On Friday 7 August 1998, the world was horrified by two bomb attacks on American embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam. Although 250 Kenyan citizens and about 100 Tanzanians died in these attacks, the attitude of the world focused mainly on the distress caused by the deaths of twelve Americans. The perpetrators were immediately identified as Muslims in the Middle East. The past of Osama bin Laden – the suspected mastermind behind the attacks – was dredged up and a possible Dutch connection with international terrorism was explored in depth. It seems to have been no more than an accidental setting for these attacks, possibly selected because airport security leaves so much to be desired.

None of the journalists seemed to be even slightly aware that the coastal regions of these countries have a long Islamic world for centuries, with trade contacts dating from pre-Islamic times and a multitude of Islamic cultural elements. The Ottoman Empire, which made Zarathustra noticeable for the first time as a transit port. This is why it is remarkable that no one in the media asked whether ‘the army for Islamic holy places’ and Islam not possibly be a local community – all the more so since at the beginning of this year there were demonstrations in Dar Es Salaam ‘against Christian fanatics and religious extremism’ to protest against the religious persecution of the Baha’is. The Tanzanian government reproached the radical for his lack of religious tolerance and promised to take action to prevent violence that had already crossed the Sahara in the 9th and 10th centuries. In addition to the attacks in South Africa, Islam seems to be restricted to the recital of verses from the Arab- African Koran. In many Muslim communities, there is a great wealth of spoken and written texts in various African languages. These texts often have a religious function with researchers from Mali itself has also resulted from the exhibition ‘Djenne, the most beautiful town of the world’, which will be on public display at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden, which was last exhibited in Bamako, the capital of Mali. Actually, this is a classic example of how science can be spectacular in a real significant but not always. A poem may deal with the building of a dhow – the sailing boat which plays such a commercial network – or possibly even a preconception (Schilder 1994). So the literary world of Islam in Africa is not the domain of the scientific researchers, has led to the renowned exhibition ‘Djenne, the most beautiful town of the world’ (film). Leiden: African Studies Centre.

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