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OCH ANTIKVITETS AKADEMIEN

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RICCOLDO DA MONTE DI CROCE (†1320)

MISSIONARY TO THE NEAR EAST AND EXPERT ON ISLAM



Riccoldo da Monte di Croce

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Kurt Villads Jensen & Davide Scotto (eds)



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ABSTRACT

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, a Dominican friar, traveled to the Holy Land in 1288, living in Muslim Baghdad where he learned Arabic and studied the Qur'an. Returning to Florence after 1300, he wrote extensively on non-Christian peoples and religions. Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis* details his travels, offering ethnographic insights and theological discussions. His *Epistolae ad ecclesiam triumphantem* laments the fall of Acre to Muslims and the subsequent enslavement of Christians, whereas his *Libellus ad nationes orientales* explores Eastern religions based on firsthand interactions. Riccoldo's major work, *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, is a detailed refutation of the Qur'an, which significantly influenced Western European studies of Islam. In this volume 16 authors offer various perspectives on Riccoldo's works and his influence on Christian European writers and thinkers. The contributions were originally presented at a conference held on 7–8 September 2017 at the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities in Stockholm.

KEYWORDS

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, pilgrimages, Christianity, Islam, Qur'an, Middle East, Medieval literature, comparative religion

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KURT VILLADS JENSEN & DAVIDE SCOTTO

Preface

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce: pilgrim, missionary, scholar. A Dominican friar from the convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, who spent years travelling in the Middle East and studying Islam and other religions and religious denominations he encountered. When he died in 1320, he left several significant works of which his *Contra legem Sarracenorum* came to have an enormous influence upon later Christian understanding of Islam for centuries—and indirectly still today.

The importance of Riccoldo has always been recognized by researchers, but the scholarly interest in him has grown almost exponentially within the last generation or two. Many more scholars are now studying Riccoldo than ever before, and many more aspects of his works and working methods are becoming better understood than in the past. It was therefore timely to gather some of the experts to discuss and present new results. The idea to organize such a conference was conceived during the 2016 international medieval congress in Kalamazoo where Davide Scotto gave a paper on Riccoldo's *Letters to the Triumphant Church* and he and Kurt Villads Jensen met for the first time.

The conference *Riccoldo da Monte di Croce* (†1320). *Missionary to the Near East and Expert on Islam* was held on 7–8 September 2017 in Stockholm in the splendid building of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. The Academy also provided the conference with generous financial support, for which we want to express our sincere gratitude.

The contributions from the conference are published here, supplemented with a few additional chapters by authors who could not be present at the conference. The publication has been long on its way for several reasons, among which was the Covid pandemic. It is a very great pleasure that it has at last come to publication.

Jean-Marie Mérioux was an outstanding scholar, editor of Riccoldo's *Contra legem*, and also an enthusiastic and inspiring personality. When Kurt Villads Jensen first began working on Riccoldo for his master's thesis in the early 1980s, he wrote to a Dominican convent outside Paris for information without knowing that it had been demolished during the French Revolution. Months later, he got an answer from Jean-Marie Mérioux, with the opening "Thanks to God and in spite of the French Postal service, I received your letter", and pages of precious and helpful information. The letter had been redirected to the Dominican convent in Paris that Mérioux happened to be visiting at that time.

Mérioux was invited to participate in the Stockholm conference from the very start of the project. For health reasons, he could not come to Sweden in person, but supported the conference and encouraged its "équipe riccoldienne" by letters over all the years of its planning. Without hesitation, he kindly accepted the invitation to contribute to the proceedings with a revised version of his ground-breaking study and partial French translation of Riccoldo's letters, which the reader will find here in an English translation. His last message was sent to Davide Scotto on 8 January 2019, soon after Epiphany, from the Dominican Convent of Marseilles. May this book be, in a way, the accomplishment of both his wish and our promise.

Cher collègue et ami

Recevez tous mes vœux les meilleurs en cette belle fête de l'Épiphanie: pour vous, vos travaux, et pour toute l'équipe riccoldienne que je n'oublie pas: cette année j'ai encore eu divers problèmes de santé qui m'ont limité dans mes possibilités de travail, mais pas dans mon intérêt pour tout ce qui fut au coeur de la vie de Riccoldo: le salut éternel de tous les hommes. J'espère que l'édition des Actes du Colloque Riccoldo se réalise petit à petit.

Ici à Marseille je retrouve sans cesse des chrétiens qui viennent du pays oriental de Riccoldo: ceux de l'Eglise de l'Orient ou de celle d'Antioche.

Très amicalement à vous et aux collègues "riccoldiens",

Fr Jean-Marie Mérioux

The volume is dedicated to the memory of Jean-Marie Mérioux,
who died in November 2020.

KURT VILLADS JENSEN & DAVIDE SCOTTO

Riccoldo as an Author and His Intellectual Afterlife*

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (c. 1243–1320), Dominican friar, missionary and scholar was truly a remarkable person. He is notable for his extensive travels in difficult and dangerous terrains, for his impetuous and sometimes rash temperament, for his deep interest in theology and how various peoples think about God, and for his learnedness. He is not least remarkable for his prolific writings which enable us to follow him over the years, physically from city to city, but also intellectually, to see how he worked with different genres of writings and treated different topics, and how he applied different methods according to where he was writing and to whom. Riccoldo is also of unusual importance for the European intellectual tradition because of the enormous influence he has had on later Christian studies of Islam and of the Qur'an. He is well known to scholars and has been so for hundreds of years; over the past few decades he has attracted the interest of a rapidly growing number of specialists from various academic fields and various countries.

Riccoldo entered the Dominican Order in 1267¹ when he was probably in his twenties, and was accepted in the Convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Five years later, in 1272, he became *lector* in the apparently newly established *Studium artium* at the Dominicans in Pisa, and in 1287 he was appointed to the Convent in Prato, from where he was transferred back to Florence in 1288.² It is probably while he was in Pisa that he composed his commentary on Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias*.³ As far as ongoing

* Pp. 9–14 written by Kurt Villads Jensen, pp. 15–19 by Davide Scotto.

1 Orlandi 1955, vol. 1, p. 222.

2 Mérigoux 1986, p. 15.

3 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Scripta super II Peryhermenias*.

research allows to be stated, it is a standard introductory textbook within the field, of no great originality,⁴ but up to date with references to Thomas Aquinas and well suited for the basic teaching Riccoldo was undertaking. It is a decent pedagogical presentation but does not earn Riccoldo the merit of being considered a profound philosopher or logician, as has sometimes been claimed by modern scholars. It seems he even found the topic somewhat difficult as he later remembered his study time as laborious.⁵ Riccoldo's introduction to Aristotle exists in only one manuscript and has not previously been studied.⁶

Florence and not least Santa Maria Novella were intellectual and cultural hotspots in the second half of the 13th century,⁷ with numerous connections to the wider Mediterranean world and further. Merchants such as Marco Polo and missionaries travelled along the same routes in these years, and the Florentine Dominicans had connections to brethren and convents in the East.⁸ Florence was also a rapidly growing city with significant social conflicts and lively political debates which featured in sermons, treatises, and diverse works of art. A Florentine who later was to become famous was Dante. He was exiled in 1301 because of his political work and opinions, but before that he may have followed the teaching in Santa Maria Novella and the Franciscan Convent of Santa Croce. It has been claimed that the composition of his *Comedia divina* may have been inspired by Islamic narratives to which he may have been introduced by Riccoldo or others from the religious missionary milieu in Florence.⁹

Florence was a place for innovative experimentation, and it was here in 1288 that Riccoldo decided to become a missionary to the Near East, leaving that same year. On Palm Sunday 1288, Pope Nicolaus IV had celebrated mass in Rome together with Rabban Bar Sauma, the envoy and teacher of the leader of the Nestorian church, Catholikos Mar Yaballaha III. The mass was of great symbolic significance and marked the—today partial—communion between the Catholic Church in the West and the Nestorian Church in the East. On 3 September that same year the Pope promulgated the

4 Thanks to Henrik Lagerlund, Professor in Medieval Philosophy at Stockholm University, for his evaluation of this text.

5 Riccold de Monte Croce, *Pèrgrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient*, pp. 36–38: “quas longas et laboriosas peregrinationes adsumperam adhuc secularis existens, ut addiscerem illas seculares scientias quas liberales appellant.”

6 Shortly described by Bauer in Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem* (2021); Booth 2021, pp. 50–51.

7 For Santa Maria Novella, see Pegoretti 2020; Booth 2021.

8 Loenertz 1932; 1937; George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 4–15; Hautala 2020; Booth 2021.

9 Tolan 2007. On the much-debated topic of Islamic sources in Dante's work, see most recently Celli 2022.

bull *Cum hora jam undecima*, “As it is now in the eleventh hour”, which had already been issued several times during the 13th century by earlier popes.¹⁰ It was a strong exhortation to go to the East and convert all peoples and prepare for the second coming of Christ. Riccoldo left very shortly afterwards, after having applied from the Master of the Dominican Order permission to missionize and possibly to become a martyr. He set out for the Holy Land and reached Acre either in December 1288 or very early in 1289.

Riccoldo first visited the holy places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and later in 1289 continued his travels through Turkey and Armenia. In 1290 he was in Mosul. When Acre as the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land fell to the Mamluks in 1291, Riccoldo went to Baghdad where he spent probably several years studying Arabic and the Qur’an. He claimed that his travel companions—of whom we know nothing—left him alone in the remotest part of the Orient: “Et relictus sum solus in Baldaco a sociis in profundis partibus orientis.” In 1294 or 1295 the Mongol ruler, the ilkhan Ghaza, converted to Islam. For a short period, Christians began to be persecuted, and that might have led Riccoldo to leave Baghdad and travel through the desert in disguise as a camel driver.¹¹ On the other hand, he might also have stayed in Baghdad during the 1290s until he returned to the Italian Peninsula. We simply do not know.

Riccoldo was back in Florence by the end of 1299, recalled home “to explain some dubious points to the papal see.”¹² He had the intention and the hope of returning to the East and therefore continued to grow a beard, but spent the remaining years of his life in the Italian Peninsula, mostly Florence, until his death on 31 October 1320. He taught, preached, and functioned for a short while as prior, and he was also a prolific writer. He wrote five letters to the Triumphant Church (*Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem*), a travel description (*Liber peregrinationis*), a refutation of Islam (*Contra legem Sarracenorum*), and a treatise on the different peoples of the East, their beliefs and how to missionize among them (*Libellus ad naciones orientales*). From various internal criteria, Emilio Panella came to the conclusion that they were all written within a couple of years after Riccoldo had returned to Florence, i.e., between 1300 and 1301.¹³ It is, however, possible that it took around ten years for Riccoldo to finish them all, as argued by Phillip Booth, so that the *Ad naciones orientales* was completed only in 1310. Booth also stresses that the composition of Riccoldo’s works was not a linear process

10 Hautala 2020, pp. 40–41; Schmieder 2000.

11 Mérigoux 1986, pp. 26–27; cf. Mérigoux’s chapter in this volume.

12 Orlandi 1955, p. xx “Demum pro quibusdam dubiis articulis per sedem apostolicam declarandis ad Ytalie partes remeans cum proposito redeundi, propter quod et barbam plurimo tempore nutriebat [...]”

13 Panella 1986, pp. xxxviii–xl.

in which the completion of one was followed by the inception of another. They all underwent revisions, and new information and comments were added by Riccoldo.¹⁴

Other works including sermons are known to have existed but are now lost. Some writings have been ascribed to Riccoldo erroneously, while others are still disputed. The *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Sarracenos et Alchoranum* was edited in 2017 by Daniel Pachurka who argues that it is Riccoldo's thorough reworking of a treatise by the Catalan Dominican Ramon Martí.¹⁵ In the present volume, Pachurka analyses the *Tractatus* and its refutation of the prophethood of Mohammad and discusses how and why the original text by Ramon Martí has been changed.

The five letters to the Triumphant Church were written while Riccoldo was still in Baghdad, at least according to his own words: they were *scripta in Oriente*. They may have been edited and polished and only finalized when he was back at Santa Maria Novella, but they reflect Riccoldo's grave concern and spiritual anxiety after the fall of Acre in 1291 and the conversion of Baghdad's ruler to Islam in 1295. They are lamentations in the Old Testament tradition, meditations on the will of God and His plans for humanity, but also rhetorically high style, almost sermons, in order to comfort the believers: Persevere, in spite of troubles, in spite of what seems to be Muslim superiority. The letters have been preserved in only one manuscript (MS Vat. Lat. 7317),¹⁶ but they have attracted much attention from modern scholars. Some have read them as revealing Riccoldo's inner feelings, others as a rhetorical exercise.¹⁷ In this volume, Jean-Marie Mérigoux places the letters in context and provides translations of lengthy passages that allow us to get an impression of the style of the letters. Davide Scotto demonstrates through a close reading of the letters that Riccoldo was firm in faith in spite of Muslim success, and in spite of his strong questioning and accusations against God and the saints in Heaven.

The travel description, *Liber peregrinationis*, was probably begun while Riccoldo was in the Orient and emended and updated when he was back in Florence.¹⁸ It is a rich and interesting work with several diverse themes and descriptions of the peoples Riccoldo met. The chapters concern the Holy Land, including Bethlehem and Jerusalem; Turkey and the Turks; Mongols; Persia; Kurds; Mosul; Jacobites and Nestorians; Muslims and Islam; monsters in Baghdad; and Sabeans. Riccoldo's route from Jerusalem to Baghdad was not the most direct, but one that enabled him to visit some Dominican

¹⁴ Booth 2021, pp. 56–57.

¹⁵ Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum*.

¹⁶ Scotto 2023.

¹⁷ Panella 1989; Weltecke 2007; Shagrir 2012; Bauer 2021; Scotto 2021a.

¹⁸ Riccoldo later added references to his *Contra legem Sarracenorum* in the margin to *Liber peregrinationis*, cf. Kappler's edition, pp. 200–201.

convents on his way.¹⁹ The travel description is known from seven manuscripts and was translated into French and Italian in the Middle Ages. The first part contains a relation of Riccoldo's visit to the sacred sites of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and follows the traditions of pilgrimage descriptions to the Holy Land, as discussed in the chapter by Susanna Fischer in this volume. She stresses the performative aspect, that Riccoldo should not only see sites with his own eyes, but also perform rituals or acts that made him and his fellow pilgrims actual participants in biblical events. Riccoldo was also innovative in appealing to emotions in order to actively involve the reader, by shedding more tears than was common in pilgrims of his time.

The *Liber peregrinationis* contains plentiful and often unique observations on the Turks, Mongols and Kurds which have only sporadically been explored by researchers, and referred to mainly in general surveys of Mongol history or of medieval Christian understandings of Mongols.²⁰ The penultimate chapter on monsters in Baghdad is both interesting and captivating but has apparently not been studied specifically. The last chapter on the Sabaeans is the first mention by a Western European author of this "sect", but short and with little information.²¹

The longest part of the *Liber peregrinationis* concerns Muslims and Islam and is a description and reflection of Riccoldo's time in Baghdad. It is a dynamic juxtaposition of two interrelated but contradictory elements: Riccoldo felt at ease among Muslims and enjoyed their company, their sincerity in religious matters and their societal institutions such as the asylums for the mentally ill. Their religious law, however, he considered confused, irrational, violent and leading to perdition. He wondered why Muslims living with a law of death could behave so well, while Christians with the law of life sinned. What Riccoldo actually meant has been much discussed. Did he have an universalist hope of religious dialogue, perhaps developed during his stay in Baghdad, or did he use the positive descriptions of Muslims as a rhetorical device to reproach Christians?²²

The chapters in *Liber peregrinationis* describing Riccoldo's personal meetings and religious discussions with Eastern Christians have attracted only little attention:²³ maybe because they are short, maybe because they are not very sophisticated.²⁴ Most scholars have treated this part of the *Liber peregrinationis* together with the descrip-

19 George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 11–12.

20 E.g., Jackson 2018. More detailed, Schiel 2011.

21 Puech 1949; Lupieri 2016.

22 Discussed in detail by George-Tvrtković 2012.

23 Richard 1977, pp. 107–113.

24 As argued by Teeuwen 2012.

tions of Eastern Christians in *Ad naciones orientales*.²⁵ Kurt Villads Jensen discusses Riccoldo's two very different working methods in these two works in his chapter in this volume. Jana Valtrová in her contribution compares the conversion strategies of Riccoldo to those of contemporary missionaries, not only among Eastern Christians but also Jews, Muslims and Mongols.

The work of Riccoldo that saw the widest distribution was his large refutation of Islam as a religion, his *Contra legem Sarracenorum*.²⁶ It has survived in c. 30 manuscripts from the Middle Ages, was translated, was printed, and has had an immense influence upon Western European understanding of Islam up to the 18th century and even later, and beyond Western Europe—we will come back to this point later in this introduction. Riccoldo studied the Qur'an in Arabic when he was in Baghdad, and had begun to translate it. A Qur'an manuscript with Riccoldo's annotations is today kept in Paris, but he never finished the translation (MS ar. 384, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France). *Contra legem Sarracenorum* was written when Riccoldo was back in the Italian Peninsula with access to several sources that he reformulated and incorporated into his own. Anthony Lappin in this volume shows how carefully Riccoldo studied the material about Islam collected by Abbot Peter the Venerable of Cluny in the 1140s, including the glosses to Robert of Ketton's translation of the Qur'an.

The last of Riccoldo's works was his *Libellus ad naciones orientales*, divided into chapters on the Eastern Christians (actually only Nestorians and Jacobites), Jews and Mongols. For the Saracens, Riccoldo simply referred to his *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, "where their religious law has been refuted by the law itself."²⁷ The part on Eastern Christians has, as mentioned, been analysed by only a few scholars recently. The chapter on the Mongols is partially lifted from Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, and has also in this context only been sporadically referred to.

The chapter on the Jews includes references to Petrus Comestor's *Glossa ordinaria* and other works, but it is primarily Riccoldo's discussion with his fellow Dominican Ramon Martí who wrote *Capistrum Judeorum* in 1267. Riccoldo incorporated, but also changed and sometimes directly argued against Ramon Martí in his chapter on the Jews. It has only been very sporadically explored by contemporary scholars.²⁸

As a conclusion to this handbook, Riccoldo added five general rules for missionaries: not to rely on interpreters because they know too little of the correct theological terms; to argue from the Bible text and not rely on Latin exegetical works that are not

25 Rouxpetel 2015; 2016.

26 Mérigoux 1986.

27 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Libellus ad naciones orientales*, III, 184: "vbi per legem eorum confutatur lex ipsa."

28 Walker 2011.

considered authorities by non-Catholics; to know those you argue against and what their main dogmatic errors are; to begin missionizing among the élite and leaders and not among the commoners; and finally that all this is of no avail if the missionary himself is not of strong faith and firm in his devotion to the missionary task.²⁹ In his introduction to *Ad naciones orientales*, Riccoldo explained that those who are closest to Catholic Christianity, the Eastern Christians, are the most difficult to convert, and those furthest away, the pagan Mongols, are the easiest. This introductory hierarchical ordering of theologically non-Catholics and the five practical pieces of advice to missionaries have been noted and discussed by many. They can be considered a summary of Riccoldo's experience from his practical missionary life.

In the scholarship of the centuries-long history of Christian–Muslim relations, the multifaceted reception of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's literary works—his “intellectual afterlife”—has been far less investigated compared to his earthly experience as a missionary among the Muslims and his observations on a variety of religious denominations living in the Near East. Through the late medieval and the early modern times, Riccoldo was widely known, appreciated and later criticized primarily for his harsh polemic against the Qur'an, i.e., his pre-eminent *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. Evidence of its dissemination and extensive use dates to approximately half a century after Riccoldo's death and relates to both Latin and Greek Christendom. Sometime after 1385, the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaeologus read the Greek translation of the *Liber* made by the Greek theologian Demetrios Kydones, which was retranslated into Latin by Bartolomeo Piceno or Picerno, the former village of Monte Arduo, at the beginning of the 16th century, achieving great success in Europe. Around the end of the 14th century, Manuel II resorted to the Greek version of *Contra legem* to write his much-debated *Dialogues with a Learned Persian*, which became known worldwide after Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger) quoted it in his controversial lecture on *Faith, Reason, and the University—Memories and Reflections*, held at the University of Regensburg on 12 September 2006.³⁰

After his investigation of Riccoldo's annotations to an Arabic copy of the Qur'an (the above-mentioned MS ar. 384),³¹ Thomas Burman has suggested that throughout the 14th century, *Contra legem* was known amongst a few Dominican friars based in

29 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Libellus ad naciones orientales*, V.

30 To our knowledge, no one among the historians and theologians reflecting on the role of Islam in Ratzinger's lecture has noticed that behind Manuel II's conception of Islam as a self-proclaimed religion based on violence and irrationality was the emperor's reading of Riccoldo's *Contra legem*. See, e.g., Wenzel 2007; Mazas & Palasciano 2017.

31 Burman 2007. The full text of the *marginalia* was later published by Martínez Gázquez & Déroche 2010.

Tuscany, having been allegedly employed for the education of missionaries.³² Between the 14th and 15th centuries, the Italian Peninsula, the Kingdom of France and the southern part of the German-Roman Empire became the main settings of Riccoldo's dissemination. In this volume, Jacob Langeloh considers the previously unstudied case of the Croatian Dominican friar, John of Ragusa, who at the time of the Council of Basel extensively employed Riccoldo's polemic to draw a treatise against Islam and made two short writings (*cedule*) to stir a doctrinal debate among Muslims and hopefully convert them.³³ In his chapter, Ulli Roth in turn shows how the German humanist Nicholas of Cusa drew from Riccoldo's *Contra legem* and explicitly mentioned his name in the first prologue to his well-known *Cribratio Alkorani*, finished in Rome by early 1462, i.e., some months after Pope Pius II wrote his controversial letter to the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II, calling for his conversion to the Christian faith. Nicholas of Cusa quotes several Christian treatises against Islam claiming that in his opinion, Riccoldo's polemic provides the most refined contribution to the field among the writings he could collect between Rome and Byzantium.

At that juncture, the popularity of *Contra legem* had already reached the papacy in Rome, included in a first group of manuscripts that joined the newly built Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, conceived by Pope Nicholas V and later inaugurated by Pope Sixtus IV. The manuscripts would later form the Latin section of the papal library. The descriptions of the manuscripts listed in the papal inventories show that a copy of *Contra legem*, today unfortunately lost, was among the books owned by the Italian humanist Tommaso Parentucelli, who from 1447 was Pope Nicholas V, a strenuous promoter of the crusade against the Nasrid Muslims of Granada and the Ottoman Turks. Among the books related to Islam kept in Pope Nicholas V's library, Riccoldo's treatise lay alongside manuscript copies of John of Damascus's *Liber de heresibus*, Peter the Venerable's *Corpus Cluniacense*, Thomas Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles* and *Declaracio quorundam articulorum contra Grecos, Armenos et Sarracenos*, and Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*,³⁴ which in turn conveys a number of observations on the early history and beliefs of the "sect of the Saracens" that have proved extremely influential upon both Latin and French readerships.³⁵ Considering the previously unknown annotations to the Latin Qur'an by Nicholas of Cusa, which José Martínez

32 Burman 2015; 2018.

33 The texts underlying Ragusa's interest in Islam have been published in Langeloh 2019.

34 See Manfredi 1994 *ad indicem*, respectively No. 776; Nos 545, 555, 754; No. 775, i.e., the present Vat. Lat. 4071, handing down a copy of Robert of Ketton's Latin Qur'an annotated by Nicholas of Cusa; Nos 220, 222, 229, 235; Nos 344–346 (three volumes).

35 See Ninitte 2017.

Gázquez has brought to light,³⁶ it would not be surprising that some others of the pope's manuscripts—including Riccoldo's *Contra legem*—were read by Cusa when he was in Rome as a cardinal and actively participated in Pius II's crusade campaign against the Ottoman Turks.

In addition to his acclaim as a polemicist, Riccoldo was known as an authoritative source of information on religious beliefs and anthropological features of various, and sometimes barely known, religious denominations in the Near East. It is no coincidence that his name was and is often correlated—whether coherently or not is a matter of debate—to other well-known medieval authors of travel literature such as Marco Polo, John Mendeille or William of Rubruck. In this volume, Marco Robecchi shows that, throughout the 14th century, Riccoldo's book of travel, known as *Liber peregrinationis* or *Itinerarium*, circulated between the Italian Peninsula, the Kingdom of France, and the German Empire, having been translated from Latin at least twice into Italian and once into French by the Benedictine monk Jean le Long d'Ypres.³⁷

At the end of the Middle Ages, the setting for Riccoldo's afterlife broadened from the Italian Peninsula and French regions to the rest of Western Europe, with literary trajectories and theological implications that are worthy of investigation. At the dawn of the 16th century, a Castilian translation of *Contra legem* was made in the Iberian Peninsula by two anonymous Hieronymite monks. According to the colophon of MS R/4037 kept at the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid, this full translation was printed in Seville in 1501 by well-known German typographers and, as its engraved frontispiece shows, it was allegedly used to preach against the Moriscos soon after the first wave of forced conversions in Granada (February 1502). Considering the religious affiliation of the two anonymous translators, Cándida Ferrero has recently suggested that the promotion of this Castilian version of *Contra legem* must be related to the ecclesiastical entourage of the powerful archbishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera, himself a Hieronymite monk, the confessor of Queen Isabel of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon, and most importantly, an alleged supporter of the peaceful evangelization of Muslims in Castile.³⁸

A few years later, the Catholic monarch Ferdinand of Aragon ordered a second Latin translation of Riccoldo's *Contra legem* from the above-mentioned Bartolomeo Picerno, who based his work on Kydones's translation of *Contra legem* into Greek. The translation was printed in 1506.³⁹ Two decades later, Riccoldo's *Contra legem* was

36 Martínez Gázquez 2016.

37 Robecchi ed. 2020.

38 Ferrero Hernández 2021. For a reconsideration of Talavera's "tolerant" attitude towards Muslims and Jewish converts, see most recently Scotto 2021b.

39 George-Tvrtković 2007, p. 66.

copied and translated into Italian in Venice and disseminated together with other religious texts aiming at Church reform. In his chapter for this volume, Eduardo Fernández Guerrero, who has identified and examined this previously unstudied translation and compendium, elaborated upon the literary role of Riccoldo's treatise within a broader corpus of writings by the religious writer Paolo Angelo—mainly known for his "Life of Scanderbeg" (1539)—all of which is connected to the relation between Venice and the Ottomans as well as to the Catholic reaction to both Lutheran and Islamic doctrines.

In the early years of the Reformation, a copy of Riccoldo's polemic was obsessively underlined and carefully read by Martin Luther, who annotated the margins of a printed edition of it issued in Basel in 1507, now kept at the Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (MS. Dresd.A.130.a). As showed by Johannes Ehmann in his chapter, in 1542 Luther translated the full Latin text of *Contra legem* into German and later drew from its most biting arguments to write his politically motivated pamphlets against the Turks, whom he regarded as the Antichrist, deeming them as wicked as the Roman pope. While translating from Latin, he introduced into the German text reshaped expressions, in fact distortions, which would be worth investigating systematically as a further episode of the creative implementation of Riccoldo's thinking in an inter-theological and inter-faith context.

The same Latin version stemming from the Greek translation by Kydones, together with Robert of Ketton's translation of the Qur'an into Latin, became part of the popular collection of writings on Islam published in 1543 by the Swiss humanist Theodor Bibliander. This collection of writings, mainly based on Peter the Venerable's *Corpus Cluniacense*, was extensively referenced in Europe by 16th- and 17th-century humanists, theologians and polemicists. The case of the French orientalist and cabbalist Guillaume Postel, who provided a universalistic and so to speak constructive interpretation of Riccoldo's treatise, is carefully examined in this volume by Rita George-Tvrtković. As Hartmut Bobzin has claimed, the influence of Riccoldo's reading of the Qur'an lasted until the late 17th century, when the French orientalist Adrian Reland (1676–1718) wrote his informative treatise on the Islamic religion, *De religione Mohammedica* (Utrecht 1705), wherein he convincingly criticizes what Christian theologians up to his time had stated on Islamic doctrine and ideas, calling for a non-mediated study of Arabic sources on Islam.⁴⁰

Monsieur Reland did not know that, two centuries before him, a colleague from the Iberian Peninsula had already criticized polemical Christian literature on Islam, especially theological writings produced by Dominican authors. Juan de Segovia

40 Bobzin 1993, pp. 196, 203.

(1393–1458), an esteemed Castilian theologian at the University of Salamanca and an eminent member of the Council of Basel, later isolated in the Duchy of Savoy, had addressed the same claim to the Western Church in the mid-15th century. Stating that Muslims' view of Christian doctrines had been distorted by the Crusades and that Christians' view of Muslims had been misunderstood by Christian polemics, Segovia had avoided quoting explicitly from Riccoldo in his writings on Islam and instead had promoted a trilingual edition of the Qur'an drawn together with the help of a Muslim scholar, which is today unfortunately lost. In his chapter in this book, Roth considers the case of Segovia as well as that of Nicholas of Cusa. Segovia's efforts in translating the Qur'an and writing on the peaceful conversion of the Muslims, however, were not enough to diminish Riccoldo's influence.⁴¹ Seen for long as the crown jewel of the medieval practice of *refutatio*, *Contra legem* was replaced, at least amongst learned Western readers, by Ludovico Marracci's monumental translation of the Qur'an issued in 1698, a philologically refined text that was extensively based on Islamic sources, tafsīr collections in particular.⁴²

As a mediator between religions and geographies, the name of Riccoldo was destined to travel beyond preconceived borders, both physical and symbolic. Latin Christendom and Western Europe represent just one part of his intellectual afterlife. As demonstrated in the well-documented chapter by Stefan Schreiner, an abridged Polish translation of Riccoldo's *Contra legem* was made by the Jesuit missionary Teofil Rutka in the mid-17th century as means to preach against the Ottoman Turks, who exerted a persisting influence in terms of cultural habits (dress code, food practices, arts) upon the nobility and the learned élite of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁴³ Moreover, Schreiner shows how besides a Polish version of *Contra legem* included in what can be defined as "a Polish Bibliander", Riccoldo's works were translated into Russian; and how in the modern Russian theological literature and historiography, Riccoldo's intellectual legacy followed, with respect to Western Europe, a parallel and in many respects previously unknown path.

41 On Segovia's attempt at converting Muslims "by peace and doctrine" (*via pacis et doctrine*), see Scotto 2022.

42 Felici 2007; Gleis & Tottoli 2016.

43 Schreiner 2015.

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MISSION AND CONVERSION

KURT VILLADS JENSEN

Authority versus Personal Experience

What Was New in Riccoldo's Writings?

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce was a prolific author who left several works that were the results of years of study, years of travels, and years of writing and rewriting. Together, his works offer an unusual opportunity for following the methods of a medieval author, and when studying them, it soon becomes clear that there are great differences between the various descriptions of peoples that Riccoldo provides in his various works. He repeatedly claimed to base his opinions upon his own observations and studies, but in reality often referred to other authorities: sometimes he quoted them almost verbatim, sometimes he reworked them, sometimes we can find no model and must believe he built on his own experience. It seems a paradox, an inconsistency, but there may sometimes be specific reasons for the variation in methods. It is the aim of this chapter to discuss some concrete examples of Riccoldo's working methods, illustrated by the way he described different peoples of the East. It will not include his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, nor his *Epistole ad Ecclesiam Triumphantem*, although they could easily be analysed along the same lines as follows.

TURKS, KURDS AND MONGOLS

In a short chapter in *Liber peregrinationis* Riccoldo described the Turks he met, living underground as moles. They were Muslims, a wild and tough people, especially their women. A pregnant woman who followed the same caravan as Riccoldo gave birth in silence in the evening and the next morning followed the travel company on foot. The

Turks hated the Greeks and demanded that they always brought with them a bridle to signify that they were under the control of the Turks.¹

The Kurds are described as half-naked savages with long beards, excelling in murder, robbery, and breaking oaths. They were Muslims, hating Christians and especially religious persons, but nevertheless they helped Riccoldo and his company out of the snow, warmed them at fires and fed them with honey from the forests and “manna from heaven”. Their habits were barbaric; if anyone drowned in a river, they punished it by collecting water from it in sacks and beating them, or by dividing the river into many smaller streams to make its way longer and more laborious.²

The chapters on Turks and Kurds are short, but characteristic for much of Riccoldo’s description of others. It is a blend of personal experience while travelling, of common stereotypes of the time, for example, on the wild nature of Kurds, and of hearsay, such as the information on the Turks demanding the bridle of the Greeks.

The section on Mongols is much longer³ and more detailed on their habits, looks, religion and history. They are ugly, cruel, laying waste the land and feared by all other nations. Heavy drinking and vomiting from drinking is considered honourable by them, physical punishment a minor inconvenience, and all show total obedience towards their lords. The Mongols have no interest in cities or permanent dwellings, and believe that God has chosen them to conquer and dominate the entire world.

Riccoldo described in some detail the Mongol women who enjoyed a much freer status than in other societies he knew, and how they helped the men in warfare and rode their horses in the same way as men. Mongols were polygamous but one of the wives was the primary wife and the others ranked rather as concubines. Mongol women were no less cruel than the men, and some had demanded a traitor to be handed over to them so they could cook him.

Mongols believe in an afterlife similar to the present, Riccoldo stated, and therefore they bury their dead with food and the mighty ones with slaves to serve them after death. They hold in high honour some religious men called *baxitas*, dark-skinned individuals from India. Riccoldo was probably referring to Buddhists rather than shamans.⁴ One of them claimed to be able to fly, but he was only walking in the air without touching the ground, Riccoldo remarked, which does not seem to have impressed him.

How was it possible that such a large and mighty people could have remained hidden for so long, so nobody knew about them, to suddenly burst forth and conquer

1 Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, pp. 76–78.

2 Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, pp. 118–120.

3 Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, pp. 68–114.

4 Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, n. 142, p. 93.

such a large part of the world? According to Riccoldo, they had been hidden behind mountains and only found a way out when the time had come for them to play their role in salvation history. Some think they were the tribes that had been kept out of civilized lands by Alexander the Great and his iron gates, some that they were the Gog and Magog that heralded the end of time. Riccoldo prudently leaves the drawing of the conclusion to more learned persons: “Solutionem relinquo potiori.”⁵

Riccoldo wrote about the Mongols in his *Liber peregrinationis*, and he included a short résumé of his own text in *Libellus ad nationes orientales*. But where did he get his information from? Juliane Schiel argued in 2011 that all Riccoldo’s information on Mongols was common knowledge circulating in Western Europe at the time. The only place Riccoldo contributed something of his own was in three paragraphs on the origin of the Mongols and their conviction of having a heavenly mandate to conquer the world.⁶ Schiel refers to the many marginal notes to this part of the *Liber peregrinationis* in the manuscript in Berlin, added by Riccoldo himself to substantiate his arguments, mainly with scriptural references.⁷

Schiel is probably right. It is not possible to point to one single source that Riccoldo was dependent upon, but almost all he wrote about the Mongols was well known at that time. It is also striking that he only in one instance refers to his own experience, namely that he had seen Mongol women riding into towns armed with bows and arrows.⁸ In other works, he repeatedly relates what he saw and what he did, and with whom he talked. Not so here on the Mongols. There is no reason to doubt that Riccoldo actually met Mongols during his travels and had ample opportunity to talk to them or to collect information about them from other locals he encountered, but he does not mention that at all. There is no indication in his works that Riccoldo held any controversial or extraordinary views on Mongols, which he did not want to express, so it is puzzling why he did not add any personal touches or experience to this part of his story.

MUSLIMS AND ISLAM

There is a remarkable difference between Riccoldo’s attitude towards Muslims and towards Islam, and between his description of Islam in *Liber peregrinationis* and *Contra legem Sarracenorum*.⁹

5 Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 98.

6 Schiel 2011, pp. 136–137.

7 Berlin Staatsbibliothek Lat. 4°, 466, fols 8v–9r.

8 Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 88.

9 Discussed in George-Tvrtković 2012.

The chapters on Muslims in *Liber peregrinationis* are intended by Riccoldo to be short, precise, and positive, but formed in order to shame Christians rather than praise Muslims: "Referimus hic breuiter quedam opera perfectionis Sarracenorum magis ad confusionem Christianorum quam ad commendationem Sarracenorum".¹⁰ Riccoldo referred to his own impressions from travelling and especially from the years he spent in Baghdad. He praised the Muslim educational system with schools and stipends for students who are content with bread and water and to study in poverty. He was impressed by Muslim devotion and sincerity in praying; in their helping prisoners and poor by collecting money and by almsgiving, and in their reverence towards God and prophets, such that they collect paper wherever they find it on the streets, in order that the name of God shall not be trodden upon. Their manners are sincere, and they are welcoming to foreigners and loving towards other Muslims.

Riccoldo constantly referred to his own observation: "We carefully followed their work", "We were surprised when we saw and experienced", "We checked out [*probavi*]" or "I cannot remember that I ever heard". Riccoldo apparently appreciated the Muslim lifestyle and the important role religion had in daily as well as in public life. At the same time, he was obviously exaggerating, for example, when he claimed that Muslims abhorred killing and bloodshed so much that they would not even kill a chicken, but had to stop foreigners on the street and ask them to do it. Nevertheless, Riccoldo added, they would expose themselves to any danger to defend their mortiferous religion.¹¹

When turning to the religion, the impression is exactly the opposite. Islam is, according to Riccoldo in *Liber peregrinationis*, simple, confused, inscrutable, irrational, and violent. It is simple to enter and live in: the only thing required is to enunciate the Islamic creed "There is no god except God", to which Riccoldo dryly commented that it is a true proposition of anything: "There is no dog that is not a dog", etc. The Qur'an is confused with no logical order, Riccoldo wrote, it is inscrutable in the sense that nobody can interpret it fully, it is filled with contradictory statements and irrational claims, and it is founded on, spread and sustained by violence. Before Muslim preachers begin their sermons, they put the sword on the pulpit to symbolize that Islam began by the sword and will end by the sword.¹² In addition, Riccoldo argues that Muhammad was not a true prophet and did not live in the way that a true prophet was expected to.

Riccoldo refers to his own experience only once in this section of Islam. He claimed that caliph of Baghdad had forbidden the study of all works other than the Qur'an,

¹⁰ Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 158.

¹¹ Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, pp. 168–170.

¹² Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 192.

and therefore "We found that they knew very little about the theological truth and the subtleties of philosophy."¹³ His main sources for knowledge on Islam in *Liber peregrinationis* were his own study of the Qur'an and probably some commentaries, but apparently not much from other Christian authors.

