in one of John's letters, in which he indicates the intention to obtain more knowledge on Islam.[6] His *terminus ante quem*, although left unexplained, coincides with John's departure from Constantinople.

A closer inspection of the manuscript reveals several important facts. First, John of Ragusa wrote it in his own hand. Second, he probably conceptualized the texts himself, as there are numerous cancellations, insertions, emendations, and so on. Third, the pages are all mixed up. And fourth, and finally for now, there are in fact two (incomplete) treatises contained within the manuscript. They begin on f. 505r and f. 506r respectively and are both marked with an upright cross where they begin.

While both parts have their own interesting history, this study focuses on the second part for the simple reason that the second part uses Riccoldo as a source, while the first does not. In order to give a proper context, however, I will briefly contextualize the first treatise.

The first part, which we have titled 'Confessio fidei coram Saracenis', is written from the perspective of a group of people who are meant to give their names at the beginning. Afterwards, they state the guiding principle of their speech: One should love one's neighbour as oneself. Therefore, the imagined speakers feel obliged by love to point out the true faith to their listeners. They do this in a rather conversational and peaceful tone; for example, by comparing the Muslim vision of paradise with the Christian. They generally do not condemn Islam for any falsehoods but seek out common ground until arriving at the point where Islam falls short of the ultimate goal and needs to be augmented by Christianity. In the end, the *Confessio* offers a summary of the Christian faith in the form of the Apostles' Creed and invites the listeners to enter into further conversation on it.

This final part of the *Confessio*, however, is not in John's own handwriting. The manuscript evidence breaks off after about three quarters of the text. It is possible to complete the text, though, because it was included in Theodore Bibliander's *Refutationes*, which constitute the second book of his Qur'an edition from 1543, as a "Christianae fidei Confessio, facta Saracenis, incerto auctore."[7] Bibliander suggests it might have been written by Riccoldo, which was met with a healthy dose of scepticism by Dondaine.[8] Given that we have a manuscript in Ragusa's own hand and, as I want to show in this article, a valid occasion for Ragusa to write a piece like this, we have good reason to attribute this section of Bibliander's Qur'an edition to John of Ragusa. Bib-

6 Letter no. 96: ed. Cecconi 1869, no. LXXVIII, ccvi–ccxi, here: ccix; ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 358, l. 137.

7 Bibliander, *Machumetis Saracenorum principis eiusque successorum vitae ac doctrina ipseque Alcoran: Quo velut authentico legum divinarum codice Agareni & Turcae*, 1543, part 2, pp. 166–178.

8 Dondaine 1967, pp. 145–149.

liander must have possessed a complete manuscript that we sadly cannot locate. In the 1543 edition, this piece also appears side by side with a Greek translation.[9] It is hard to imagine why Bibliander would have translated this piece himself, so one should assume he found the translation in his manuscript as well.

While the first treatise stresses the common ground between the religions, the second emphasizes the differences. Using natural reason as the frame of reference, the two laws of Christianity and Islam are to be compared, which is why we have named this piece 'Fragmentum de Conditionibus Legum, scilicet Alchorani et Evangelii' (henceforth referred to as *De conditionibus*). In order to state his arguments against Islam, John draws heavily on the *Contra legem Sarracenorum* by Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. From a tally made by Beatus Rhenanus, we know that John brought a manuscript of *Contra legem* with him from Constantinople in a codex that also contained a Latin Qur'an.[10] It is plausible that this is the codex that John of Ragusa had copied for himself at Constantinople in January 1437, which constituted the basis for Bibliander's edition.[11]

JOHN OF RAGUSA AND THE FRANCISCAN MARTYRS

As we learn from a diary note contained within E I 1k, three Franciscan friars arrived at Constantinople in December 1436.[12] Juan of Segovia's history of the Council indicates that the Council received a letter from Ragusa about this,[13] which did not

9 Bibliander, *Alcoran*, *1543*, pp. 166–178. On the different printed versions of this edition, cf. Moser 2009.

10 Vernet 1961, no. AN 14, p. 102: "In 20 pulpito a libris grecis circa AN, sub numero 14, est Liber contra Saracenos ubi multa in greco sunt; que etiam ibidem in latino sunt, presertim unus Ricoldi de Florencia." Vernet reads this as indicating that the volume contained both the *Collectio toletana* and *Contra legem Sarracenorum*.

