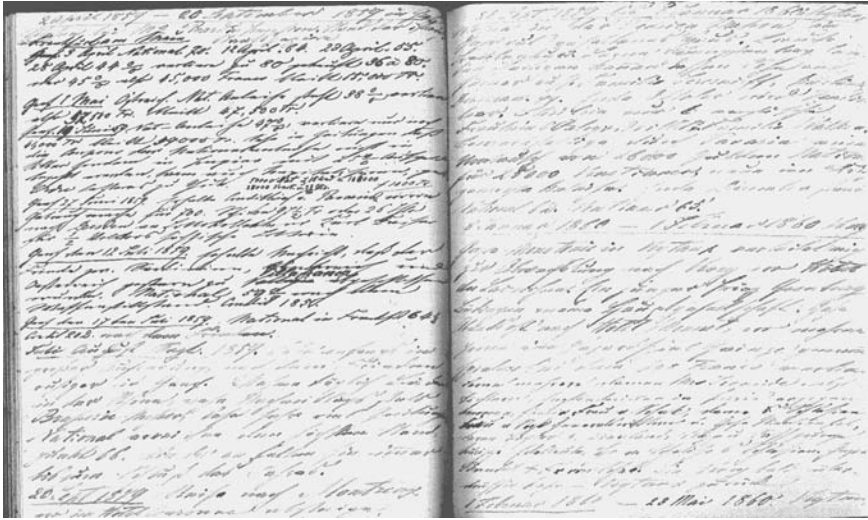


FIGURE 5.1 Excerpt from von Maltzan's diary

Conclusion

I hope to have shown that it is currently impossible to prove either the veracity or the invention of this particular voyage. Nevertheless, a close reading of the text in conjunction with the diaries raises serious doubts as to whether von Maltzan ever ventured to Jeddah and the Hijāz before 1870. Further research will need to compare very closely von Maltzan's text with earlier, confirmed travel reports, and will need to decipher all that remains legible of his diaries. In the long run, a solid biography of this restive but very productive author and fascinating individual would be a clear desideratum, adding to the analysis of Orientalist writers. In the meantime, however, any information contained in his *Wallfahrt* should be treated with utmost caution and, unless it can be corroborated by other sources, rather not be used as a source for Hijāzī history or ethnography.

TABLE 5.1 *Comparison of dates in travelogue and diary*

Dates	Travelogue	Diary (vol. 2)
December 1853	Alexandria, meeting Burton	Alexandria
early 1860	return from Morocco	8. Jan.–1. Feb. 1860 Vevey
1. Feb.–23 May 1860		Veytaux
April 1860	Boat Malta to Alexandria	
12 April 1860	steamer to Alexandria, then Cairo	
23 April 1860	boat to Qena	
10 May 1876 (18.10.1276 = 9.5.1876?)	arrival Qena, per caravan to Quşayr	
20 May 1860	arrival Quşayr	
23 May 1860		travel to Luzern, there until 8 July 1860
30 May 1860	arrival Yanbū‘	
8 June 1860	arrival Jeddah	
12–13 June 1860		climbing Mt Pilatus
18 June 1860		Nice
25 June 1860	departure for Mecca	
26–27 June 1860		travels in Switzerland
29 June 1860	flight from Mecca	
30 June 1860	boards English ship via Aden to Bombay (no further travel dates)	
8 July–5 Aug. 1860		??? (illegible entry)
24 July 1860		visits Küsnacht
8 Aug.–20 Oct. 1860		Luzern
24 Oct. 1860–2 Feb. 1861		Nizza
26 Nov. 1860	date of letter to von Maltzan by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān	
mid-Oct. 1861–June 1862		Algiers