The *Contra legem* was written when Riccoldo had returned to the Italian Peninsula, and it is very different in its composition. It consists of 17 chapters treating much of the same themes as in *Liber peregrinationis*, but stressing now that Islam is a continuation of old heresies, and contrasts Muhammad to Christ. The *Contra legem* is carefully composed, quoting or paraphrasing numerous Christian authors. At least 20 quotations are taken directly from an older Christian polemic work against Islam, the *Contrarietas alipholica*,¹⁴ which is also paraphrased in at least another 30 places. There are references to several Christian authorities, including Thomas Aquinas, Peter the Venerable and the Cluniac *corpus* on Islam, and to many classics such as Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, Aristotle and others. Some may have been quoted directly by Riccoldo from their own works, others probably indirectly by being lifted from other authorities. When Riccoldo referred to the Qur'an, he used others' translations as well as his own. He emphasizes his own experience: "I studied their religion again and again, and I eagerly and often discussed with their teachers in the schools, and I began by experience more and more to understand the perversity of this religion."¹⁵ In reality, however, Riccoldo relied more on others' experiences than on his own in *Contra legem*, much more so than in *Liber peregrinationis*.

J E W S

Riccoldo showed little interest in Jews or Judaism in his *Liber peregrinationis* although he had had ample opportunity to meet and converse with them during his travel. He mentions almost in passing that he had a religious dispute with Jews in their synagogue in Mosul and won over them, but gives no further details.¹⁶ However, he had to include them and discuss Judaism in his *Libellus ad nationes orientales* to complete the list of peoples that future missionaries to the East might encounter and try to

13 Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 186.

14 Burman 1994, pp. 240–385.

15 Riccoldo, *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, p. 62: "legem eorum ... relegens, et studioso in scolis et cum magistris ipsorum frequenter conferens, magis ac magis per experientiam apprehendi perversitatem predictae legis."

16 "Ibi [in Mosul] sunt multi Iudei et uicimus eos publica disputatione in sinagoga eorum." Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 122.

convert:¹⁷ it is a description and analysis devoid of any reference to personal experience, but nevertheless a careful and thorough study. It is based very much on the Catalan Dominican Ramon Martí's *Capistrum Judeorum* from the 1260s,¹⁸ but Riccoldo was not simply copying. He included several other works, on Jews and generally on Old Testament exegesis, and he discussed Ramon's text and sometimes disagreed with it. Riccoldo's aim was probably to create a shorter and more accessible work for missionaries than Ramon's lengthy and learned treatise. He concentrated on the central element in any Christian theological discussion with Judaism: whether the Messiah has come or not.

The Messiah is Jesus Christ, and Riccoldo argues from the Old Testament with reference 1) to the prophecy of Jacob in Genesis 49:10, that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah until the Messiah comes, but Jews have no longer any ruler so the Messiah must already have come; 2) to the prophecy in Daniel (9:23–24) that 70 weeks is given the Jews to repent, but—dependent upon how one counts—the 70 weeks were exactly the time from Daniel to Jesus; and 3) to a long range of Christological references in the Old Testament.

Jews are difficult to convert, Riccoldo stated, because they are blinded so they cannot see the truth, according to Isaiah 6:10, and because Christians and Jews disagree on how to translate some of the central passages in the Old Testament. On the sceptre in Jacob's prophecy, Riccoldo adds that "this passage is difficult, and therefore it is interpreted differently by different theologians. But it is certain, that the Hebrew text does not read exactly as Jerome translated it."¹⁹ Sometimes when it comes to the Hebrew text, Riccoldo refers to Ramon Martí and not to his own reading, so it is uncertain how much Hebrew he actually knew.²⁰

Ramon Martí is referred to or quoted at least 17 times, and many references to *Glossa ordinaria* seem to be lifted by Riccoldo from Ramon and not directly from the *Glossa*. In addition, Riccoldo read and incorporated arguments from Jerome's *Prologue to the Pentateuch* and *Prologue to Daniel*, from Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, from Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, and from Petrus Comestor's *Historia Scolastica*. In addition, he refers to Petrus Alfonsi, Bede, Tertullian, and to the Old Testament text of *Septuaginta*, references that may be secondary and not directly from the authors themselves.

¹⁷ See now Walker 2011.

¹⁸ Raymundus Martin, *Raimundi Martini Capistrum Iudaeorum*.

¹⁹ Riccoldo, *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, III, 78: "quod illa auctoritas habet difficultatem. Et ideo dissimiliter exponitur a diuersis doctoribus. Et certum est, quod in ebraica ueritate non totaliter sonat, sicut Ieronimus transtulit."

²⁰ Riccoldo, *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, III, 121.

Riccoldo's chapter on the Jews is a precise scholarly work, based on careful and balanced study of other specialists and of the relevant source material—the Old Testament—and it has a clear purpose: to distil what Riccoldo saw as the most important arguments that could be used in discussing religion with Jews and missionizing among them. It contains no reference to Riccoldo's own experience.

EASTERN CHRISTIANS

Riccoldo was naturally much interested in the Eastern Christians he met, especially the Jacobites and the Nestorians. In the *Liber peregrinationis*, he says that he had discussions with them, that he preached among them in Arabic, and he claimed to have converted the leader of the Jacobites, but the common monks and believers protested so vehemently that it became dangerous and Riccoldo and his co-travellers had to leave hurriedly. Riccoldo concentrated upon describing rites more than theology.

The Jacobites confess only to God, not to a priest, and only their sins in general, not specific ones. The last unction is administered to the dead at burial, not to the terminally ill. They use leavened bread and allow divorce. Riccoldo also briefly described their baptismal ritual, but most of his writing on the Jacobites concern his discussions with them and his visit to one of their monasteries. He writes next to nothing about their theology, except that they do not believe in purgatory and that they, just as the Nestorians, understand the three persons of God as three *qualitates*, in Arabic *thelathe saffat*.²¹

Also concerning the Nestorians, Riccoldo is much more detailed on the rites than on the theology. Nestorians mix leavened and unleavened bread, they also allow divorce, and they circumcize women “licet non potuerimus bene intelligere quid incidebant.”²² Some of the Nestorians could predict the future, could divine what Riccoldo himself had experienced, and many of them could perform miracles.²³ From studying “old Muslim books”, Riccoldo had discovered that the Nestorians had been friends of Muhammad. Indirectly he claimed that Islam could be a heresy inspired by Nestorianism; and therefore the Nestorians could still live protected and secure in Muslim countries.

Riccoldo was, however, slightly more interested in Nestorian theology than in Jacobite. He discussed the concepts of “persona” in Chaldean and Arabic and claimed that Nestorians in Arabic confessed that Jesus is one person and in Chaldean that He

²¹ Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 132.

²² Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 146.

²³ Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 148.

is two.²⁴ These concepts are written in the main manuscript of *Liber peregrinationis* in Arabic and Syriac letters, apparently added by Riccoldo himself. He also claimed that he had discussed theology with Nestorians on several occasions, and had first been prohibited to preach because he persuaded too many of the truth of Latin Catholicism. Later, he met with the Nestorian patriarch, who must have been Mar Yahballah III, and some of the most outstanding Nestorian theologians and bishops and archbishops. They could not answer Riccoldo's questions about faith, and they had no counter-questions. After this Riccoldo and his followers were allowed to preach openly in the Nestorian churches, and many of the most learned Nestorians converted, but only in secret. They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.²⁵

There is no reason to doubt that Riccoldo met with Eastern Christians on several occasions and studied their theology and discussed with them, but he is unfortunately not very concrete when it comes to what their particular beliefs were, and what was said and used as arguments.

In the *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, written when he was back in Florence, the situation is the opposite. The chapter on the Eastern Christians consists of 103 paragraphs, of which almost all are concerned with Jacobite and Nestorian understandings of the divinity of Christ, how and why these are wrong, and how they can be refuted. This analysis is, however, not the result of Riccoldo's studies in the Orient or of his many discussions with Eastern Christians. It is almost all copied from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles*, book 4, cc. 34–36 and 49.²⁶

Riccoldo abbreviated and in a few instances reordered the text of Thomas Aquinas. *Libellus ad nationes orientales* II, 85–93 is a paraphrasing of *Summa contra Gentiles*, lib. IV, cap. 36; but the last argument of Thomas Aquinas is presented by Riccoldo as the first. Some conclusions of arguments in Thomas are only rendered as “ergo idem quod prius”, as, for example, in II, 11 and II, 12, instead of Thomas' “Ipsa igitur est persona et hypostasis illius hominis, quae est persona et hypostasis Verbi Dei”, or “Oportet igitur personam et hypostasim illius hominis loquentis esse personam et hypostasim Verbi Dei.”

Abbreviations are common. The words in italics in the following examples were omitted by Riccoldo:

²⁴ Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 140.

²⁵ Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 154.

²⁶ The following discussion of dependency upon Thomas Aquinas is taken from my introduction to the online edition of *Libellus ad nationes orientales*.

Libellus ad nationes orientales II, 17: “Adhuc, uerbum Dei dicitur Dei Filius per naturam, homo autem, propter inhabitationem Dei, Dicitur Dei filius per gratiam adoptionis.”

Libellus ad nationes orientales II, 18: “corpus illius esse corpus Filii Dei naturalis, id est Verbi Dei.”

Libellus ad nationes orientales II, 20: “filio adoptiuo” instead of “*homine illo qui est filius adoptionis*.”

Libellus ad nationes orientales II, 20: “ut sit factus ex muliere, sed ita quod Dei filius qui est factus ex muliere et sub lege ad hoc sit missus.”

Between II, 32 and II, 33 one longer paragraph from Thomas Aquinas is omitted.

Between II, 49 and II, 50 four arguments are omitted. Between II, 52 and II, 53 two arguments are omitted. From II, 58 to II, 59 four arguments are omitted.

The two short paragraphs II, 73 and II 74 substitute three longer arguments by Thomas Aquinas.

In II, 92 one whole argument in Thomas Aquinas is reduced to a single reference to scripture.

Notably, Riccoldo does not mention Thomas Aquinas and *Summa contra Gentiles* in all these paragraphs that were copied almost verbatim, while he has two references to short passages from Thomas' commentary to Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* (*Libellus ad nationes orientales* II, 17; II, 63). Small pieces of information from Riccoldo's travel are included, such as in a discussion of Arabic and Syriac words for persona (II, 43), or the claim that the Eastern Christians allow divorce (II, 97), or that they do not confess to a priest (II, 99). These are not lifted word for word from *Liber peregrinationis*, but simply present the same information in another formulation.

Riccoldo relied almost exclusively on Thomas Aquinas in this chapter on Eastern Christians, but he continued to insist that his own experience was the source of his knowledge. “All that I have written here about the Oriental nations in unpolished and

simple style, I know by experience to be so from the many years I have communicated with them.”²⁷

Riccoldo concluded his *Libellus ad nationes orientales* with five general pieces of advice for missionaries that he had learned himself during his time in the East: missionaries must learn the languages and cannot depend upon interpreters who do not know the technical, theological terms; missionaries should base their arguments upon scripture and not the Western Latin exegetes who are not considered authorities in the East; missionaries must know the position of those they want to convert; they should begin with the élite and better educated and then the ordinary people will follow later; and the missionary must be firm in the faith.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Why did Riccoldo change his methods and his ways of writing from one work to the next, and even within the same work? First, it is difficult to compare texts and to judge, for example, whether a specific quotation indicates a connection between two texts or simply was common knowledge that could be used in any relevant case. “If one sole lie is found in the Gospel, said Augustine, all the rest must be considered a lie.” This quotation is found in both *Contra legem* and in *Liber peregrinationis*,²⁸ both written by Riccoldo, but also such an explicit formulation and easy to remember that anybody could have applied it in any text. Second, many textual references are hidden or hinted at rather than expressed directly. Jean-Marie Mérioux’s edition of *Contra legem* has located (probably) all direct quotations to *Alpholica* and Thomas Aquinas and others, but paraphrases and slightly modified quotations are not marked. If we include them, the number of textual references doubles, at least. Third, some parts may have been added later and may therefore belong to another working process than the first formulation of the text. It is striking that *Liber peregrinationis* contains only one direct quotation and one paraphrase from *Alpholica*, in contrast to *Contra legem*. Perhaps the reference to *Alpholica* has been added later to *Liber peregrinationis*?

Riccoldo had the education and background for understanding even very complicated theological discussions, he had learned the necessary languages, and had spent years among Eastern Christians and Muslims. He repeatedly referred to his own expe-

27 Riccoldo, *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, IV, 14: “Hec igitur, que de nationibus orientalibus rudi et simplici stilo descripsi, conuersando cum eis pluribus annis per experientiam ita esse cognoui.”

28 “Dicit Augustinus quod si unum solum mendacium in evangelio deprehenderet, totum residuum quasi mendacium reputaret.” Riccoldo, *Liber peregrinationis*, p. 180; *Contra legem Saracenorum*, pp. 9, 11–13.

rience to substantiate his claims and interpretations. However, in some of his works he became totally unoriginal, and solely relied on others' authority. The 13th and first part of 14th centuries were a time in which personal experience gained much more authority than earlier—to have seen it yourself became increasingly important.²⁹ This had a background in psychology with a new interest in all that could be sensed providing an entrance to understanding and truth. It also had a background in theology with a new emphasis on literal interpretation: what was related in the Bible had happened, physically and in reality, just as the transubstantiation during communion, and had been seen and heard by contemporaries. If there were no literal interpretation, any spiritual one was devoid of meaning. In understanding other religions, the actual meeting, discussions, and study now also became more important than ever before. These are some of the reasons why it was so important for Riccoldo to stress that he had seen it himself with his own eyes.

Nevertheless, Riccoldo sometimes omitted what he knew himself and simply copied from others. The chapter on Eastern Christians in *Libellus ad nationes orientales* is a special case. Riccoldo had been called back from the Orient to be interrogated at the papal curia about some questionable theological opinions.³⁰ We do not know the precise subject of the interrogation, but it may have been his designating Eastern Christians as heretics, at a time when there were strong efforts to negotiate a union between the Western church and more of the Eastern ones. In any case, Riccoldo found it necessary to add in the margin of *Libellus ad nationes orientales* that he used the word heretics “as a loose designation and not a fixed term. For it has not yet been defined by the pope whether these Jacobites and Nestorians are heretics.”³¹ This may explain why Riccoldo chose to copy Thomas Aquinas—who was certainly an acceptable authority and could not be connected to anything heretical.

Another reason may of course be that Riccoldo deemed Thomas to be so much better a theologian than Riccoldo himself, and so his words were to be preferred,³² but if that were the case Riccoldo would be expected to have used that strategy in many more places. The chapter on Jews, for example, is also much dependent upon another

²⁹ See the article by Susanna Fischer in this volume.

³⁰ Orlandi 1955, vol. 1, p. 222: “Demum pro quibusdam dubiis articulis per sedem apostolicam declarandis ad Ytalie partes remeans cum proposito redeundi, propter quod et barbam plurimo tempore nutriebat [...]”

³¹ Riccoldo, *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, I, 6: “... opinatiue, et non certitudinaliter. Nondum enim diffinitum est per papam, utrum sint heretici illi iacobini et nestorini ...”

³² Riccoldo may also have been very much inspired by Thomas Aquinas in how he understood religion, as suggested in Rizzardi 1984.

scholar, Ramon Martí, but Riccoldo actively reworked Ramon's text and commented it with other authorities, in contrast to the chapters taken from Thomas Aquinas.

A general explanation for different styles is that we all write in contexts, consisting of general world views, social pressure, and a multitude of preconceived ideas and thought patterns. It must have been one thing to sit and write in Baghdad as a lonely Latin Christian, but constantly engaged in stimulating and frustrating discussions about faith, and another thing to sit home in Florence in one of the largest and intellectually most stimulating Dominican convents in Europe. Much must have been different. In Santa Maria Novella, the constant repetitious liturgy must have given another concept of time, a feeling of contemporaneity with biblical events and with the long tradition of Church authorities. Viewed in that perspective, contemporary Thomas Aquinas and 900-year-old anti-heretical texts could be considered of the same authority, and even more important to Riccoldo than what he had seen with his own eyes.

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SUSANNA FISCHER

“Adoravimus Christum natum ad modum magorum”

Performance and Theatricality as Narrative Strategies in Riccoldo’s Liber peregrinationis

INTRODUCTION

A basic characteristic of pilgrimage narratives is the narration of a subject’s motion through holy space, as well as the narration of sensory perception. In contrast to a narration about a profane journey, travelled space is marked as holy by connecting it to a biblical event and thus characterizing it as a holy place.¹

The structure of pilgrimage narratives usually follows a (real or imagined) *itinerarium* through the holy places.² Up to the 13th century narrating a pilgrimage to the Holy Land³ mainly referred to describing the holy places in the context of the scripture

1 In the 4th century *Itinerarium Burdigalense* we can already observe the connection between the holy places and the Bible: *Inde passus mille est locus, ubi Iacob, cum iret in Mesopotamiam, addormivit, et ibi est arbor amigdala, et vidit visum et angelus cum eo luctatus est*, ed. in Anonymus Burdigalensis, *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, line 588, 9–10. Cf. Fischer 2019, pp. 44–47.

2 Pilgrimage narratives are structured by the *itinerarium*. This structure (“Wegstreckenschema”) is characteristic of pilgrimage narratives, where each place is described and linked to the next. The method of connection varies across texts, ranging from precise distances between locations to rough directional indications or mere mentions of the next destination. This scheme dominates the text and forms the structure for the representation of the sacred places. Cf. on “Wegstreckenschema” Huschenbett 1985. From the 13th century onwards, this structure is interrupted by digressions and encyclopaedic information becomes more important. Cf. also the exceptions: John of Würzburg (structure by salvation history) and Burchard of Mount Sion (structure of the land in *divisiones*). Cf. Fischer 2019, pp. 42–54.

3 Cf. for the research on pilgrimage texts Ganz-Blättler 1990, pp. 20–35; Betschart 1996, pp. 9–21; Morris 2005; Schröder 2009, pp. 32–45; Hoffmann & Wolf 2012; Kühnel *et al.* 2014; Fischer 2019, pp. 13–36; Bauer *et al.* 2023. On the genre of pilgrimage texts cf. Wolf 2012 and Wilhelm Tzewers, *Itinerarius terre sancte*, p. 29.

without discussing the actual historical or political background. In the 13th century, we can observe a development towards a different, more encyclopaedic approach.⁴ What we read in a pilgrimage narrative is a combination of experience and knowledge gained through reading the scripture, pilgrimage narratives and other texts.⁵ For the most part it is difficult to isolate the different sources from one another.

Pilgrimage narratives are written in the first person, such as Egeria's *Itinerarium*⁶ or Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, as well as in the third person, such as the *Descriptio* of John of Würzburg⁷ or Burchard's *Descriptio*.⁸ Even in texts primarily written in the third person, the narrator uses the first person in important passages to verify what they have witnessed as an eyewitness, sharing their own perception (cf. the expression *sicut oculis meis vidi* in Burchard's *Descriptio*, p. 181). The eyewitness⁹ bears witness to the biblical truth and legitimizes the existing knowledge that is based on reading the scripture. Also, the eyewitness emphasizes the credibility of the miraculous and the marvellous. Thus, seeing is often described in pilgrimage narratives.¹⁰ By detailing what they see, narrators guide readers towards imaginative seeing. Through this narration, the visit to the sacred place can be visualised and imagined by the reader.¹¹

Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis* is different from other pilgrimage narratives. Due to its missionary character, a major part of the text deals with the Orient and its inhab-

4 In Burchard's *Descriptio terre sanctae*, for instance, chapters on the size of the Holy Land, the animals or the religions are attached to the text.

5 Cf. Wilhelm Twezers, *Itinerarius terre sanctae*, introduction by Hartmann, p. 29; Ganz-Blättler 1990, p. 27.

6 On Egeria cf. Egeria, *Itinerarium*, eds Franceschini & Weber and the introduction and bibliography by Röwekamp in Egeria, *Itinerarium / Reisebericht. Mit Auszügen aus Petrus Diaconus, De locis sanctis / Die heiligen Stätten*.

7 On John of Würzburg cf. the 1994 edition by Huygens; Lehmann-Brauns 2010, pp. 121–150; Fischer 2016.

8 On Burchard of Mount Sion cf. the 2019 edition of *Descriptio terrae sanctae* by Bartlett; also Pringle 2012; Baumgärtner 2013; Rotter 2013; Rubin 2014; Fischer 2019, pp. 236–264.

9 The conception of the eyewitness is as central for pilgrimage narratives as for medieval historiography: *Apud veteres enim nemo conscribebat historiam, nisi is qui interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset*. Isid. orig. 1,41,1. Cf. Wenzel 1995, pp. 58–60; Rösinger & Signori 2014. Cf. Herodot *Hist.* 1,8,2 for Greek historiography and the conception of the eyewitness. Marina Münkler comments on the status of the eyewitness in the medieval East Asia travel literature: "Der Augenzeuge bezeugt als Geschehenes, was sich im Text geschrieben findet und das kann auch das sein, was ein anderer geschrieben hat." (Münkler 2000, p. 284). These words also apply to pilgrimage narratives. The narrator validates the visibility of the biblical world.

10 Cf. Fischer 2019, pp. 38–41.

11 On pilgrimage narratives and *imaginatio*, reading and mental images cf. Fischer 2019, pp. 66–80.

itants.¹² But—although Riccoldo focuses on these topics—the part of the *Liber peregrinationis* describing the holy places is clearly written in the literary tradition of pilgrimage narratives.¹³ As in earlier pilgrimage texts, the narration about the holy places concentrates strictly on biblical matters. Given this character of Riccoldo's book, the present article is not about the author's experience with the foreign world and foreign religion—not with “the other”, the unknown, but with the known, Christianity. I intend to show in my interpretation how Riccoldo does not elaborate on the holy places in a descriptive way in the *Liber peregrinationis*, but how he visualizes the places by focusing on processionality and performance.¹⁴

This article aims to discuss the *Liber peregrinationis* in the light of the literary tradition of pilgrimage narratives focusing on narrative strategies, in particular on the narration of motion and performance.

In the first part of my contribution, I will position Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis* in considerations of imagination and memorization in connection with pilgrimage narratives. In the second section, I will discuss the structure of the *Liber peregrinationis* as a whole. In the third part, I will analyse Riccoldo's originality in narrating the movements through the holy places by providing a close reading of selected passages from his book. By examining the prologue and specific examples from his narration, including the descriptions of Bethlehem, the Valley of Josaphat, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, I will discuss how the encounter with the holy places is modelled as a performative act imbued with theatrical elements.

PILGRIMAGE NARRATIVES, IMAGINATION AND MEMORIZATION

In the 12th century, Theodericus describes in the prologue of his *Libellus de locis sanctis* the connection between the reading of the text (*lectio sive narratio*) and *memoria*.¹⁵

12 On Riccoldo as a missionary cf. Reltgen-Tallon 2015; Roberg 2015; Rouxpetel 2015.

13 Cf. on the literary tradition of pilgrimage narratives Fischer 2019, pp. 13–36.

14 Cf. Fischer 2019, pp. 177–192.

15 Theodericus, *Libellus de locis sanctis*, p. 143, ll. 13–16: “Hoc autem studio idcirco nos desudasse lector omnis agnoscat, ut ex hac ipsa lectione sive narratione Christum in memoria semper discat habere et eum in memoria retinens studeat amare.” Cf. on Theodericus, Lehmann-Brauns 2010, pp. 151–186; Fischer 2016.

Pilgrimage narratives can create a mental topography of the Holy Land and thus function as a memory aid.¹⁶

Considering pilgrimage narratives and imagination or memorization, it is important to differentiate between the imagination or memorization described in the narrative and the possible imagination or memorization of a recipient of the text.

Texts on pilgrimage describe how a biblical event is memorialized and imagined at the actual place of the event. A striking Late Antique example is Hieronymus' letter to Marcella (Epist. 46,5,3) where he discusses the visualization of salvation history events upon entering the Holy Sepulchre: "quod quotienscumque ingredimur, totiens iacere in sindone cernimus salvatorem ..." The presence at the holy place (*sepulchrum Domini*) connected with motion (*ingredimur*) leads to an "inner" seeing experience (*cernimus*). The interior seeing is a reaction to a physical seeing by the physical eyes or the description of it in narration. In reading and re-enacting the pilgrimage, the boundaries between exterior and interior seeing dissolve.¹⁷ In the process of reading, the narrated movement through the holy places as well as the seeing of these places leads to an interior seeing of mental images.¹⁸

Not only the simple motion through the holy space, but also rituals performed in the places can be described. The actual *peregrinatio* has a clearly performative dimension connected with physical activity, which is inscribed in the narration of the pilgrimage. In the holy places, various liturgical, ritual or imitative practices are performed, which are intended to create proximity to the biblical events. These performances are recorded in the text. Capturing the unique act of pilgrimage in writing not only documents the pilgrimage but makes it repeatable in the imagination. In this way, a scheme is created: the pilgrimage can be re-enacted in reading the narrative about it.¹⁹ Central to the re-enactment is visualization, which represents the stimulus for an imagination of the holy place and subsequently the imagination of the particular event of salvation history.

16 See Carruthers 1998, p. 40: "Jerusalem pilgrimage as a map for remembering". Cf. Ousterhout 2012, p. 144: Jerusalem becomes a "meditative map". For the special conception of the *ars memorativa* cf. e.g. Quintilian, *Inst.* 11,2,2. For a medieval mental building cf. Hugo's of St Victor Arche. See the discussions by Carruthers 1998, pp. 243–246; Assmann 1999, pp. 115–119; Wandhoff 2003, pp. 106–109; Fischer 2019, pp. 66–73.

17 Cf. Largier's observation on prayer and meditation. The distinction between interior and exterior, which Largier analyses in the examples of 12th and 13th centuries, changes: "Where theories of religious anthropology seem to propose an opposition between interior and exterior (...) practices of prayer formulate a dynamic relationship where interior and exterior turn into aspects of communication, conversion and transformation." (Largier 2014, p. 58).

18 Cf. Fischer 2019, pp. 73–81.

19 Cf. Kiening 2011, pp. 177, 183.

In pilgrimage narratives, interior seeing is described with the words *videre oculis mentis* or similar expressions. The interior seeing is contrasted to the physical seeing. John of Würzburg mentions the bodily gaze (*intuitu corporeo*, line 24). Burchard contrasts *intuitus mentis* with the physical seeing of the *oculi corporei* (p. 194). For the exterior seeing, Riccoldo mentions the *oculi corporei* and for the inner seeing of salvation history the *oculi fidei*. (p. 70).²⁰ As pilgrimage narratives document, the truth of the biblical event can become visible to the inner eyes. Pilgrimage narratives stimulate the imagination, as they provide readers with material for mental images and invite them to meditation.²¹ Therefore, some authors emphasize in the prologues that their text is not mainly written for those people who plan to travel to the Holy Land but particularly for those who cannot go there.²² In this way, the text functions as a surrogate for a pilgrimage.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE *LIBER PEREGRINATIONIS*

Before showing how the visualization of the holy places is connected with performance in Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, it is necessary to discuss the structure of the book as a whole.

The transmission of the text sheds light on the use and on the structure of Riccoldo's writing. The *Liber peregrinationis* is known from seven manuscripts. The text

20 *Oculi fidei* is already used by Hieronymus in connection with the visit of a holy place: in the *Epitaphium Paulae* (Epist. 108,10,2; CSEL 55), where the pilgrimage of Paula is depicted. Schleusener-Eichholz (1985, p. 1059) shows that the metaphor of piety *oculi fidei* had been used since Hilarius. Because only the pious possess these eyes (Ambrosius, *Expositio psalmi* 108,11,7 [CSEL 62,237], cf. Schleusener-Eichholz 1985, p. 1060), we can understand the use of these words in the Epitaphium as a homage to Paula's piety. In pilgrimage narratives, the words *oculi mentis* or *fidei* are not used in the context of gnosis or contemplation of God, cf. Schuppisser 1993; Lentjes 2002; Ganz 2006. On seeing with the inner eye, cf. also Fischer 2019, pp. 111–117.

21 On virtual pilgrimages as a practice in convents in the late Middle Ages, cf. Rudy 2016; cf. also Lehmann-Brauns 2010; Fischer 2016; 2019, pp. 62–90, on strategies of visualization in pilgrimage narratives.

22 For example, John of Würzburg, *Descriptio terre sancte*, p. 79, ll. 20–27: “quam descriptionem tibi acceptam fore estimo, ideo scilicet, quia evidenter singula per eam notata tibi, (a) quandoque divina inspiratione et tuitione huc venienti, sponte et sine inquisitionis mora et difficultate tanquam nota tuis sese ingerunt oculis, vel (b), si forte non veniendo haec intuitu non videbis corporeo, tamen ex tali noticia et contemplatione eorum ampliorem quoad sanctificationem ipsorum devotionem habebis.” Cf. Fischer 2016.

is transmitted with different titles²³ and alongside other texts that fall within two distinct contexts. The Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 3343 manuscript only contains Riccoldo's description of "Saracens" on folios 80v–85v, which can not only be seen as a fragment of the *Liber peregrinationis* but also as a self-contained *tractatus* about Islam. The *Liber peregrinationis* or parts of it are transmitted either in the context of writings on Islam²⁴ or of pilgrimage narratives such as the *Descriptio Terrae Sancte* of Burchard of Mount Sion.²⁵

In the narrative of the *Liber peregrinationis*, we find a rupture which we can trace back to its transmission. The two-fold structure of the text is evident: the first part is about *peregrinatio* (36–76) and the second about *religiones* (76–204). Also, if we look at the content, from a geographical point of view we can divide the *Liber peregrinationis* into two parts:²⁶ the stay in the Holy Land and the stay in the Orient, which is treated in the larger part of the text. Thus, the *Liber* differs from other pilgrimage narratives. The prologue²⁷ shows how the content of the following chapters goes beyond a description of holy places:

Here begins the book of the pilgrimage of Friar R[iccoldo] of the Order of Preachers. In this book are briefly included the kingdoms, peoples, provinces, laws, rites, sects and heresies and the monsters that I have found in eastern parts so the brothers who wish to take up the task for Christ of extending

23 Cf. on the transmission of the *Liber peregrinationis* the contribution of Marco Robecchi in this volume. The text is transmitted with the title *Liber peregrinationis* only in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. lat. qu. 466, as *Itinerarius* in Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 2687 and in the two manuscripts from Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, in the fragment from Turin (Bibliotheca Nazionale, H. II. 33) with the title *Historia de variis religionibus*, cf. ed. Kappler, pp. 24–25.

24 In Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 3343; lat. 6225; Turin, Bibliotheca Nazionale, H. II. 33.

25 Cf. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. lat. qu. 466 and see the distinct constellation of the transmitted texts in the two manuscripts from the Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, (Cod. Guelf. 40 und 41 Weiss.) with authors such as William of Boldensele and Odoricus de Pordenone.

26 Cf. Cappel, 'Introduzione', in Ricoldus de Monte Croce, *Libro della peregrinazione*, pp. xxi–xxii.

27 In the manuscript Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. lat. qu. 466.

the faith may know what they require and where and how they can best proceed.²⁸

Right at the beginning of the *Liber*, Riccoldo answers the question of why he writes about his pilgrimage. His aim is to provide material for missionary friars. Thus, the aim of his writing is to preserve knowledge.²⁹ The missionary character of Riccoldo's writing is emphasized compared to other pilgrimage narratives. But in the first part of the book, focused on the description of the holy places, this new aspect is not central.

The two parts of the writing are connected through the structure of the itinerary ("Wegstreckenschema"). Mainly in the second part of the *Liber*, the description of the journey is interrupted by digressions. The second part can be divided into three major thematic parts: on the Tartars, on the Oriental Christians and on the Saracens.³⁰ First, a digression on the Tartars interrupts the description of the journey (78–114). The excursus is marked in the text: *Et hec de Tartaris dicta sufficiant. Nunc prosequamur de nostra peregrinatione* (114). The next shorter digression is on the *Curti* (119–121). Discussing the Jacobites (124–136) and the Nestorians (136–150) religious debates take on a central role in the book.³¹

It is worth observing how the narrative is structured and how the different topics are connected. The journey through the Holy Land is described like a procession through the holy places. This structure of the narration changes in what follows, and the processional description of the way becomes less important. Digressions on other people and their religions gain importance and finally, talking about the Saracens, the

28 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 361: "Incipit liber peregrinationis fratris R. ordinis predicatorum. Continetur autem in hoc libro sub breuitate regna, gentes, prouincie, leges, ritus, secte et hereses et monstra que inueni in partibus orientis ut fratres qui uellent laborem pro Christo adsumere pro fide dilatanda sciant quo indigent et ubi et qualiter magis possunt proficere" (ed. Kappler, p. 36).

29 Pilgrimage narratives in general also document, authenticate and perpetuate the pilgrimage. An obvious function is the function as a pilgrimage guide for potential travellers. As we already discussed, the text can also serve as an aid for a mental pilgrimage, cf. Lehmann-Brauns 2010; Fischer 2016; Rudy 2016; Fischer 2019, pp. 62–90.

30 Schiel observes that Riccoldo takes a different role as an author in these parts of the text: "Der Augenzeuge Riccoldo begegnet in vielerlei Gestalt, und seine Wahrnehmungs- und Beschreibungsweise variiert ganz offensichtlich je nach Umfeld. So erscheint der Dominikaner im Heiligen Land als frommer Pilger, bei den Türken und Tataren als neugieriger Reisender, unter den orientalischen Christen als gewissenhafter Missionar und im Umgang mit den muslimischen Sarazenen als theoretisierender Scholastiker." Schiel 2007, p. 9. The different perspective might also be caused by using different sources as pilgrimage narratives in the first part of the text.

31 Cf. Teeuwen 2012.

structure of the *itinerarium* is replaced with the form of a *tractatus*. With two thematic chapters, *de monstris* and *de Sabbeis qui interpretantur batiste*,³² the *Liber peregrinationis* ends.

Nevertheless, the *Liber peregrinationis* is formed by Riccoldo as a consistent whole. Before the encounter with different religious groups, the author's own belief is strengthened through an imaginative journey to the roots of Christianity. The description of the pilgrimage through important holy places is—so to say—the prologue of the encounter with foreign religions.³³ This function is not only important for the documented journey of Riccoldo the missionary, but also for the recipient of the writing.

PERFORMANCE AND PROCESSION

At the beginning of the *Liber peregrinationis*, Riccoldo reflects on the reasons for his travels. Stylistically, the beginning of the book contrasts with what follows, which mainly consists of shorter sentences with formulaic descriptions. In long-winded sentences Riccoldo explains the motivation for his pilgrimage in the succession of Christ. Riccoldo refers to the incarnation of Christ as *peregrinatio* and cites John 16:28: *exiui a patre et ueni in mundum* (36).³⁴

At the beginning of the second chapter, Riccoldo mentions a popular reason for pilgrimage, i.e., to physically see the places that Jesus Christ physically visited:

“I crossed over the sea, so that I might see in person those places that Christ bodily visited, especially the place where He deigned to die for the salvation of humankind, so that the memory of His Passion might be impressed on my mind more firmly and that the blood of Christ that was shed for our salvation might give me strength and steadfastness to preach and die for Him, who gave me life by His death.”³⁵

32 Only transmitted in the manuscript Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. lat. qu. 466.

33 Cf. Schiel 2007.

34 The flight to Egypt is also described as a *peregrinatio*: “quomodo etiam cito natus et pauper et parvulus nec sibi nec matri pepercit a longa et laboriosa peregrinatione” (36).

35 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 362: “Transiui mare ut loca illa corporaliter uiderem que Christus corporaliter uisitauit et maxime locum in quo pro salute humani generis mori dignatus est, ut memoria passionis eius in mente mea imprimeretur tenacius et sanguis Christi pro nostra salute effusus esset in robur et firmamentum ad predicandum et moriendum pro illo qui mihi sua morte uitam donauerat” (ed. Kappler, p. 38).

Consider the words that seeing the holy places impresses (*imprimeretur*) the memory of the passion in the mind. These words highlight the connection between seeing the holy places and gaining a deeper understanding of the history of salvation. The desire to gain strength to preach and to die for Christ exceeds the usual *topoi* in prologues of pilgrimage narratives.³⁶ With these words Riccoldo adds a personal colour. The description of the pilgrimage is important to Riccoldo's spiritual development—and to the spiritual development of his readers. Through the narration the reader can participate in this spiritual experience. The textual representation of the journey serves in a special way as an aid to transfer the experience of the holy places and the space of salvation into the here and now of the recipient. In Riccoldo's text the narration is presented as a continuous sequence of described places while other information that is not directly related to the holy places and biblical events is treated separately. By following Riccoldo's lead, the recipient is able to imagine the pilgrimage.

Riccoldo models the beginning of his pilgrimage as a processional movement through the holy places connected with personal prayer. Christian Kiening defines processionality ("Prozessionalität") in connection with the passion structured in stations, as bound to concrete or imaginative forms of motion in space and time, to liturgical or ritual practices.³⁷ In texts and images representing processional sequences, Kiening discusses the imaginative dimension of processionality ("imaginäre Dimension des Prozessualen"), arguing that texts or images do not simply document these sequences. At the same time they offer patterns to form and to practise these sequences in a performative way: through reading or looking at images.³⁸ This processional dimension is inscribed in Riccoldo's text through the description of performance and motion in the holy space.

In the *Liber peregrinationis*, motion is presented in a more intense way than in other pilgrimage narratives. In contrast to the mainly passive description in other pilgrimage writings—consider the frequent use of *ostenditur*³⁹—Riccoldo uses the active form such as, for instance, *ibi inuenimus*. The description of Cana, the first place mentioned after leaving Acre, is an illustrative example:

36 Cf. e.g. John of Würzburg, *Descriptio terre sancte*, pp. 79–80.

37 "Bindung an konkrete oder imaginative Formen der Bewegung in Raum und Zeit, an liturgische, kultische oder rituelle Momente", Kiening 2011, p. 181. Cf. also Fischer 2019, pp. 178–183.

38 "[Sie] sind ja nicht einfach Dokumente solcher Abläufe. Sie bieten vielmehr (zugleich) Muster, diese performativ zu gestalten, durchzuführen oder zu vollziehen: im Lesen oder Betrachten", Kiening 2011, p. 178.

39 Cf. e.g. already in Egeria, *Itinerarium* 1,1,1; 2,3,22; 2,5,29.

There we found the place of the marriage feast and the places and shapes of the jars. There we sang and preached the gospel of the marriage feast. There I asked Christ, just as He had changed the water into wine, so to convert the water of my insipidity and lack of devotion into the wine of repentance and spiritual flavour. From there we came by a straight course of fifteen miles to the village of Gennesaret.⁴⁰

Riccoldo⁴¹ always talks about himself and the group with which he travels in the first-person plural. Thus, the reader is able to participate, to identify with the group and to go on a virtual journey from one holy place to the next one, as she or he is following the way described in the narrative: *iuimus cum multis cristianis in Galileam et primo peruenimus .XX. miliaria ad Cana Galilee* (38). Naming Cana first establishes a close relation to salvation history, as Cana has a special significance as the place where the signs of Christ begin: *ubi Christus fecit initium signorum* (38).