11 We know this from the colophon that Bibliander reprinted in his text of the Qur'an. Bibliander, *Machumetis Saracenorum principis eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina, et ipse Alcoran,* 1550, p. 188: "Explicit liber legis diabolicae Saracenorum, qui Arabice dicitur Alchoran, id est, collectio Capitulorum, siue praeceptorum. Per manus Clementis Poloni de Vislicia, Anno Domini millesimo CCCCXXXVII. mensis Ianuarii ultima, in Constantinopoli. Et ad instantiam magni loannis de Ragusio ordinis praedicatorum, tunc in Constantinopoli degentis."

12 Krchňák 1960/1961, no. 4 c. The manuscript (UB Basel, E I 1k, f. 514v) appears to state 1435 and Krchňák also gives this date. The circumstances, however, necessitate a date of 1436 and, with that in mind, one could argue that an additional, rather sloppy "i" can be discerned.

13 "Post auditas oratorum concilii litteras ex Auinione perlectis continuo litteris Iohannis de Ragusio ex Constantinopoli, significantis narrata de tribus fratribus minoribus transituris ad Turcum, Christum coram illo publice confessuris." *Historia Gestorum*, Liber XI, Caput V in MC vol. 2, p. 957.

survive.[14] Their names were, according to John's diary note, Petrus of Bitonto, Angelus of Bitonto (other sources say of Esculo), and Peter the German of Mainz. Their intent was to confess their faith in front of the prince of the Turks and potentially suffer martyrdom afterwards. John sought close contact with these friars and supported them in their endeavour, as is also documented in the self-justification called *De martyrio sanctorum* that the three friars wrote, probably in the beginning of 1437.[15] John is explicitly mentioned in this treatise. He also brought back copies of the letters that the Franciscans received from their superiors that allowed them to travel to the Holy Land and seek martyrdom.[16]

Since these letters are dated between October 1435 (Venice) and October 1436 (Crete), their arrival at Constantinople in December 1436 appears reasonable. What happened afterwards, we do not know. No record indicates whether or not the martyrs reached their goal.

Concerning the authorship of *De martyrio*, it was long assumed that an otherwise mostly unknown person called Tommaso d'Arrezo had written it.[17] We know of Tommaso through two sources: the first is a note by his friend Giovanni Tortelli,[18] which he inscribed into a rare volume of Thukydides, stating that the two compatriots arrived together in Constantinople in order to pursue their studies.[19] The other source is an epitaph by Maffeo Vegio, which lauds him for exchanging temporal goods for eternal ones.[20] As *De martyrio* is told from the first person by a "clericus primae tonsurae", who had been searching for antique books before he met the three friars and asked to join them in martyrdom, he would fit the profile perfectly. A manuscript discovered by Elisabetta Caldelli, however, has recently challenged this assumption. She found an

14 See no. 102 in Krchňák 1960/1961. The letter is mentioned in CB vol. 1, p. 380.

15 The *tractatus* has been printed as Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio sanctorum*, 1492, and partially edited in Golubovich 1927, pp. 291–297. There are two extant manuscripts, Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, F 43 and Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, C 17 sup. Excerpts from this work have been edited in Langeloh 2019, pp. 414–505 with both the manuscripts and the incunabulum taken into account.

16 UB Basel E I 1k, f. 502r, ed. Langeloh 2019, pp. 408–412.

17 The "standard explanation" is most succinctly summarized in Frazier 2005, pp. 81–90. The first person to state this hypothesis was Mercati 1947, followed by Besomi & Regoliosi 1970, who in turn built on the thesis of Capriotti 1967/1968, which, according to the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, cannot be accessed anymore. I want to thank Zornitsa Radeva for ascertaining this.

18 On Tortelli, see most recently Manfredi *et al*. 2016.

19 UB Basel, E III 4, f. 274v: "... studiorum causa ad eam civitatem applicui, una cum fidelissimo socio Thomasio compatriota et fratre meo Laurentino."

20 Given and translated in Frazier 2005, pp. 80–81.

autograph by Giovanni Tortelli, which contains traces indicating that the first-person narrator might be Tortelli himself.[21]

While the question of authorship remains fascinating, we cannot dwell on it here. Whoever the first-person narrator might be, he apparently had an affectionate relationship with John of Ragusa. John loved him and took care of him "like a father" and introduced him to the three Franciscans.[22] The author was chosen to write the treatise for his competence in both Latin and Greek. The friars assisted with their knowledge of *exempla* and patristic texts. However, he laments having had very little time to revise or add polish, since the departure from Constantinople was imminent.[23]