In the following, Riccoldo describes four stations, the already mentioned Cana, Genesareth, Bethsaida and the Mount of Beatitudes, where he follows the same scheme in his description: firstly the movement to the holy place is described—with *uenimus*, *ascendimus* or *descendimus*; secondly the holy place is identified, at Cana by the verb *inuenimus*, at the other places by naming the biblical episode and the performance of singing: *cantauimus Evangelium*; finally, there is a prayer that begins with the formula *ibi rogaui Christum / Dominum* and is directly connected to the corresponding holy place.

The often-used verbs *descendere*, *ascendere* and *uenire* mark the processional movement from place to place and give an impression of monotony. This kind of description is usual and can be found in most pilgrimage writings. Apart from the direction or the distance, the reader gains only information about the holy places that is already well known from the scripture. The appearance of the places is not mentioned.

In contrast to other pilgrimage narratives, the main characteristic of Riccoldo's narration is the description of performance. The example of Lake Genesareth is meaningful in this regard: "There on the way down the mountain overlooking the sea we sang the gospel of those two demoniacs whom Christ cured there of a legion of demons,

40 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 362: "Ibi inuenimus locum nuptiarum et loca et formulas ydriarum. Ibi cantauimus et predicauius euangelium nuptiarum. Ibi rogaui Christum quod sicut aquam in uinum conuerterat, ita aquam mee insipiditatis et indeuotionis conuerteret in uinum compunctionis et spiritualis saporis. Inde recto curso uenimus .XV. m. ad casale Genesaret." (ed. Kappler, pp. 38–40).

41 "Riccoldo" refers to Riccoldo as the narrator of the *Liber*.

which Christ allowed to enter into some pigs.”⁴² As in the description of Cana—*Ibi cantauimus et predicauius euangelium nuptiarum*—the author portrays the performative acts of pilgrims. In every place, biblical events become present through singing (and preaching). In the example of Genesareth, the description of the chant goes along with a processional movement. The description, not of only one, but of several chants in different places is unusual in pilgrimage literature. The integration of personal prayer in the writing is new. At the first four places, four prayers are described. They form a four-step scheme beginning with the desire to experience the divine and ending in the renunciation of the mind from the secular world and its turn to heaven.

The first prayer addresses the spiritual attitude that provides a basis for the experience of the divine. The second prayer focuses on temptation and includes the liberation from demons (*Ibi rogauit Dominum quod me ab infestationibus demonum liberaret*, 40). The third prayer expresses the desire to become the disciple of Christ. In the succession of Peter, the *piscator hominum* (Matthew 4:19) is mentioned. Linked to this is the idea of baptism—this wish is aimed at the missionary frater. Finally, on the Mount of Beatitudes Riccoldo’s prayer asks for a detachment from the secular world and a turn towards the celestial: “There I asked the Lord to remove completely from me all earthly desires and to turn my mind to heavenly things.”⁴³

Because of these prayers the pilgrimage can be understood as a spiritual base for the following missionary journey,⁴⁴ and as a spiritual prologue for the mental journey of his readers.

ASPECTS OF THEATRICALITY

Following the description of the four prayers, the imitation of Christ is addressed as another performative act: Riccoldo breaks bread at the site of the feeding of the 5,000 (p. 40). This bodily act of imitation makes the past biblical event present. There is a progression in the description of the veneration. In the first place, i.e. Cana, liturgical and para-liturgical practices such as chanting and sermons are depicted. Additionally, biblical events are imitated here.

42 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 362: “Ibi in descensu montis super mare cantauimus euangelium de illis duobus demoniacis quos Christus curauit ibi a legione demonum quos Christus concessit intrare in porcos” (ed. Kappler, p. 40).

43 Trans. Pringle 2012, pp. 262–263: “Ibi rogauit Dominum quod me totaliter a desiderio terrenorum leuaret et meam mentem ad celestia transferret” (ed. Kappler, p. 40).

44 Cf. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 33.

From there we went up a mile to the mountain near there where the Lord made a meal from five loaves of barley bread; and we sang the gospel and preached, and afterwards, sitting in rows on the grass and hay, we all broke bread and ate with joy and tears.⁴⁵

The imitative part of the performance at the place of the feeding of the 5,000 is formed like a liturgical practice. The repetition of gestures and actions of the Gospels relates to liturgical rites.⁴⁶ In the next place, at the *locus tabulae*, the text is similarly formed—with *manducauimus omnes* there is a reference to the Eucharist:

From there, returning around the Sea of Galilee, we came after two miles to the place of the Table (*locus tabule*), which is between Capernaum and Bethsaida in the place where the Lord appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection, standing on the shore, and called them in front of the sea and invited them to eat. We sang and preached the gospel, and we all ate where He ate bread and fish with them.⁴⁷

The tears that are shed at the holy places are mentioned on several occasions in the *Liber peregrinationis*.⁴⁸ Tears are usually seen as a sign of piety.⁴⁹ However, in pilgrimage literature up to the 14th century tears as a personal and emotional reaction are rarely to be found.⁵⁰ In not only describing personal prayer but also describing emotional reactions, Riccoldo's *Liber* differs from the literary tradition of pilgrim-

45 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 363: "Inde ascendimus .I.m. ibi ad montem ubi Dominus fecit conuiuium de quinque panibus ordeaceis et cantauimus euangelium et predicauius, et postea sedentes per ordinem super herbam et fenum fregimus panem et manducauimus omnes cum letitia et lacrimis" (ed. Kappler, p. 40).

46 Cf. Kiening 2011, p. 142; Müller 2004, p. 128. Cf. on Riccoldo and performance Fischer 2019, pp. 183–192.

47 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 363: "Inde regirantes iuxta mare Galilee, uenimus .II.m. ad locum tabule que est inter Cafarnaum et Betsaydam, in loco ubi Dominus apparuit discipulis post resurrectionem stans in litore et uocauit eos de mari et inuitauit eos ad prandendum, et cantauimus et predicauius euangelium, et manducauimus omnes ubi manducauit cum eis panem et piscem" (ed. Kappler, pp. 40–42).

48 Cf. *Liber peregrinationis*, pp. 44, 50, 54.

49 See the introduction to Gertsman 2012 for the *donum lacrimae*.

50 Cf. Miedema 1998, p. 78, about pilgrimage narratives: "one gains the impression (...) that it was highly unusual to report on which ways a visit to these places had affected the author emotionally or in which ways he had devoted himself to any of the holy places."

age narratives. The depiction of the emotional affection⁵¹ as a result of proximity to Christ in spatial terms and the repetition of gestures of salvation invites the reader to participate. The tears indicate less the *compassio* with Christ's suffering but stimulate the affective participation of the reader in the emotions during the stay at the holy place. The reference to the Gospels intensifies the experience as a memorization and visualization of salvation history.

The place of the baptism of Christ is another example that connects the imitation of the biblical event with the chant of the Gospels:

There on the feast of the Epiphany we found over ten thousand Christians of every people and nation gathered together for baptism and the feast. There we built an altar beside the river on which we celebrated, and we preached and baptized with tears of rejoicing. While all the people were being baptized and were singing "Kyrie eleison", so great was the weeping and crying that I thought the angels had descended from heaven and were crying out with us in plaintive tones. Then we sang the gospel, "When all the people were baptized", etc.⁵²

Here, the imitation is placed in a temporal setting and dated on the feast of Epiphany. The reference to the ecclesiastical year creates a setting that makes events cyclic and repeatable. Temporal and spatial proximity, liturgical rites, the ritual of the baptismal bath and the chant evoke an emotional participation. The description of the vision that the angels come down from heaven and sing with the faithful intensifies the narrated experience of salvation.

It is evident, therefore, that performative acts are central to Riccoldo's description of the holy places. In the following three examples—Bethlehem, the Valley of Josaphat, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—I will demonstrate in a close reading how theatrical elements are used depicting these sacred sites.

⁵¹ For emotions in medieval literature in general see Schulz 2012, pp. 112–116.

⁵² Luke 3:21. Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 368: "Ibi in festo Epifanie inuenimus congregatos christianos ad baptismum et ad festum ultra decem milia ex omni populo et natione, ubi edificauimus altare iuxta fluuium ubi celebrauimus et predicauius et baptizauimus gaudentes et flentes. Cum autem omnis populus baptizaretur et clamaret Kyrie eleison tantus fuit fletus et ululatus quod putabamus angelos descendisse de celo et uoce querula clamantes nobiscum. Et tunc cantauimus euangelium 'Factum est autem cum baptizaretur omnis populus' etc." (ed. Kappler, p. 54).

Bethlehem

The description of the place of Christ's birth is a good starting point to discuss theatrical aspects in Riccoldo's writing. In pilgrimage texts written before the *Liber peregrinationis* we read that visitors to Bethlehem imagined the child lying in the manger.⁵³ Riccoldo takes it one step further as he writes that there is a real child lying in the manger. Riccoldo and other pilgrims play the role of the three magi:

There we celebrated, preached and gave communion to the people. After the celebration of mass, we found in the manger the most beautiful infant son of a poor Christian woman, who lived next to the church, and rejoicing in him we adored the newborn Christ in the manner of the Magi and after giving the little one presents we returned him to his mother.⁵⁴

In research, it is an essential insight that the late medieval forms of individual devotion include theatrical elements without being theatre,⁵⁵ such as in passion piety,⁵⁶ where the events around the crucifixion are imagined in meditation like an imagined theatre.⁵⁷ Müller refers to this form of piety as "theatrical piety".⁵⁸ The difference between theatre that creates an illusion and theatrical piety is the desired participation in the imagined events. Therefore, the aim of the role played by the three pilgrims in our example is not theatrical mimesis, but rather to gain an intense closeness to salvation history that is sought in a bodily-mimetic way.

53 Cf. for instance Paula in Hieronymus' depiction in Epist. 108,10,2 (CSEL 55): "Postquam uidit sacrum uirginis diuersorium et stabulum (...) me audiente iurabat cernere se fidei oculis infantem pannis inuolutum uagientem in praesepe, deum magos adorantes, stellam fulgentem desuper, matrem uirginem, nutricium sedulum, pastores nocte uenientes (...) paruulos interfectos, Herodem saeuientem, Ioseph et Mariam fugientes in Aegyptum."

54 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 370: "Ibi celebrantes et predicantes et populum comunicantes post missarum sollemnia inuenimus in presepio pulcherrimum infantem filium paupercule cristiane que habitabat iuxta ecclesiam et in eo letantes adorauius Christum natum ad modum Magorum, et dantes paruulo munera reddidimus matri" (ed. Kappler, p. 60).

55 "Auch die spätmittelalterlichen Formen individueller Devotion enthalten theatrale Elemente, ohne doch Theater zu sein" Müller 2004, p. 129.

56 On passion piety cf. Haug & Wachinger 1993.

57 Müller 2004, p. 127: "imaginäres Theater".

58 Müller 2004, p. 128: "Theatralisierte Frömmigkeit".

The Valley of Josaphat

The passage on the Valley of Josaphat⁵⁹ is another striking example for the development of “theatrical piety” in Riccoldo’s narrative: “There indeed, contemplating the place of judgement in the valley of Jehoshaphat between the Mount of Olives and the Mount Calvary we sat weeping and fearful, awaiting judgement.”⁶⁰

Past, present, and future merge in the imaginative reality of salvation history. In the text, the pilgrims envision the Last Judgement, with performance (*flentes et trementes*) stimulating their imagination of the event. This example illustrates how performance enables pilgrims to participate in the imagined event.⁶¹ Participation and commitment are taken a step further in the following example. The narration about the Valley of Josaphat concludes with a reservation of a seat at the right hand of God, symbolized by a stone.

We discussed moreover, where the most just Judge would sit on high and where would be to His right hand and where to His left hand. Then we chose a place to the right and each made a mark on a stone as a record. I also erected and marked a stone there and accepted a place to the right for myself and for all those who had heard the word of God from me and who had persevered in the faith and the truth of the Gospels; and I marked the stone in this way at the request of many faithful witnesses, who stood there weeping.⁶²

The seat is not only marked for Riccoldo himself but also for his audience. Through the narration the recipient can participate in the ritual act of reservation. In the process of reception and imagination the reader can follow the narration remembering that there is also a place marked for her or him to the right of God.

59 The visit to the Valley of Josaphat is described in the chapter on the second visit of Jerusalem (*ut completeremus desiderium nostrum de uisitatione sepulcri*, p. 62). At the first visit the pilgrims couldn’t see the Holy Sepulchre (*non potuimus intrare nolentibus sarracenis*, p. 48).

60 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 372: “Ibi uero in ualle Iosaffat considerantes locum iudicii inter montem Oliueti et montem Caluarie sedimus flentes et trementes expectantes iudicium” (ed. Kappler, p. 64).

61 Müller 2004, p. 127.

62 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 372: “Conferentes autem ubi resideret in alto iustissimus Iudex, et ubi esset ad dexteram et ad sinistram elegimus mansionem ex tunc ad dexteram et quilibet signauit in lapidem in testimonium. Ego autem erexi et signaui ibi lapidem et accepi locum ad dexteram pro me et pro omnibus illis qui a me uerbum Dei audierant, qui perseuerarent in fide et ueritate euangelii et sic signaui in lapide sub inuocatione multorum fidelium testium qui presentes flebant” (ed. Kappler, p. 64).

Sepulchrum Christi

The highlight of the pilgrimage is the visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We read in the *Liber peregrinationis* how the place of the crucifixion evokes a maximum of emotional participation and *compassio*:

This is a place of such devotion that if one did not weep out of compassion for the Son crying out and dying on the cross, one would be disposed to weep out of compassion for the mother, weeping at the feet of Christ while He dies for us. O soul, o soul of sinful man, how could you afterwards vivify and govern a body of such corruption and contradiction? Why has the sorrow of death not been made for me the sorrow of compassion? If I had already been devout as I thought, I would have been able to die of sorrow or joy from the completion of so great a desire.⁶³

The encounter with the holy place is stylistically formed and emphasized by the use of exclamations and rhetorical questions. The vivid presentation may recall paintings of the crucifixion scene. The repetition of central words such as *flere – fleret – flentis, morientis – morientis – (mortis) – mori, dolor – dolor – dolore* intensifies the address to the reader. Riccoldo reflects on *compassio*,⁶⁴ as the word is mentioned three times in this section. *Compassio* is a central aspect in writings devoted to Passion piety.⁶⁵ The change of the tenses, from past to present, actualizes the emotional experience and results in an oscillation between past and present. The individual and factual experience of the visit is depicted for the readers' eyes, while at the same time every reading actualizes the visit with its emotional experience.⁶⁶ The expectation is highlighted so that despite the temporal distance the visitor present at the site of crucifixion can see Christ through corporal eyes: "Moreover, looking around anxiously to see if I should

63 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 373: "Ibi est locus tante deuotionis quod si quis non fleret compassione filii clamantis et morientis in cruce, flere cogitur compassione matris flentis ad pedes Christi morientis pro nobis. O anima, o anima peccatoris hominis quomodo potuisti postea uiuificare et gubernare corpus tante corruptionis et tante contradictionis; quare non factus est michi dolor mortis dolor compassionis? Si uere fuissem deuotus ut credebam, dolore uel gaudio mori potui de completionem tanti desiderii" (ed. Kappler, p. 68).

64 On *compassio* cf. Mertens Fleury 2006; McNamer 2009; Mertens Fleury 2010.

65 On passion piety cf. Haug & Wachinger 1993; Köpf 1997.

66 Cf. Kiening 2011, p. 189 on the change of tenses in German 15th-century pilgrimage narratives: "Dadurch wird das Ereignis, im Heiligen Land gewesen zu sein, im gleichen Atemzug zu einem individuell historisch-faktischen und einem für andere Individuen je neu aktuellen und wiederholbaren."

truly see with the eyes of my body my Lord hanging on the cross, I saw only with the eyes of faith (*oculis fidei*).⁶⁷

In another section of the book, on the way to Emmaus, the pilgrims imagine in the conversation about Christ, that Christ himself becomes a bodily companion: “talking of Christ, that He might draw near and go with us through the meadows and beautiful places.”⁶⁸

However, at the site of crucifixion, Riccoldo narrates what he can see with his bodily eyes: “With the eyes of my body however I saw the place of crucifixion, the rock split from top to bottom (...)”⁶⁹

The narration culminates in a staged “search” for Christ. Riccoldo is the director of procession that is spontaneously formed by the pilgrims. In the narration, the temporal gap to the time of crucifixion does not exist anymore: “From there, wanting to go to the Sepulchre and look for the Lord whom we had not found on Mount Calvary, for they had already taken Him down when I, miserable as I am, arrived there late, I said (...)”⁷⁰

Riccoldo came too late in the “Passion play” he staged. Christ was already taken from the cross.

The processionalty we find in Riccoldo’s book culminates in the procession organized by Riccoldo himself, which passes through the sacred space: “I said, ‘Let us go and look for Him at the tomb where they have laid Him.’ Gathering together the Christians who were there, numbering more than a hundred, I organized a procession.”⁷¹

It is striking that in Riccoldo’s work the ritual measurement,⁷² which we find in other pilgrimage narratives, in paces or body length, is missing. The space is “possessed” in a different bodily way, through performance. The movement through the sacral space is connected with liturgical rite:

67 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 373: “Circumspiciens autem sollicitè si uere uiderem Dominum meum oculis corporeis pendente in cruce, non uidi nisi oculis fidei” (ed. Kappler, p. 70).

68 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 375: “Et conferentes de Christo ut ipse appropinquans iret nobiscum per prata et loca pulcherima” (ed. Kappler, p. 72).

69 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 373.

70 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 373: “Inde uolentes accedere ad sepulcrum et querere Dominum quem non inueneramus in monte Caluarie, iam enim deposuerant eum cum ego miser tarde perueni dixi ...” (ed. Kappler, p. 70).

71 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 373: “... dixi ‘eamus et queramus ad monumentum ubi posuerunt eum’ et congregans Christianos qui tunc erant ibi ultra centum, ordinaui processionem” (ed. Kappler, p. 70).

72 On ritual measurement cf. Lentjes 1995; Shalev 2011; Rachman-Schrire 2012, p. 364.

We started at the column (...) proceeding along the way in a regular fashion and asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us" etc. Afterwards, as we were approaching, we sang in a loud voice and repeated, "Praise to the Paschal Victim." At each step, one person sang the verse, and all responded. Surrounding and moving around the Sepulchre anxiously searching, since we were not finding the Lord, someone exclaimed, "The Lord, my Hope, has risen and is going before them into Galilee." This he said in such a loud voice that outside the whole church a noise and tumult resounded among the Saracens.⁷³

In the procession, we find dramatic and dialogic elements. The movement around the Sepulchre is narrated, as well as what the pilgrims say to each other, and it is noted that with every step they sing chants of the Easter liturgy. Thus, repeating these motions, the holy space could also be created in a different place far away from the Sepulchre.⁷⁴ The performance organized by Riccoldo has even (involuntary) listeners, namely the Saracens, whose reaction to the loud song of the faithful can be heard inside the church. Nevertheless, this "play" is not a theatrical play, since its main aim is to create proximity to biblical events by imitation.

Surprisingly the Holy Sepulchre is not described in detail, in contrast to 12th-century pilgrimage narratives such as John of Würzburg's *Descriptio Terre Sancte* or Theodericus' *Libellus*, which contain elaborate descriptions of the Holy Sepulchre. In the *Liber peregrinationis*, the inner space of intense devotion superposes the real space of the Holy Sepulchre:

We entered the Sepulchre however and found that a large stone at the mouth of the tomb, albeit rolled away beside the entrance. We came out without

73 Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 374: "et nos plane procedentes per uiam et conferentes ad inuicem quis reuoluet nobis lapidem etc., et postea cum adpropinquaremus alta uoce canentes et repetentes 'uictime pascali laudes' ad omnem passum unum uersum unus precinebat et omnes respondebant, et circumdantes et circumeuntes sepulcrum cum querentes solliciti non inueniremus Dominum clamauit quispiam tam alta uoce 'surrexit Christus spes mea' p.s.i.G. quod extra totum templum rumor et tumultus insonuit inter Sarracenos." (ed. Kappler, p. 70).

74 Cf. Ousterhout 2012, pp. 149–150: "But what lies behind this curious bit of guerilla theatre is, I believe, the recollective memory of the play of the Visitation to the Sepulchre, popular throughout medieval Europe and presented at Easter time."

finding the Lord. Next, they showed us the garden and the place where He appeared first to Mary Magdalene (...).⁷⁵

The real appearance of the Holy Sepulchre is not important to this rememorization of salvation history based on biblical events.

CONCLUSION

My aim was to interpret Riccoldo's description of the holy places focusing on performative elements. To achieve this, I examined the literary tradition of pilgrimage narratives and the structure of the *Liber peregrinationis* as a whole. In Riccoldo's work as in the literary tradition, the visualization and the seeing of the biblical world plays a pivotal role. Riccoldo's text illustrates that the significance lies not in the physical sights of the holy places, but in the internal visualization of biblical events. This aspect contrasts with the subsequent passages of the *Liber peregrinationis* describing a foreign (oriental) world through a lens of personal experience.

By emphasizing imagination and memorization we highlighted the function of the first part of Riccoldo's work as a spiritual journey for his audience. The encounter with the holy places is visualized through descriptions of procession, performance and theatricality using a visual and emotional language absent in the later sections of the *Liber peregrinationis* devoted to the Orient.

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⁷⁵ Trans. Pringle 2012, p. 374: "Intrantes autem in sepulcro inuenimus magnum illum lapidem ad hostium monumenti, sed reuolutum iuxta hostium, et exeuntes, cum non inueniremus Dominum, ostenderunt nobis ortum et locum ubi primo apparuit Marie Magdalene ..." (ed. Kappler, p. 70).

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Contextualizing Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's Experience with Religious Conversion*

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's work is usually studied for the author's knowledge of, and personal experience with, the Muslim world¹—in particular, Islamic doctrines, rituals and cultural habits. Less explored are Riccoldo's encounters with the followers of other religions—the Jews,² Eastern Christians,³ Mongol Shamanists, Buddhists and others.⁴ Although his focus on the study of Islam is clear, his conceptualization of followers of other religions and their “sects” (*sectae*) is also worthy of scholarly attention. It offers an image of his missionary practice, its prospects, and also to a certain degree its results among the inhabitants of the Persian Ilkhanate. This paper tackles Riccoldo's experience with converting non-Christians and non-Catholics to the Christian faith as expressed by the Western Church. My analysis focuses on a statement by Riccoldo contained in his *Libellus ad nationes orientales*,⁵ which concerns the effectiveness and facility of conversion: “... experience proves that the Tartars are more easily converted

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1 The total amount of time that Riccoldo spent as a missionary in the Near East is considered to be about twelve years; for details, see George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 14.

2 Cf. Walker 2011.

3 Cf. Rouxpetel 2015.

4 About the religious situation in the Ilkhanate at the time of Riccoldo, see Jackson 2017, pp. 298–300.

5 Dondaine 1967; Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, electronic edition 1997 & 2014.

than the Saracens, and the Saracens than the Jews, and the Jews [more easily] than the [heretical] Christians.”⁶

This contribution aims to contextualize this statement with regard to Riccoldo’s experience as reflected in his works,⁷ and also to compare it with the records of other Mendicant friars operating in Asia through the 13th and 14th centuries. The broader chronological and geographical context of sources used in this study reveals regional and religious particularities that document the variety of Mendicant experience as well as modes of its documentation.⁸

Besides Riccoldo’s *Libellus ad nationes orientales, Epistolae ad Ecclesiam Triumphantem*⁹ and *Liber peregrinationis*,¹⁰ the present study considers a selection of Franciscan and Dominican sources. These sources refer to various areas of Asia and date between the second half of the 13th century and 1340s. They include the report by William of Rubruck (1215–1270);¹¹ letters from the Franciscan friars John of Montecorvino (1247–1328),¹² Andrew of Perugia¹³ and Peregrine of Castello,¹⁴ a letter from Pascal of Vittoria (d. 1339),¹⁵ an account and letters from a Dominican friar Jordan of Catalan (d. around 1336?),¹⁶ and the account by a Franciscan friar John of Marignolli

6 “Sed tamen quantum ad effectum appropinquationis et conuersionis est totum contrarium in predictis, nam, experientia teste, tartari facilius conuertuntur quam sarraceni, et sarraceni quam iudei, et iudei quam christiani.” Dondaine 1967, p. 163; Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, electronic edition 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/1.prohemium.pdf>. Article 11 (August 2019).

7 For an analysis of Riccoldo’s works with respect to his education see Booth 2021, pp. 49–78.

8 Cf. Szpiech 2013.

9 Five letters were written shortly after the fall of Acre in 1291. English translation in George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 137–173. On the *Letters* cf. also Shagrir 2012.

10 Latin text in Riccold de Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche-Orient*; English translation in George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 175–227.

11 About his life and mission, see Jackson 1990, pp. 1–55; English translation of Rubruck’s report Jackson 1990, pp. 59–278. For the Latin report, see van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 164–332. A most recent edition of Rubruck’s account is provided in the 2014 Latin–Italian edition by Paolo Chiesa.

12 Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 340–355. For an English translation, see Dawson 1955, pp. 224–231, or Yule 1866, vol. 1, pp. 197–218.

13 van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 373–377. English trans. Dawson 1955, pp. 235–237.

14 van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 365–368. English trans. Dawson 1955, pp. 232–234.

15 van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 501–506. English trans. Yule 1914, pp. 81–88.

16 Gadrat 2005.

(d. 1358/1359).¹⁷ Some of the sources precede Riccoldo's *Libellus* by almost half a century, some were written almost half a century later. The political contexts of the friars' missions varied—while some were envoys who were travelling through Asia for diplomatic purposes,¹⁸ others focused on the establishment of permanent missions.¹⁹ The missions were greatly influenced by both the friars' objectives and the environment in which they operated, including both the vast steppe inhabited by nomadic populations as well as multireligious cities. These aspects certainly influenced the authors' missionary strategies as well as the success of their endeavours. Situating Riccoldo's statements into the broader context of missionary experience reveals the discrepancy between the Mendicant narrative modes, recurring across the Mendicant sources, and the regional specifics reflecting his own experience.

WAS THERE A MISSION TO NON-CHRISTIANS AT ALL?

Robin Vose, in his publication on medieval Dominican missions among non-Christians in the Crown of Aragon, pointed out that the Dominicans in this region, in spite of the close presence of Jews and Muslims, focused primarily on Christian communities and that their engagement with non-Christians was quite limited.²⁰ Following Vose's research, some scholars believe that the level of Mendicant engagement with non-Christians was low, not only in Iberia, but also in other regions of the medieval world.²¹ However, in my opinion, such generalizations might conceal essential differences which testify to the friars' engagement with non-Christians. Besides the political and diplomatic contexts of the missions to the Mongols, which have already been described by Ryan,²² there are numerous cases providing us with examples of Mendicant missionary activities among the non-Christian population. A letter sent by Franciscans operating in the region of the Golden Horde in 1320 mentions Tartar Christian converts who, after being converted, were Islamized because of a lack of

17 For the Latin text, see *Kronika Marignolova*, ed. Josef Emler 1882. For the English translation of selected parts, see Yule 1866, vol. 2, pp. 335–394. For a modern edition see Malfatto 2013 and Mocella & Malfatto 2022.

18 This is the case of John of Marignolli; to some degree, also of Pascal of Vittoria.

19 John of Montecorvino, Andrew of Perugia and Peregrine of Castello were working on the development of a strong Christian Church.

20 Vose 2009.

21 Roest 2015, pp. 333–334.

22 Cf. Ryan 1998, pp. 350–373.

Christian friars.²³ Another letter, sent in 1323 from the same region, mentions a German Franciscan who destroyed 93 idols belonging to nomads by throwing them into a fire, thus demonstrating his grave concern with the nomads' religious practices.²⁴ More examples may be listed;²⁵ at the same time, there were serious obstacles and limitations to these missionary attempts. One of the most serious was the language barrier, as mentioned by many friars.²⁶

However, there were also non-verbal means of mission, which were applied with great attention—the self-representation of the friars, the singing of *Credo* and other hymns,²⁷ and the sharing of food with locals, etc. All these actions were aimed to impress the local inhabitants and perform Christian ideas with the aim of converting them. That the efforts of the friars had little effect among non-Christians should not be universally ascribed to reluctance on the part of the friars, but sometimes to very specific cultural and social factors which played a role in the process of conversion.²⁸

Riccoldo is quite explicit about his missionary aims when he states in one of his *Letters*: “For you, O Lord, I left the world and entered the Order. For you I left the Order, so to speak, and came to proclaim you to the Saracens and Tartars...”²⁹ He was aware of the rising power of Islam among the Mongols and perceived his mission as a challenge to it: “I ... have been sent to preach the faith of Christ to the Saracens and Tartars, at a time when not only the Tartars and other nations are becoming Saracens, but also the Christians.”³⁰ On the one hand, his mission is aimed at preventing the process of Islamization; on the other hand, he does not limit himself to Christian communities, as his profound knowledge of, and polemics with Islam testifies.

23 Moule 1924, p. 66. More on the Franciscan mission in the Golden Horde in Hautala 2013; 2016.

24 Moule 1923, p. 107.

25 Cf. Jordan of Catalan's promising prospects of Christian mission in India. Gadrat 2005, pp. 265–266.

26 Rubruck often complained about this problem, cf. Jackson 1990, pp. 179–180, 228 and *passim*. Peregrine of Castello stated that if the friars knew languages, “God would show forth His wonders” (Dawson 1955, p. 233, Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 365–368). Cf. Valtrová 2017.

27 Jackson 1990, pp. 117, 132, 166, 177 and *passim*. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, pp. 76, 154, 176, 178 and *passim*.

28 As one such factor, a taboo spread among Christians in the Mongolian Empire concerning the drinking of qumys may be mentioned. Cf. Jackson 1990, p. 102; Chiesa 2014, p. 56.

29 George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 145.

30 George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 152.

MEDIEVAL MINDS AND MODERN CONCEPTS

Before proceeding to the examination of Riccoldo's statements about conversion, a few general remarks concerning modern and medieval conceptualizations of religion, religious typology and conversion are necessary. In the following pages, I intend to avoid an anachronistic imposition of the modern concept of "religion", its classification pattern and the underlying notion of "conversion" upon medieval thought. Instead of "religions", Riccoldo writes about "sects" (*sectae*) when referring to groups of practitioners or "nations" (*nationes*), which in the medieval sense mingled the modern meanings of ethnic origin and religious affiliation.³¹ These discrepancies between modern and medieval conceptualizations of religions create a specific terminological problem which is beyond the scope of the present study, but should not be ignored.³² Here, it is sufficient to point out that Riccoldo's classification of particular "sects" or "nations" was, along with all other friars of his time, Christian-centric. This implied not only the idea of Roman Christianity as the only true "religion", but also posed a problem in relation to Asian religious inclusivism.

In the introduction to his *Libellus*, Riccoldo evaluates each religion according to the similarity or "closeness" of its doctrine to that of the Western Church. Thus, he names Nestorians and Jacobites as those who are "the closest" to Western Christians, followed by Jews, then Saracens, and finally Tartars and pagans, who are the most distant from the Christian faith because they have "neither understanding nor law, except the law of nature, neither a temple nor a fast, nor any support that unites them spiritually."³³ As noted by Rita George-Tvrtković, the same order of "sects" was very often used by medieval authors to structure and organize writings on these topics.³⁴ Looking closely at Riccoldo's typology of non-Christians reveals, however, that this typology is not used by him consistently: specifically, the category of the Tartars and pagans seems somewhat problematic. While in the introductory part of *Libellus* Riccoldo mentions "Tartars and pagans", in the following development of his work he distinguishes two other groups: the Tartars and other "idolaters", namely Indian monks called *bacscite* or *baxitas*, that is, *bhaskhīs* or Buddhist monks, whose position on his

31 Cf. Carpini and William of Rubruck in Dawson 1955, pp. 17, 42, 132 and *passim*.

32 More on this cf. Bossy 1982; Biller 1985; Valtrová 2016. On the history of the concept of religion see Nongbri 2013.

33 "... tartari et pagani, qui nec intellectum habent nec legem, nisi legem nature, nec templum nec ieiunium, nec aliquod adminiculum, quod eos uite spiritualis coniungat." Electronic edition Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/1.prohemium.pdf>. Article 10.

34 George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 18.

scale is not explicitly determined.³⁵ Riccoldo notes, however, that they enjoy great respect among the Mongols and provides special instructions on how to handle them.³⁶

In general, Western travellers noticed that there were “many different sects of idolaters”³⁷ in the East, which varied according to their objects of worship and other customs, and often also in burial rites. While in theory, “pagans” were treated as one category, in practice, a great variety of beliefs and practices were documented and some types of the “pagans” required special treatment, as we shall see in the example of Riccoldo’s account of the *bhakshīs*.

Discrepancies between the theoretical religious typology and religious practice are obvious, however the adaptation of the concept of “religious conversion”³⁸ is even more complicated. It may encompass a wide range of actions and processes—from simple participation in a ritual, which might not even be properly understood by the alleged “convert,”³⁹ to a complete change of life including its social and practical consequences. Riccoldo does not provide us with his explicit definition of a proper “conversion,” but a close examination of his statement reveals a broad range of meanings. Reports of other missionaries also document a whole variety of cases, ranging from a formal act of receiving baptism, sometimes en masse, to the very elaborate programme of a catechism. The first type of “conversion” is reported by John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan friar in Khanbaliq, as concerning the Önggüd ruler Körgüz (in Latin sources called “King George”). His “conversion” with the whole tribe is testified by their participation in a Catholic mass.⁴⁰ The latter case is attested by Montecorvino in 1305:

I have purchased by degrees forty boys of the sons of the pagans, between seven and eleven years old, who as yet knew no religion [*legem*]. Here I baptized them and taught them Latin and our rite, and I wrote for them about thirty psalters and hymnaries and two breviaries by which eleven boys now

35 The Turkic word *bakshī* refers to a Buddhist monk. About their status besides other holy men in Persian Ilkhanates see Jackson 2017, pp. 298–300.

36 Electronic edition by Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/4.Detartaris.pdf>. Article 4.

37 Cf. Rubruck’s report in Jackson 1990, p. 149. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, p. 116. Similarly, also Marignolli in Malfatto 2013, p. 3.

38 For more on conversion in the Middle Ages, see Muldoon 1997 and Szpiech 2013. For conversion in the Mongol Empire, see Ryan 1997.

39 As testified, e.g., by Rubruck, see Jackson 1990, pp. 166–167. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, pp. 136–138.

40 Dawson 1955, p. 227. Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, p. 348.

know the office. And they keep choir and say office as in a convent whether I am there or not.⁴¹

Montecorvino's understanding of a proper conversion as more than mere baptism is also reflected in his letter from 1306.⁴² The fact that baptism is perceived as only a part of the process is also indicated by Andrew of Perugia in his letter from 1326: "Of the idolators exceedingly many are baptized: but when they are baptized they do not adhere strictly to Christian ways."⁴³

Medieval Mendicant sources on Asian missions reveal a relatively vague and broad concept of "conversion" when it concerned the category of "pagans".

THE "MOST EASILY CONVERTED" TARTARS

What kind of experience could support Riccoldo's statement, and what do the accounts of other missionaries tell us about the difficulty and effectiveness of converting "the Tartars"? Analysing Riccoldo's words about his personal experience with evangelization among the Mongols provides little evidence. This is not unusual among missionary reports about Asia. In general, cases of conversion that are described in detail are rather few.⁴⁴ Reporting about the results of mission seems to be associated especially with those missionaries who worked on a long-term basis and wished to invite more friars to participate—in this context numbers of converts appear in letters of John of Montecorvino and his fellow friars,⁴⁵ and in Jordan of Catalan's *Mirabilia descripta*.⁴⁶

When considering Riccoldo's engagement in the evangelization of the Mongols, there are several statements proclaiming his intention;⁴⁷ however, none of his works abound with specific examples of such conversions. In his *Libellus*, we can read that:

... not many Tartars were converted to our faith, except some rulers and excellent men and women. The great emperor of the Tartars kindly keeps friars

41 Dawson 1955, p. 225. Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, p. 347.

42 Dawson 1955, p. 230. Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 354–355.

43 Dawson 1955, p. 237. Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, p. 376.

44 Among the notable conversions described in detail is the case of an Indian Brahmin who was baptized after a three-month-long catechism by John of Marignolli (cf. Malfatto 2013, p. 20–21).

45 van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 345, 347, 354–355, 366 and *passim*.

46 Gadrat 2005, p. 251.

47 *Letter Three* in George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 152.

at his court with honour, but this is for his bigger fame, rather than with any hope for conversion.⁴⁸

Unlike some friars who nourished the idea of the future conversion of the Mongolian khans to Christianity, Riccoldo did not foster any such hopes, although he recommended to address the mission primarily to the educated people and people of higher social rank than to the common people.⁴⁹ However, in relation to the “Tartars”, instead of a promising future for Christian mission among the Mongols, he witnessed the Mongols’ strong confidence in Buddhist monks⁵⁰ and their easy conversion to Islam.⁵¹ There seems to be a slight shift in his works relating to his treatment of the role of the Buddhist monks among the Mongols. He dedicated more space to their description within his earlier *Liber peregrinationis*⁵² than later in *Libellus*.⁵³ This may reflect their changing status within the Ilkhanate during the reigns of Arghun (1284–1291), who held the Buddhist monks in great esteem, and his son Ghazan (1295–1304), who adopted Islam and started their persecution.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the fame of Buddhist monks as trustees of the Ilkhans is reflected in *Libellus*, where Riccoldo recommended first refuting the doctrines of the Buddhists in order to successfully evangelize among the Mongols.⁵⁵ How difficult a task this would be, he does not say.

Neither Riccoldo’s *Libellus* nor his *Letters* document any large-scale conversion of the Mongols to Christianity. He even claims that the Mongols ask what they will gain if they become Christians.⁵⁶ How should we understand his statement that the Tartars are those who are “most easily converted”? Certainly, it does not refer specifically

48 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/4.Detartaris.pdf>.

49 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/5.Regule-Generale.pdf>, Article 11.

50 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/4.Detartaris.pdf>, Article 4.

51 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/4.Detartaris.pdf>, Article 2.