JOHN OF RAGUSA'S SKETCHES ON ISLAM CAN BE CONSIDERED AS CONVERSION LEAFLETS AND ARE CONNECTED TO *DE MARTYRIO SANCTORUM*

Upon closer inspection, the sketches of John of Ragusa on Islam are closely connected to *De martyrio sanctorum*, which this section will illustrate. Among other considerations, the authors of *De martyrio* contemplate how best to achieve a conversion of the infidels. They examine several examples of martyrdom and come to the conclusion that hijacking the pulpit and shouting out a Christian confession will not be enough. One general obstacle is language. In the penultimate chapter, they therefore ask themselves "how should those proceed, who do not know the language of the infidels who they want to go to with their ardour of charity and martyrdom?"[24] One solution, they claim, is simply writing down what one has to say.[25] Another group of Franciscans, under the guidance of Nikola Tavelić (Nicolaus Tavilei), had tried this at Jerusalem

21 Caldelli 2009, see pp. 235–238 for a summary of the arguments for Tortelli's authorship.

22 Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio*, ch. xii, pp. 79–80: "Ego, cum hic Constantinopoli litteris graecis intenderem et audierim a viro clarissimo fratre Iohanne de Ragusio ex fratribus praedicatorum, qui pro ecclesiae Latinorum et Graecorum unione a Basiliensi concilio legatus huc advenerat et me ut dulcissimus pater fovebat et amabat, quod venalem parvo praetio infiniti valoris margaritam tres sancti francisci venerabiles et veri fratres secum portaverant, frater scilicet Petrus de Bethonto, frater Angelus de Aestulo Italici et frater Petrus Alemannus de Maguntia, qui huc alibi accessuri venerant, illam emere pro posse decrevi." Ed. Langeloh 2019, pp. 456–459, ll. 3–11.

23 Mostly in the final chapter titled 'Excusatio eius, qui libellum hunc composuit', Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio*, ch. xviii, pp. 120–122. Ed. Langeloh 2019, pp. 498–504.

24 "Quis modus habendus his qui ignorant linguam eorum infidelium: ad quos caritatis et martyrii ardore accedere cupiunt." Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio*, ch. xvii, p. 105 sqq., here: p. 105. Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 466.

25 Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio*, ch. xvii, p. 109. Ed. Langeloh 2019, pp. 470–473.

in 1391, but they had not taken care to prepare themselves properly.[26] Their testimony was certainly true, but also contained just the "naked truth" (*nuda veritas*) and was not adapted to the audience and the circumstances. That is why the authors of *De martyrio* want to do better: "we will write another one, in our own way, and whoever knows to do it differently or better, can form and write another."[27]

The *cedulae* can be adapted according to different factors.[28] The first factor is a consideration of the education of the speakers themselves and whether they have been trained in theology or are laymen. Secondly, one has to keep in mind the audience and whether the ruler is alone, if priests are in attendance, and if uneducated people are also present.[29] The authors then give several examples, starting with a formulaic "nos tales" where one can fill in one's own name and heritage.

When composing his confession, it is highly likely that John of Ragusa had read this treatise or even contributed to it. His first sketch, the *Confessio fidei* starts with the same formula "nos tales" and uses several of the phrases and arguments that can also be found in *De martyrio*. In general, it can be considered a more finished product, since the draft in *De martyrio* is not very elaborate and only tries to transmit the general idea without giving a complete sample—perhaps John's attempt was meant to provide the martyrs with a finished product to take along. But one thing appears very clear: the two treatises that John of Ragusa drafted must have been intended in the way that the authors of *De martyrio sanctorum* imagined, that is, as hand-outs to the infidels, which were supposed to give them pause and to fuel further discussion. If a partner in conversation is wanted, the speaker offers to give it, as he states at the end of the *Confessio*. While the *Confessio* obviously serves a general purpose and addresses both a ruler and his subordinates,[30] the *De conditionibus* is more specific. It draws upon Riccoldo's *Liber contra legem Sarracenorum* in order to make a scientific comparison between the "two laws" of Christianity and Islam. It is not implausible, then, to assume that John of Ragusa aided his colleagues in writing. His copy of the Qur'an was completed in January 1437, around the time when *De martyrio* was hastily composed. There are later correc-

26 A description of their martyrdom along with a transcription of their *cedula* is contained in Golubovich 1927, pp. 282–287.

27 Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio*, ch. xvii, p. 110: "scribemus et nos aliam modo nostro et quicumque alius ut melius noverit, alteram sibi formare et describere poterit." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 472, ll. 75–76.

28 Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio*, ch. xvii, p. 110.

29 Anonymous, *Tractatus de martyrio*, ch. xvii, p. 110: "Sed conditiones hominum qui Christi nomen sic profiteri intendunt considerandas prius putamus". Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 472, ll. 76–77.

30 The confession is meant to happen "coram tua et tuorum terrena et transitoria potestate." UB Basel, E I 1k, f. 506r. Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 250, l. 5.

tions and insertions of material based on the Qur'an in the manuscript Vallicelliana F 43. Could the study of the Qur'an have been John's contribution to the shared labour? We do not know. However, the circumstances of John's treatises have been sufficiently outlined and we turn now to turn to the fragment 'De conditionibus legum' and its use of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's *Contra legem Sarracenorum.*

HOW DOES JOHN OF RAGUSA DRAW ON RICCOLDO IN HIS *DE CONDITIONIBUS LEGUM*?

If the discourse of the *Confessio* is governed by love, then *De conditionibus* is guided by reason. John starts of by justifying why. The only real difference—he is obviously referring to the Aristotelian *differentia specifica*—between man and other animals is reason and, in this regard, God created man in his own image. Therefore, it is also opportune to approach a religious confrontation on the basis of reason. Not through promises of carnal lust, not through force of arms, but with reason alone the speaker aims to convince his audience of the truth. And since, as he states, conflicts can be resolved best if opposites face each other ("opposita iuxta se posita magis elucescunt"),[31] the treatise seeks to confront directly the teachings of the Gospel with those of the Qur'an and to judge which of the two better accords with reason.

If a law accords with reason, it has to be just, good, and rational. Three categories help discern that these conditions meet the "common opinion of humans who use their rational faculty": the first emphasis is on the giver of the law; the second is on its contents; the third is on its goals.

The whole passage reads as follows:

> Vobis, quos homines ad imaginem dei factos et ratione utentes cernimus, honorem dei et salutem vestram quaerentes, veram legem et salutis viam non carnalium voluptatum promissis, ad quorum desiderium carnalis et bestialis concupiscentia instigat omnino falsissimis et fabulosis doctrinis, non in armorum potentia, ut latrones et tyranni faciunt, sed ratione, quantum ipse dominus deus adiuverit, pro praesenti persuadere intendimus. Et quia iuxta philosophorum et sapientum doctrinam opposita iuxta se posita magis elucescunt, duarum legum conditiones, evangelii scilicet et Alchorani, in medium

31 This common saying is generally attributed to Aristotle and, for example, frequently used by Thomas Aquinas. *De malo*, q. 1 a. 1 arg. 14 "opposita iuxta se posita magis elucescunt." In a similar fashion: *De caelo et mundo* 2,9,8 "opposita enim iuxta se posita magis sentiuntur." Or "contraria iuxta se posita magis elucescunt" (STh Ia–IIae q.42 a 5 ad3).

> proponemus, ut unusquisque utens ratione et intellectu, quam sequi debeat, intelligat et perpendat. Quod autem aliqua lex sit et existimetur iusta, bona et rationabilis iuxta communem hominum ratione utentium opinionem, ex triplici capite perpendi potest, primo ex parte ministri dantis et condentis eam, secundo ex contentis in ipsa, tertio ex fine, ad quem ordinat sequaces suos et viventes secundum ipsam, et ex parte quidem ministri in duobus, videlicet in conditione ministri et modo tradendi ipsam.[32]

John of Ragusa promises his listeners to make an unbiased inquiry into the conditions of two laws, the Qur'an and the Gospel. He assumes that any rational person who is making use of reason would approve of this method. With this introduction, John directly connects to his previous work, the *Confessio*. There, he also stressed the rationality and the similarity to God of his audience in order to make them consider his writings without anger or prejudice.[33] By dividing the inquiry into three parts, the giver of the law, the contents of the law, and the goal it leads towards, he is already leaning on Riccoldo. Riccoldo aims to prove in Chapter 8 of his *CLS* that the Qur'an is an irrational law, which he wants to demonstrate "ratione ministri et ratione sui et ratione operis et ratione finis."[34] However, John divides part one (*ratione ministri*) in two: first the *conditio* of the transmitter himself and then a description of how he acquired his followers.

Concerning the first point, John finds it fully rational that the giver of a law should be a holy and perfect man because "effect follows cause" (*effectus sequitur causam*). In proving that Christ embodied these qualities, he skips Christian sources and proves it with reference to the Qur'an, the content of which he learns from Riccoldo. How Muhammad fared, he says, could easily be gleaned from his life and deeds, since he was "most polluted, most incestuous, a manslayer, an idol worshipper, and guilty of almost every other sin."[35] At this point, at the latest, the tone of the forthcoming argument has been set. Instead of relying on the "power of love", John will try to prove that his op-

32 *De conditionibus*, UB Basel E I 1k, f. 505r. Ed. Langeloh 2019 pp. 278–280, ll. 9–23.