52 George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 192. The Buddhist monks are labelled *baxitas* here.

53 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/4.Detartaris.pdf>, Article 4.

54 Cf. Jackson 2011 [1988].

55 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/4.Detartaris.pdf>, Article 4. About Buddhist immigration to the Ilkhanate, see Jackson 2017, p. 300. About *bhakhshis* also in *Liber peregrinationis*, cf. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 192.

56 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/4.Detartaris.pdf>, Article 5.

to conversion to Christianity, but to conversion to any “sect” in general, most likely to that which brings the most benefit. According to Riccoldo, the Mongols became Muslims because Islamic “law” was “exceedingly lax and contained nothing difficult either in belief or works”;⁵⁷ in addition to that their conversion was supported by “the greatest gifts”.⁵⁸ In fact, this lament about the Mongols’ attachment to valuables such as silk, gold and other items is not unique and stems from a non-deliberate difference in distribution of supplies, tributes and gifts in Mongol society. Half a century earlier, William of Rubruck had experienced the difficulty of navigating between these social institutions, while trying to stick to the ideal of poverty.⁵⁹

The seeming absence of a religious “law” among the Mongols, combined with their alleged attachment to valuables, in Riccoldo’s understanding creates the foundation of their spiritual instability. Successive religious conversions of some of the Mongol Ilkhans in the preceding decades also certainly contributed to the development of this opinion concerning the Mongols and conversion. Several Ilkhans, including Hülagü and Arghun, were reported to have successively “converted” from one tradition to another during their lifetimes. The most striking example is undoubtedly Öljeitu (Ilkhan between 1304–1316), who is reported to have been a Nestorian, a Buddhist, a Sunnī Muslim of two different schools, then a Shī’a Muslim, and finally a Sunnī Muslim again.⁶⁰ The case of baptism of the Ilkhans’s envoys at the Second Council of Lyon in 1274 also supports this view of the Mongols as being easy to convert.

In this context, Riccoldo’s statement about the conversion of the Tartars has to be understood in terms of the Mongols’ general willingness to accept new religious beliefs and practices, be they Christian, Buddhist or Muslim, which is something they had done quite flexibly over the preceding decades.

The works of other missionaries provide us with comparative material. For example, William of Rubruck had already recorded an episode that reveals how problematic it is to use the concept of “conversion” in the Asian context. On a dangerous journey through the Tarbagatai mountains, Rubruck was asked by his guides to pray for their safe passage, which he did by singing the *Credo*. When the caravan had passed safely, the local guides, impressed by the prayer’s power, asked Rubruck to teach it to them. Due to the translators’ incompetence it was not possible to explain to them the content of the *Credo*; therefore, Rubruck decided to write it down and gave it to his guides with a commentary:

57 *Liber peregrinationis* in George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 197.

58 *Liber peregrinationis* in George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 197.

59 Cf. Valtrová 2020.

60 Jackson 2005, pp. 176–177.

What is written here is the belief a man should have concerning God, and a prayer in which God is asked for whatever a man needs. So believe firmly what is written here, even if you cannot understand it, and ... my hope is that it will save you.⁶¹

This episode shows the interest of local people in a variety of religious beliefs and practices, which were easily adapted, accommodated, and used to fulfil their everyday needs. However, the acceptance of a Christian prayer certainly cannot be considered as a “conversion”.

If we consider sources concerning Mongol China, here the mission was also presented as quite promising. John of Montecorvino claims to have baptized 6,000 people within ten years.⁶² In a letter from 1318 written by Peregrine of Castello, a fellow friar of Montecorvino, we read:

But among the infidel we can preach freely and in the mosque [*moscheta*] of the Saracens we have preached often that they might be converted, and to the idolaters likewise in their great cities by means of two interpreters. Many come together and wonder greatly and enquire diligently about these things. And now it has begun, we have good hopes, seeing the crowds eager to hear and running to where we preach.⁶³

Some of those reports which recount the promising evangelization of idolaters certainly have to be perceived with their implicit intentions in mind—they were written to inspire more friars to come and to justify the Asian mission. Nevertheless, the Asian inclusivism of faiths and practices, as recorded by many friars, supports Riccoldo’s judgement that, indeed, the Tartars are “the most easily converted”, although in this case it means neither that he was particularly successful among them, nor that they became exclusively Christian and abandoned their previous faiths and practices.

CONVERTING MUSLIMS AND JEWS

Riccoldo’s work is strongly marked with an awareness of the rising power of Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean and its popularity among the Mongols. His knowledge of Islam was extraordinary compared to that of his contemporaries, and he explicitly

61 Jackson 1990, p. 167. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, p. 138

62 Dawson 1955, p. 225. Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, p. 347.

63 Dawson 1955, p. 233. Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, p. 366.

mentions Muslims as targets of his mission.⁶⁴ Conversions of Muslims to Christianity are documented as happening quite often in those parts of the Holy Land that were under the Christian rule. As Benjamin Kedar has shown, it was common for a large proportion of the inhabitants of a conquered region to adopt the religion of their conquerors.⁶⁵ However, Riccoldo was in a different situation, especially after the fall of Acre in 1291. The Mamluks conquered the city as one of the last strongholds of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Christians, therefore, could hardly expect the local Muslims to convert to Christianity anymore. For Riccoldo, who was settled in Baghdad then, this event became a catalyst for serious contemplation about God's intentions regarding Muslims and their rise to power, which he expressed in his five *Epistolae ad Ecclesiam Triumphantem*.⁶⁶ Prospects for Christian missions also worsened as the Mongols gradually became Islamized. As Riccoldo ruefully pointed out: "Where Christ was once publicly preached, Mahomet is now proclaimed with loud cries day and night."⁶⁷

Although particular conversion stories regarding the Muslims are sporadic in missionary accounts, there are specific indications and sources showing that such attempts were made by friars. One of the earliest is an episode recorded by Rubruck, who unsuccessfully attempted to baptize one Muslim in a region north of Crimea.⁶⁸ Further testimony, showing little success among the Jews and the Muslims, comes from a 1326 letter written by Andrew of Perugia: "... of the Jews and the Saracens none is converted."⁶⁹ These accounts at least show that attempts to convert the Muslims were made, although we do not know much about their actual procedure.

A letter from 1338 written by the Franciscan friar Pascal of Vittoria provides a more detailed account. Pascal travelled with a caravan of Muslim merchants from Urgenj to Almalyk, where a Franciscan convent was situated. In his letter, he describes in detail his efforts to convert his fellow Muslims: he had been preaching ceaselessly for many days near a mosque during Ramadan. To stop him preaching, the Muslims offered him various precious presents including silver and gold, horses, camels and even virgins; later he was also attacked.⁷⁰ The following year Pascal and all the Franciscans in this convent were martyred.⁷¹ Disappointingly, Pascal did not record anything about

64 George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 145, 152.

65 Kedar 1997.

66 English translation in George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 137–173. On the *Letters* cf. also Shagrir 2012.

67 George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 143.

68 Jackson 1990, p. 104. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, p. 58.

69 Dawson 1955, p. 237. Latin text in van den Wyngaert, p. 376.

70 van den Wyngaert, pp. 501–506. English translation in Yule 1914, pp. 81–88.

71 One of the accounts of this martyrdom is edited in van den Wyngaert, pp. 509–511.

the results of his missionary efforts, a fact that is not that surprising given his focus on martyrdom, which became an aspect of the Franciscan missions after 1300.⁷²

In contrast to these reports an earlier source provides the reader with a much more optimistic account of the conversion of Muslims to Christianity. The author of a Latin treatise *De statu Saracenorum* (1273), traditionally ascribed to the Dominican friar William of Tripolis, claims that he had baptized “a good thousand” Muslims in the Holy Land.⁷³ This is not a unique claim. Several decades later, when such a situation was no longer possible in the Holy Land, another Dominican friar, Jordan of Catalan, who evangelized in Southern India in the 1320s, mentions that he baptized “around 300 people, out of whom many were pagans and Saracens.”⁷⁴ How many of these “many” converts were Muslim is impossible to tell. Certainly, we should not assume that the friars’ chances were the same throughout the vast Asian regions and under the different political circumstances.

Riccoldo’s statement placing Muslims in second place on his convertibility scale must also be viewed with respect to the other groups that he considered as even more difficult to convert: Jews and “heretical” Christians. As the difficulty is presented simply as relative it is thus practically impossible to quantify.

When exploring missionary contacts with Jews in Asia,⁷⁵ little is reported by friars. Most of these rare mentions are limited to noting the presence of Jews at various places in the Caucasus, in Persian cities and also in Southern India. From the little evidence we have, it seems that friars operating in Asia did not consider Jews as primary target groups and their presence was sometimes even ignored. The fact that Jews were encountered in Asia and that friars had to deal with them at some point is also testified by Riccoldo, who pointed out that Jews were very well versed in the Old Testament, and therefore those friars who wanted to evangelize among them should be well prepared.⁷⁶ In general, his approach towards Jews was based upon Augustinian theology, according to which the Jews deserve to be tolerated as those who received and preserved the message of the Old Testament. Furthermore, the Augustinian approach stressed the role of Jews as witnesses of the true message of the New Testament. During the 13th and 14th centuries Christian attitudes shifted from the Augustinian view of Jews as witnesses towards the rejection of Talmudic Judaism. Riccoldo’s opinion,

72 MacEvitt 2020.

73 *De statu Saracenorum*, § 55, 370. On William of Tripolis and his work, see Tolan 2002, pp. 203–209.

74 Gadrat 2005, p. 251.

75 Cf. Cuffel & Gamliel 2018.

76 Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/5.Regule-Generale.pdf>.

however, did not follow this development, as is also reflected in his belief in the future conversion of the Jews.⁷⁷

Riccoldo's participation in a disputation between Dominicans and Jews in Mosul's synagogue mentioned in *Liber peregrinationis*⁷⁸ was probably not an exceptional experience among friars, because we learn from John of Marignolli's account that he had "many great disputes" with Jews and other sectarians in Khanbaliq in the 1340s. According to Marignolli, a "great harvest of souls was gained in this region."⁷⁹ If and how many of the alleged converts were Jews is unclear. No results concerning Jews in China are documented in Andrew of Perugia's letter mentioned above.

NESTORIANS AND JACOBITES

The last group on Riccoldo's scale—the Nestorians⁸⁰ and Jacobites—is a complicated case, where ambiguous attitudes can be perceived. The first problem concerns the definition of their "conversion" and its symbolic representation. From the canonical point of view, rebaptism was out of the question, because the rebaptism of heretical Christians had already been forbidden in the Catholic Church from the 4th century AD.⁸¹ Therefore, we may assume that the friars would not baptize these "converts" again if they had been previously baptized by their priests.

In the case of the Jacobites, we have quite a detailed account of their "conversion" in *Liber peregrinationis*. Riccoldo's description of preaching to, and the direct conversion of, some of the monks in the Monastery of St Matthew presents what appears to have been a straightforward task. Although some monks opposed Riccoldo, the others, including the most learned bishops, accepted him "as an angel" and promised "to preserve until death the faith which they had received firm and complete from [him]."⁸² Taking into account Riccoldo's advice listed in his *Libellus*, that the missionaries should focus on a unity of faith, not a unity of rite,⁸³ this might suggest that a "conversion" of these Christians may have not required any kind of outer representation.

⁷⁷ Walker 2011, p. 4.

⁷⁸ George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 200.

⁷⁹ "... multus animarum fructus in illo imperio factus." Malfatto 2013, p. 3, article 8.

⁸⁰ By the term "Nestorian" I refer to a historical concept by which the Western travellers designated the members of the Church of the East. Cf. Brock 1996, 23–35.

⁸¹ For a detailed list of synods dealing with conversion of heretics cf. Freidenreich 2014.

⁸² George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 203.

⁸³ Jensen 1997 & 2014, <https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/5.Regule-Generale.pdf>, Article 8.

Less detailed but similarly optimistic is the account of Jordan of Catalan. According to him, Dominican and Franciscan friars converted some 4,000 people or more in Armenia, including an archbishop named Zakarias.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Jordan was successful in Tabriz with 1,000 converted “schismatics” and as many in Ur, plus 500 or 600 in Sultaniya.⁸⁵

Riccoldo’s judgement of Nestorians and Jacobites being the most difficult to convert stands in contrast to these numbers, reported by himself and Jordan. Supposedly, in this case, we need to regard the difficulty of their “conversion” not as an individual change of religious affiliation, but as the unification of churches by means of the acceptance of the pope as the ultimate head of all Christians. While friars could have been warmly received in certain places, Riccoldo was well aware of the fact that the union of churches was a goal far beyond his personal remit.

The situation in the eastern part of the Mongolian Empire was different. In missionary accounts from Rubruck, to Montecorvino and to Odoric of Pordenone, the Nestorians were presented as “the worst heretics” and rivals of the Latin Christian mission in Asia.⁸⁶ The image of the Nestorians in Latin reports seems to shift from a critique of their ignorance in the second half of the 13th century, towards a criticism of their conspiratorial and hostile behaviour as described by the Franciscans after 1300. This development might reflect a growing rivalry between the two institutional networks which competed for the favour of the khan. While in the second half of the 13th century William of Rubruck had to co-operate with the Nestorians in order to successfully accomplish his mission, the Franciscans some 50 years later were much more independent of them and relied on other sources of support—Europeans living in China, Armenians,⁸⁷ or Alans, not to forget the funding from the khans. The difference between the Nestorians and other Christians is reported as being maintained by the Nestorians. William of Rubruck mentioned that the Hungarians, Alans, Armenians, Georgians and Ruthenians living in Karakorum were not allowed to accept the sacrament in Nestorian churches unless they had been rebaptized by the Nestorians.⁸⁸ At the same time, however, he reports that he was allowed to use their church and liturgical equipment for celebrating the Easter mass.⁸⁹ Such cases of sharing reported by Rubruck were no longer present in the letters of the Franciscans in China. According

84 Gadrat 2005, p. 244.

85 Gadrat 2005, pp. 245–246.

86 Cf. Valtrová 2011.

87 One Armenian lady provided funds for a new church in Zaitun. Dawson 1955, p. 233. Latin text in van den Wyngaert 1929, pp. 374–375.

88 Jackson 1990, p. 213. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, p. 218.

89 Jackson 1990, p. 216. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, pp. 222–224.

to Montecorvino, the Nestorians did not allow anyone to build even a small church, and they attempted to get rid of him by making false accusations against him.⁹⁰ Probably, the rivalry between Nestorians and Franciscans in Mongol China had grown as the Franciscan mission settled.

However, there was also a certain ambiguity in Montecorvino's relationship with the Nestorians: on the one hand, he was strongly critical of them; on the other, the success of his mission was based upon the "conversion" of exactly these "heretical Nestorians", namely the tribe of "King George".

It seems that apart from the case of the "King George" tribe, the Franciscans in China achieved most success among Christians—specifically, Armenians, Alans, Greeks and various other Europeans—who were not affiliated to, or not allowed to join the Nestorian church. To what degree the Franciscans could step into the network of the Nestorian church, which had its communities in many cities on and around the Silk Road, is also questioned.⁹¹ According to William of Rubruck, Nestorian bishops came to the regions in the realm of the great khan rarely—only once in 50 years: "On that occasion they have all the male children, even those in cradle, ordained as priests."⁹² This of course did not mean that all the males were sufficiently prepared to provide the spiritual services required for celebrating a mass. It should also be noted that Syriac as the liturgical language of the Nestorians was no more understandable to the locals than Latin. Therefore, the arrival of a priest, no matter of what affiliation, could have been welcomed, especially in those places where the network of the Nestorian church was weak and educated priests were rare.

CONCLUSION

Riccardo's statement regarding the effectiveness and facility of the conversion of particular religious "sects" has to be viewed as a combination of the traditional treatment of the topic and the friar's personal experience. This statement might also be a reflection of the fact that those who were closest to Catholic Christians were at the same time those who were most difficult to convert, and those who were furthest, the easiest. Contextualizing this claim within Riccardo's own work leads us to the conclusion that in this statement he did not indicate those groups from which most converts were likely to be recruited to Christianity, but rather the difficulty of missionizing among them.

⁹⁰ van den Wyngaert 1929, p. 346.

⁹¹ Cf. Tang & Winkler 2013; 2022.

⁹² Jackson 1990, p. 163. Latin text in Chiesa 2014, p. 134.

The typology and order of “sects” follows the traditional view, which did not distinguish among the different types of “pagans”, although Riccoldo was well aware of their variety. From Riccoldo’s accounts of his travels we know that he considered the different demands of refuting the beliefs of such pagans, although he does not provide the readers with detailed instructions on how to proceed with particular groups of “idolaters”. He seems to be aware of the intellectual demands of converting Buddhist monks, compared to the demands of the Mongols, who sought instant benefits.

Contextualizing Riccoldo’s statement within the broader, though not complete, set of missionary sources allows us to draw some general observations. Experienced friars were well aware of the difficulty of proper catechesis and the conversion of the followers of non-exclusivist religions. The speedy success of missions among them was often undermined by their maintenance of idolatrous practices.

The approaches to Muslims and their conversion seem to exhibit the greatest variety with respect to their degree of success across the selected sources and regions. When thinking about converts from Islam the overall situation regarding the spread of Islam must be taken into account, as well as the growing importance of the ideal of martyrdom within the Franciscan order. The Franciscan mission among the Mongols is described by some sources as a race with Islam. Given the Mongol willingness to “convert”, it is quite possible to imagine recent native Mongol converts to Islam as being temporarily “converted” to Christianity by the friars (only to be reconverted to Islam again).

In the case of Jews, occasional inter-religious debates taking place in Asia are mentioned in several sources, similarly to the situation in medieval Europe. Whether and how the different position of Christianity as “one of the many sects” in the Mongolian Empire influenced such debates is a question to which the sources discussed here do not provide any answer.

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JEAN-MARIE MÉRIGOUX OP (†)

Friar Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's *Letters to the Church in Heaven*

"The Lament of a Camel Driver of Christ"

Friar Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (c. 1243–1320), from the Order of the Preachers, is a famous medieval clergyman. The life and writings of this passionate Florentine, philosopher, theologian and orientalist are moving and fascinating, for he experienced in present-day Iraq the difficult problem of the encounter of the Christian world with the Muslim world, a confrontation that would soon be continued with the persecution of the Christians under the Mongols. The fall of Acre, the last Frankish bastion in Syria, captured by the Mamluks on 18 May 1291, had consequences as far as in Mesopotamia, where Riccoldo was living at the time. These dramatic events traumatized him and plunged him into a bitter inner turmoil that may partly explain his severity with regard to the *lex Sarracenorum*.

I will first give some information about our author, and then present some excerpts from the translation that I made in Mosul¹ of the *Letters* that Riccoldo wrote to the Church triumphant after the dramatic fall of Acre, *per modum orationis amaritati animi*, "like a prayer of a soul in bitterness".

1 I was helped for this translation, in Mosul, by Father André Dubarle OP, who lectured at the St John seminary, and in the Dominican monastery of Paray le Monial by Sister Hélène de Jésus, who corrected it and revised it thoroughly. My grateful thanks go to these two senior figures in Dominican life. Cf. Mérigoux 2000, pp. 87–122.

FRA RICCOLDO DA MONTE DI CROCE:
A LATE VOCATION TO THE EAST

According to Father Paul Amargier, Friar Riccoldo² Pennini³ was “a missionary of exceptional stature”.⁴ He counted among the first generations of Dominicans in the Order that was founded by Saint Dominic in 1216.

Riccoldo had his origins in Monte di Croce, in the Mugello, and was born in Florence c. 1243. In 1267, he entered the Florentine monastery of Santa Maria Novella, becoming part of the same Dominican province as Saint Thomas Aquinas. In 1272, the provincial chapter sent Friar Riccoldo to Pisa to teach logic⁵ and Friar Thomas to Naples to organize the *Studium generale*.⁶ Who then would have suspected that after 15 years of teaching in Pisa, this professor of philosophy would apply his talent as a dialectician in the service of the East? As a disciple of Thomas Aquinas, Riccoldo was convinced that the natural reason was the only way to discuss with those who possessed neither the Old nor the New Testament.⁷

In leaving for Frankish Syria, Riccoldo responded to the calls that the pope and the master of the Order of the Preachers had launched in favour of the Eastern Christians. He landed in Acre, whose Dominican monastery was the centre of the Preachers' influence in the East.⁸

² Previously misspelt as *Ricoldo* or *Richardus*.

³ Mérigoux 1987; 2001; 2015a; 2015b.

⁴ Amargier 1963; 1986, pp. 7–17.

⁵ Riccoldo's commentary to the Book II of Aristotle's *Perihermenias* has been preserved, a lesson given in Pisa about 1280: Sibenik OFM, Conv. 14. f. B., ff. 1–8. Father René Gauthier OP, from the Commissio Leonina, has highlighted this text in his edition of Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Perihermeneias*, vol 1:1, p. 73, n. 2, and made a typewritten transcription of it.

⁶ Cf. Weisheipl 1993, pp. 323–351.

⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 2.

⁸ Some years after Riccoldo's return to Florence, between 1300 and 1305, a “Society of the Peregrine Friars” was established in the Dominican monastery of Galata, in Constantinople; however, Father Loenertz considers that Riccoldo already represented its ideals when he arrived in Acre. In this “Society” the brethren, “travellers for the Christ”, usually had to live *extra conventum*, in small teams and without proper monasteries. Cf. Loenertz 1937, pp. 13–15; Delacroix-Besnier 1997, pp. 8–34.

RICCOLDIAN STUDIES

In 1884, the German orientalist Reinald Röhricht published for the first time the *Epistolae quintae de perditione Acconis 1291 fratris Ricoldo de Monte Crucis*⁹ according to the only known manuscript. He thus revealed what the last episode of the *negotium fidei*, which had been undertaken two centuries before Riccoldo's time in order to free the Holy Land, had represented for Riccoldo. In 1893, Father Pierre Mandonnet OP devoted a long article to Friar Riccoldo in the *Revue Biblique*,¹⁰ in which he emphasized the excellence of Riccoldo's description of Palestine in his *Liber peregrinationis*.¹¹ In this article, Mandonnet brought to light the *Letters* that Riccoldo had addressed after the fall of Acre to the Church in Heaven, the Celestial Court, which he recognized as one of the major medieval lyrical texts.

In 1967, Father Antoine Dondaine OP achieved a true *aggiornamento* within Riccoldian studies. In his article 'Ricoldiana', published in the *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*,¹² he took stock of what was known of Riccoldo's work, and published some extracts of his *Ad nationes orientales*. At this time, there was already a rich documentation on Riccoldo: Monneret de Villard's book *Il libro della peregrinazione nelle parti d'Oriente di Frate Ricoldo da Montecroce* and several articles about Riccoldo,¹³ Father Raymond Loenertz's (OP) works on the *Frères Pérégrinants*, those of Father Joseph Henninger on the missionaries' contribution to the knowledge about Islam,¹⁴ Father Marco Voerzio's (OP) works on Friar Guillaume of Tripoli,¹⁵ those of Father Angel Cortabaria, Dominican from Cairo,¹⁶ and Charles Puech's laudatory appreciation of Riccoldo as the first medieval Westerner to talk about the Mandeans.¹⁷

While making a catalogue of the manuscripts originating from the Florentine monastery of Santa Maria Novella—where Riccoldo had stayed—and kept in the National Library of Florence, on the occasion of the monastery's seventh centennial in 1980, Gabriella Pomaro discovered Riccoldo's major work, the *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, under the registration BnF Conv. Soppr. C 8. 1173, ff. 185r–218r.¹⁸ It is followed on ff.

9 Röhricht 1884.

10 Mandonnet 1893.

11 Cf. Baldi 1955.

12 Dondaine 1967.

13 Monneret de Villard 1944; 1948.

14 Henninger 1953.

15 Voerzio 1955.

16 Cortabaria Beita 1970.

17 Cf. Puech 1949.

18 Cf. Pomaro 1980.

219r–244r by *Ad nationes orientales*,¹⁹ a presentation of the Eastern peoples and religions written for the Dominican friars who were destined to work in the East.

In this Florentine manuscript—a true authorial manuscript—there were passages written by Riccoldo's own hand. In view of the significance of this discovery, Father Emilio Panella²⁰ rewrote the note 'Riccoldus' in the *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*.²¹ Among the old notes dedicated to Riccoldo, one may recall those by Quétif-Echard,²² by Vincent Fineschi in *Memorie istoriche que possono servire alle vite degli uomini illustri del Convento di S. Maria Novella di Firenze dall'anno 1221 al 1320*,²³ and by Father Stefano Orlandi in the *Necrologio di S. Maria Novella*.²⁴

The *Liber peregrinationis*,²⁵ the *Contra legem Saracenorum* and Riccoldo's first Letter have since been translated into Italian,²⁶ and the *Liber peregrinationis* and the Letters into French.²⁷ Thanks to Father Emilio Panella, the text of the *Ad nationes orientales* can be found on the internet, along with a new edition of the Latin text of Riccoldo's Letters.²⁸

THE FALL OF ACRE, AS EXPERIENCED IN BAGHDAD

When Friar Riccoldo arrived in the East in 1288, he did not know, as he put it himself, "what he should have known" in order to face what awaited him. He had not opened himself up to the spiritual wealth of the Eastern Christians and he still knew nothing of the Arabic language or of Islam. During a stay of almost ten years in Mesopotamia, his knowledge about ecumenism and Christian–Muslim dialogue developed consid-

19 Cf. Mérigoux 1986a. In the Latin–Arab glossary that was authoritative in the 13th century, *lex* signifies *dīn* (religion) and *saracenus* signifies *muslim*, cf. Schiaparelli 1871. It is worth noting that in his *Ad nationes*, Riccoldo quotes entire passages of the *Contra Gentiles* in order to describe the Nestorian and Monophysite positions.

20 Cf. Panella 1988.

21 Kaeppli & Panella 1993.

22 Cf. Quétif & Echard, 1719, pp. 504–506.

23 Fineschi 1790.

24 Orlandi 1955, n. 222.

25 de Sandoli 1984, 'Itinerarius fratris Ricoldi, ordinis fratrum predicatorum, textus latini cum versione italica', with the Latin text 'Itinerarius Fratris Riculdi' in Laurent, 1873.

26 Riccoldo da Montecroce, *I Saraceni*, pp. 55–181. Riccoldo's first Letter has been republished, presented and translated into Italian in Panella 1989.

27 Riccoldo da Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient* (text at pp. 36–205), *Lettres sur la chute de Saint Jean d'Acre* (text at pp. 208–252), ed. Kappler 1997. Cf. Mérigoux 1990. On the first French translation of the Itinerary, by Jean Lelong, cf. Mérigoux 1973, p. 616; Panella 1988, pp. 65–77.

28 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Libellus ad nationes orientales* and Letters.

erably. The link between theology and missionary behaviour is very close in Riccoldo's work. When he arrived in the East, he considered that not only the Saracens, but even all the non-Catholic Christians would be damned. His life in the East caused him to change his judgements to such an extent that he ended up wondering if these non-Catholic Christians really were heretic, and admiring many aspects of Muslim life.

In Baghdad, Riccoldo came to know apostolic delights, but also the great sorrow of seeing the persecution of the Christians by the Mongols, who had turned into radical Muslims.

On 18 May 1291, the Mamluks of Egypt captured Acre, a city that would later be known as "Saint John of Acre" in memory of the Knights of Saint John.²⁹ This event was extremely painful for all of Christianity.³⁰ Its repercussions were felt in the entire East and the Christians were the first to be affected.³¹ Although the event did not alter the ruling khan's favourable policy towards the Christians in Baghdad, the population often reacted with growing hostility. Many Muslims changed their behaviour and the relations between both communities deteriorated. The event was traumatic for Riccoldo because he had personally known the friars of Acre who were slaughtered. The group of Dominicans in Baghdad was now condemned to isolation. Acre, which had formed the connection with the West and was where their religious supervisors had lived, did not exist anymore.

Baydu, the new khan who gained power in March 1295, was, just like his father, a friend of the Christians. But his reign was brief and he was assassinated in September the same year. The Mongols' arrival in Baghdad and the end of the Abbasids had firstly brought hope to the Christians, but the atmosphere changed quickly after the assassination of Baydu.³² For the Christians, this was the beginning of their suffering. Having embraced Islam, the new sovereign Khan Ghazan proclaimed it the official religion and enacted a *yarlik* of destruction of the churches. The catholicos-patriarch Yahwalaha III was arrested and tortured.³³ New taxes were imposed on non-Muslim men. Jews and Christians had to wear special clothing. *Maphrian* Bar Hebraeus, a rep-

29 The city of Acre, Acco, Akkâ, known as Ptolémaïs in ancient times and Saint John of Acre during the Middle Ages.

30 Cf. Grousset 1934–1936, vol. 3, pp. 741–763; Richard 1996, 'Les lendemains de la chute d'Acre', pp. 479–482.

31 Cf. the account of the capture of Acre in Wiet 1931–1940, vol. 4, pp. 459–460.

32 "One cannot deny that the Christians considered the Mongols' arrival (in 1258) as a relief and that they were pleased with their triumph as with the fall of the new Babylon." Fiey 1980, pp. 271–274.

33 Cf. Chabot 1895, pp. 134–142.

representative of the Syriac catholicos in the region, wrote sadly: "The Mongols had all become Saracens, the nobles as well as the little people."³⁴

OPEN LETTERS TO HEAVEN

Facing these dramatic events in great spiritual darkness, Riccoldo entered into profound meditation about Providence's mysterious intentions, and he thought back of all he had learnt of the slaughter of the Dominicans and Franciscans in the city of Acre. All this tormented him greatly,³⁵ and in an attempt to restore inner calm, he set to express his complaint in five "Epistles" addressed to the Celestial Court:³⁶ "Open Letters" where he displayed his suffering as well as his and the Eastern Christians' personal drama, in a style that evokes Jeremiah's *Laments* and the *Fourth Book of Esdras*.³⁷ He confessed his indignation at so much suffering and disgrace inflicted on the disciples of Christ.

34 Cf. Fiey 1975, p. 63.

35 "The Mamluks slaughtered the Dominicans who sung the *Salve Regina* as they awaited martyrdom", in Richard 1953, pp. 333–345. Cf. Grousset 1939, pp. 371–384. In the monastery of Acre, Riccoldo was probably able to receive the intellectual and missionary legacy of Friar Guillaume of Tripoli, who lived in Acre until 1273 and was the author of an important work on the Saracen world and Muslim religion. Cf. Voerzio 1970.

36 Cf. 'Epistolae V', ed. Röhrich; Panella, 'Preghiere e protesta'.

37 In bringing up his pain, Riccoldo may have drawn his inspiration from the *Fourth Book of Esdras* [also known as *Apocalypse of Esdras*], III, 1 [French translation quoted by Father Méri-goux]: "La trentième année de la ruine de la Ville, j'étais à Babylone, moi Salathiel, qu'on appelle aussi Esdras. Reposant sur mon lit, j'étais troublé et des pensées me montaient au cœur, parce que je voyais la désolation de Sion et la prospérité des habitants de Babylone. Mon esprit était fortement agité et je m'adressais avec crainte au Très Haut. Je dis: Ô Seigneur souverain, n'as-tu pas parlé au commencement, lorsque tu as, toi seul, formé la terre [...] Et maintenant, je te dis en mon cœur: se conduisent-ils mieux, les habitants de Babylone? Est-ce pour cela que Babylone domine Sion? A mon arrivée ici, j'ai vu des impiétés sans nombre et j'ai vu moi-même une multitude de pécheurs durant trente ans. Mon cœur est troublé. [...] Car j'ai vu comment tu soutiens les pécheurs, comment tu as épargné les impies, perdu ton peuple et préservé les ennemis! Babylone fait-elle mieux que Sion? Y-a-t-il un autre peuple qui t'ait connu en dehors d'Israël? [...] J'ai en effet parcouru les peuples en tous sens et je les ai vu prospères, alors qu'ils oublient tes commandements. IV 1: L'ange Ouriel, qui m'avait été envoyé, me répondit en ces mots: Ton cœur s'est fort éprouvé à la vue de ce monde et tu penses comprendre la voie du Très-Haut!". See *La Bible, écrits intertestamentaires*, pp. 1399–1402.

THE CAMEL DRIVER OF CHRIST

What one can call Riccoldo's great hardships lasted from autumn 1295 to Easter 1296. Lost in the desert into which he had escaped, he was arrested by the Saracens and commanded to become Saracen. Having refused, he was forced to join a caravan and to become a camel driver. This caused him to gladly consider himself as a "camel driver of Christ".³⁸

Father Mandonnet has evoked Friar Riccoldo's moving testimony: "For its originality and its importance, Riccoldo's letters on the fall of Acre remain one of the most curious monuments of the apostolic life in the East during the 13th century. Either regarding the psychology of a missionary soul or regarding history and literature, they are worthy of serious study and much attention."³⁹

EXTRACTS FROM THE *LETTERS TO THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN*
BY FRIAR RICCOLDO

Here begins the preface of the work that a friar preacher was pushed to write. Epistles on the Saracens' worldly prosperity and of the total abandonment of the Christians. *Aleph*.⁴⁰ I was staying in Baghdad among the deportees on the banks of the Kebar River, the Tigris.⁴¹ On the one hand, I was thrilled by the charm of the surrounding greenness. It was like a paradise planted with trees of abundant and various fruits, like a well-watered garden surrounded by edifices covered with gold.

On the other hand, the collapse and enslavement of the Christian people after the dreadful capture of Acre plunged me into immense sorrow: on the one hand indeed, the triumphant Saracens, on the other the Christians stripped of everything, dismayed and demoralized. Their daughters, their children, their elders and spouses⁴² taken to the remote Eastern regions in order to be enslaved by barbarian nations. Suddenly, I entered into unfamiliar meditation. In my profound sadness, I began to reflect more seriously than usually about the purposes of God in governing the world. Why had this race triumphed? Why had the Christian people collapsed? Finding no explanation, it came to me to write to God and the Celestial Court. I wanted to present my request in prayer, with the desire of being strengthened in the purity of the faith and to see

38 Cf. Mérigoux 1986b.

39 Mandonnet 1893, p. 594.

40 This is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; cf. Lamentations 1:1.

41 Ezekiel 1:1.

42 According to Röhrich's edition the text says *senes et rumoribus*, according to Panella's edition it says *senes cum uxoribus*.

the Christians, especially the captives, freed of the enemies. Distressed as I was, I have written the following epistles like a prayer of a soul in bitterness.

First Epistle

Epistle of an astonished soul (*admirantis animae*) to the living and true God governing the world.

To the King of the ages, God incorruptible and invisible, unique, honour and glory forever and ever. Amen. You are admirable, your decrees are unfathomable and your ways are incomprehensible.⁴³ It is not surprising that you do wonders; it would be much more if you did not. Indeed, you are so wonderful that I do not know what would be the most wonderful: to do wonders or not to do? This would be wonderful as well. Your holy prophet David declared to us: "You are the God who does wonders."⁴⁴ If my intelligence rises above the terrestrial dust and strives to gaze upon you, it is filled with admiration. Who will allow me to reach your throne? Then, my judgement will vanish in your presence, and full of objections, my mouth will wish to know all your responses.

But now I am prompted by the tribulations and cannot reach the serenity of contemplation. How can I talk to you in sweetness while my body is wrapped in sackcloth and ashes are sprinkled on my head? It is not appropriate for the one "wrapped in sackcloth" of mortality to enter the dwelling of the eternal King. I would rather resemble a second Mordecai, "crying out with a loud and bitter cry" in the midst of the city.⁴⁵ Perhaps my laments will then reach the ears of Esther's servants and of the eunuchs, who will themselves announce it to Queen Esther, to the Virgin Mary and finally to the King of the Kings. In my suffering, my God, I will say to you: "You are just and I cannot argue with You without your consent. I know my Lord that all your judgements are just."⁴⁶ These judgements, nobody can blame them fairly, for nobody understands them fully.

My Lord, you know everything;⁴⁷ I do not come to you with a criticizing mind, but with the desire to talk to you and express my feelings, although you are more interior to me than I am to myself. My Lord, I do not try to penetrate your transcendence, which exceeds my intelligence so much, but my heart believes in your mercy and in your truth. It loves them and desires to understand them: "I do not try to understand

43 Romans 11:33.

44 Psalms 77:15.

45 Esther 4:1–2.

46 Acts of the Apostles 16:7; 19:2.

47 John 21:17.

in order to believe but I believe in order to understand, by believing I will certainly understand.”⁴⁸ I know that you always do wonders, but it seems to me that you have renewed these wonders and changed their signs. Yet, the holy prophet used to assure us of your might. But now, what happened in Antioch, Tripoli and Acre⁴⁹ encourages the Eastern people to claim your powerlessness. For us however, there are no gods or lords but Lord Jesus Christ, whom some would like to consider only as a man, and not as a God: a man incapable of confronting Muhammad, whose fortune seems to worsen dismally. They also say that Muhammad’s fortune has totally surpassed Christ’s. The “Where is the God of the Christians?” that they openly claim among the people has also become the shout of the Jews and of the Tatars. All of them want to convince us that Jesus, son of Mary, is not God and cannot help us. My Lord, why do you not display your might among the people? Please remember Sennacherib’s insulting words: “Where is the God of Sepharvaim?”⁵⁰ Then you had responded by sending your angel, who had killed 18,500 men in one night alone.

So why are you now sleeping, my Lord? Do you not care if we perish? As Mark the Evangelist has said, not only did he sleep, but “he slept on his pillow.”⁵¹ O pillow on which the one sleeps who is vigilant and holy. But I cannot shake my Lord, not even softly, to wake him! Your prophet has said: “You made your strength known to the people.”⁵² To me it is not enough that you have made it known to them, make it known now. Arise Lord, save us, do not reject us definitively! Why are you looking away and forgetting about our misery and tribulation?⁵³ Arise, Lord, help us, not because of us who are sinners, but release us because of your name. You are in us Lord, and your name has been invoked on us ...⁵⁴

It is impossible not to mention the fundamental attacks of Muhammad’s followers: they eliminate the Holy Trinity and the mystery of Incarnation, they take away the Father from the Son and the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit from both of them. Yes, I have read in Arabic in the Alkoran: “The Father can have no son since

48 Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, I, 241–243: “And you my Lord, how long? How long my Lord will You forget us, for how long are You looking away from us? When will You look at us and listen to us? [...] And neither do I try to recognise in order to believe, but I believe in order to recognise. For I believe it: if I did not believe, I would not recognise.”

49 Capture of Antioch on 14 May 1268 by Baybars, of Tripoli 26 April 1289 by Qalâwûn, of Acre 18 May 1291 by al-Achraf Khalil.