33 *Confessio*, ed. Bibliander, *Alcoran, 1543*, p. 177: "rogamus vos et obsecramus in eo, qui nos omnes ad sui imaginem rationales et intellectuales creavit, ut patienter his in scriptis suscipiatis, quae annuntiavimus, et ut rationales, ad imaginem et similitudinem dei creati scripta nostra cum ratione discutiatis." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 274, ll. 283–287.

34 Mérigoux 1986 ch. 8,5–6; ch. 8,90. From here on, I will refer to this work simply as *CLS*.

35 De conditionibus, UB Basel E I 1k, f. 505r: "Qualis autem ipse pseudopropheta Mahumet fuerit, patet omnibus scientibus vitam suam et doctrinam ipsius legentibus, quia fuit sceleratissimus, incestuosus, homicida, idolatra et aliis paene omnibus peccatis obnoxius." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 280, ll. 34–36.

ponents are wrong. He labels Muhammad a pseudo-prophet, calls him a liar whenever possible[36] and seeks to prove his depravity in various respects while at the same time refuting counter-examples from the Bible.

Given these initial impressions, I will first give an overview of the individual arguments that John brings forward to prove the rationality of the Christian faith and the irrationality of the Islamic one. Following this, I provide an outline of the structure in which he presents these arguments. And finally, I will describe how he makes use of Riccoldo's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*.

As explained above, John wants to investigate the rationality of the creeds under three criteria: the giver of the law, its contents, and its goals. As far as we can discern, John only treated the first topic and barely started with the second, which is at least where our manuscript evidence breaks off. There is another page (507r), which is about three-quarters filled but repeats topics that have already been dealt with. The arguments outlined are given in the following table of contents. I have added the line numbers of my forthcoming edition in order to make the length of the sections somewhat appraisable. The final column indicates the parts of *CLS* John uses for each section.

36 For example, such as in this condensed passage: "Similiter celavit peccatum adulterii, quod commisit cum uxore Zero nutritii sui imponendo deo, quod eam sibi maritaverat, ut patet in capitulo Elhazeb, in quibus expresse minora peccata maiori peccato mendaciter excusavit. Nam ut idem Mahumetus ait: 'Nullum peccatum est maius quam imponere deo mendacium.' [sura 6:157] Est autem manifestissimum mendacium, quod deus peccata approbat et adulteria atque periuria dispensat, ut hic scelestissimus et spurcissimus homo asserit." *De conditionibus*, E I 1k, f. 505r–v. Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 282, ll. 48–54.

Table: Contents of the Fragmentum de Conditionibus legum, scilicet Alchorani et Evangelii *by John of Ragusa.*

Fragmentum de Conditionibus Legum (ff. 505rv–510rv–503rv–512rv–504rv) No.	*Topic*	*ll. in ed. Langeloh 2019*	*Uses* CLS *book parts*
0	Introduction	1–23	8
1	The messenger of the law		
1.1	The prophet himself	24–133	
1.1.1	Was the prophet a good person or not? – Christ yes, Muhammad no.	26–75	1, 8
1.1.2	*Counter-argument*: "His conduct does not matter; his prophecies can stand on their own." – But, as he said himself, he is not sure if he is telling the right thing.	76–105	5, 8, 15
1.1.3	Muhammad was not mentally fit to be a prophet – *Counter-argument*: "Does this not show that the doctrine came from God?"	106–133	4, 8
1.2	Muhammad's way of advocating his law	133–546	
1.2.1	The way of presentation was unworthy. There were no miracles and there is no previous mention of Muhammad in scripture. Christ, on the contrary, has been announced.	136–163	3
1.2.2	If Muhammad was a real prophet, he would have been announced previously. By naming himself a prophet, he contradicted Christ who said that only pseudo-prophets would come after him.	164–181	3, 9
1.2.3	[Digression] *Counter-argument*: "The holy scriptures were perverted and mention of Muhammad expunged." Response: Scripture has not been corrupted.	182–374	1, 3
1.2.4	Muhammad was not supported by miracles.	375–384	
	Great miracles were performed by Moses, Christ, and the apostles.	385–410	
	Therefore, Muhammad should do the same.	411–419	
	Muhammad himself says he came without miracles.	420–444	7
	Counter-argument: "Is it not the greatest miracle to convert without miracles?"	445–449	

	Response: Is it not an even greater miracle that the Christian faith was accepted despite all its inconveniences?	449–478	
1.2.5	A rational law is transmitted without violence.	479–489	
	The Christian faith was propagated without violence.	489–493	
	Islam was spread by the sword, contrary to reason.	494–517	10
	Christianity is the law of God and transcends violence; Muhammad's law is just violence.	518–546	
2	The content of the laws		
2.1	The Qur'an does not have the proper style of a law, since it is not written "in simple and pure words".	547–557	4
??	Notes f. 507r		
	Christ is revered in the Qu'ran.	559–579	1, 16
	Adultery of Muhammad with Maria Iacobina.	580–605	8