50 Isaiah 36:19.

51 Mark 4:38.

52 Psalms 77:15.

53 Lamentations 5:20; Isaiah 64:7.

54 Jeremiah 14:9; this text comes from the chapter of Dominican Complines.

he has no wife." O Lord, how many altars and churches they have destroyed, and how much contempt they have shown in putting Christians, perfect men, predicators of the faith, preachers and minors to death! How many times have their tyrants shared out your consecrated nuns and those who were destined for virginity, your faithful wives! What king, being able to fight back, has ever suffered that another king seized his wife?

Therefore, with the obedience of your Vicar, I have come to these profound Eastern lands as a weak friar preacher, going around and preaching you Christ. But I fell into the hands of the enemies, who wanted to force me to preach Muhammad and his belief by hitting and threatening me. As I refused and withstood their torments and threats with your help, they deprived me of the holy habit of my Order. In my confusion, I had to take a camel driver's habit and to drive a camel with a chain. Having been for so long a negligent friar preacher, I suddenly became an attentive camel driver. So, crying tears of joy, I said: "O Lord, I know that Muhammad has been a camel driver;⁵⁵ can it be that by your decree, I, under the habit of a camel driver, will have to face this camel driver? No, I do not refuse to fight for you, no matter under which habit." But having returned to myself, I experienced how difficult it is to accomplish what I had projected. Pulling myself together, I then thought that my poverty, in the apostolic perfection ordered to your apostles, was the cause of my failure. And now suddenly, I think of this great and very fervent preacher, the blessed Dominic, founder of the Order of the Preachers,⁵⁶ whom you have let shine in the West by his doctrine and his miracles ...

Lord, how long will you suffer that? Be attentive to the captives' groaning; avenge the blood that has been shed. Now the Holy Land, having been corporeally visited by you, the Most Holy, and consecrated by your precious blood, groans as it is deprived of its Christian inhabitants. Day and night, Muhammad is now announced aloud where Christ used to be preached. Yes, I have learned how the sea of Tripoli and Acre have turned red by the blood of the slaughtered, and how the sea has swallowed those who had been spared from the Saracens' swords and arrows ... We have become a reproach to our neighbours,⁵⁷ and I do believe, Lord, that we have deserved these punishments by our sins. But Lord, once, you accepted to spare Sodom for ten righteous persons. Were there not ten righteous persons among so many Christians and clergymen living in the whole city of Tripoli or Acre? For one single righteous man you once spared the Jews and you said through you prophet: "Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through its squares. If you can find but one person

⁵⁵ Cf. de Premare 2002, pp. 38–39.

⁵⁶ Cf. Vicaire 1957.

⁵⁷ Psalms 44:14; 79:4.

who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city.”⁵⁸ Lord, I have learned that not only one or ten, but many friar preachers had stayed in the city of Acre although they could have gone out and escaped. They preferred to die with God’s people as witnesses of the faith, and they were killed. Does he not pursue the faith, the one who dies for the faith? Lord, do I dare to ask you if you have changed in our respect, have you become crueller in letting a large amount of righteous people perish with few impious people, you who had often spared many impious people for few righteous people? Indeed, you have saved Moses from the waters as he was a child crying in a basket of rush, in order to make him a liberator.

But whereas I reject these sophistic arguments, the proofs are presented to me that great multitudes of Christians have repudiated Christ and become Saracens after these events. Wretched man! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?⁵⁹ I expected the opposite, which would be only too logical. Indeed, when the heathens slaughtered the Christians, many heathens became Christians. But now, O misfortune, it is the opposite. We can observe a change in the right hand of the Almighty, towards the left, and even the most sinister left. The Christians that were spared in the Saracens’ slaughters are embracing Muhammad’s law. I have no consolation but you, my God. I have stayed alone in Baghdad, separated from my fellows, deepest in the East. From the West, no more news from the Order. What can have happened to the General Master, why does he leave my so sorrowful letters unanswered? Yet, I asked for help. Every day I am wounded to death. Being considered as a lamb to be slaughtered, I have become a stranger to my brothers, unknown by the sons of my mother. For you, Lord, I have abandoned the world. Having come to the Order, I wanted to announce you to the Saracens and the Tatars. I have come out from the very heart of the seas,⁶⁰ broken by the tempest! Do not let the tempest of water swallow me! I know indeed, Lord, that your mercy is sweet although mysterious and hidden. I beg you, O my God, to confirm me in your holy faith and to promptly release the Christian people from the hands of the impious. May your name be blessed to ages of ages ... Given in the East.

Second Epistle

Since the Divine Clemency did not respond immediately, my afflicted soul added this epistle intended for the blessed Queen in Heaven.

⁵⁸ Jeremiah 5:1.

⁵⁹ Romans 7:24.

⁶⁰ Jonah 2:4.

To the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Queen in Heaven and advocate of the world. A friar preacher in the East, with an afflicted soul, deprived of joy and peace, addresses to you who are joy and peace. Several times already, I have written to the divine Wisdom and exposed to it my sorrow and my astonishment, but I have not yet received a consoling and enlightening response. Now, most blessed Queen, in my cries I endeavour to make you know the cause of my sorrow and of my disappointment, and I hope to receive your merciful support in my misery.

I fall back on you with trust and confidence, I, miserable sinner, knowing that the sovereign judge has established you as Queen of mercy and advocate of the sinners in the celestial curia. Having reflected on my future for many years and turned towards bearing witness of your Son, I have faced the enemy of mankind, who wanted to hold me by depicting the numerous and serious dangers of such a trip for my fragile health. As I was crushed and had delayed again and again, I heard a voice in my heart: "Put your thoughts in the Lord, and he will nourish you."⁶¹ From now on, be certain that if difficulties or danger should arise, you will receive support if you invoke the patronage of the Queen of mercy. This is why I stand before you with confidence and familiarity, and ask you: "If you accept to be my intendant and housekeeper, the *massaria*, I will walk safely." As you know, in my land *massaria* commonly refers to the woman providing for the house's necessities; and I have experienced that in all dangers and in the barest necessities, when I have said to you: "Where is the house's *massaria*?", you have always understood me and enfolded me with your patronage.

Here I am now, alone in a remote land, weak in my body, sad in my heart, dismayed in my soul. From my exile, I scream to you as the son of Eve,⁶² but also as the son of a multitude. Wretched! Wretched! I have come from the West to the Eastern lands to preach Christ, to baptize and to work towards the expansion of our holy Mother the Church, and now I hear of dispersion and dissemination, and I see it by myself. Wrested from the womb, from the very heart of the holy Mother Church, the Christians are killed or sold and taken to Baghdad and the remote Eastern regions; so large is the number of captives. As I was searching among them, trying to recognize some of my friar preachers, I was told that all had suffered a violent death. Old men and children are sold to strangers. Chalices, chalice cloths and other consecrated ornaments intended to the altars' spiritual ministry are passing from the table of Christ and from the service of the Body and Blood of the Lord, to the hands of the Saracens. The holy books of the Prophets and of the Gospels are handed over to the dogs.

⁶¹ 1 Peter 5:7.

⁶² Cf. the *Salve Regina*, a Marian antiphon from the 11th century closing the office of Complies, especially among the Dominicans.

But the most lamentable is that the nuns, the virgin wives of your most holy Son, have been captured: the most beautiful being chosen and sent to the Saracen kings and princes to engender posterity; others being sold or given to minstrels who take them all over the world, to the shame of the Christians and of your most holy Son Jesus Christ. O Our Lady, we know that your Son is the splendour of the eternal light, the spotless mirror to which nothing pleases but purity. Does it please him more that nuns and consecrated virgins become slaves and concubines of the Saracens, and engender Saracens' sons, rather than keeping their vow of virginity, thus conceiving, through the Holy Spirit, holy thoughts in contemplation of your divine Son, and giving birth to a ministry of love? ... Of course, we recognize that everything happens with God's permission. But may the Saracens know God and thank him for their victory! On the contrary, their gratitude goes to Muhammad, their benefactor by the merit of the Alkoran. They attack Christ: "The Christians trust a certain Jesus, Son of Mary, who they believe to be God but seems impotent against Muhammad ..."

As you know, I was in Sebaste,⁶³ a city in Turkey, when I heard the sorrowful news of the capture of Tripoli. They attached a cross depicting the crucified to the tail of a horse who went all over the city, starting with the quarter of the Friars and the Christians, and dragged his sorrowful trophy in the mud. And this they did on a Sunday, to make the insult to the Christians and to Christ even worse. We learn from eyewitnesses that everywhere, in Galilea, in Judea, in Jerusalem, the Saracens have put out the eyes of your images and of those of your divine Son with spears, swords and sticks. All the paintings have been so to say "blinded" as an insult to the Christians and to Christ. What mother would endure her son being blinded? Have we not found, in Turkey, Persia and until Baghdad, that Christian churches had been destroyed or changed to barns, sometimes to mosques? Where they were not able to do so, they have built a mosque or a minaret just next to the church, with a high tower from where they proclaim the faith of Muhammad in the face of the Christians. In Tauris,⁶⁴ a city in Persia, they have made a Koranic school of the very large and beautiful church that the Christians had built in the honour of the beloved disciple saint John the Evangelist, your nephew. Do you not read in Arabic, in many passages of the Alkoran, Muhammad's demonstration: "It is impossible that God has a son since he has no wife." In this short and foolish speaking, this fleshly and obscene blasphemer endeavours to take away the Son from the Father and the Father and divinity from the Son. And you, O Virgin Mary, in many passages of the Alkoran, you become this ancient Mary from the time

63 Sivas, Turkey. The news of the fall of Tripoli (27 April 1289) must have reached Sebaste on 1 May: cf. Panella 1986, p. xxxiii.

64 Tabriz, Iran.

of Moses, daughter of Amran, sister of Moses and Abron. You are supposed to have said: "I would prefer death rather than having given birth to such a son". O Our Lady, you know that they commonly teach that your Son Jesus should come back at the end of the world to become a Saracen. O Our Lady, as I passed close to the Tigris, the river of Paradise, between Baghdad and Nineveh I found the ancient Baghdad,⁶⁵ where they still wait for the son Haah,⁶⁶ dead 600 years ago, with a mule lavishly saddled and prepared which they display every Friday. As to Jesus, Son of Mary, they announce that he will return in his time and choose the Saracens. O Our Lady, regarding your Son, I believe in you and reject the Saracens' thought. I cannot admit such an error. I beg you, O most merciful, take care of us, look at our miseries and relieve them ... Obtain from him that the Lord's wrath and fury turn into tranquillity and mercy, as much for the Christians as for the Saracens. Hail, O most beautiful, and always pray Christ for us. Given in the East.

Third Epistle

[In this letter, Riccoldo brings up the social situation in Baghdad after the fall of Acre.]

I, miserable sinner sent to preach the faith of Christ to the Saracens and the Tatars, I see Tatars, other people and even Christians become Saracens. If the persecution initiated two years ago in Tripoli and Acre continues, with all the murders, imprisonments, torments and tortures, all Christians will disappear from this world. Who will give water to my head and to my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I can mourn day and night the victims of the daughter of my people? Stifled by the devil rather than killed by sword, affected by the scandals or the impatience, or pressed by hunger or other necessities, they have disavowed the faith of Christ. Alas! Alas! Alas my God, have you deceived your people, by saying "Peace, Peace", whereas the sword is now piercing to the soul? What will I do, I, miserable and afflicted, left alone deep in the East among the captives. In the course of one day, they say, thirty thousand Christians have been slaughtered. By distress and lack of courage, others disavow the faith of Christ and embrace the faith of Muhammad. I have already written to the divine Wisdom and its immaculate Mother, exposing to them my sorrow and my astonishment. Having

65 Samarra, a city located 125 km north of Baghdad, which was the residence of the Abbasid caliphs between 836 and 692.

66 Muhammad al-Mahdi (868–874), twelfth imam 'alide of the Twelver Shi'a, whose return to Samarra is awaited after his "occultation", *ghayba* in the *sirdāb* of his palace; he is the "awaited", *al-muntazar*.

received no response yet, I will do like the one who suffers an intolerable insult on the public place. I will scream aloud: "Come running, man!" Will nobody respond?

O Father, grand Dominic, founder of the Order of the Preachers, you have grown your beard in order to face the Saracens in the West. You have not succeeded. Now that you are close to your God, you are very mighty. How could you remain silent when we have such a need for your patronage? Many saints are joining you to implore strongly the God Almighty. Many clergymen slaughtered by the Saracens can reinforce your group. I anxiously question those who come from the capture of Acre, but nobody can ensure me that a single friar preacher is still alive.⁶⁷ I examine the captives: none of my friars among them. But among the Saracens, I find tunics, ornaments, books, breviaries. O my friars, thus despoiled, where have you gone? It is not in our habits to travel without tunics and breviaries. From those coming from the disaster, I could get a tunic pierced with a spear or a sword and even lightly reddened by blood. Moaning and crying, I recognized the tunic of my Order and bought it back cheap.

O blessed Dominic, I am looking for my brothers. Sent from the Valley of Hebron, from the Western regions I came to Shechem.⁶⁸ In a dry land burnt by the sun. I came to preach the faith; I find plenty of books, writings on the faith, but I do not find my brothers. I am looking for my brothers. Please show me where they take care of the flock.⁶⁹ No, they do not feed the flock anymore but are fed themselves by an excellent Pastor in rich pastures. They have been slaughtered: Earth, do not cover my blood!⁷⁰ Do not cover the blood of my brothers that has been shed, so that the blood of the captives may enter in your presence ...

O Saint Gregory⁷¹... after having destroyed Acre, the Saracens have taken your book of the *Moralia* to Nineveh, this great city, where I bought it as a captive slave, separated from Christianity by more than fifty days of camel caravan ...

O, group of the Apostles ... the Christian churches are destroyed and mosques are erected. The holy Gospels are burnt or thrown to the sea. I myself have found a missal

67 A friar from the convent, Fra Matteo, escaped and reached Florence, broken by tiredness after his travels; cf. Abel 1934, p. 283; Orlandi 1955, p. 15, n. 148; Cenci 1998, n. 37.

68 Genesis 37:14.

69 Song of Solomon 1:7.

70 Job 16:18.

71 Gregory the Great, pope 590–604, *Doctor Ecclesiae*. Among his writings, a commentary of the Book of Job: *Moralia in Job*. This is the work of a great spiritual master, made to enlighten and give confidence to the faithful in their spiritual life and in the midst of their trials: "The soul of the afflicted man approaches God all the more as it is abandoned by men's favour. He immediately pours prayers out and, being oppressed from outside, he purifies himself in order to seize interior realities." (*Moralia* 10, 47–48). Cf. Dagens 2014, pp. 328–333; Gregoire le Grand, *Morales de Job*.

containing the epistles or Gospels, which had been taken to Nineveh, the great city, as the remains of the plunder of Acre. The Saracens had forbidden this book, they wanted to destroy it, to scratch its pages in order to turn them to skin for their drums and tambourines, which are widely used in the East. How can you sleep with that? ...

O sorrow! The Saracens pretend that Muhammad's name is written in the Gospel. I read chapter sixty-one of the Alkoran: "Jesus, son of Mary, openly declares: I am the envoy of God, O son of Israel, but I announce that another envoy will come after me, whose name is Muhammad."⁷² To tell the truth, I do not find this in the Gospels, neither in the Chaldean ones,⁷³ neither in the Arabic ones, although I have read them very attentively in the East ... All you evangelists have written that Christ has been crucified to death. Muhammad pretends that a double had taken his place.⁷⁴ By saying so, the Saracens prevail against us. The Alkoran seems to prevail against the Gospels, especially in the East where this error has triumphed for more than seven hundred years.

When I was fleeing from Babylon⁷⁵ for the desert, I was captured at the gate of the city by the followers and ministers of Muhammad. They were of Saracen rite and wore Tatar habits. They stabbed me as they stripped me to force me to become a Saracen. But charity helped me to suffer their stabs and insults like a game ... This is why they took away from me the holy habit of my order and dressed me with the habit of a camel driver. The Saracens have been able to turn me into a camel driver, but not into a Saracen ...

And I, sinner but fully confident in your mercy, I scream and yell before the palace's gates. Like a second Mordecai with torn clothes,⁷⁶ a long beard, disavowed by my brothers even under my preacher's habit, dressed as a soldier or as a camel driver or as a preacher, I go all over the East to preach Christ to the Saracens and the Tatars, although not only the Tatars but even the Christians become Saracens ...

Wretched, what will I do when seeing dazed Christians upon the roads, dismayed by their sorrow and the fear for the Saracens? I meet old men, virgins, young children, tattered innocents, pale, weak, looking for bread to no avail, even among the Christians. Many desire to become the Saracens' slaves to get some food and avoid starvation. I see women, young and old, crying at the foot of a crucifix, hitting their desiccated breasts and imploring help with a broken and enfeebled voice ...

72 Sura 56:6. An excellent overview of Islam's position regarding Jesus can be found in Arnaldez 1980.

73 Riccoldo knew both Syriac and Arabic, as appears from his study of the Christological vocabulary in these two languages; cf. Panella 1986, pp. xiv–xvi.

74 Sura 4:157.

75 Baghdad.

76 Esther 4:1.

O God, I beg you with all the saints and the whole Celestial Curia, deign to release us Christians from such a great misfortune, we that are placed under the Saracens' domination. As to the Saracens, I beg you with all my soul, deign to show them the true faith: You, Father of Heaven and Earth, true God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive, for many sin by ignorance and not by malice. Honour and glory to you with all the saints to ages of ages. Amen. Given in the East.

Fourth Epistle

To the venerable father and brother in Christ, Friar Nicolas from the Order of the Friars Preachers, Patriarch of Jerusalem and to the other brothers who died during the capture of Acre, Friar Riccoldo from the same Order, afflicted and miserable pilgrim come to preach the faith of Christ in the East, sad and in tears.

To tell the truth, when Acre fell, my sorrow and my sadness were immense. Each of you has a personal experience of it. I was in Baghdad, deep in the East, when I learned of it. Moreover, remains from Christians have been brought. Books and ornaments were sold. Women and children were led all over the city to the shame of the Christians. Nuns and virgins consecrated to God were sent to the barons and kings of the Saracens to sell them at the higher price. As to me, I sadly and sorrowfully inspected them, hoping to find some of my brothers, to buy at least one of them free or to provide one or another service. I was surprised to find only tunics and breviaries, but no friar! In our Order, we usually do not go without a tunic and a breviary. Saracen cooks⁷⁷ coming from the capture of Acre showed me a very beautiful tunic pierced with a sword or a spear and lightly reddened by blood. I do not know to whom of you it used to belong. I bought it back. According to these Saracen merchants, no friar preacher would have escaped the slaughter. O brothers! The Saracens have killed you to prevent you from strengthening the other captives' faith. So rejoice in the Lord, my brothers, and again I say, rejoice!⁷⁸ You have been put to death for your faith; you could have escaped the city by quitting your convent, which was built close to the sea. But you have preferred to stay to encourage the others in their faith.

But you, my brothers, tell me the time of your agony. What were your words when the enemies of the Christian faith swooped on you? It is told to have been a Friday at the Third Hour,⁷⁹ after you had celebrated the holy mass and received the Body and the Blood of Christ, whereas a great multitude of men, women and children sur-

⁷⁷ *foccarì*.

⁷⁸ Philippians 4:4.

⁷⁹ About 9 o'clock in the morning.

rounded you. I learned these details from a pious and trustworthy woman, captive of the Saracens. She attended your slaughter. When the enemies arrived, you were singing the *Veni Creator Spiritus* aloud.⁸⁰ It was customary to sing it during the reception of a new member into the Order. It was just to sing it during the reception of so many friars preachers into the Order of the Angels. You were slaughtered during this chant, and since then, I have heard nothing of you ...

Fifth Epistle

[In his last epistle, Riccoldo shows how, by means of Saint Gregory the Great's spiritual doctrine, he had been able to overcome the severe internal crisis into which he had been plunged by the slaughters that had happened during the capture of Acre. At the market of Mosul, among the objects looted from the convents of Acre, he had bought a copy of Pope Gregory's *Moralia*. This commentary of the Book of Job became the true response to the *Letters* that Riccoldo had sent to the Church in Heaven.]

I had before me the closed book of the *Moralia* by the blessed Gregory. I had asked God to respond by the doctrine of the blessed man to whom I had particularly addressed in my lament: "O Saint Gregory, you did not deign to respond, whether with a messenger or with letters. I beg you: show me in your ancient doctrine the reason of God's silence. My heart is so full of bitterness, so anxiously expecting a response. Then I heard like a voice in my heart: "Take it and read, take it and read."⁸¹ I opened the book eagerly, and looking at the point where I had put my finger, I saw chaste words approaching me like a face. I had come across Job's words: "Why do you complain to him that he does not respond to all your words? For God speaks once and does not repeat twice."⁸²

80 *Come, Creator Spirit*. This is the sequence of the Pentecost mass (12th century) that was sung during the ceremonies of taking of the habit in the Order of the Preachers.

81 Cf. Augustinus, *Confessiones*, VIII, 12, 29: "Tolle, lege."

82 Job 33:13–14.

And Gregory explains: "It is proper to an afflicted heart to want the Lord to respond to all demands by words."⁸³ This is the thought of God himself, who would openly say: "He does not respond privately to the heart of every single man, but his word is constructed so as to respond to everyone." The Scripture resolves all our questions. God responds in communion with our individual sufferings. There we find the life of our predecessors and the examples of those who may come. Again, the blessed Gregory says: "God speaks once and does not repeat twice,"⁸⁴ for he is careful to teach us through the Scriptures ... This is what Saint Gregory says. I thank you, Lord, for having responded to my question the way you did through your servant Gregory. I have nothing more to ask. My Lord, I thank you for your theoretical response, however, I affectuously and ceaselessly wait for your practical response. Written in the East. Explicit. Deo gratias.

CONCLUSION

After this presentation of the *Letters* in which Riccoldo brought up his moral and spiritual sufferings, I would like to highlight a teaching of Saint John of the Cross, which brings up the obscure nights and the mystical sufferings that the followers of Christ may experience:

"It is Apostle Paul's doctrine to the Hebrews, when he compels them to abandon their primitive customs and their relations with God under the Law of Moses, and urges them to fix their eyes on Christ only. So many times in the past, and in so many ways, God had addressed to our fathers through the prophets, but in these times that are the last, he has addressed to us through the Son. Thus, the Apostle teaches us that God has become sort of mute. He has nothing more to say to us, since he has now told us thoroughly what he used to say in separate declarations through the prophets, delivering it completely through the Son. Consequently, you must admit that long-

83 Riccoldo quotes Saint Gregory quite accurately: Sancti Gregorii Magni, *Moralium libri in Job*, XXIII, 34, cols 271–272; S. Gregorii Magni, *Moralia in Iob libri XXIII–XXXV*, 19, 34, 1168. Riccoldo's fellow friar Saint Thomas Aquinas commented the verse 33:14 of Job similarly: "Ostendit consequenter Eliud non esse necessarium quod Deus homini ad singula verba respondeat, sed unicuique sufficienter loquitur ad eius instructionem, unde subdit *Semel loquitur Deus*, scilicet homini sufficienter ad eius instructionem; unde deinceps non oportet quod ad singulas hominis interrogationes respondeat, unde subdit *et secundo id ipsum non repetit*, quia quod sufficienter factum est iterare superfluum esset" (Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, 175), and he praised Saint Gregory's commentary on Job, to which he seems to have nothing to add: "nihil ultra addendum videatur" (*Expositio super Iob*, Prologus).

84 Job 40:5.

ing for visions or revelations under the New Law is not only foolish; it is an offence to God, since by doing so our eyes are not fixed only on Christ anymore, but are searching for something new. God could answer indeed: I have told you everything I had to say through the Word which is my Son.”⁸⁵

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FACING THE ISLAMIC EXPANSION

DANIEL PACHURKA

Riccoldo's *Tractatus contra Saracenos* and Its Sources

A Refutation of the Prophethood of Muhammad

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the so called *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum*,¹ the attribution of which to Riccoldo was long under discussion. A more recent analysis of the text has shown that the *Tractatus* is an adaptation of a work of Riccoldo's confrere Ramon Martí.² However, because Riccoldo makes essential changes and reworkings, the *Tractatus* can be added to the catalogue of his works. Benefiting from the intellectual culture of Florence and the Dominican Order, Riccoldo displays a wide range of both literary as well as polemic techniques. Thus, the use of pre-texts (*Vorlagen*) is a characteristic feature of Riccoldo's writings, especially those that deal elaborately with Islam and the Qur'an. The *Tractatus* as well as the *Contra legem Sarracenorum* rely on a variety of authoritative pre-texts, among which there are anonymous works such as the *Liber denudationis* and texts by Dominican confreres such as Thomas Aquinas or Ramon Martí.³

With this in mind, I would first like to give a short introduction to the manuscript transmission, the dating, and the general content of the work. Second, I will briefly outline the structure and methods of argumentation. Finally, I will provide insight into the various strategies Riccoldo employs to refute the prophethood of Muhammad, which will become clear through an exemplary analysis of the manner by which

1 Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum* (ed. Pachurka 2016).

2 For a detailed discussion of Riccoldo's authorship cf. *Tractatus* ed. Pachurka 2016, pp. xviiiiff.

3 Cf. Pachurka, forthcoming.

he uses his main sources. These include the Qur'an, Ḥadīth collections, a biography of the Prophet, commentaries on the Qur'an, and Latin-Christian polemics.

The text has been transmitted in a single codex from the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, the codex BnF latin 4230 (parchment, 195 folios, 31 x 21.5 cm). The same codex also preserves Riccoldo's work *Contra legem*, which immediately follows the *Tractatus* in the manuscript. While the *Tractatus* is written on folios 151v to 159r, *Contra legem* begins on folio 159v. Both texts are written in two columns. The year 1384 is recorded on fol. 194v and represents a probable *terminus ante quem*. There is an entry in the catalogue of Petrus de Luna, Aragonese cardinal and later Pope Benedict XIII, which refers to the title of both Riccoldo's *Tractatus* and *Contra legem* in a form preserved only in BnF latin 4230: *Disputacio fratris Ricoldi Florentini contra Saracenos et Alcoranum*.⁴ Maybe the codex was kept in the papal library at Avignon until the death of its owner in 1423.⁵ Further research should clarify whether it was even produced in Avignon. In the manuscript, our treatise is titled *Tractatus seu disputatio Fratris Ricoldi Florentini ordinis fratrum praedicatorum contra Saracenos et Alchoranum*. It is subtitled *Alius modus procedendi secundum Fratrem Raymundum Yspanum ordinis fratrum praedicatorum*.⁶ Thus, the work itself tells us about its main source, for Raymundus Yspanus is the Catalan Dominican Ramon Martí. In the following, I shall repeatedly consider the connection between Martí's work *De seta Machometi* and Riccoldo's *Tractatus*.

The *Tractatus* focuses on the true prophethood of Muhammad or rather on its refutation. In the eyes of Western Christian polemicists, the Prophet of Islam constitutes a promising target for a successful attack on the *religio hostilis*: "If he could be shown to be no prophet, the whole Islamic fabric failed."⁷ In the *Tractatus*, Riccoldo directly attacks the prophethood by portraying Muhammad as the exact opposite of a holy prophet: an anti-prophet. Since Riccoldo focuses on the prophet of Islam in the *Tractatus*, and on the scripture of Islam in *Contra legem Sarracenorum*⁸ (CIS), the former can be considered a complementary work to the latter. Hence, the *Tractatus* proves to be Riccoldo's anti-Muhammad work. This mutual complementarity of Riccoldo's most elaborated treatises against Islam suggests that both works were written in chronological proximity to each other. This is supported, for example, by a common motif

4 Cf. Mérigoux 1986, pp. 35–43.

5 Cf. Lavajo 1988, vol. 3, p. 881. Cf. Tischler 2011, p. 149, n. 91.

6 Because of the transmission and the titling, both undertaken by the scribe, the title refers to both *Contra legem Sarracenorum* and the *Tractatus*. Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. xviii ff. For a more detailed discussion cf. Pachurka 2023, pp. 360–362.

7 Daniel 2009, p. 88.

8 Ed. Mérigoux 1986, pp. 60–142.

in the *Tractatus* and the CIS that Riccoldo adapted from Martí's *De seta Machometi*. The motif occurs in the context of the splitting of the moon (sura 54:1), when both parts of the moon enter the sleeves of the Prophet.⁹ It is not found in the *Liber denudationis*, a main source of CIS¹⁰ that can be securely dated to 1300–1301,¹¹ nor in other known works of Riccoldo, even if they refer to the splitting.¹² Thus, the use of *De seta Machometi* suggests that the *Tractatus* was most likely written between 1300 and 1301.

STRUCTURE AND METHODS OF ARGUMENTATION

In the *Tractatus*, Riccoldo attempts to refute the prophethood of Muhammad by drawing on various sources, including not only the Western Christian polemics but also sources from the Islamic tradition in addition to the Qur'an. These include the Ḥadīth collections (Arabic *ḥādīṭ* – “report, narrative”; pl. *ahādīṭ*), a biography of the Prophet (Arabic *sīra*) and exegetical commentaries on the Qur'an (Arabic *tafsīr*). However, these Islamic sources cannot simply be used as evidence or as a basis for argumentation without modifying the general approach and without being appropriately accommodated to the system of authorities (*auctoritates*) of Latin Christendom. The Dominican Ramon Martí (d. between 1285 and 1290) successfully incorporated Islamic sources into the argumentation of his work *De seta Machometi*¹³ (written in the 1250s, probably before 1257),¹⁴ which is why he can be considered Riccoldo's direct predecessor.¹⁵ Riccoldo adapted and reworked Martí's treatise, which thus became the

9 *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 16, ll. 172f.: “una pars [lunae] intravit per unam manicam ipsius et alia per aliam”. CIS (ed. Mériçoux 1986), ch. 4, p. 78, ll. 61ff.: “et cum sic fracta esset luna, uenit et intrauit in manicam camisie Machometi et ipse integrauit eam.”

10 Cf. Burman 1994, pp. 225ff. and ch. 9.11, pp. 318ff. Burman provides an edition of the *Liber denudationis* (1994, pp. 240–384).

11 Cf. Panella 1986, pp. xxvff.; 1988, pp. 10ff.; Schiel 2011, p. 128; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. xvi.

12 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 93, comm. 172f. Cf. Riccoldo de Monte Croce, *Pèrègrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient*, ed. Kappler 1997, pp. 180ff., according to whom the text refers to the splitting of the moon.

13 There are two editions of *De seta Machometi*: Hernando Delgado 1983; ed. Lavajo 1988, vol. 3, pp. 900–1027.

14 Cf. Tolan 2002, p. 236; Wiersma 2005, p. 15; 2015, p. 73.

15 Cf. Szpiech 2012, p. 176: “Although Martini implicitly characterizes Islamic sources as *auctoritates* in the *Explanatio*, this characterization becomes explicit in the *De Seta*. [...] This characterization is significant because in his later works he does not hesitate to designate his non-Christian sources as *auctoritates*.”

main source and the textual *Vorlage* of the *Tractatus*, as Riccoldo retained about 90% of Marti's content.

Like *De seta*, the *Tractatus* can be subdivided into four major parts, which are shown in the table below. The first part describes in turn the four signs of a "true prophet", each of which has its own subsection.¹⁶ The fourth sign about prophets as lawmakers additionally designates each law with its own heading.

I. Fructus seu signa, ex quibus cognosci potest propheta verus a falso, sunt quattuor.

1. Primum signum est, quod sit verax.
2. Secundum [...] quod sit virtuosus et sanctus, non malus et facinorosus.
3. Tertium signum est, quod faciat miracula.
4. Quartum signum est, quod legem afferat vel doceat sanctam inducentem populum ad Dei cultum et sanctitatem vitae et caritatem et pacem
 - a) Super matrimonio et mulieribus
 - b) Lex super repudio
 - c) Lex cognoscendi mulieres
 - d) Lex super conductione mulierum
 - e) Lex de effusione seminis extra vas debitum
 - f) Lex de modo comedendi
 - g) Lex super rapinis
 - h) Lex super transgressione iuramenti
 - i) Lex contra illud "non concupisces"
 - j) Lex super peccato sodomitico

II. Nunc agendum est contra Saracenos super eo, quod dicunt libros Veteris et Novi Testamenti esse corruptos et immutatos.

III. De secta Saracenorum et quando ortum habuit.

IV. De infelicitate et vili morte Mahometi.

¹⁶ The four signs are the reason why *De seta Machometi* is preserved under the name *Quadruplex reprobatio* (*Fourfold refutation*). Cf. ed. Hernando Delgado 1983, p. 9; ed. Lavajo 1988, vol. 3, pp. 871ff.; Daniel 2009, pp. 31 and 416. For a detailed discussion of the title, cf. Hernando Delgado 1991, pp. 98ff. and Wiersma 2015, pp. 73ff.

I. There are four signs by which one can distinguish a true prophet from a false prophet.

1. First sign: that the Prophet is truthful.
2. Second sign: that the Prophet is virtuous and holy, not evil and villainous.
3. Third sign: that the Prophet works miracles.
4. Fourth sign: that the Prophet makes and teaches a holy law to lead the people to worship God and to live holy lives, and to charity and peace.
 - a) About Matrimony and Women
 - b) Law about Repudiation
 - c) Law about Sexual Intercourse with Women
 - d) Law about Polygamy
 - e) Law about the Emission of Semen outside the Permitted Body Orifice
 - f) Law about Table Manners
 - g) Law about Raids
 - h) Law about the Transgression of Oaths
 - i) Law against "Thou shalt not covet"
 - j) Law about Sodomy

II. Defence against the Muslim's Objection of Forgery concerning the books of the Old and New Testaments.

III. The Sect of the Saracens and its Beginning.

IV. The Infelicity and Vile Death of Muhammad.

A comparison between Riccoldo's *Tractatus* and Marti's *De seta* shows that the former author altered the order of the text: his examination of the Prophet's death is placed at the end of the treatise, while *De seta* treats Muhammad's death right after the fourth sign and the numerous *leges*.¹⁷ Riccoldo uses this modification to connect the defence against the Muslim objection of *tahrîf* (i.e., the corruption of the sacred texts by Jews and Christians) with the biography of Muhammad. Consequently, any attack

¹⁷ Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. xxviii, n. 99, and p. 112, comm. 276ff.; *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), pp. 50ff.; *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, pp. 980ff. Cf. ed. Lavajo 1988, vol. 2, p. 690. Only the text of *De seta* in the manuscript of the Archivio Generale dell'Ordine dei Predicatori (AGOP), Rome, ms. XIV.28b, 200v–222r, shares this order with the *Tractatus*, but shows no changes made by Riccoldo.

on Muhammad that discredits him and his status as a prophet becomes an argument not only against Muslim objections and Islam itself, but also for the truthfulness of Christianity. The unholiness and human nature of Muhammad himself emphasize that the Christian Bible is textually uncorrupted, which is asserted in the conclusion of the analysis of sura 61:6 in the *Tractatus*:

Et ex hiis patet, quod Mahometus nullo modo potest dici Paraclitus, cum non fuerit datus Apostolis. Inter eos enim et ipsum fuerunt anni 500 et ultra. Nec fuit consolator, sed potius desolator, nec fuit Spiritus Sanctus, qui videri non potest, sed corporalis fuit et visibilis et miserabilis, sicut patebit in hiis, quae inferius annotantur de ortu et fine eius.¹⁸

From this it becomes obvious that Muhammad cannot be called a paraclete at all because he was not given to the apostles. In fact, 500 years and more lay between them and him. And he did not give consolation, but rather desolation, and he was not the invisible Holy Spirit, but corporeal and visible and miserable, as is evident from the following notes about his birth and death.

Riccoldo also modifies the general method of argumentation that he knew from his confreres. His contemporaries, especially *confratres* Ramon Martí and Thomas Aquinas, developed methods to encounter Islam. In his work *De rationibus fidei* (written after 1265 and after the completion of the *Summa contra Gentiles*),¹⁹ Aquinas defines a method of argumentation against Islam based on reason alone, because the Muslim counterpart does not accept Christian authorities and “because it is in vain to use authorities against the ones who don’t accept the authority.”²⁰ Moreover, Aquinas explains that reason cannot prove the truthfulness of the Christian faith because its truthfulness exceeds reason. Vice versa, the truthfulness of faith cannot be refuted

18 *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 38, ll. 453ff. For Muhammad as paraclete, cf. Daniel 2009, pp. 73f. and 364, n. 18; Glei 2009/2010, pp. 106ff.; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 133, comm. 442–457. Riccoldo also deals with sura 61:6 in CLS (ed. Mérioux 1986), ch. 1, p. 67f., ll. 93ff., and ch. 3, p. 71, ll. 22ff., and in the *Liber peregrinationis* (ed. Kappler 1997), p. 188. Again, in his third letter, cf. Röhricht 1884, *Epistola III*, p. 282. The edition of the *Epistolae* by Röhricht is deficient, as shown by Panella 1989, pp. 23ff.; and Bauer 2016, p. 370, n. 1; In 2021, Bauer published a new edition with a translation into German and a commentary, cf. Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Epistole ad Ecclesiam Triumphantem, Epistola III*, p. 130.

19 Cf. Thomas von Aquin, *De rationibus fidei*, ed. and trans. Ludwig Hagemann & Reinhold Glei 1987, pp. 16ff.; Roth 2017, pp. 172ff.

20 Translated from *De rationibus fidei* (ed. Hagemann & Glei 1987), ch. 1, p. 62. Cf. Tolan 2002, p. 244.

by reason.²¹ It can be assumed that Riccoldo and Martí knew this work. However, Aquinas' method ignores that the Muslims partially accept the Bible, especially the parts that confirm the truthfulness of the Qur'an. On this basis, Christian *auctoritates* can be used to some extent after all,²² as is demonstrated in the works of Riccoldo and Ramon Martí.

Although his works were composed at an earlier date, Ramon Martí's method, which he applies in the *Explanatio simboli Apostolorum*²³ (c. 1257) and in *De seta*, can be seen as complementary to Aquinas' approach.²⁴ Martí's method of argumentation draws on both *ratio* and *auctoritas*. He knows how to incorporate an authority into the argumentation. But how can his approach be based on authority when the Muslim counterpart, for example, does not accept Christian scripture? How can Islam be effectively combated in this way? Martí's answer is to treat Muslim sources as authorities, which enables him to prove the veracity of Christian authorities by transferring the Qur'an's claim of truth to the Bible.²⁵ On the one hand, this methodological approach makes it possible to maintain the general framework of the scholastic strategy. On the other hand, the Muslim counterpart must now accept the Christian authorities and the evidence coming from them. Ramon Martí thus acts as an intellectual pioneer among the Dominicans in the 13th century, for a remarkable shift takes place in the treatment of non-Christian sources as authorities that can also function as valid proof texts.²⁶ Overall, his strategy relies on three types of evidence: Christian authorities, non-Christian authorities and reason. *Prima facie*, the method seems to be well founded and to work effectively. The problem, however, is that the polemicists do not comprehensively reflect on their use of non-Christian authorities, but simply use them without discussing them in detail. Even if the polemicists focus on only a few sources, their assessment of whether a Muslim source is relevant to Islamic theology and there-

21 Cf. *De rationibus fidei* (ed. Hagemann & Gleis 1987), ch. 2, p. 64; Tolan 2002, pp. 241ff.; Wiersma 2015, p. 22; Roth 2017, p. 175. Aquinas develops his method primarily in his *Summa contra Gentiles*, as the studies just mentioned show.

22 Cf. ed. Hagemann & Gleis 1987, p. 144, n. 15.

23 Edited by Joseph M. March (1908). Cf. Wiersma 2015, p. 70.

24 Cf. Roth 2017, p. 174, who points out that Thomas Aquinas is well aware Martí's works but neglects them.

25 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 53f.; Roth 2017, p. 181.

26 Cf. Szpiech 2013, p. 122 also p. 125: "In his *On the Sect*, although he [Martí] harshly attacks Muhammad and Islam as mendacious, he still cites the Qur'an as an *auctoritas* [my italics]." Cf. Szpiech 2012, p. 176; Daniel 2009, pp. 68ff.: "[T]he Qur'an must be judged by the standards applied to Scripture. [...] Much of Martí's argument pursued this parallel between Scripture and Qur'an; whatever could be used to argue the validity of the latter proved equally that of the former."

fore suitable for refutation is prone to error. In general, their use of sources thus echoes the polemical discourse of the time.

Riccoldo, who despite his experience *in Oriente* is no exception to this problem, is familiar with both Aquinas' and Martí's works. He generally adopts Martí's method in the *CLS*²⁷ and *Tractatus*,²⁸ but is able to expand it by redefining and reevaluating the sources. For example, Riccoldo deletes almost all references to Muslim philosophers from the text. Philosophers interfere with the strategy of refutation because they may be revered figures but have no (religious) authority in the debate. The following example is taken from the discussion of the third sign of a true prophet, the working of miracles:

De seta:

Propter quod dicit Abenrost philosophus: *Res que facit ad hoc, ut ille qui dicit se esse Prophetam credatur esse uerax, est quod ueniat cum miraculo, quod non possit hoc facere per se, inquantum homo.*²⁹

That is why the philosopher Abenrost says: The condition is that the one who calls himself a prophet and wants to be believed as true, brings a miracle. He, a simple man, cannot do that.

Tractatus:

[N]on ostendit se a Deo missum, quia miracula non potest operari homo in quantum homo.³⁰

He cannot prove that he is sent by God because he cannot perform miracles as a simple man.

It is apparent that Riccoldo retains the argument but removes the reference to Abenrost (Averroes/Ibn Rušd). Riccoldo's adaptation eliminates all sources that Muslims could use against his argument. Thus, the Muslims cannot raise the objection that an argument comes only from a philosopher or polemical source, not from a recognized

27 Cf. Tolan 2002, p. 252.

28 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 54, comm. 8/12. Cf. Daniel 2009, p. 284.

29 *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, p. 906. Cf. *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), p. 16.

30 *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 4, ll. 28f.

authority. Also, the word *philosophus* does not appear in the *Tractatus*, but is either replaced, for example, by *astrologus*, or omitted altogether.³¹ There are only two exceptions, the first of which is found in the discussion of the splitting of the moon:

De seta:

Et hunc sensum approbat et confirmat Caali, glosator Alcorani super predictum locum. Hoc etiam euidenter reprobatur Aliquidius duplici ratione: Una ratio est ...³²

And the Qur'an commentator Caali approves and confirms this view of the aforementioned passage. With a twofold rational argument, Aliquidius also apparently rejects the Qur'an text: One argument reads ...

Tractatus:

Et hunc sensum approbat et confirmat Taali glossator Alchorani super praedictum locum. Hoc etiam irrationabile valde est ...³³

And the Qur'an commentator Taali approves and confirms this opinion of the aforementioned passage. This is also very irrational ...

It can be seen that Riccoldo removed *Aliquidius* but maintained the commentator *Caali/Taali*. Based on the forms of the name,³⁴ it seems likely that the scholar al-Ṭa'labī (d. 1035) may be meant. Al-Ṭa'labī is famous for his voluminous exegetical commentary on the Qur'an,³⁵ in which he confirms that the splitting is an event that will occur in the future, possibly—but not exclusively—on the Day of Judgement.³⁶ Since al-Ṭa'labī is neither a philosophical nor a polemical source, the reference to his commentary does not weaken the reasoning but rather supports it.

The second exception contains a crux and a lacuna on a philological level:

31 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 16, l. 182.

32 *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, pp. 958ff. Cf. *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), p. 40.

33 *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 16, ll. 180ff.

34 Cf. the additional forms in the critical apparatus of *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, p. 960: *Cali* and *Cabali*.

35 Cf. Rippin 2000, p. 434.

36 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 93, comm. 180f. Cf. Aṭ-Ṭa'labī, *al-Kaṣf wa-l-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ma'rūf bi-Tafsīr at-Ṭa'labī*, ed. Saiyid Kisrawī Ḥasan 2004, vol. 2, pp. 31ff.

Tractatus:

Quorum quidam, sicut dicit Aliquidius, intraverunt legem eius †tres [...].³⁷

Some of them, as Aliquidius says, obeyed his law [...].

The reference to *Aliquidius* most probably refers to the author of the well-known and influential *Epistula al-Kindī*.³⁸ The word *tres* does not appear in the text of *De seta*.³⁹ Since the *Epistula al-Kindī* points to three reasons why people followed Muhammad, one could assume that the lacuna is the result of defective tradition.⁴⁰ Perhaps it is a mistake by Riccoldo who unintentionally retained the name of the source, but in any case the exception confirms the rule. Riccoldo's method of adaptation has the effect of keeping in his text predominantly sacred authorities—Christian and Muslim. He selects among the sources those that he considers verified in Islam. Nevertheless, he uses arguments from non-sacred authorities without naming them.

THE QUR'AN

The main source he uses for his refutation is, of course, the Qur'an. In the *Tractatus*, Riccoldo adopts Ramon Martí's citation method with respect to the Qur'an:⁴¹ a sura is usually called *tractatus* (*capitulum* only twice), and the suras bear Latinized Arabic names, usually followed by a Latin translation.⁴² There is no numbering, but instead there are indications such as *in principio*, *ultimo capitulo*, and *XVI. capitulo* for orienta-

³⁷ *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 44, l. 508.

³⁸ Ed. González Muñoz 2005. Cf. Tolan 2002, pp. 60ff.; Daniel 2009, p. 22. We know that Ramon Martí was familiar with the *Epistula*, since in his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* he named the author and the work itself, cf. *Capistrum Iudaeorum* vol. 1 (ed. Robles Sierra 1990), Ratio VI, ch. 12, p. 254ff.: "Notandum quod Iacob Alqindi dicit in quadam epistola missa ad quemdam Sarracenum".

³⁹ Cf. *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), p. 24 and *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, p. 922.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Epistula al-Kindī* (ed. González Muñoz 2005), p. 61; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 146f., comm. 508. A possible emendation for *tres* could be *tribus de causis*.

⁴¹ Cf. Burman 2015, pp. 76ff.; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. xlviff.

⁴² Szpiech 2012, p. 176 summarizes Ramon Martí's citation method of suras: "In the *De Seta* [...] Martini regularly follows the title with a brief, explanatory translation." For an overview cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 171.

tion.⁴³ These indications refer to the decade divisions (i.e., groups of ten verses) of the Qur'an. Another indication, namely *in fine secundae distinctionis*, occurs only once in the text and refers to a division of the Qur'anic text called *ḥizb* (pl. *ahzāb*), which is a sixtieth.⁴⁴ For example, Riccoldo refers to sura 77:41–43 with *ultimo capitulo*. The verses 41–43 are in the last decade of the sura, which has a total of 50 verses. The reference is therefore correct. For sura 7:157 the text gives *XVI. capitulo*, which refers to verses 150–160, the corresponding decade. The reference to a *ḥizb* (*In tractatu Vaccae in fine secundae distinctionis*) is made for sura 2:136. The end of the second *ḥizb* is formed by verses 75–141. The reference is largely correct, since verse 136 is more or less at the end of the second *ḥizb*, but the indication *in fine* is a rather unspecific reference.

Martí's *De seta* is not the only means through which Riccoldo came into contact with this method of citation and its terminology. The Arabic Qur'an preserved in the codex BnF MS Arabe 384 contains two sets of Latin glosses. The younger set is by Riccoldo's own hand, while the identity of the first scribe—Ramon Martí has been considered—is not yet clarified.⁴⁵ The MS Arabe 384 has decade markings (*uṣṛ*) after every ten verses, and the older hand names the suras as *capitula*.⁴⁶ Although further research will have to show whether the decade markings in *De seta* and the *Tractatus* correspond to MS Arabe 384, it can be stated that Riccoldo had the option of developing his citation method from either an Arabic Qur'an or Ramon Martí's work.

Riccoldo cites extensively from the Qur'an. With regard to these citations, it is necessary to examine whether Riccoldo's translations are in accordance with the wording and meaning of the Qur'an. There is one passage in the *Tractatus* that contains a well-translated verse (sura 4:157) as authority, displaying the Dominican attitude toward Islamic *auctoritas*:

Tractatus:

Item dicit [i.e. Mahometus] in Alchorano in tractatu Mulierum inducens Iudeos loquentes de Christo: "*Nos interfecimus Messiam, Iesum, filium*

43 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. xlvii. Cf. Cecini 2012, p. 118, who describes the identical terminology of Marcus of Toledo. A sura is called *tractatus* or *capitulum* and a decade *distinctionio*.

44 Robert of Ketton and Marcus of Toledo also use the system of *ḥizb* divisions in their Latin translations of the Qur'an. Cf. Burman 2009, pp. 80ff.; *Der Koran* (trans. Bobzin 2010), p. 606; Cecini 2012, pp. 126ff.

45 Cf. Burman 2007, pp. 96ff.; Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010, pp. 1022–1024, 1039.

46 Cf. Burman 2009, p. 106, n. 4, who notes that Ramon Martí also refers to decade divisions (called *denarius*) in the *Pugio fidei*. Cf. Cortabarría Beitia 1983, pp. 285ff.; Burman 2015, p. 84.

Mariae, nuntium Dei.” *Et non interfecerunt eum neque crucifixerunt eum, sed assimilatum fuit eis.* Hic negat passionem et mortem Christi; et hoc patet esse falsum per libros Prophetarum, in Evangeliiis per dicta Apostolorum, per revelationes antiquorum et per signum crucis, quod est memoriale passionis Christi. Item per sepulcrum Christi, quod ipsi Saraceni custodiunt. Confi- tentur enim illud esse sepulcrum, in quo corpus Christi mortuum requievit.⁴⁷

Adducing the Jews speaking about Christ, Muhammad also says in the Qur’an in the sura named ‘The Women’: “*We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, messenger of God.*” *And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it was made to appear so to them.* Here Muhammad denies the passion and death of Christ. This denial is false, as is evident from the books of the prophets, from the words of the apostles in the Gospels, from the revelations of the Fathers, and from the sign of the cross, which is a symbol of Christ’s passion. Likewise, from the tomb of Christ, which the Saracens themselves guard. In fact, they recognize that this is the tomb, in which the dead body of Christ rested.

Ramon Martí’s account of this aspect is different:

De seta:

Item, quod dixit in Alcorano, in tractatu Mulierum, XVI c(apitulo), indu- cens Judeos loquentes sic: *Nos interfecimus Messiam Jesum, filium Marie, nuntium Dei,* et non interfecerunt eum neque crucifixerunt eum, sed as- similatum fuit eis. Hic negat passionem et mortem Christi, et hoc patet esse falsum per libros Prophetarum, Euangeliorum, et per dicta Apostolorum et reuelacionem multorum antiquorum, et per signum crucis, quod est memori- ale passionis Christi.⁴⁸

Adducing the Jews speaking about Christ, Muhammad also says in the Qur’an in the sura called ‘The Women’, chapter 16: *We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, messenger of God.* And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it was made to appear so to them. Here Muhammad denies

⁴⁷ *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. 4ff.

⁴⁸ *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), pp. 26ff. and *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, p. 930. I emended Lavajo’s “memoriale passionis Christi”.

the passion and death of Christ. This denial is false as is evident from the books of the prophets and the Gospels, from the words of the apostles and the revelations of many Fathers, and from the sign of the cross, which is a symbol of the passion of Christ.

For comparison I cite sura 4:157 from the *Alchoranus Latinus* of Mark of Toledo:

Et quia dixerunt: ‘Cristum Ihesum, filium Marie, occidimus Prophetam Dei,’
et non occiderunt ipsum nec crucifixerunt, sed uisum fuit eis.⁴⁹

And because they said: “We killed Jesus, son of Mary, Prophet of God”, and they did not kill him or crucify him, but it seemed like it to them.

In the Islamic tradition, most commentators interpret the Qur’anic verse to mean that the outward appearance of the crucified man was that of Jesus. The question of the identity of the person remains. But the non-standard interpretation takes into account the Arabic verb *šabaha* and its form in the verse, which is the impersonal form of stem II—*šubbiha*. Thus, the verse can be translated as “but it was made to appear so to them.”⁵⁰ The Latin translations in *De seta* and in the *Tractatus* follow the non-standard interpretation and therefore use an impersonal construction consisting of a past participle passive with a form of *esse*. Semantically, *assimulare* closely resembles the Arabic verb *šabaha*, which is why the translation of this verse can be called almost perfect.⁵¹ By also using an impersonal construction, Mark of Toledo’s translation confirms that the non-standard interpretation of the verse is known to some extent among Western scholars.

In the same passage, the controversial point of the *passio Christi* is also addressed. According to Islamic theology, Muslims deny the death of Christ because his death would mean that the Prophets have failed. By denying the death of Christ, the essential

49 *Alchoranus Latinus* (ed. Petrus Pons 2016), ch. 4, p. 70.

50 Cf. Robinson 2003, p. 19. Cf. *Der Koran* (ed. Khoury 1990–2001), vol. 5 (1994), p. 255.

51 Riccoldo also cites and refers to the verse in CIs and the *Epistolae*. Cf. CIs (ed. Mériçoux 1986), ch. 9, p. 102, ll. 64ff.: “Preterea, in capitulo *Elnesa*, quod interpretatur mulieres, dicit quod ‘ipsi Iudei dicunt quod occiderunt Christum Iesum filium Marie nuncium Dei.’ Hoc est expresse falsum;”, ch. 1, p. 65, ll. 51ff.: “Asserit [Machometus] etiam quod Iudei non occiderunt Christum nec crucifixerunt, sed quendam ei similem.” Cf. *Epistola III* (ed. Bauer 2021), p. 132: “Sed ecce in multis aliis imponit vobis [i.e., Evangelistis] mendacium Machometus in suo Alchorano. Vos igitur omnes scripsistis, quod Christus crucifixus est et mortuus; et ipse dicit ‘Nequaquam, sed eius similis.’”

moment of the redemption of humanity, Muslims cannot be right in Riccoldo's view.⁵² The two religions are incompatible. Riccoldo's arguments are not valid, however, because they are almost all based on Christian scripture, which is not accepted by the Muslim counterpart. Solely the Holy Sepulchre, preserved by the Muslims, presents a strong argument. Riccoldo himself has been to Jerusalem and visited the Holy Sepulchre, which is why he knows that it is guarded by the Muslims.⁵³ This point is not found in Ramon Martí's text, which demonstrates that Riccoldo is revising the text of his predecessor. According to Riccoldo's interpretation, the Muslims recognize Christ as the Messiah who died on the cross. Why else would they guard the Holy Sepulchre if Jesus never died? Whose tomb are they guarding then? Perhaps Riccoldo neglects the difference between Islamic theology and the guarding for practical reasons, but his argument is not entirely without validity.⁵⁴

HADĪTH COLLECTIONS

To the same extent as from the Qur'an, Riccoldo and Ramon Martí cite from the Ḥadīth collections. The Qur'an terminology of the polemicists is also applied to the Ḥadīth collections,⁵⁵ which both Riccoldo and Martí—along with only a few other scholars—knew very well.⁵⁶ Even though Riccoldo most probably became acquainted with or studied the collections during his pilgrimage, in most cases he adapts Martí's *De seta* and only slightly reworks the Latin text. The collections from which Riccoldo mostly cites or refers to in the *Tractatus* are the so-called Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, both named after their 9th-century editors.⁵⁷ As indicated by the Arabic classification *ṣaḥīḥ* ("authentic", "true"), these two collections have the highest rank of authority in Islam because they preserve mainly reports that are considered authentic. The third collection that Riccoldo most likely used is the so-called Sunan Abī Dāwūd,

52 The *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum* of Petrus Venerabilis (ed. Glei 1985), ch. 2, p. 2, gives a concise summary of the main points from the Qur'an about the divine sonship and the death of Christ.

53 Riccoldo does not explicitly mention the guarding in the *Liber peregrinationis*. Cf. *Liber peregrinationis* (ed. Kappler 1997), pp. 68ff.

54 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. 61ff., comm. 46–52.

55 Cf. Burman 2015, p. 78; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. xliii.

56 In the CIS and the *Liber peregrinationis*, Riccoldo tells of the "thousands of words" collected in the *aḥādīṭ*, only some of which are true. Cf. CIS (ed. Mérigoux 1986), ch. 9, p. 108, ll. 249ff.; *Liber peregrinationis* (ed. Kappler 1997), pp. 178ff. Cf. Mossman 2007, p. 181; Burman 2015, pp. 73ff.

57 Cf. Robson 1960b, pp. 1296–1297; 1971, pp. 23–28; Juynboll 1993, pp. 691–692; Bobzin 2011, p. 29.

named after the editor Abū Dāwūd Sulaimān as-Siġistānī (9th century). His collection is not of the highest rank, but it is important nonetheless.⁵⁸ Unlike the other two collections, it is cited in the *Tractatus* solely as a *glossa*, without being mentioned by name. The polemicists exploit the collections as extensive sources of material useful for refutation because they know about the status of these reports in the Muslim world.⁵⁹ The citation of the Ḥadīth collections is thus identical to that of the Qur'an:⁶⁰ the collections are referred to as *libri*, and the thematic books (Arabic *kitāb*) within the collection as *tractatus* and *capitula*, e.g., “dicitur in libro Bohari, quod Axa dixit in tractatu Expositionis Alchorani” or “in libro Bohari in capitulo Creationis.”⁶¹ A chapter within a thematic book (Arabic *bāb*) is also called a *tractatus*, e.g., “in tractatu Infirmitatis Prophetarum.”⁶² According to this terminology and citation, it is obvious that the polemicists treat the Ḥadīth collections on the same level as the Qur'an. Therefore, the reports may also function as *auctoritates*.

The reports cited in the *Tractatus* may be authentic,⁶³ but not all of them are relevant to Islamic theology, so they cannot be used to refute Islam. In particular, Muhammad's personal life, which seems very indecent and scandalous to Western polemicists, has no theological relevance. In Islam, Muhammad is a simple man, which is why he can kill his enemies, have sex with women, and do things that a Christian prophet or saint would never do—this does not affect his status as a prophet. Despite their profound knowledge of Islam, Riccoldo and Ramon Martí did not understand this aspect. In the *Tractatus*, Riccoldo therefore repeats Martí's personal attack on Muhammad and his status as a prophet⁶⁴ based on the Prophet's personal life. This type of attack becomes all the more apparent as Riccoldo focuses on Muhammad's sexual morality and the practices he legalized for the benefit of himself and his followers.⁶⁵ Riccoldo selects episodes related to sexual laxity for both the second and the fourth signs of a true prophet. Almost all of the episodes Riccoldo cites in the context of the second

58 Cf. Robson 1960a, p. 114.

59 Cf. Burman 2015, pp. 73ff.

60 Cf. Burman 2015, p. 78. Ramon Martí terms the Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim as *historia* in his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* vol. 1 (ed. Robles Sierra 1990), Ratio VI, ch. 12, p. 258: “Hoc autem verbum ‘mittar vivens,’ exposuit Machometus in historia Mozlim”.

61 *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 22, l. 248, p. 40, l. 476.

62 *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 46, ll. 526f.

63 Cf. Tolan 2002, p. 238.

64 Cf. Szpiech 2012, p. 174.

65 The motif of the immoral and licentious Muhammad—from a medieval Christian-Dominican perspective—is very popular and widespread in the literature of the Latin West. Cf. Tolan 2002, p. 239; Daniel 2009, pp. 92, 124f., 270; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. 75ff., comm. 106ff.

sign concern the prophet's sexuality. An example from Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī occurs at the beginning of the discussion of the second sign:

Tractatus

Secundo non solum non fuit sanctus, sed malus et facinorosus. Dicitur enim in libro Bohari, quod *circuibat mulieres suas iacendo cum eis in una hora noctis vel diei et erant XI. Nam virtus XXX virorum fuit ei data in coitu.*⁶⁶

Secondly, not only was he not holy, but he was also evil and villainous. In the book of Buḥārī, it is said that he [Muhammad] visited his wives in turn to sleep with them within one hour during the night or day, and they were eleven in number. Indeed, he was given the power of thirty men for sexual intercourse.

Riccoldo modifies the Latin version of the *ḥadīth* that he took from *De seta* by eliminating the speaker as well as the parts of direct speech and by rephrasing the short text.⁶⁷ Thus, only the prophet and his sexual affairs remain. In the line of argumentation, the episode functions as an authority cited to prove, by means of an Islamic source, that the refutation is sound, correct, and justified. The *Tractatus* contains the most accurate translation of the episode among Riccoldo's writings, but Martí's translation is even better. Riccoldo most likely refers to the same *ḥadīth* in CIS:

CIS:

Est igitur omnino irrationabile quod minister et propheta legis tante salutis, ut dicunt Saraceni, sit homo carnalissimus et inmundus qui etiam de hoc se iactat quod tanta sit eius uis et facultas libidinis in agendo quanta in quadraginta hominibus cum tamen Deus eum priuauerit fecunditate filiorum. Nam unam solam filiam legitur habuisse.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 10, ll. 105ff.

⁶⁷ Cf. *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), p. 34; *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, p. 944.

⁶⁸ CIS (ed. Mérigoux 1986), ch. 8, p. 92, ll. 62ff. Riccoldo also refers to the episode in the *Liber peregrinationis* (ed. Kappler 1997), pp. 196ff. His elaboration and the context of the episode are rather a listing of the misdeeds and lies of Muhammad that facilitate the refutation. The episode is written in the part of the *Liber peregrinationis* that resembles a handbook. Riccoldo himself tells of his intention to give some brief information, cf. (ed. Kappler 1997), p. 172: "Porro de lege Saracenorum aliquid uel sub breuitate ponamus."

Therefore, it is completely irrational that the minister and prophet of such a great law, as the Saracens say, is a most carnal and impure man who boasts himself of having as much strength and energy in sexual intercourse as forty men. However, God has deprived him of begetting sons, but he is said to have had one daughter.

In the example cited, Muhammad has the strength of 40 men. The adjustment of the number is perhaps influenced by polemical tradition, but it does not affect the tenor or the statement of the episode itself.⁶⁹ In *Contra legem*, the development of Riccoldo's argumentation strategy becomes evident: the present argument is not one of scripture but of reason, as *irrationabile* indicates—the theologically irrelevant sexuality of Muhammad is not a subject of *auctoritas* but of *ratio*. It is probable that in writing CLS, Riccoldo took the episode from his earlier works or *De seta* or Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḥārī, reworked it, and improved his strategy, with the result that—from his point of view—the Muslim counterpart must accept his reasoning. The *Tractatus*, by contrast, bases the refutation exclusively on the citation of an authority, but neglects rational argumentation.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE PROPHET

The life of the Prophet in general is the subject of its own literary genre, the so-called *sīra*. *Sīra* can be translated as “biography of the prophet”. The biography used in *De seta* and the *Tractatus* is the *Sīra Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* by Ibn Ishāq, which was reworked by Ibn Hišām, dates from the 9th century, and is the most important version of Muhammad's biography.⁷⁰ Riccoldo and Ramon Martí call the *Sīra Ciar* in Latinized Arabic and translate the title as *Actus Mahometi*, which is related to *Actus Apostolorum*.⁷¹ The intention of the *Sīra* is to integrate Muhammad into the history of salvation and to emphasize that he is the Seal of the Prophets. Since the Qur'an does

69 Cf. *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, p. 945, n. 4; Daniel 2009, pp. 118ff.

70 Cf. Raven 1997, pp. 660–663; Bobzin 2011, pp. 36ff. Different versions of the *Sīra* are known especially in the Iberian Peninsula, cf. Tischler 2008, pp. 43ff. Cf. Maser, *Die Historia Arabum des Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada*, 2006, p. 230. It is important to note that approaches to the *Sīra* vary: Rodrigo, for example, omits the Prophet's wife, Aisha, and the poisoned lamb that caused Muhammad's death in his *Historia Arabum*, but he gives a detailed account of the Prophet's night journey (*mi'rāğ*), which is omitted by Riccoldo and Martí. There are also differences in style, diction, and detail. Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. xlvf.

71 In his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* vol. 2 (ed. Robles Sierra 1993), Nequitia V, ch. 4, p. 176, Ramon Martí identically names and translates the *Sīra* as *Ciar* and *Actus Mahometi*.

not give much information about Muhammad's life, Ibn Ishāq decided to write the biography of the founder of Islam in order to give Muslims a role model like Moses or Jesus.⁷² In the Islamic tradition, the *Sīra* has a quasi-sacred authority and conveys such an impression of historical accuracy that Muslims themselves accepted the reliability of the *Sīra*.⁷³ As a result, the polemicists also treated it as *auctoritas*, although the *Sīra* is actually a literary text. For them, the *Sīra* became a treasure trove containing rich details about the biography of Muhammad that are useful for refutation. For example, Riccoldo makes use of the account of the first eight years of the Prophet's life:

Tractatus:

Item dicitur in eodem libro [i.e. *Sīra*], quod, quando natus est, mater eius misit eum ad avum suum Abdalmutalib, qui erat idolatra, qui accepit puerum et obtulit eum diis suis gratias agens de tali dono et restituit eum matri. Post cuius matris mortem fuit cum avo suo praedicto. Et postquam fuit annorum VIII, mortuus est avus eius.⁷⁴

Likewise, the same book [*Sīra*] says that after his [Muhammad's] birth, his mother gave him to his grandfather 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who was an idolater. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib took the boy and consecrated him to his gods to thank them for such a gift. Then he returned the boy to his mother. After his mother's death, Muhammad stayed with his grandfather. And when he was eight years old, his grandfather died.

Riccoldo summarizes the *Sīra* to prove that Muhammad originates from the time of paganism before Islam, the so-called *ḡāhiliya*, which is translated as "Age of Ignorance". The Prophet's grandfather was—*mirabile dictu*—an idolater. The faith of the Prophet's ancestors is important to the polemicists, on the one hand, because the paganism of Muhammad's forefathers and of Muhammad himself was used by the Christian authors as an argument against his true prophethood.⁷⁵ On the other hand, the entire family history of the Prophet could be utilized to create an anti-hagiography of Muhammad, even if substantial changes had to be made that did not exactly conform to the Islamic sources. In the *Tractatus*, Riccoldo decisively modifies the text of

⁷² Cf. Raven 1997, p. 662.

⁷³ Cf. Raven 1997, p. 663.

⁷⁴ *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 40, ll. 464ff.

⁷⁵ Cf. Daniel 2009, p. 103, who gives examples from a variety of texts.

De seta and the *Sīra* by transforming Muhammad's grandfather 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāšim into an idolater who worshipped many gods.⁷⁶ But the *Sīra* is unambiguous in this regard, as is Ramon Martí's account, which contains no polemical interpolations. In the *Sīra*, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib prayed solely to Allāh in the Ka'ba because he was grateful for the child.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the general intention of the polemicists—which is reinforced in Riccoldo's account—may be to compare Muhammad with Jesus: the former leads a sinful life and is descended from idolaters—he is a false prophet, an *anti-propheta*—while the latter was born of a pure and holy mother and leads a holy life in every respect.⁷⁸

COMMENTARIES ON THE QUR'AN AND LATIN POLEMICS

Information about the Prophet's life also comes from the Islamic exegesis of the Qur'an (*tafsīr*). Thus, the traditional exegesis of sura 66:1–2 is the basis for the episode of Muhammad, Maria the Copt (Māriya al-Qibṭiyya), who is a slave, and Ḥafṣa bint 'Umar, who is the Prophet's fourth wife.⁷⁹

Tractatus:

Item tangitur in Alchorano in tractatu Prohibitionis in principio et in glossa, quae est ibi, quod quidam presentavit Mahometo quandam mulierem captivam nomine Meria; qui assumpsit eam in concubinam. Dum autem semel concubisset cum ea in domo uxoris suae nomine Hafza, supervenit ipsa uxor et videns hoc redarguit eum, eo quod in loco suo talia faciebat. Qui respondens, volens placare eam: *Placet tibi, quod abstinenceam ab ea?* Que ait: *Ita.* Et ille iuravit, quod ad ipsam ulterius non accederet, et mandavit, quod secretum teneret. Postmodum iterum coivit cum ipsa concubina. Et dixit in Alchorano, quod Deus constituerat eis, scilicet Saracenis, satisfactionem iuramentorum suorum, hoc est, quod possunt venire contra iuramentum cum compensatione, de qua infra dicitur.⁸⁰

76 Cf. *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), p. 18; *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, 910ff.

77 Cf. *The Life of Muhammad* (trans. Guillaume 2007), p. 70, paragraph 103. The paragraph numbering refers to the pages of the edition of the Arabic text: *Das Leben Muhammed's* (trans. Wüstenfeld 1858–1860).

78 Cf. *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), p. 19, n. 2; *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, p. 913, n. 1; Daniel 2009, pp. 108ff.; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. 138ff., comm. 464–466.

79 Cf. Buhl 1991, p. 575; *Der Koran* (ed. Khoury 1990–2001), vol. 12 (2001), p. 158, on 66,1–2.

80 *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 12, ll. 126ff.

Likewise, in the Qur'an, in the sura 'The Prohibition,' it is mentioned at the beginning and in a corresponding gloss that a man gave Muhammad a captive woman named Meria. Muhammad made her his concubine. Once when he slept with her in the house of his wife Ḥafṣa his wife caught them doing so and reprimanded Muhammad for doing such a thing in her house. He replied to appease her: *Do you want me to stay away from her?* She answered: *Yes, I do.* And he swore not to approach his concubine again and told his wife to keep the affair a secret. Later, he slept with the same concubine again. And he said in the Qur'an that God permitted the dissolution of oaths for them, i.e., the Saracens. This means that they are allowed to break an oath provided they atone for it. See below.

The above-mentioned verses of the Qur'an state that God made it lawful to dissolve oaths by expiation. The *Tractatus* returns to this discussion later. By mentioning the *glossa*, the *Tractatus* refers to Islamic exegesis, which traditionally links the Qur'anic verses to the episode of the Prophet's intercourse with Maria the Copt.⁸¹ Here, too, Riccoldo's and Martí's elaborations of the episode differ. The *Tractatus* reduces the story to its essence, primarily by omitting direct speech, resulting in an encyclopaedic presentation.⁸² The *Liber denudationis* also contains the episode and follows the translation of sura 66:1–2 with the story, but with different wording.⁸³ Riccoldo refers to the episode again in the CLS and in the *Liber peregrinationis*, both of which are influenced by the *Liber denudationis*.⁸⁴ Some detailed comments on these passages are in order. In the *Tractatus*, Maria is referred to as a captive (*captiva*) and not a Copt (*Capcia/Captia*), which is most likely due to an error. The participle *capta* for "captured woman" may have been misread in the textual tradition or replaced by the adjective *captiva*. Another change indicates the influence of the *Liber denudationis*: Riccoldo replaces the collocation *placere ei*, which occurs exclusively in *De seta*, with *placare eam*, which is found in CLS and the *Liber denudationis*. But CLS chapter 12 is also close to *De seta* and the *Tractatus*, as is evident from the phrase *ad ipsam ulterius non accederet*, which appears in all three works in slightly varied word order.⁸⁵ Riccoldo apparently knew the episode in different versions, one of which was taken from Martí's *De seta* and reworked in the *Tractatus*, the other from the *Liber denudationis*,

81 Cf. *Der Koran* (ed. Khoury 1990–2001), vol. 12 (2001), p. 158, on 66,1–2.

82 Cf. *De seta* (ed. Hernando Delgado 1983), pp. 34ff.; *De seta* (ed. Lavajo 1988), vol. 3, pp. 948ff.

83 Cf. *Liber denudationis* (ed. Burman 1994), ch. 7.1f., pp. 280ff.

84 Cf. CLS (ed. Mérigoux 1986), ch. 8, p. 91, ll. 22ff., and ch. 12, p. 116, ll. 49ff.; *Liber peregrinationis* (ed. Kappler 1997), p. 196; Burman 2015, p. 82.

85 Cf. *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), p. 81f., comm. 126–132.

which was reworked in the CIS and the *Liber peregrinationis*. The textual differences between *De seta* and the *Liber denudationis* could be the result of a Latin variant or even an Arabic version of the latter that Ramon Martí could have worked with.⁸⁶ In the Islamic tradition, the episode leads to tendencies in the exegesis of the Qur'an to make the Prophet appear less dishonourable, even though the story is neither part of the sacred text itself nor significant for Islamic theology.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Riccoldo employs the episode as quasi-scriptural evidence, as *auctoritas*, because he sees the Christian point of view confirmed by Muhammad's behaviour.

CONCLUSION

As shown in the *Tractatus*, Riccoldo uses a variety of sources for his refutation of Muhammad's prophethood. The main source, however, is the treatise *De seta Machometi* by his Dominican confrere Ramon Martí, which Riccoldo adapts and reworks extensively. The Islamic sources mostly referred to in both texts are, besides the Qur'an, the authentic and thus most important Ḥadīth collections, the tradition of the biography of the Prophet (*Ṣīra*) and Islamic exegesis (*tafsīr*). Influences of the Western Christian polemic tradition, such as the *Liber denudationis* or the *Epistula al-Kindī*, are also discernible. All sources are interpreted according to Riccoldo's argumentation strategy, which relies on *auctoritas* and *ratio*. Thus, the refutation presented in the *Tractatus* is based on a threefold argumentation: Christian *auctoritas*, Islamic *auctoritas*, and reason. Riccoldo modifies Martí's strategy by removing all secular and/or philosophical authorities from the text, leaving only those that he considers the Muslim counterpart accepts. Nevertheless, Riccoldo still fails to distinguish whether a source is relevant to Islamic theology or not. In the Dominican Order, both polemicists played an important role in developing an innovative approach to non-Christian sources. The use of Islamic sources interacts with translations from Arabic into Latin. His experience *in Oriente*, and profound studies, language skills, and his expertise in the polemical tradition make Riccoldo a central intellectual figure in Latin Christendom. Given his intellectual authority, it would be a worthwhile task for future studies to examine how Riccoldo's use and understanding of sources influenced subsequent Dominican argumentative strategies.

86 Cf. Burman 1994, pp. 46ff., 225ff.; 2015, p. 76; *Tractatus* (ed. Pachurka 2016), pp. xxxiff.

87 Cf. Vecchia Valieri 1971, p. 64.

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Riccardo's Use of the *Corpus Cluniacense* in the *Contra legem Sarracenorum*

Although much has rightly been made regarding Riccardo's own personal experience of a Muslim *Sitz im Leben*, his discussion of Islam depended, to a large extent, on the previous Latin traditions. In the following analysis, I shall consider Riccardo's debt in his *Contra legem Sarracenorum* to the corpus of texts connected to Islam associated with Peter the Venerable and translated by Robert of Ketton and Hermann of Dalmatia; in particular Peter the Venerable's own *Summa* of Islamic beliefs, together with the *Doctrina Mahumet*, and what he calls the *Liber narrationum*; and, possibly, the marginal glosses to the translation of the Qur'an, but not the *Alchoran latinus* itself.

Riccardo's *Libellus* was a well-copied and influential text, with a survival rate of nearly 30 manuscripts and one edition (Seville: Stanislaus Polonus, 1500).¹ Even more remarkably, it is also preserved in one manuscript with autograph corrections, additions and completion, which was originally held by the Dominican convent in Santa Maria Novella: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS *Conv. soppr.* C 8.1173, foll. 185r–218r.² This Florence manuscript was edited by Jean-Marie

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- 1 Mérigoux 1986, pp. 37–39; Panella 1988, p. 22. There are, further, ten manuscripts of Petrus de Pennis's *Tractatus contra Alchoranum*, which has been described by its editor as a “refundición” of Riccardo's *Libellus*; González Muñoz 2017 (see, further, Rezvan 1998, and, for wider influence, Langeloh 2023). This notable diffusion offers a clear corrective to the widespread idea that the text was somehow unimportant, as found in Daniel 1960, p. 234 and Hopkins 1994, p. 59.
 - 2 Riccardo (according to Panella's codicological description) finished the last five pages of the manuscript (ff. 206v–218r) in his own hand.

Mérigoux,³ and this edition, in turn, has been digitized and corrected by Emilio Panella (2001–).⁴

THE PROLOGUE

Riccoldo's dependence upon Peter's *Summa* is found immediately in the introduction or prologue to the *Libellus*, where the Frenchman's situation of Muhammad in a historical context is repeated by the Italian, but placed within a more explicitly eschatological context (the Ages of Persecution),⁵ which thus explains why the elements taken from Peter are inverted by Riccoldo:

Libellus, Prol. 42

Summa

In hoc igitur tertio statu surrexit contra ecclesiam dei et contra ueritatem, scilicet *post tempora* beati *Gregorii*, **tempore Eraclii**

Fuit autem iste, sicut etiam chronica ab Anastasio romanę ecclesię Bibliothecario de greco in latinum translata apertissime narrat **tempore** imperatoris **Heraclii**, paulo *post tempora* magni et primi *Gregorii* romani pontificis, ante annos quingentos et quinquaginta ...

And so in this third era, there rose against the Church of God and against Truth, namely after blessed Gregory's days, in the time of Heraclius ...

It was this man, as Anastasius Bibliotecarius's Chronicle (translated from Greek into Latin) most clearly narrates, in the time of the Emperor Heraclius, a short while after the days of the Roman [pontiff], Gregory I, the Great, before the year 550 ...