As we can see, the first part of the argument takes up the most space. John attempts to show that Muhammad was a poor representative of any God-given law. Concerning the mode of presentation, three criteria are brought up that can also be considered classics in this field: a true prophet would have been announced by scripture; a true prophet would have been supported by miracles; a true prophet would not resort to violence. The first of these arguments necessitates a lengthy discussion on the corruption of scripture. Since the argument that Muhammad does not appear in scripture could be countered by the claim that Christians and Jews have purged his name from the records, this claim has to be refuted. John does this in a long section that encompasses about a third of the whole text.

The structure of each argument is similar and begins by naming a criterion for the rationality of a faith. This is followed by John showing how Christianity conforms with this criterion, exploiting the passages of the Qur'an that praise Christ and the Gospel as much as possible. After this, he demonstrates how the Qur'an and Muhammad himself deviate from this criterion, citing their "beliefs". This structure can be illustrated by retracing one of the last arguments connected to violence.

The criterion is here stated as follows: "That the law of Muhammad is neither from God nor rational, is further shown through the violence expressed."[37] The rationality

37 *De conditionibus*, UB Basel E I 1k, f. 504r: "Ulterius quod lex Mahumeti non sit a deo nec rationabilis, ostenditur expressa violentia." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 318, ll. 479–480. It should be noted here again that the pages in the manuscript do not follow the correct order and are very mixed up. The correct order of folios is ff. 505rv–510rv–503rv–512rv–504rv plus the disconnected f. 507r.

of this criterion is established through several arguments. One is the definition of God that is reminiscent of that in sura 112.[38] Since God is spiritual, he is to be adored in a spiritual way, excluding violence. Another argument is taken from St Paul. But finally, Muhammad's own words are John's strongest weapon:

> God does not require of us forced servitude. Therefore, Muhammad himself, as if forced by the truth itself, said in the chapter Elbahara, which can be translated as 'The cow': "that in God's law there is no compulsion." Therefore, every divine law draws its followers by love and not through the fear of corporal punishment or pain through the sword.[39]

In concordance with "Muhammad", any compulsion is excluded from the law of God. Now, how does the Christian faith fare in this regard? Although the old law probably included violence, for the new law, the case is clear. It is successful and draws its adherents through sincere and pure love:

> The new law of the gospel is therefore not called the law of servitude, but the filial one and the one of love, since it has drawn its cultors to it neither through fear or reward, but through sincere and pure love, and keeps on doing so.[40]

The law of Muhammad, however, exemplifies the opposite:

> How could there be more violence and "more compulsion than through murder by the sword"? This is the type of law that is the law of Muhammad and is also your law, in which Muhammad "as if from the mouth of God" explicitly mandates to kill anyone who objects and does not believe. He does

38 "AZOARA CXXII. In nomine et cetera. Constanter dic illis, Deum unum esse, necessarium omnibus, et incorporeum: Qui nec genuit, nec est generatus, nec habet quenquam sibi similem." Bibliander, *Alcoran*, *1550*, p. 188, ll. 16–19.

39 *De conditionibus,* UB Basel E I 1k, f. 504r: "Nec exigit deus a nobis coacta servitia. Unde et ipse Mahumet quasi ab ipsa veritate coactus ait in capitulo Elbahara, quod interpretatur vacca, 'quod in lege dei non est compulsio'. [cf. *CLS* 10,8–9] Unde et omnis lex divina non timore poenae corporalis aut gladii, sed amor[e] suos ad se traxit cultores." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 318, ll. 485–489.

40 *De conditionibus*, UB Basel E I 1k, f. 504r: "Lex vero nova et evangelii non dicitur servitutis, sed filialis et amoris, quia neque tim[o]re neque mercede, sed sincero et puro amore ad se suos traxit et trahit cultore[s]." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 318, ll. 491–493.

> not only do this in one chapter but repeats multiple times: "Kill them, kill them." Not even Muhammad could remain silent on the irrationality of this, since he said in the chapter about Iona: "If God wanted everyone on earth to believe, they would do so, so why would you force humans to believe?" And "nobody can be faithful, unless it is given to him by God." And: "nobody can be guided except by God." And this he says in many places. So, if according to him, nobody can believe or be faithful, unless it is granted by God, how would he, contrary to God's volition, dare to give to humans what God did not give them, namely faith and faithfulness, and this through sword and violence, and take away from those who do not believe what God gave them, namely their present life and their temporal possessions?[41]

According to John, Muhammad does exactly the opposite of what he affirmed as a rational premise in the earlier part—he converts by the sword and orders those killed, who do not convert to his faith. Yet, he "could not remain silent on the irrationality of this" and thus undermines his own policy by stating that technically only God can direct a person to the true belief. In that sense, his deeds and words contradict each other. With that, John hopes to have proven the irrationality of the Qur'an through the words of the prophet themselves and concludes as follows: "The law of God, therefore, is not the law of fear, of murder, of the sword."[42]

The whole treatise conforms to this basic structure. So, what is Riccoldo's role in all this? Riccoldo basically serves as the definitive—and only—source for the opponent's viewpoint. All information concerning Islam in this treatise is derived from the *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. We know that John possessed a copy of the Qur'an, and the *Confessio fidei*—the first new text that we have edited—shows that he worked with it,

41 *De conditionibus*, UB Basel E I 1k, f. 504r–v: "Qualis autem potest esse maior violentia aut 'maior compulsio quam per occisionem' [*CLS* 10,10] gladii? Cuiusmod[i] est lex Mahumeti et vestra, in qua ipse Mahumet 'quasi ex ore dei' expresse mandat, ut occidantur contradictores et non credentes [cf. *CLS* 8,105–106]. Et iam hoc non in uno capitulo solo tamen facit, sed multotiens replicat: 'Occ[idite, occidite]!' [cf. *CLS* 10,22–24] Quam sit irrationabile, etiam ipse Mahumet subticere non potuit 'in capitulo de Io[na: "Si vellet Deus, omnes crederent"], qui sunt in terra, et tu cogis homines, ut credant. [Et nemo potest esse fidelis, ni]si ei largiatur a deo' [*CLS* 8,112–114] et 'numquam possunt | dirigi nisi a deo.' [cf. *CLS* 8,107] Et haec in multis locis dicit. Si ergo secundum ipsum nemo potest credere neque esse fidelis, nisi ei largiatur a deo, quare nititur contra dei voluntatem dare hominibus, quod deus non dat eis, scilicet suam fidem et credulitatem per gladium et per violentiam, et tollit a non credentibus, quod deus dat eis, scilicet praesentem vitam et bona temporalia." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 320, ll. 494–506.

42 *De conditionibus*, UB Basel E I 1k, f. 504v: "Non est igitur lex dei lex timoris, lex occisionis, lex gladii." Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 322, l. 518.

as he quotes it at length. There are some traces that he knew more than what he takes from Riccoldo, for example, the characterization of God "secundum legem vestram" as incorporeal and immaterial.[43] But in this work, he never quotes the Qur'an directly but relies on Riccoldo instead. Riccoldo's role is almost exclusively to give information on Islam and to suggest arguments against it. The Christian view, it would appear, is worked out by John on his own, on the basis of his own theological education.

However, John's text does not simply repeat what Riccoldo had written. While using him as his main source of knowledge, he arranges him freely. The above passage is fuelled mainly by Chapter 10 of Riccoldo, which bears the title 'The Qur'an is a law of violence and death',[44] but some parts, especially those stating that violence is useless for conversion, are taken from Chapter 8, which is titled 'It is an irrational law'.[45] The pieces of information that John uses originate from different parts of the respective chapters and do not necessarily appear in their original order. Further, the conclusions and their wording are John's own.

It appears likely that John first scoured *CLS* for passages to use and then compiled his treatise. An indication could be f. 507r, which is, as stated above, disconnected from the main text and repeats the praise for Christ in the Qur'an as well as the accusation of adultery with Maria Iacobina. For the latter fact, John cites an entire passage from *CLS* Book 8 that stretches over more than 30 lines in Mérigoux's edition.[46] John's final account concerning this affair is much shorter, which could indicate two stages of work: he first extracted the vital sections, and then arranged them for his own argument, very much in line with classic oratory practice where the *inventio* precedes the *dispositio* and the *elocutio*.

John's writing also has a different focus from that of Riccoldo. Riccoldo's work was written as his *ceterum censeo* after having come back from his stay at Baghdad and he certainly did not intend to return. John, on the other hand, anticipates standing face to face to an addressee, be it through verbal conversation or through the handing over of a *cedula*. He redirects Riccoldo's arguments by addressing them to an audience, frequently anticipating their counter-arguments by "sed dicitis", "sed fortasse dicetis" or similar phrases to drive the argument forward.

However, this way of using and vivifying Riccoldo's text is precisely what Riccoldo intended. A large part of what the Dominicans did was compiling, condensing

43 *De conditionibus,* UB Basel E I 1k, f. 504r. Ed. Langeloh 2019, p. 318, ll. 480–481.