³ Mérigoux 1986, pp. 60–142.

⁴ Reference is made to the latter. Regrettably, Panella's web pages use frames, rendering direct reference to the electronic text rather cumbersome; he does, however, maintain the system of reference established by Mérigoux, with each paragraph noted by the line number of the latter's edition.

⁵ The first age, that of the pagans, between the death of Christ and the age of Constantine (Prol. 10); the second, that of the heretics, between Constantine and Gregory the Great (Prol. 20); and the third, that of the "false brothers", which will last until the End (Prol. 30). On the prologue, see Ferrero Hernández 2019.

Riccardo's description (or, rather, classification) of Muhammad does not then follow the *Summa's* depiction,⁶ but rather shows his dependence upon the traditions which are found in the annotations to the *Alchoran latinus* itself.⁷ The motif of Muhammad as oppressor of the Church is found already in II.26, adnot. "O creator" (Qur'an 2:154),⁸ and, as we can see below, the close links between Muhammad, the devil and deceitfulness are already sketched out:

Libellus, Prol. 42

Alchoran latinus IV.7, adnot. "nec omnes"
(Qur'an 2:253).

... surrexit quidam homo **diabolicus**, primogenitus sathane, homo **lubricus** et obscenis actibus deditus, ...

Nota quam uarius quam mutabilis quam uaria et diuersa coniungit in isto spiritus **diabolicus**, et quasi anguis **lubricus** per quot et anfractus sese miseris et stultis abscondit, ut possit subreperere et decipere.

... there arose a certain devilish man, the first-born of Satan, a slippery man and given to disgraceful deeds, ...

Note how many various, changeable, different and heterogeneous things the devilish spirit brings together, and wriggles up by wretched and stupid sayings like a slippery snake so that it might insinuate itself and mislead.⁹

6 For this and all subsequent citations, the translations provided are my own.

7 *Alchoran latinus* I. Paris, *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal ms. 1162*, ed. Lappin 2022. References are to chapter and line of this edition.

8 "Quando enim hic apostata predicare sua deliramenta cepit, multi in terra illa Christiani erant, qui ei resistere. E contra ille, perditorum multitudinem paulatim sibi alliciens, et gladio etiam quibus preualebat legem diabolicam imponens, sepiissime suos hortatur, ut et si qua eis detrimenta hac de causa contigerint, patienter ferant, et ipsi toto conamine et Christianos et quicumque legem eius non suscipiant, expugnent" ("So when this apostate began to preach his delusions, many in that land were Christians, who opposed him. And in reaction to this, he, drawing the multitude of the damned slowly to himself and by the sword imposing the diabolical law on those he conquered, most often encouraged his men that if there was any loss that they sustained due to this reason, they should bear it patiently, and they should, with all their power, overcome the Christians and anyone who did not accept their law").

9 The despective term, *anguis lubricus*, is used throughout the middle ages with an emphasis upon deceitfulness (Martin 2016, par. 82, 97, ll. 209, 288; Palacky 1858, p. 260, l. 9), and it was used this way elsewhere by Peter the Venerable and his circle (Petrus Pictavensis, *Panegiricon*, fol. ã iiij va, l. 29; Petrus Venerabilis, *Contra Petrobrusianos*, fol. IIIvb, ll. 21–22). Riccardo strips out the figurative and classicising language (this particular snake's pedigree stretched back to

The association with the devil (or with devilish deceitfulness) continues, echoing further glosses from the *Alchoran*, where the contents of the text are consistently equated with madness and deceit, and are understood as being designed to deceive.

Libellus, Prol. 42

Alchoran latinus, XXI.48 (to Qur'an 12:24)

... nomine Mahometus, qui consilio illius et auxilio qui mendax est et pater eius, **legem mendacissimam** et nefariam composuit quasi ex ore dei ...

Nota insana *mendacia* et *mendax* insania. Admisset tamen aliquam uelut umbram ueritatis, ad decipiendos infelices ac pecuiales homines.

... called Muhammad, who—by the counsel and help of the one who is both deceitful and the father of deceit—put together a most deceitful and execrable law as if it came from the mouth of God

Note the mad deceitfulness and deceitful madness.

He mixes a certain (as it were) shadow of the truth in order to deceive the unfortunate and easily led.

...

The further trope, of Muhammad's being aided by the devil ("consilio illius et auxilio qui mendax est et pater eius", with its elegant riff on "the father of lies": John 8:44) is firmly rooted within a sensibility shared with the glossators of the *Alchoran latinus*; thus XIII.66, adnot. "Deus Ihesum" (Qur'an 5:110):

scilicet non dei sed et hoc ubique dicit, sicut et Iohannem Babtistam, non babtistam semper appellat, spiritu diabolico baptismo nec mentionem facere uolens

namely not *of god* but just as he says this everywhere, so with John the Baptist, whom he does not always call "the Baptist", not wishing to even mention baptism due to a diabolical spirit

Aeneid V.84). For a contested meaning of *lubricus* as "wanton, lewd, immodest", du Cange 1883–1887, V, 146 (a sense its romance offspring certainly, and at times exclusively, have); Riccoldo may well be playing with both senses in his description of Muhammad, given his subsequent mention of his habitual "disgraceful deeds" (or, equally possible as a translation for *obscenibus actibus*, "lewd acts").

Such a thought is similar to the comment on the Qur'anic terminology for the apostles ("those dressed in white": LXX.26, adnot. "albis indutos", to Qur'an 61:14; V.103, adnot "albis induti", to Qur'an 3:52).¹⁰ However, Riccoldo does not go quite as far as one annotator, who equates Muhammad with a devil.¹¹ In the Dominican's further description of the Qur'an, however, he probably returns to the *Summa*: "Quam legem appellauit alchoranum, quasi collectaneum preceptorum dei" (Intro, 42; "This law he called *Alchoranus*, as it were 'the gathering-up of the precepts of God'"). Peter the Venerable had written "Alchoran quo nomine legem suam nuncupant, et interpretatur Alchoran ex arabico, collectio preceptorum" ("the *Alchoran*, by which name he entitled his law; *Alchoran* is translated from Arabic as 'the gathering-up of precepts'"). Peter himself had taken this directly from the original title of the *Alchoran latinus*: "Lex Mahumet que arabice Alchoran, id est, collectio preceptorum uocatur" ("Muhammad's Law, which is called in Arabic *Alchoran*, that is, the gathering-up of precepts").¹²

Riccoldo continues with a historical description of the actions of Muhammad which further excerpts Peter's own evocation of events:

Libellus, Prol. 42

Non enim uno modo, sed omnibus tribus generaliter efferatur;

Summa

Hic paulatim crescendo, et contiguos quosque ac maxime sanguinis propinquos,

- ¹⁰ "Viros uestibus albis indutos intelligi uult apostolos, diabolico instinctu nominare illos fugiens" ("By the men dressed in white he means that the apostles should be understood, avoiding naming them by the devil's instinct"); "Viros uestibus albis indutos apostolos Christi uult intelligi, spiritu diabolo nominare illos dissimulans, ne inde uideretur euangelium suscipere, in quo sunt eorum nomina" ("By the men dressed in white he means the apostles of Christ, feigning to name them by a diabolic spirit, lest thence the gospel might be consulted, in which are their names). The gloss continues, however, with a corrective observation from another annotator: "Vestibus albis indutos propter sanctitatem eorum uult dicere" ("He means that they are dressed in white clothes due to their sanctity").
- ¹¹ *Alchoran latinus* XX.100, adnot. "Huth" (Qur'an 11:53): "Nota nomina prophetarum inaudita; quis enim umquam preter istum diabolum, tales prophetas inuenit? Quis amplius Hut, et Hat, et Scale et Scaibe audiuit? Istos ego non homines sed diabolos aliquos fuisse credo, quibus impletus iste sathanas, huiusmodi deliramenta" ("Observe the unheard-of prophets' names! Who other than this devil, ever came across such prophets? Who, besides him, heard of *Hut*, and *Hat* and *Scale* and *Scaibe*? These were not men but rather devils, I think, by whom this satan was filled by delusions in this same fashion"); XXIII.97, adnot. "alchitran" (14:50): "Alchitran locus inferni, secundum istum diabolum" (*Alchitran* is a place in hell, according to this devil).
- ¹² For *collectio* as "gathering-up" rather than the flatter "collection" (which it can also mean, of course), see Lewis & Short 1879, s.v. *collectio*. Note also the gloss to "Alfurcan" (V.5, Qur'an 3:3): "Alfurcan id est discretorem preceptorum" ("the *alfurkan*, that is, the examiner of precepts").

unde modo per tyrannidem seuiendo,	insidiis, rapinis, incursionibus frequenter infestando, quos poterat furtim, quos poterat publice occidendo, terrorem sui auxit ... ad regnum suę gentis aspirare cepit;
modo per <i>legem seducendo</i> ,	cumque uniuersis pari modo resistentibus, eiusque ignobilitatem contempnentibus, uideret se hac uia non posse consequi quod sperabat, quia ui gladii non potuit, religionis uelamine, et diuini prophetę nomine, rex fieri attemptauit. Et quia inter barbaros barbarus, inter ydolatra et ipse ydolatra habitabat, atque inter illos, quos utpote pre cunctis gentibus tam quam <i>legis expertes, et ignaros</i> , faciles ad <i>seducendum</i> esse nouerat coniniquitati dare operam cepit.
modo per <i>hypocrisim simplices</i> subuertendo ...	Et quoniam prophetas dei magnos fuisse homines audierat, prophetam eius se esse dicens, ut <i>aliquid boni simularet</i> , ex parte illos ab ydolatRIA, non tamen ad deum unum sed ad quam parturire iam ceperat, heresis fallaciam traducere conabatur.
iam fere dimidiam partem totius orbis seduxit <i>permissione Dei</i> , qui “terribilis est in consiliis super filios hominum” .	Cum interim <i>iudicio</i> illius qui terribilis in consiliis dicitur super filios hominum et qui miseretur cui uult, et quem uult indurat dedit Sathan successum errori, et Sergium monachum, heretici Nestorii sectatorem, ab ecclesia expulsus, ad partes illas Arabię transmisit, et monachum hereticum pseudoprophetę coniunxit.
Not, though, in a single fashion, but in all three ways did he become a beast:	He, slowing growing in power, and frequently harassing his neighbours and above all those who were close to him by blood,
whence in one way raging with tyranny;	by betrayals, plundering, raiding, by killing those whom he could secretly, those whom he could in public, fear of him grew, he could grasp rule over his people;

in one way seducing [others] through the law

in one way, undermining the simple through hypocrisy;

Now has he seduced almost half the globe by the permission of God, who is terrible in his counsels over the sons of men.

and thus, with all in a similar way opposing him, and disdaining his low birth, he saw that he could not gain what he hoped for by that route; since the power of the sword could not bring it about, by the cover of religion, and through the name of a divine prophet, he tried to make himself king. And because he lived as a barbarian amongst barbarians, as an idolater amongst idol-worshippers,

and amongst those whom he knew were (as much those learned in as those who knew nothing about the law) easy to seduce, he captivated through giving the possibility for acting out their common iniquity.

And since he had heard that God's prophets were great men, saying that he was their prophet, so that he might do something good he brought them from idolatry not so much to the One God but to that which he had already began to give birth, he exerted himself to betray them to a heretical falsity.

When the judgement of him who is called terrible in his counsels over the sons of men and who takes mercy on whom he will, and against whom he wishes he hardens, he gave Satan the advancement of the error, and the monk Sergius, the following of the heretic Nestorius, who had been expelled from the church, came to those parts of Arabia, and the heretic monk was partnered with the pseudo-prophet.

The account is closed by Riccoldo by the same allusion to the Psalms as Peter used, Psalm 65:5, but with a difference: the latter goes on to deploy the Sergius–Bahira story as an explanation for various Christian elements in the Qur'an; Riccoldo simply stops, and makes reference to himself, and so draws a parallel between himself, not

as the architect of Muslim doctrine,¹³ but as the “*minimus in ordine Predicatorum*”, who “*de tanta dampnatione condolens, cogitavi vias meas, et conuerti pedes meas in testimonia dei*”.¹⁴ Riccoldus, then, casts himself as the anti-Bahira.

CHAPTER ONE

Peter’s analysis is again used by Riccoldo in the first chapter to the *Libellus*, where the Cluniac’s depiction of the Christian heresies that have flowed into Islam are taken up.

Libellus I.4

Summa

Et sciendum quod *omnium antiquorum hereticorum feces, quas diabolus* in aliis sparsim seminauerat, simul in Machometum *reuomuit*. Ipse namque Machometus **cum Sabellio negat trinitatem**

Omnes pene antiquarum heresum feces, quas diabolo imbiente sorbuerat, *reuomens, cum Sabellio trinitatem abnegat ...*

And one should be aware that the lees of all the former heretics (which the devil had sown one-by-one in others), he vomited all together into Muhammad. And so Muhammad, like Sabellius, denies the Trinity ...

Vomiting forth almost all the lees of former heresies, with which the devil had filled him, he denies like Sabellius the Trinity ...

And the Dominican inserts a numerological criticism of Qur’anic anti-Trinitarianism that was used by Peter as the opening observation of his *Summa*:

Libellus I.4

Summa

In primis primus et maximus ipsorum execrandus est error quod trinitatem in unitate deitatis negant, sicque dum in una diuinitatis essentia trinum personarum numerum non credunt,

¹³ “Sergium monachum, heretici Nestorii sectatorem, ab ecclesia expulsum” (“The monk Sergius, an exile from the church, a follower of the heretic Nestorius”).

¹⁴ *Libellus*, Prol. 54; “the least in the Order of Preachers ... grieving over so much harm, thought on my ways, and turned my feet towards witnessing for God”.

in unitate numerum euitantes, dum ternarium inquam omnium formarum principium atque finem, sicque rerum formarum causam et originem atque terminum, non recipiunt, deum licet ore confitentes ipsum penitus nesciunt.

... ponit tamen in diuinis quendam *binarium*, qui est numerus infamis *et alteritatis principium*. Ponit enim *ipsam diuinam essentiam et eius animam; unde Deum pluraliter loquentem introducit in alchorano ...*

Ipsi autem deuii, ipsi uariabiles, *principium* uarietatis *et alteritatis* omnis, uidelicet *binarium* solum in unitate confitentur, scilicet *ipsam diuinam essentiam et eius animam. Vnde deum pluraliter loquentem, introducit semper Alchoran ...*

Firstly, the first and greatest of their errors to be condemned is that they deny the Trinity in the unity of the deity, and thus whilst they do not believe in the three-ness of the persons in the one essence of divinity, in unity avoiding number, whilst I would say the ternary is the beginning and end of every form, and thus they do not accept the cause and origin and the end of created things, although they confess God with their lips, they hardly know him.

... he foists upon the deity, though, a certain binary, which is a disreputable number and the principle of otherness. He alleges that same divine essence and his soul, whence he brings in God speaking in the plural in the Qur'an ...

So these inconsistently, these variably, confess the principle of the variety and otherness of everything, namely only the binary in unity, namely the very same divine essence and his soul. Whence the Qur'an constantly introduces God speaking in the plural ...

Now, Peter's understanding of God's "speaking in the plural" is drawn directly from the gloss (1.43, adnot. "fecimus"; Qur'an 2:35):

Hic pluraliter deum loqui facit, secundum modum quo in eo duo esse heretice dicunt, deitatis essentiam scilicet et eius animam, assignantes creationem, motum.

Here he makes God speak in the plural according to the mode in which they say in their heretical way that there is a binary in God, namely the essence of the deity and its soul, to which they assign creation and motion.

Yet it is clear from the citation above, however, that Riccoldo is directly dependent upon Peter's *Summa*. Nevertheless, Riccoldo's long section on the use of the plural (chapter XIII) certainly responds to the comparable interest found in the *Alchoran latinus*'s glossators for similar features of the sacred text: the programmatic annotation for the first words of the *fatihah* may be invoked (o.3, p. 447, adnot. 'Misericordio pioque deo' (Qur'an 1.1):

... Nam deinceps per totum librum quasi deus loquitur ad ipsum aliquando singulariter aliquando pluraliter, aliquando uero personarum uarietatem assumit ut quandoque quasi ipse propheta loquatur, quandoque boni deum inuocantes uel malos increpantes secundum locorum diuersitatem.

... Now hereafter throughout the whole book it is as if God should speak to him sometimes in the singular, sometimes in the plural, sometimes He assumes the variety of persons as when he speaks as it were like a prophet, or when the good invoke God or criticizing the bad according to the difference of the situation.¹⁵

Nevertheless, it is worth observing that such critical notes in the glosses to the *Alchoran* are not a condemnation of the literary style of the Qur'an itself: Robert of Ketton and Herman of Dalmatia were quite alive to the literary texture of the Arabic they were translating, even going so far as to provide distinct translations of the opening sura, and maintaining an elegant, high-styled Latin throughout (according to the norms

15 Further, XV.104 adnot. "tribuimus" (6:83): "Nota quotiens facit loqui deum aliquando singulariter aliquando pluraliter, cum ipse tamen trinitatem abneget, quid dicat nesciens" ("Observe how frequently he makes God speak now in the singular, now in the plural, when he himself denies the trinity, not knowing what he is saying"); XVII.8, adnot. "Quotiens enim" (38: 73–74): "Deo scilicet imputantes quando eis mala contingunt, et eorum a predonibus diripiuntur, et hoc maxime de Christianis dicit, qui ei credere nolebant, faciens deum loqui pluraliter pene assidue" ("Namely, imputing to God when something bad happens to them, and they are despoiled by pillagers; and this he says most about Christians, who refused to believe him, making God speak in the plural almost constantly"); I.231, adnot. "Nos quidem" (2:138–139): "Vox quasi suorum professorum, et hoc sepe facit mutando personas in locutione, ut uideatur quasi propheta loqui" ("The voice of his believers, and this he often carried out by changing the person of the verb when speaking, that it might seem as if he was speaking like a prophet").

of the 12th century, of course). Riccoldo was much less impressed by the cadences of the original, and became bored with the repetitious nature of the verses which were, instead, a particular challenge to the earlier translators.¹⁶ His consultation of the *tafsir* (Qur'anic commentaries) and living masters came about when he was reading the text piecemeal: this does not seem to have been his practice when actually translating.

The final element of the first chapter is an evocation of Qur'anic Christology, which is drawn, in the main, from Peter the Venerable's *Summa*.

Libellus, I.26, 35, 41

Summa

Machometus itaque ponit **Christum** hominem sanctissimum et uirtuosissimum *super omnes alios homines*. Et expresse in eo uidetur aliquid ultra ponere hominem. *Nominat* enim ipsum, **uerbum dei** et **spiritum dei** et animam dei. Quod autem *in ueritate dicatur* Deus, *omnino deridet*; ad quod confirmandum duo precipue inducit: unum, quia ipse Christus hoc de se nunquam asseruit nec dixit, aliud quia ipse uidetur dixisse contrarium. Vnde dicit

Sic plane impius ille fecit, quando et Christianam et Iudaicam legem collaudans, neutram tamen tenendam esse confirmans, probando reprobis reprobauit. Inde est, quod Moysen optimum prophetam fuisse, **Christum** dominum *maiores omnibus* extitisse confirmat, natum de uirgine predicat, nuncium dei, **uerbum dei**, **spiritum dei** *fatetur*, nec nuncium uerbum aut spiritum, ut nos aut intelligit aut fatetur. Filium dei *dici aut credi prorsus deridet*.

¹⁶ *Libellus*, Prol. 54: "Et legem eorum diligentissime relegens, et studiose in scolis et cum magistris ipsorum frequenter conferens, magis ac magis per experientiam apprehendi peruersitatem predictae legis. Et cum inceperim eam in latinum transferre, tot inueni fabulas et falsitates et blasphemias, et eadem per omnia in locis creberrimis repetita, quod tunc attediatus dimisi" ("And reading and reading again their law [i.e., the Qur'an] with attention, and studiously checking glosses and their masters, by experience I learnt more and more the perversity of that law [i.e., the Qur'an]. And when I began to translate it into Latin, all I found was tall stories, and lies and blasphemies, and all those same things often repeated here, there, and everywhere, so that I then set it aside through boredom").

Machometus “Christiani dicunt Christum esse deum”,¹⁷ et ipse Christus dixit iudeis “Adorate deum meum et deum uestrum, dominum meum et dominum uestrum”.

Hec igitur prolixius exposui ut manifeste sciatur quod illud quod diabolus in mundo *incepit per Arrium*, sed consummare non potuit, *postea* tepescente in ecclesia fere et crescente malicia *per Machometum compleuit*;

denique tamen ad plenum consumabit maliciam *per antichristum*, qui suadebit mundo quod Christus *nec uerus deus* fuerit *nec filius dei nec bonus homo*.

... Quę quidem olim diaboli machinatione *concepita*, primo *per Arrium* seminata, *deinde per* istum sathanan, scilicet **Mahumet**, *prouecta*, per antichristum uero ex toto secundum diabolicam intentionem *complebitur*.

Cum enim dicat beatus Hylarius antichristi originem in Arrio extitisse, dum quod ille cepit, uerum filium dei Christum esse negando, et creaturam dicendo, *antichristus* tandem *non modo illum deum uel dei filium*, sed **nec etiam bonum hominem** fuisse asserendo consummaturus est merito impiissimus Mahumeth inter utrumque medius a diabolo prouisus ac preparatus esse uidetur, qui et Arrii quodam modo supplementum, et antichristi peiora dicturi, apud infidelium mentes maximum fieret nutrimentum.

¹⁷ Cp. *Alchoran latinus* XIII.88–90 (Qur’an 5:117), where Jesus addresses God: “Tu scis itaque me nil hominibus nisi mandata tua dixisse, scilicet quod te deum meum atque suum inuocent et adorent; quorum quam diu tibi placuit, testis affui” (“You know that I told men nothing but your commands, namely that they should invoke and adore you, my God and theirs”); XIV.7–8 (Qur’an 6:1), “Increduli uero alium ipsi deo consimilem et æqualem ponunt”, together with the gloss “scilicet christiani Christum” (“The unbelievers place another as equal and just like God himself—namely the Christians [do with] Christ”).

(the following is placed immediately before
 “Quę quidem...”, above)

Summa uero intentio Machometi **est** quod **Christus** *nec* **deus** *nec* **dei filius**, **sed homo quidam sapiens** et sanctus **et propheta maximus**, sine patre et de uirgine natus.¹⁸

Summa uero huius heresis **intentio est** ut **Christus** dominus, *neque deus, neque dei filius* esse credatur,¹⁹ **sed** licet magnus deoque dilectus **homo** tamen purus, et uir **quidem sapiens, et propheta maximus**.

Muhammad therefore states that Christ was a most holy and most virtuous man, above all other men. And explicitly in him may be seen something above the human. He names him the word of God and the spirit of God and the soul of God.

18 The text continues with what can only be understood as something of a garbled paragraph: “Et in hoc conuenit cum Carpocrate heretico. Asserit etiam Machometus quod deus non potest habere filium quia non habet uxorem. Et in hoc conuenit cum Carpocrate heretico” (“And in this he is in agreement with Carpocrates the heretic. Muhammad also asserts that God cannot have a son because he has no wife. And in this he is in agreement with Carpocrates the heretic”). Carpocrates, however, regarded Joseph as Jesus’s father (Irenaeus 1857, vol. I, pp. 216–218; 1885, p. 350; Thomas Aquinas, *De articulis fidei* 1954, pars I: “Decimus error est Carpocratis, qui hominem Christum de utroque natum putasse perhibetur” (“The tenth error is Carpocrates, who thought that one should believe that Christ-as-man was born from both parents”)); possibly the reference to Carpocrates was originally marginal, and should have been included as a note after the mention of Christ’s human perfection.

19 Cp. *Alchoran latinus* I.187, adnot. “uniuersitatis creatorem” (2:116): “Et hec est summa totius heresis huius, ut deus filium nunquam habuisse credatur, quod sepe iste diabolus repetit. Et sumpsisse dicit quasi deridendo” (“And this is the sum of all of this heresy, that is to believe that God never had a son, which this devil always repeats. And he says ‘take up’ as if mocking”).

That he is said in truth to be God, he mocks completely, and to confirm this he brings up two main ideas: the first, that since Christ had never asserted nor said this about himself; the second, that since he himself would seem to have said the contrary. Whence Muhammad says: "The Christians say Christ is God", and Christ himself said to the Jews, "Adore my God and your God, my lord and your lord."

These things, therefore, I set out a length so that it might become obvious that that which in the world the devil began through Arrius but could not complete, afterwards, when the fervour in the church had grown lukewarm and malice was growing, he completed it through Muhammad; at length, then, the evil-doing will be fully complete through the antichrist, who will persuade the world that Christ was neither true God, nor the son of God nor a good man.

Muhammad's chief purpose is that Christ was neither God nor the son of God, but just a man, wise and holy, and a very great prophet, born of a virgin without a father.

Thus that impious man clearly do, when praising both the Christian and Jewish religion, however confirming neither as having to be kept, the reprobate, by commending, criticized. So it is, that the confirmed Moses was an excellent prophet, Christ the Lord the greatest of all that ever lived, preached he was born of a virgin, confessed he was the messenger of God, the word of God, the spirit of God, neither the messenger, nor the word nor the spirit, so that he might understand or praise us. He utterly mocks saying or believing in the son of God.

That which, long ago conceived through the machination of the devil, sown first through Arrius, thereafter brought on by this Satan, namely Muhammad, through the antichrist was wholly completed according to the devil's intention.

When blessed Hilary said that the antichrist's origin was in Arrius, so that what he began (denying Christ was truly the son of God, and saying that he was a creature), at length the antichrist, by affirming that he was not at all God, nor the son of God, nor even a good man, it will have been accomplished thanks to the most impious Muhammad, the mid-point between both, who seems to be supplied and prepared by the devil, who is in a certain way an addition to Arrius, and to the antichrist's worse statements, who fed greatly the minds of the unbelievers.

The chief purpose of this heresy is that it should not be believed that Christ the Lord was God, nor the son of God, but rather a great man, loved by God, and pure and a man who was wise, and a very great prophet.

It would be fair to say that Peter's discussion of Islam has essentially guided Riccoldo's hand in the prologue and the first chapter to the *Libellus*. Certainly, elements have been moved around, but the overall structure is kept. This may not simply be a question of unimaginative dependence. Riccoldo's text, and its presentation of the arguments, may have something of a resumé about it, a recapitulation of the key historical, Latin treatments of the Qur'an as an accompaniment to his more anthropological discussions elsewhere.

CHAPTER EIGHT

This observation may also be valid for the work referred to as the *Doctrina Mahumet*—a collection of popular religious sayings translated as part of the *Corpus Cluniacense* by Herman of Dalmatia—and which is referred to explicitly throughout chapter VIII, forming a crucial point of reference for his argument against Islamic conceptions of paradise. Two details are extracted at chapter VIII.150:

In libro autem de Doctrina Mahometi, qui est magne auctoritatis, exponit ordinem comestionum, et dicit quod primum ferculum quod proponetur ibi erit iecur piscis albebut, cibus summe delectabilis, et postea succedent fructus arborum. Et infra, in eodem capitulo, cum quererent ab eo si luxuriabuntur, et respondit quod non esset beatitudo si aliqua delectatio deesset ibi, immo cuncta essent frustra nisi et uoluptas luxurie sequeretur.

In the book *Muhammad's Teachings*, which is of great authority, he sets out the order in which they will eat [in paradise], and he says that the first course which is to be offered there should be the liver of the fish called *albebut*, a wholly delectable food, and afterwards would come the fruits of trees. And further down, in the same chapter, when they ask of him if they will [in paradise] be indulged with sexual pleasure, he replies that there is no blessedness if any pleasure should be lacking; on the contrary, it would be in vain if the pleasure of sex were not to be added.

The citation of the *Doctrina* as "magne auctoritatis" might seem to refer to his time in Baghdad, where he might also have come across the text; the evaluation has all the hallmarks of personal experience. Unfortunately, the appraisal is wholly literary, drawn from the title of the work itself in Latin translation: "Incipit Doctrina Machumet, quae apud Saracenos magnae auctoritatis est" (Bibliander 1543: vol. I, p. 189; "Here begins the *Teachings of Muhammad*, which is of great authority amongst the Sara-

cens"). Riccoldo's citation of the work rearranges the material to maintain a focus on the specific detail and argument, with the descriptions being somewhat toned down, or perhaps rendered slightly more theological in conception.²⁰

The second citation moves on from whether or not physical experience is an essential part of paradise to more precision, not over what we might expect to be the target (sex) but on the order of the menu—what to eat first, out of all the delights that are possible? (*Libellus* VIII.179):

Constat enim quod cibos ad hoc assumimus ut corruptio que posset accidere ex consumptione naturalis humidi euitetur, et etiam ad augmentum. Sed ista duo non erunt ibi; nam omnes in debita quantitate resurgent, nec amplius poterunt mori nec aliquo modo deficere. Nam, sicut dicit Mahometus in sua Doctrina, postquam omnia mortua fuerint, Deus occidet mortem, et postea resurgent immortaliter et integri. Ergo cibi sumptio non erit necessaria aliquo modo; et eodem modo nec usus uenereorum, quia nec nunc est necessarius nisi ut conseruetur in specie quod non potest conseruari in indiuiduo.

It is a fact that we eat foods so that the wearing-down that can come about through consumption of humid matter is prevented, and secondly for sustenance. But these two will not be there [in paradise]; for all in due number will come back alive, and neither will they be able to die or in any manner pass away. For, as Muhammad says in his *Teachings*, after all things will have died, God will kill Death, and afterwards they will come back to life, immortal and whole. Therefore the taking in of foods will not be necessary in any way; and in the same fashion, nor will sexual activity, since it is not now necessary other than for the continuation of the species which cannot be conserved in the individual.

20 Bibliander 1543, vol. I, p. 196, ll. 46–p. 197, l. 3 &—30 lines down, as Riccoldo indeed says, “infra”—ll. 34–37 (“Respondit, Primum quidem ingressis uescendum proponitur iecur piscis albebut, cibus quam ultra mirari possis delectabilis. Succedunt fructus arborum, potusque defluentis paradisi, deinde quicquid affectarint, praesto erit. ... Et ilud primum, quoniam comedent et bibent, si etiam *misceantur illic mulieribus*, idque qualiter, et qua lege. Respondit, Si ullum *oblectamenti* genus deesset, beatitudo minime plena esset. Frustra ergo deliciae adessent, si voluptas deesset”) (“He replied: ‘Certainly the first thing to be eaten is the liver of the *albebut* fish [perhaps a whale, or Leviathan], then the fruits of the trees, drink from the streams of paradise, then whatever they desire, will be ready’ ... And the first asked him since they will eat and drink, whether they would have sex with women there, and how and by what law. He replied, ‘If any type of pleasure were missing, beatitudo would not be complete; it would be in vain for the delights to be there if enjoyment of them should be absent’”).

The citation does little more than add a bit of local colour to the overwhelming theological point regarding immortality—with rather more Pauline hues than are communicated in the original, which foresees the angel of death committing suicide in order to fulfil a divine command.²¹ The discussion, however, is already looking forward to cite Muhammad's further response from the same source (VIII.190; Bibliander 1543: vol. I, p. 197, ll. 3–8):²²

Ad hoc respondet Mahometus in libro de sua doctrina dicens quod non erit ibi egestio sordium sed purgatio per sudorem. Et ponit exemplum de puero in utero matris, qui, ut dicit, nutritur et non egerit. Sed exemplum et ratio eius nichil soluit, sicut patet inspicienti. Nam quedam sunt de perfectione imperfecti que in re perfecta essent imperfectiones magne.

To this Muhammad in the book of his *Teachings* saying that there will be no expulsion of filth but purgation through sweat. And he uses the example of

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- 21 Bibliander 1543: vol. 1, p. 199, ll. 6–10, “Post haec uocabit angelum mortis, dicens: O Andreiel, estne quid superstes ex omni creatura mea? Dicit: Nihil, domine mi, præter me seruum tuum imbecillem. Tunc dicit ei, Quoniam omnem creaturam meam occidisti, abi hinc inter paradisum et infernum, et occide postremo teipsum, ac morere. Abibit infelix, atque in praescripto interuallo proiectus humi, et alis suis inuolutus, seipsum suffocabit, cum tanto quidem mugitu, qui et coelestes spiritus et terrena animalia si uiuerent terrore exanimaret” (“After this he will call on the angel of death, saying, ‘Andreiel! Has any of my creatures survived?’ He will say, ‘None, my lord, other than me, your useless servant.’ Then he will say to him, ‘Since you killed all of my creatures, go from here, betwixt paradise and hell, and kill yourself, and die’. He will go thence unhappy, and, thrown to the ground in the pre-established gap, wrapped in his wings, he will suffocate himself, with such roars that the heavenly spirits and living things of earth if they were still living would die from terror”). For Paul: I Corinthians 15:26, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Note also the antiphon for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross: “O magnum pietatis opus mors mortua tunc est quando in ligno mortua uita fuit” (“O great work of mercy! Death was then brought to death when on the wood life was killed!”): for example, from Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 38, f. 333v (saec. xiii med.).
- 22 “Ait: Dic ergo, cum quicquid influit, et effluere necesse habet, nonne ut comedent, sic et iam egerere oportebit? Respondit: Non sequitur. Nam et infans in utero dum uiuit, uescitur, *nec* tamen egerit. Et quam cito egerere incipit, mortalitatis legem subit. Quae et illos, si egerent, necessitas consequeretur. Si quid tamen superfluit, id per sudorem exit, odorem musti fragrantem” (“He said, ‘So say, when something goes in, it must go out; surely as they eat, they will have to also defecate?’ He replied: ‘No so. For the infant in the womb whilst it lives, feeds but does not defecate. And as soon as it begins to defecate, it is placed beneath the law of mortality. And so for them, if they should defecate, necessity would catch up with them [i.e., they would be mortal, and would die]. If however anything is superfluous [from what they eat], that comes out as sweat, with the fragrance of new wine.’”).

the child in the mother's womb which, as he says, is fed but expels nothing. But the example and his justification solves nothing, as is evident on examination. For there are some perfections in something imperfect which in a perfect thing would be enormous imperfections.

Finally, in this chapter, the text is mentioned (without actual textual reference) to add further authority to Riccoldo's own citation of Aquinas.²³ Riccoldo's preference for the *Doctrina Mahumet* as a witness to Muslim belief places him in good company;²⁴ it was a widely known and much appreciated text for its apologetic resources, widely known because it circulated with the rest of the texts in the *Corpus Cluniacense*. However, in the fourth chapter, it is cited again yet with a new title: the "liber narratorium", from the same discussion of the delights of paradise.²⁵

Libellus, IV.71

Item ipse Machometus in libro narrationum reddit causam quare *uinum sit illicitum*.

Dicit enim quod *deus duos angelos misit ad terram* ut bene regerent *et iuste iudicarent*, et fuerunt isti angeli *Aroth et Maroth*.

Doctrina Mahumet (Bibliander 1543: vol. I, p. 197, l. 41–p. 198, l. 16)

... Sed illuc recolens, quod dicis, praeter illicita: cum illic uini fluentia describas, quaero quid nam operis illic habeant, si *uinum illicitum est*? aut si licitum est, quid tibi causae assumis in hoc saeculo uini prohibendi? Respondit, Adeo quidem argute quaeris, ut necessario una quaestione geminam responsionem extorqueas. Vtrumque ergo exponam, et illic esse licitum, et hic illicitum.

Erant enim *angeli duo, Arot et Marot*, missi olim a Deo de coelis in *terram*, gubernando et instruendo generi humano, tribus his interdictis, ne occiderent, *nec iniuste iudicarent, nec uinum biberent*.

²³ *Libellus* VIII.226, from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* 1961), IV.83. Panella (1988, n. 13) suggests that the intended words from the *Doctrina* are "Ancillarum vero non erit numerus" (Bibliander 1543: vol. I, p. 197, l. 41; "there will be no counting the number of sex-slaves").

²⁴ For Nicholas of Cusa, see Valkenberg 2014, pp. 201–204; for Hugo Grotius, see Klein 2005, pp. 162–163. Further, Ferrero Hernández 2011.

²⁵ See Di Cesare 2012, p. 398.

Cumque uenissent, **mulier** *que habebat causam*

inuitauit eos **ad prandium** et dedit eis *uinum* quod Deus eis mandauerat **ne biberent**;

et **inebriati** *requirunt eam de luxuria,*

et consensit hoc precio quod *unus docuit eam ascendere in celum et alius descendere.*

Et **ascendit** in *celum*. Cum autem **Deus** **uideret** eam, *audita causa* et modo, *fecit eam luciferum* ut esset ita *pulchra* in celo **inter sidera sicut erat** in terra **inter mulieres**.

Data autem optione angelis qui peccauerant ubi uellent puniri, hic uel in futuro, cum **eligerent** in presenti puniri, suspendit eos per pedes **in puteo Babilonia cum cathena ferrea usque ad diem iudicii**.

Multo itaque tempore sic habito nocti iudices essent per uniuersum orbem, uenit eis die quodam **mulier** prae cunctis foeminis omnino pulcherrima, **causam habens** aduersus maritum. Quae ut parti suae accomodaret iudices, **inuitauit ad prandium**. Sequuntur. Illa satagens convivantibus inter epulas et pocula vini apponit. Adstat ministrans, offert crebro, instar ut sumant. Quid plura?

Vicerunt blandiciae mulieris. **Inebriati** poculis, in hospitam formosam incaluerunt, uicti, *accubitus postulant*. Spondet ea conditione: dum *alter uerbum doceat per quod ascendebant coelos: alter, per quod descendebant*. Placet conditio. Cum ergo didicisset, eleuata est subito et **ascendit coelos**. Quod cum **uideret Deus, explorata causa, posuit eam luciferum, pulcherrimam inter stellas, ut fuerat inter foeminas**.

Illis autem in iudicium vocatis, proposuit eis Deus, ut eligerent inter poenam huius seculi et poenam alterius. **Eligerunt** hanc. Depensi sunt ergo *per cathenas ferreas*, demissis capitibus **in puteo bebil, usque in diem iudicii**. Quid ergo, Abdia? Nonne sufficiens videtur causa cur et illic licitum sit uinum, et hic illicitum?

And this Muhammad, in the *Book of narrations* gave the reason why wine is unlawful.

He says that God sent two angels to the earth so that they might rule well and might judge justly, and these angels were Aroth and Maroth. And when they had come, a woman who had a case invited them to eat and gave them wine which God had ordered them not to drink; and, drunk, they sought sex from her, and they agreed this price—that one taught her how to go up to heaven, and the other how to go down. And she went up into heaven. When God had seen her, having heard the why and the how, he made her the morning star so that she might be beautiful in the heaven amongst the stars just as she was on earth amongst women.