44 *CLS*, ch. 10, 2: "Quod Alcoranum est lex uiolenta et lex mortis."

45 *CLS*, ch. 8, 2: "Quod est lex irrationabilis."

46 *CLS*, ch. 8,23–55; ch. 8, 91–92.

and transmitting knowledge, so that future preachers would have easy access to it and could use it in their activities.[47] Riccoldo explains this at the end of his preface:

> It is now my intention, confiding in the highest truth, to confute the main obscenities of this unfaithful law, and to give other friars a model through which they can more easily bring back the followers of this faithlessness to God.[48]

Riccoldo wants to aid his brothers who want to refute Islam and to convince its followers to convert. In that sense, John shows himself to be a diligent reader and a competent user of Riccoldo's treatise. He takes the authoritative treatise by a Dominican written on the topic and uses its knowledge to craft his own address to his audience, adapting it closely to his prospective listeners. Among the genre of "Anti-Islam" treatises, this fact alone makes them remarkable. Most of these were written at study desks somewhere in Latin Europe. John, however, could observe the infidels crossing in front of Constantinople's walls and was working with and for people who actually wanted to visit them, implicitly taking Riccoldo along for the journey.

SUMMARY

To summarize, John of Ragusa used his time at Constantinople to write two treatises—one of them probably incomplete—against Islam, or rather, for Christianity, the *Confessio fidei* and the *Fragmentum de conditionibus legum*. From his diary notes, letters and the content of one of his collections, we can infer that these treatises are connected to his fateful meeting with three Franciscan prospective martyrs. The Franciscans' treatise *De martyrio sanctorum* also contains the explanation for John's treatises. They were intended as speeches to be given in front of infidels or *cedulae*

47 As an important example, see the introduction of Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum maius*: "Certus sum enim et confido in Domino, hoc ipsum opus non solum mihi sed et omni studiose et affectuose legenti non parum utilitatis afferre, non solum ad Deum per se et per creaturas visibiles et invisibiles cognoscendum ac per hoc diligendum, et cor suum in devotione caritatis multorum sanctorum ignitis sententiis et exemplis excitandum et attendendum, verum etiam ad predicandum, ad legendum et ad disputandum, ad solvendum, necnon et generaliter ad unumquodque fere materie genus artis cuiuslibet explicandum." Lusignan 1979, p. 118.

48 *CLS*, prologus, 66–69: "Nunc autem est mea intentio de summa ueritate confisus, confutare principales obscenitates tam perfide legis, et dare occasionem aliis fratribus, per quem modum possunt facilius reuocare ad Deum sectatores tante perfidie."

that could be handed to them and meant to connect with a specific audience, thus combining urgency and practicality.

The second treatise, *De conditionibus*, fully relies on Riccoldo when stating the opposing point of view. John reads Riccoldo, takes the quotations from the Qur'an and other arguments that he can use, and rearranges them for his specific purpose. This is precisely what Riccoldo considers the best use of his treatise. In the case of *De conditionibus*, we might have something that is very rare in history: a younger author using an older author and doing exactly what the older wanted.

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ULLI ROTH

John of Segovia and Nicholas of Cusa Reading Riccoldo

A Chiasmus of Rejection and Approval?

Two ecclesiastical scholars and colleagues in the 15th century, neither of them familiar with either Islam or the Arabic language, judge one of the few experts on this topic in Latin Christendom of the previous century, one positively, the other negatively. But can we trust these judgements if the one author shares several features with the scholar he openly rejects, while the other overlooks the basic ideas of the scholar he warmly recommends? The point at which this chiasmus of rejection and approval intersects may indicate the common ground for a new way in the 15th century of how to think about and deal with the "other", represented here as a member of a foreign and hostile religion. It is well known and will become even more manifest that John of Segovia (*c.* 1393–1458) and Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) are leading figures in this progress. There are only a few articles dealing with the relation between Nicholas of Cusa and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (*c.* 1243–1320) and none about that between John of Segovia and Riccoldo.[1] Both seem to read the work of Riccoldo as if the differences from their own activities in context and method are not as great as they in fact were. They are separated by one and a half centuries and a different background, namely personal and direct experience of Oriental Muslims and their culture versus scarce or indirect knowledge. Furthermore, the institutional and ecclesiastical setting is completely different. Riccoldo writes as a Dominican friar and thus follows or represents the specific Dominican call and method to deal with "the infidels", which is quite dif-

1 Cf. Hagemann, 1976, pp. 55–67; Hopkins 1994; Costigliolo 2010; George-Tvrtković 2012b.