“But going back over to where you said, regarding unlawful things—when you describe the wine flowing there [in paradise] I ask what troubles they have there, if wine is unlawful? Or, if it is lawful, for what reason do you suppose that wine is to be prohibited in his world [rather than the next]?” He replied, “Now you ask something clever, so that by necessity through a single question you will extort a double response. And so then I will set out how both there it is lawful, and here unlawful.

There were two angels, Arot and Maroth, sent long ago by God from the heavens to the earth, to govern and instruct the human race, with three things forbidden them: they should not kill, nor should they judge unjustly, nor should they drink wine. And so for a long time having by night been judges for the whole world, there came to them by day a certain woman who was utterly beautiful, above all other women, who had a case against her husband. She, so that she might bring the judges to her side, invited them to eat. They accepted. She, fussing over her guests between the courses set out bowls of wine. A servant stood by, pouring out more as soon as they drank. What else? The woman’s blandishments won them over. Drunk by the wine, they were aroused by the beautiful hostess;

overcome, they suggested they should go to bed. She agreed, with a condition: that one should teach her the word by which they ascended into the heavens; the other, that by which they came down. There was agreement. When she therefore said the word, she was lifted up of a sudden and ascended into the heavens. When God saw this, having ascertained the reason, he set her as the morning star, the most beautiful amongst the stars, as she had been amongst women.

When the angels who had sinned were given the option as to where they wished to be punished, either here or in the world to come, when they chose the present for their punishment, he suspended them in the well of Babylonia with an iron chain until the day of judgement.

For the angels, however, when called to judgement, God proposed that they might choose between a punishment in this world or in the next. They chose this one. So they were punished with iron chains, set down with their heads in the well of Bebil, until the day of judgement. What more would you need, Abdia? Is not this enough to see the reason why wine is both lawful there and unlawful here?"

The best we can say about the use of the title *Liber narrationum* is that it is generic, as generic as 'Book of Stories' would be; it is also unusual that Riccoldo, even though he was taking the material from exactly the same place he quarried in chapter VIII, did not use the same title. The question thus arises whether he was consulting the texts at different times, possibly in different recensions. Although the collection we refer to as the *Corpus Cluniacense* was indeed brought together at Cluny at some point, it had had a limited circulation in parts within the Cistercians, since the texts had been sent to Bernard of Clairvaux piecemeal as they were finished, a process that was made clear in Peter's delayed letter, sent to Bernard only with the final *pièce de resistance*, the *Alchoran latinus*. It may well have been that Riccoldo had first come across the *Doctrina Mahumet* in this Cistercian version, which was un- or differently-titled—certainly the current title was appended to the work as part of the subsequent assembly of the

Corpus itself, as can be seen from the difficulties experienced by the rubricator of Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 1142, fol. 19r (the earliest of the manuscripts of the *Corpus*) in inserting the rather verbose title into what was a too-small space left by the copyist of the work: the latter was clearly expecting a rather more succinct heading to be used (see Lappin 2021). Riccoldo's knowledge of Peter's *Summa* may thus also be traced to his becoming aware of the other elements of the *Corpus* beyond the 'Liber narrationum', and only then using it to shape his introduction. The numerous cross-references throughout the *Contra legem*, and the strikingly staccato development of topics, would suggest a period of compilation over a number of years, perhaps with the introduction being written last of all. Particularly noticeable is the absence of any reference to the letter of pseudo-al-Kindī,²⁶ although due to a material loss in an early codex, the *Corpus* often circulated without this text.²⁷

Numerous aspects of Riccoldo's view of Islam can be found mirrored in the concerns of the glossators: that violence was an inescapable element of the religion;²⁸ that the evident contradictions lead to disbelief which may then be held back only by threats;²⁹ the contradictions themselves are intrinsically linked to violence towards

26 Edited in González Muñoz 2005.

27 d'Alverny 2004.

28 *Libellus* X.99: "Ex his igitur aperte patet quod lex saracenorum est lex occisionis et uiolentie" ("From this it is absolutely clear that the religion of the Saracens is the religion of murder and violence").

29 *Libellus* VIII.261: "Ego autem pro certo comperi quod maxime litterati et sapientes inter saracenos dictis alchorani non adhibent fidem, sed fictionem doctrine aduertunt" ("I also have certainly verified that the most learned and knowledgeable men amongst the aforesaid Saracens show no trust in the Qur'an, but draw attention to the make-believe of the teachings"). The same is placed in a historical frame by the *Alchoran* XVI.27, adnot. "callidos et astutos" (6:123): "Nobiliiores et doctiores erant, qui nolebant ei credere. Qui enim primo illi credere rustici et miseri et uiles homines erant, magisque timore gladii et fatuitate bestiali, quam aliqua ratione tracti ei adquiescebant" ("Those who refused to believe him were the more noble and learned; those who first believed in him were rustic and poor and lowly men, and more from the fear of the sword and animalistic stupidity than convinced by a certain degree of reason and so acquiescing to him").

others;³⁰ that much of the precepts of the Qur'an are motivated by lust;³¹ the claim to prophethood is motivated by dishonourable desires;³² that this prophethood is not only *not* vouchsafed by miracles, it is also ridiculous.³³ Riccoldo, then, worked within

- 30 *Libellus* VI.23: "Item ipse mandat eis quod non altercentur cum hominibus alterius secte uerbis asperis sed uerbis mansuetis; non enim pertinet ad hominem dirigere sed ad deum solum, et unusquisque habet de se solo reddere rationem et non de alio. Et postea mandat in pluribus locis quod occidantur et expolientur qui non credunt donec credant uel soluant tributum" ("And again he orders them to not argue with men of another religion with harsh words, but with humble speech; it does not belong to man to dispose but to God alone, and each one is to give, for himself alone, an account and not for anyone else. And afterwards he orders in many places that those who did not believe are to be killed and pillaged until they believe or give tribute"). Cp. *Alchoran* XIII.41, adnot. "Mala et insipida" (5:100): "Nota quam tortuose et quantis modis se uertit, et non sibi coherentia dicit, more scilicet diabolico" ("Observe how tortuous and in how many ways it twists and turns, and speaks without any coherence in itself, namely in the habit of a devil"); V.36, adnot. "dic" (3:20): "Facit sibi deum prohibere ne unquam disputet cum aliquo de lege, sciens utique nullam se habere rationem, utpote conscius sibi tot mendaciorum. Et hoc sepe facit" ("He makes God prohibit for him lest anyone should dispute with anyone else about the religion, knowing that he has not good reason, aware that it is all lies. And this he often does").
- 31 *Libellus* VI.38: "Item in capitulo de *Vacca* concedit sodomiam tam cum masculo quam cum femina" ("Again, in the chapter 'The Cow', he allows sodomy, as much with a male as with a female"). Cp. the more limited concession in *Alchoran* III.53, adnot. "Mulieres uobis subiectas" (2:226): "Nota. Turpissimum preceptum, pro quo solo debuisset incendi, et uide quam uersute statim de dei timore loquitur, ut operiat turpitudinem quam dixerat" ("Observe: a most obscene precept, for which alone he ought to be consumed by fire, and look how cunningly he immediately begins to talk about fear of God, so that he might commit the obscenity that he had spoken of"); on the latter annotation, see Hanne 2013, p. 276; de la Cruz Palma 2021, p. 115.
- 32 *Libellus* XV.264: "Videtur igitur Machometus ex talibus non solum dare deo participem sed facere se Deo participem et consortem" ("It therefore appears that Muhammad from such sayings not only wishes to give a partner to God, but to make himself God's partner and consort"); XII.67: "Item quia Mahometus erat homo carnalissimus et frequentissime intendebat operi luxurie, in capitulo *Elnur*, *Elhazeb*, inducit Deum loquentem quod non intrent in domum nisi inuitati et uocati, et nisi perstrepat de foris" ("Again, since Muhammad was a most carnal man and most frequently planned deeds of lust, in the chapter *Elnur*, *Elhazeb*, he brings in God saying that none should enter the house unless they are summoned and called for, and if not, they should remain outside"). Cp. *Alchoran* XXXIII.39, adnot. "Vir bonus": "Nota: dicit ut nullus ingrediatur domum nisi suam propriam, non tamen repente ingrediatur, sed ante aduentu suo nunciato, timens uidelicet deprehendi cum uxoribus alienis, quas assidue scortabat lecor pessimus" ("Take note: he says that no-one should enter a house except his own, not however coming in of a sudden but should be announced before his arrival, since he feared to be caught with others' wives, with whom the dreadful lecher constantly consorted").
- 33 *Libellus* XV.229: "Machometus autem nullum omnino miraculum fecit, secundum Alchora-

the same tradition of analysis of Islam as the glossators, yet without showing any particular degree of textual dependence; unsurprising, since the original marginalia was rapidly excised from transmission of the text. Further, his exposure to the *Corpus Cluniacense* probably occurred over at least two or three moments; his familiarity with Peter's *Summa* possibly came later than with the other texts, assuming, here, that the introduction and first chapter were written later. Certainly the current ordering of the sections of his text is no overall guide to any chronological progression at all.

One of the features that is most important in Riccoldo's adaptation of the Cluniac material is the added salience that he gives to apocalyptic accents in his description of Muhammad. This, of course, is already present in Peter the Venerable; but Riccoldo brings it up to date and makes the connections more obvious. It was in this apocalyptic light, however, that both clerics sought to understand and present Islam. Peter's labour of erudition in identifying the heresies was not a mistaken means of Christianizing Islam, nor a self-glorying exercise in theological learning.³⁴ Both Peter and Riccoldo understood the importance of the density of heretical beliefs in Islam: not in a superficial sense, that Islam was wrong on all sorts of counts, and that the recitation of long-forgotten names could prove it; but that the reactivation of early heresies—which had previously appeared via disagreement over one or two elements of dogma at a time—specifically within one single organization, religion or *secta* was historically significant. The same approach, shorn of an evaluation against a self-evident orthodoxy, is still the dominant approach for modern historians inquiring after the causes and influences on the rise of early Islam within Late Antique cultural milieu:³⁵ however wrapped-up Peter and Riccoldo seem by theology, their approach is also, perhaps primarily, historical, using those historical tools which were available to them.

In both of our authors, Muhammad is portrayed consistently as the instrument of the devil, and as doing the devil's bidding. This, again, is not simply Christians degrading the seal of the prophets because of their feeling threatened by the Other. The devil's

num; et si de eo quedam dicantur, aut sunt impossibilia et absona ut quod lunam reintegrauit fractam, aut inutilia ut camela locuta fuit aut omnino occulta" ("Muhammad also performed no miracle at all, according to the Qur'an; and if some are recounted about him, either they are impossible and in bad taste—such as when he put the moon together when it had split—or they are useless—such as when the camel spoke—or wholly secret"). The thought is repeated at *Libellus* VIII.215. We might compare these with the ironic exclamation at *Alchoran* XLIII.74, adnot. "plurima pars incredula" (54:27): "O quam mirabiles narrationes" ("Oh, what marvellous stories!"), or LXVIII.43, "Nota quod impudens mendacium" ("Look: what shameless lies").

34 Malcolm 2019, p. 47.

35 See, for example, Shoemaker 2021, who provides an intriguing characterization of the Qur'an as a late antique apocryphon.

involvement is crucial, since both the Cluniac and the Dominican see a turning-point in world history with the arrival and rise of Islam. Muhammad, essentially, was the vessel by which the devil could prepare for the arrival of the antichrist; the wealth of Christian heresies found within Islamic belief was a sign that an important threshold towards the End Times had been crossed, and that, sooner or later, those apocalyptic Last Days would descend upon the whole world, Christians included. The appreciation by both authors that Islam (rather than Christianity) dominated the globe was important in this respect as well. A Christian victory over such a powerful, overpowering, and dominant antagonist could only be by supernatural intervention. Now, both our authors are clear: Muhammad is not the antichrist. That equation would have to wait for when the terror of the Ottoman Turks threatened to sweep away all of Christendom. Nevertheless:

Hic Mahometus fuit antichristi precursor, qui filio perditionis uiam preparauit in mundo (*Libellus* IX.25).

This Muhammad was the precursor of the antichrist, the one who prepared the way for the son of perdition to come into the world—cp. Matthew 3:3.

A John-the-Baptist figure, then, for the dark side. The heresy-count was an important measure by which one might establish just how far down the slide towards the final trumpet the world had reached. For these writers, the law of the Saracens was not to be feared in itself, but feared rather for what it portended, and it was therefore to be combated within that frame, a struggle with something seen and understood as an apocalyptic foreshadowing, but certainly not the real thing.

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JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ GÁZQUEZ

Topics of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's Latin Glosses to the Arabic Qur'an (BnF Arabe 384)*

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that there are Latin glosses by two different authors in the Qur'an manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS BnF Arabe 384, which take the form of commentaries on or direct translations of the Qur'anic text.¹ These annotations are highly significant in that they were written by Christian scholars who could read the Qur'an in Arabic and who recorded their reactions in Latin in the marginal notes.

It is not well known, however, that these glosses are fragments taken from Mark of Toledo's *Alchoranus Latinus*, which was a literal translation produced in 1210 at the behest of Cardinal Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and Bishop Mauricio as part of the preparations for the war against the Muslims that culminated in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212.²

The Latin glosses are written in the margins of the Arabic text and on the opening folios of the manuscript, and they vary with respect to both their content and their authorship.³ Nadia Petrus has undertaken a survey to determine their number and the topics they address. According to her results there are more than 500 glosses, more than 400 of which can be attributed to the hand of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce

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1 Déroche 1985, p. 53, no. 344 and pl. 17.

2 Petrus Pons 2005; *Alchoranus Latinus quem transtulit Marcus canonicus Toletanus*, ed. Petrus Pons 2016, pp. xxv-xcii.

3 Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010, p. 1024.

(c. 1243–1320). This is an exceptional group of glosses for studying the perception of the Qur'an and Islam among Christian scholars in medieval Latin Europe. The glosses deal with a variety of topics, though the focus is on the Bible, with the following topics being repeatedly addressed: Christ (3:52–54); the Crucifixion (4:157); the Annunciation (3:42–48, 19:16–32); Adam, Abraham and the rest of the Patriarchs (2:131–136); the Prophets (21), with a special emphasis on Moses in a number of passages; the precepts of Islam, such as fasting (2:183–187), ablutions before prayer (4:43, v 6), pilgrimage to Mecca (22:27–29), and the prohibition against wine and games of chance (2:219); the role of women in Islam (2:223); the Last Judgement (84:1–6); Hell and its punishments and Paradise and its rewards (88:1–7); and the figure of the Prophet (33:40–48).⁴

Regarding the author of these commentaries, in the catalogue of Qur'an manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) published in 1985, François Déroche highlighted the need to distinguish between two groups of glosses, because there are clearly two different hands, which can be dated to the 13th or 14th century.⁵ These two groups are also completely different from each other in the letter size and script used, which leads us to assume that they were inserted into the margins at different times.

As for their contents, both groups include:

- glosses
- fragments from the Qur'an in a literal Latin translation that were taken from Mark of Toledo's *Alchoranus Latinus*. These fragments, which make up the majority of the corpus of glosses, sometimes copy Mark of Toledo's text word for word, and sometimes the glossator corrects and adapts this text.

ANONYMOUS GLOSSES IN LARGE SCRIPT (+)

In the first, smaller group, the glosses are written in a larger script (indicated here by (+)), and go up only to aleya 60 of sura 2, with a few more dispersed throughout the manuscript. In the same hand there are several annexed annotations referring to a listing of Christian topics—such as the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, the death of Christ, etc.—that occupy the manuscript's opening folios, 1v–2r, preceding the text of the Qur'an. In each of these glosses, following the heading, the author has added the numbering of the sura to which the text belongs, accompanied by “C”, the initial

⁴ *Alchoranus Latinus*, ed. Petrus Pons 2016, pp. lviii–lix.

⁵ Déroche 1985, pp. 53–54.

for *Capitulum*, as well as the numbering in Roman numerals of the manuscript folios where they are found. There is a second numbering scheme throughout the entire manuscript in Arabic numerals, which is out by two compared to the foliation in Roman numerals and which I follow for identification purposes in the transcription of the glosses. Up to folio 6v, these glosses appear by themselves; they also appear on some later folios, though in fewer numbers, together with the glosses in smaller script that predominate in the rest of the manuscript.

The authorship of this first group of glosses has still not been established. Some authors who have been proposed, such as Ramon Martí or Ramon Llull, have been ruled out on the basis of comparisons of the handwriting.⁶

We should note that, until now, it had not been established that the author of these glosses was also familiar with and used the text of Mark of Toledo's *Alchoranus Latinus*. This becomes clear when we compare his glosses to this translation, which was also used by Riccoldo. This leads us to think that the author may have been a cleric, a Dominican connected to Florence's Santa Maria Novella who read and annotated this Qur'an before Riccoldo. That this translation was known in Florence is also supported by the discovery of a fragmentary Italian translation in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1910 (Codice Vaglianti), as has been noted by Luciano Formisano.⁷ This demonstrates that Mark of Toledo's translation circulated more widely than was believed up to now. Some examples that illustrate that the anonymous glossator was familiar with Mark of Toledo's translation (MdT) are:

42r (+) Nos interfecimus Ihesum Christum Filium Marie et non occiderunt eum, nec crucifixeunt eum, sed uisum fuit eis.

MdT 4:157 Et quia dixerunt: "Cristum Ihesum, filium Marie, occidimus Prophe-tam Dei", et non occiderunt ipsum neque crucifixerunt, sed uisum fuit eis.

134r (+) Insuflamus in ea de Spiritu nostro.

MdT 21:91 Aperuimus in ea de Spriritu nostro.

223r (+) Stare fecimus Christum et dedimus ei Euangelium et posuimus in cordibus sequencium eum multa que secuntur.

6 Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010, 'Lire et traduire le Coran', pp. 1024–1025.

7 Formisano 2004; Martínez Gázquez 2007, pp. 88–89 and nn. 29–31; Petrus Pons 2016, p. 117.

MdT 62:27 Et post misimus Ihesum filium Marie et dedimus ei Euangelium et posuimus in corde eorum qui secuti sunt eum pietatem et misericordiam et religionem quam inuenerunt.

This first group of glosses, written in larger script, comprise two different sections, based on their contents.

The first section on fol. iv contains eleven statements in which the glossator focuses especially on the Virgin Mary and characterizes the Saracens in disparaging terms, as well as highlighting the attitude toward the Gospel that is demanded of them.

(+) Quod angeli ceciderunt de celo et facti sunt demones quia ad preceptum Dei noluerunt adorare Adam. ii a capitulo ii^o b.

(+) Quod societas maligna demonum facta est saracenica. ccxxxvii^a, capitulo lxx ii^o.

(+) Quod Deus pretulit Beatam Virginem super omnes mulieres. xxii b capitulo iii c.

(+) Quod angelus nuntiauit uerbum Dei concipiendum in Beata Virgine. xxii a capitulo iii c.

(+) Quod Beata Virgo concepit uirgo existens. xxiii a capitulo iii c.

(+) Quod Deus insufflauit in Beata Virgine de Spiritu suo. cxxxii b capitulo xxi g.

(+) Quod christiani boni saluantur iiij a capitulo ii b.

(+) Quod saraceni omnes intrabunt infernum. cxxv b capitulo xix f.

(+) Quod saraceni debent confiteri peccata sua. cxc i b capitulo x^o l b.

(+) Quod bene erit illis qui uolunt faciem Dei. clxv b capitulo xxx d.

(+) Quod unus dies apud Deum sicut mille qui computantur cxxxv a capitulo xxii d.

The second section emphasizes the fundamentals of the Christian faith, mainly the essence of the Trinity and the importance of Christ's death and resurrection, as well

as the need for Saracens to accept Christ God and his doctrine, and the notion that Saracens must follow the teachings in the Gospel in order to be saved.

(+) Quod Deus est trinus in personis et unus in eencia (*sic*) et quod uerbum Dei (*expunctuatum*) est incarnatum in beata Virgine mediante Spiritu Sancto et quod saraceni tenentur credere Domino Ihesu Cristo. xli b capitulo iiij g.

(+) Quod Christus mortuus est et quod Deus eleuauit eum ad se et purificauit eum et quod secaces eius ponet Deus super omnes homines usque in diem resurrectionis. xxiiij a (*expunctuatum*) capitulo iiij°. Quod Christus mortuus est. L a capitulo V°.

(+) Quod Christus mortuus est et uenturus in mundum. c. xxiiij b capitulum xix°.

(+) Quod Christus non est mortuus, negatur, sed iudei concedunt quod interfecerunt eum. xli b capitulum iiij g.

(+) Quod sequaces Christum habebunt in cordibus suis multas uirtutes que enumerantur. cc° xxiiij a capitulo lvij° g.

(+) Quod saraceni nichil sunt, id est, in uia perditionis sunt, nisi compleant euangelium *uel* impleant, id est, secuantur dicta euangelii et faciant. xlvij b capitulo v d.

(+) Quod euangelium est directio et lux. xlvi b capitulo v d.

(+) Quod Saraceni sunt credituri Christo. xli b capitulo iiij f.

(+) Quod Christus predixit post se Machumetum futurum in euangelio xxcc xxviiij capitulo lxi.

(+) Quod in paradiso habebunt uxores et multa alia et cetera. ij b capitulo ij° b.

The location and distribution of the introductory glosses make it possible to speculate that the glosses written in larger script are earlier than the other group of glosses, which are much more numerous, and which are written on the margins of all folios of the manuscript.

This would also explain a couple of peculiarities in the glosses on fols 47v and 237r. The gloss on fol. 47v begins in small letters (indicated here by (-)), and connects to

the gloss in larger script with the copulative particle *et* despite the fact that the gloss in larger script begins with a capital letter, indicating the beginning of a sentence:

(–) Placuit uobis dirigere eos per Ihesum, filium Mariae ueracem et (+) Dedit eum Christo, in quo est directio et lux.

The opposite happens in the gloss on fol. 237r, where the gloss written first, in larger script (+) is followed by a period, but nonetheless it is continued and finished by Riccoldo's gloss (–) in the remaining space on the same line.

(+) Audiuimus dixerunt demones Alchoranum mirabilem uel placentem nobis qui direxit et credidimus ei. (–) Et non damus consortem Deo nostro quia ipse est unus altissimus et non habet uxorem neque filium.

GLOSSES IN SMALLER LETTERS (–) ATTRIBUTABLE TO RICCOLDO DA MONTE DI CROCE

On the basis of J.M. Mérigoux's study of Riccoldo's handwritten notes in the text of his work *Contra legem Sarracenorum* in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS Conv. soppr. C.8.1173, fols 185r–218r,⁸ which was followed by Thomas Burman's study comparing the writing in these autograph glosses in the Florentine manuscript to the glosses in the Arabic Qur'an, it was possible to identify the Italian Dominican as the author of the notes written in smaller letters (–) in the margins of BnF Arabe 384.⁹

Glosae initiales cum compendio surarum vel capitulorum

Riccoldo's initial glosses on fols 1v and 2r are inserted among the declarative glosses on the basic contents of the Qur'an, which attracted the attention of the first glossator.

The first gloss, at the end of fol. 1r, comments on the contents of sura 10, titled 'Jonah'. It points out that, despite the sura's title, this figure from the Bible barely appears in the text. He is named only once, while Noah, Moses and several other figures receive more attention. Riccoldo asks in this gloss why the sura has been given this title, and he stresses that many other suras likewise have titles that do not correspond to the topics they deal with. The text goes as follows:

⁸ Mérigoux 1986.

⁹ Burman 2007a, pp. 81, 212, 286; 2007b; Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010.

fol. iv *in marg. inferiore*

(–) In toto capitulo de Ionas quod est capitulum decimum, non est aliquid de Iona, nisi unum solum uerbum. De Noe uero et de Moyse et de Faraone et de aliis est ibi multum, quare ergo intitulatur de Iona. Et similiter multa alia capitula intitulantur illis de quibus non tractant.

Next, there is a second gloss, in which Riccoldo wonders about the contradiction in extolling Muhammad as the first Saracen, adding that Abraham and Noah and their sons were Saracens.

(–) Quod Maccomettus fuit primus Saracenus. ... clxxxvii. Quomodo ergo Habraam et filii eius et Noe et filii eius fuerunt saraceni.

On fol. 2r, Riccoldo introduces into the upper margin a longer and more important gloss with several sections in which he highlights specific ideas that are present in the Qur'an that correspond to the main points of disagreement between Christian doctrine and Islamic doctrine.

Riccoldo provides an outline of the main topics in the Qur'an, which Burman lines up with the contents of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (CLS), where Riccoldo writes:

CLS (9:17) *Reducuntur autem principales falsitates eius ad decem genera. Dicit enim falsa de seipso, de Christianis, de Iudeis, de Apostolis, de Patriarchas, de Demonibus, de Angelis, de Virgine Maria, de Christo et de Deo.*

In this ninth chapter of *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, titled 'Quod legem Sarracenorum continet falsitates apertas',¹⁰ these different sections about Muhammad's errors are broadly explained. They had been announced by Riccoldo at the beginning of the introductory chapter 1 of his treatise, titled 'Qui sunt errores Alcorani'.

The contents of the glosses in BnF Arabe 384 are similar to the part in chapter 9 of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* dedicated to discussing these falsities. The parallel nature of the two undoubtedly emphasizes the connection between the text of the glosses and the terms used in the writing of the *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. We should note, however, that the glosses add some commentary that cannot be found in *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, such as 'Contra evangelistas' and 'Contra sanctos prophetas'.

¹⁰ Quotes from *Contra legem Sarracenorum* come from Panella's 2011 online edition.

The section 'De Christo' is formulated differently than the corresponding section in *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, 'Contra Filium Dei'. The section 'De Deo' is formulated differently, with three different sections for considerations relating to the three persons of the Trinity, 'Contra Filium Dei', 'Contra Spiritum Sanctum', and 'Contra Deum Patrem'. This might have been very intentional, in order to highlight the importance of the Mystery of the Trinity in Christianity.

A comparison of the glosses in MS BnF Arabe 384 with excerpts from *Contra legem Sarracenorum* that deal with the same questions shows how parallel they are:

Iste liber est:¹¹

(–) Contra sanctos apostolos quia dicit quod ipsi fuerunt Saraceni et imitatores Macometti.

CLS (9:69) De apostolis autem dicit in capitulo Aamram, qui fuit pater Moysi, quod ipsi protestati sunt et dixerunt Christo quod ipsi erant saraceni et imitatores legati uel nuncii, id est Mahometi.

(–) Contra euangelistas quia imponit eis multa mendacia, ut patet per totum et maxime quia dicit quod Iudei non occiderunt nec crucifixerunt Christo, sed quendam ei similem, et cetera, xli. iiii capitulo.

(–) Contra sanctos prophetas quibus multa mendacia imponit, ut patet inspicienti per totum.

(–) Contra patriarchas, dicit enim quod Habraam fuit Saracenus et etiam Iacob et filii eius. viij, capitulo secundo.

CLS (9:82) De patriarchis autem idem asserit Mahometus. Dicit enim in pluribus locis in alchorano quod Abraham, Ysaac et Iacob et filii eorum fuerunt Saraceni.

(–) Contra sanctos angelos quia dicit quod Deus precepit eis quod adorarent Adam. ij capitulo ij et etiam lxi capitulo séptimo.

11 Burman 2011.

CLS (9:108) De angelis autem dicit in pluribus locis quod adorauerunt Adam et quod omnes adorauerunt, nisi diabolus.

(–) Contra beatam *Virginem* quia in pluribus locis subtrahit ei honorem et ueritatem filii Dei. Dicit etiam esse filiam Amram et sororem Moysi. xxij capitulo 3º.

CLS (9:119) De virgine Maria dicit expresse in capitulo Amram quod ipsa fuit filia Amram. Amram uero fuit pater Moysi et Aaron.

(–) Contra Filium Dei, cui subtrahit diuinitatem. Dicit enim eum esse nuntium et seruum Dei, ut patet inspicienti per totum.

(–) Contra Spiritum Sanctum per quem et a quo omne uerum dicitur, ut patet in suratibus infinitis.

CLS (15:68) Secunda questio. Secunda questio est quia alchoranum facit mentionem frequentissime de Spiritu sancto et de Verbo Dei, quis est iste Spiritus sanctus, et quid est istud Verbum Dei?

(–) Contra Deum Patrem quia dicit quod non potest habere filium, quia non habet uxorem. lxvi capitulo vj;

CLS (1:44) Asserit etiam Machometus quod Deus non potest habere filium quia non habet uxorem.

CLS (9:162) De Deo uero simpliciter asserit quod nullo modo potest habere filium quia non habet uxorem.

(–) Contra Deum simpliciter quia dicit [quia dicit] quod totus mundus erat unus, scilicet, populus et ritus, et Deus fecit eum diuersum per diuersos prophetas quos misit. viiij capitulo ij.

(–) Est autem acceptus demonibus quia ipse dicit quod demonibus placuit et multi ex eis facti sunt Saraceni. ccxxxvj capitulo lxxij. ccvii capitulo xlvi.

CLS (1:58) Dicit etiam quod demones possunt saluari per alchoranum; et quod ipsi audito alchorano, multi ex eis facti sunt sarraceni.

CLS (9:103) De Demonibus autem est in alchorano speciale capitulum, ubi expresse dicitur quod demones in magna multitudine audiuerunt alchoranum et letati sunt, et testati sunt quod per ipsum poterant saluari. Et dixerunt se esse saracenos et saluati sunt.

(–) Dicit etiam quod Deus et angeli eius salutant Maccomettum uel orant pro eo. Et hoc dicit clxxij capitulo 33°.

CLS (9:209) Preterea, Mahometus dicit in capitulo Elehزاب quod Deus et angeli eius orant pro Mahometo et aliis saracenis.

After the third line of text in Arabic in the initial glosses, Riccoldo inserted another brief gloss noting that when the Saracens have doubts about Islam, they must ask for help from those who read the Qur'an before them. This gloss corresponds to the text in 10:94, and it is an adaptation of Mark of Toledo's translation:¹²

(–) Quando saraceni dubitant de lege eorum, debent petere ab illis qui legerunt librum ante eos. lxxxvij, capitulo x.

MdT 10:94 Et siquidem in eo dubitaueris quod tibi destinauimus, eos interroga qui Librum legunt ante te. Iam quippe ueritas ad te peruenit a creatore tuo.

*Rescriptum Christiani*¹³ 82,53 “Si ambiguus fueris de his que descendere fecimus super te, interroga eos qui legunt legem ante te. Iam tibi ueritas a Deo tuo uenit.”

CLS (3:30–36) Nam dicitur in capitulo de Iona: “Si fueritis in dubio de hoc quod reuelauimus uobis, petatis ab illis qui legerunt librum priusquam uos.”

¹² Burman 2011, p. 607.

¹³ González Muñoz 2005, p. 121.

Glossae interlineales

(–) Quod si dixerint quia ibi loquitur Iudeis, contra ipse loquitur familie libri, et familia libri non sunt iudei, sed saraceni uel christiani, sicut ipse expresse uidetur prosequi. Capitulo xli capitulo iiij.

CLS (3:118) Familia vero libri sunt saraceni, sicut ibidem ostendit.

CLS (3:130) Familia libri sint saraceni, ostenditur expresse in capitulo Lem, in fine libri.

(–) Et idem etiam exponere uidetur xlvij capitulo v.

(–) Et idem etiam expressissime et ccxlviii capitulo xcviij.

Fragmenta extracta ex Alchorano Latino Marci Toletani

The second group of glosses written by Riccoldo, the ones that are fragments taken from Mark of Toledo's translation, become significantly more interesting when we consider that many of them are only a direct translation of the Arabic text, with small modifications in only a few cases. This means that Riccoldo, who could have translated them himself, given his broad knowledge of Arabic and Islam, chose to use as the source of his commentaries the second Latin translation of the Qur'an.

There are two classes in this large *corpus* of glosses, which appear throughout the entire text of the Qur'an. They are almost entirely glosses taken from Mark of Toledo's translation, but some are direct and word-for-word transcriptions from the Latin translation of the Arabic fragment under analysis, while others introduce some changes into Mark of Toledo's text. These may be the simple replacement of a word by a synonym, reinterpretations of the meaning of a passage, or summaries of the contents maintaining the terms from the Latin translation.¹⁴

Burman has analysed some of these glosses, comparing them to passages from Mark of Toledo that Riccoldo later went on to use when he wrote the *Contra legem Saracenorum*.

When Riccoldo speaks of man's creation, on fol. 248v, he accepts the text of Mark of Toledo's translation literally and without any changes:

¹⁴ Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010, p. 1024.

(–) Iuro per ficum et oliuetum et per Montem Synai et per urbem fidelem, quod creauimus homines in nobiliori imagine, demum conuertimus ipsum infimum infimorum, sed qui crediderunt et bona fecerunt habent mercedem absque improprio. Nec dicent te falsatorem amplius in lege. Nonne Deus est omnibus iudicibus melior iudex?

MdT 95:1 Iuro per ficum et oliuetum 2 et montem Synay 3 et per hanc urbem fidelem 4 quod creauimus hominem in nobiliori ymagine, 5 deinde conuertimus ipsum infimum infimorum. 6 Sed qui crediderunt et bona fecerunt, habent mercedem absque improprio. 7 Nec dicent te falsatorem amplius in lege. 8 Nonne enim Deus est omnibus iudicibus melior iudex?

CLS (8:274–275) Quod autem iuret [Deus] “per ficetum et oliuetum”, friuolum uidetur omnino et irrationabile.

SOME OF THE MAIN SUBJECTS ADDRESSED

We will briefly discuss, by way of example, three important subjects in the doctrine set forth by Muhammad.

The death of Christ

The death of Christ is an important topic in Riccoldo’s glosses, and a recurring argument in the glosses has to do with the alleged contradictions in the Qur’an regarding the death of Christ.

Riccoldo presents this subject in the gloss on fol. 38r:

(–) Si Alcoranus non esset a Deo, inuenirentur in eo contrarietates multe.

(–) Sed expresse contradicit sibi de morte Christi, quia aliquando dicit eum mortuum et aliquando non. Hoc etiam argumentum debilissimum est.

MdT 4:82 *Nunquid excogitant Alchoranum? Et si non uenisset a Deo, plures quidem diuersitates inuenirentur in eo.*

(–) Fui eis testis quamdiu mansi cum eis, postquam uero fecistis me mori. Tu fuisti custos super eos et tu es testis super hec omnia. Si punis eos tui sunt serui, et si parcis eis, tu es iudex legitime.

MdT 5:117 Et fui testis eis quamdiu cum eis mansi. *Cumque me fecisti abire, tu custos super eos extitisti et tu es super omnia testis.* 118 Si punis eos, tui sunt serui; et si parcis eis, tu es iudex, *gloriosus*.

As was mentioned above, the earlier glossator, who used a larger script, also wrote about the death of Christ and used Mark of Toledo's text in his glosses:

42r (+) Verbum eorum siue Iudeorum fuit quod nos interfecimus Ihesum Christum Filium Marie et non occiderunt eum, nec crucifixeunt eum, sed uisum fuit eis.

MdT 4:157 Et quia dixerunt: "*Cristum Ihesum, filium Marie, occidimus Prophetam Dei*", et non occiderunt ipsum neque crucifixerunt, sed uisum fuit eis.

Adam, Abraham and the other Patriarchs

We saw this subject previously in the 'Contra Patriarcas' section of glosses at the beginning, which includes the gloss to 2:131, on fol. 10r, where Riccoldo insists on the idea that Abraham, Jacob and their descendants are already Saracens, an idea that also appears in *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. Otherwise, in this case, Riccoldo summarizes or adapts Mark of Toledo's text.

(–) Dixit Habraam Deo: "Ego sum saracenus Deo." Et dixerunt Habraam et Iacob filiis suis: "O filii, non credatis aliquid aliud, nisi quod sitis saraceni." Et dixerunt etiam filii Iacob: "Nos sumus saraceni."

MdT 2:131 Ait: "Oblatus sum creatori gencium. 132 Et premonuit Abraham filios suos et Iacob dicens: "Filioli, Deus elegit quidem uobis legem, nolite mori priusquam sitis oblati." 133 Numquid presentes extitistis quando moriebatur Iacob dicendo filiis suis?: "Quid adorabitis post me?" Dixerunt: "Deum adorabimus tuum et Deum patrum tuorum Abraha et Ysmaelis et Ysaac Deum unum, et nos sumus ei oblati."

CLS (9:82) De patriarchis autem idem asserit Mahometus. Dicit enim in pluribus locis in alchorano quod Abraham, Ysaac et Iacob et filii eorum fuerunt Saraceni.

And this is restated on fol. 101r, speaking of when Joseph, in Egypt, begs God, who has defended him, to allow him to die as a Saracen:

(–) Gloss *Ista uidetur etiam conclusio totius capituli quod Iosep rogauit Deum quod non sineret eum mori nisi saracenum.*

MdT 12:101 *Tu es in hoc seculo defensor meus et in futuro. Fac ut in fide decedam Sarracenorum et perduc me cum iustis.*

CLS (6:44) Amplius ipse dicit quod Noe, Abraham, Ysaac et Iacob et filii eorum fuerunt saraceni; et tamen ipse dicit quod mandatum est ei quod ipse esset prior saracenus. Sed quomodo illi fuerunt saraceni si Mahometus fuit prior saracenus?

The role of women in Islam

The role of women in Islam is a subject with wide implications related to men's freedom in their sexual relations with women. On this subject, Riccoldo writes on fol. 16r:

(–) *Mulieres uestre, aratura uestra, arate eas ut uultis.*

MdT 2:223 *Uxores enim uestre sunt uobis tamquam uinea, excollite ergo eas qualitercumque libuerit.*

(–) Gloss *Hic uidetur concedere sodomiam.*

On fol. 66r, the gloss to 7:80 seems to present a clarification about Islam's acceptance of the practice of sodomy with a woman:

(–) *Hic uidetur contradicere sibi quia superius concedit sodomia, et hic eam uidetur detestari.*

MdT 7:80 *Et Loth quando dixit populo suo: "Comittistine flagicium in quo nullus de gentibus uos anticipauit?"*

CLS (1:80) Videtur etiam concedere sodomiam, tam cum viro quam cum muliere, in capitulo de Vacca, licet ipsi talia pallient quibusdam honestis expositionibus.

All of these subjects are emphasized by Riccollo in the sixth chapter of *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, ‘Quod lex sarracenorum est contraria sibi ipsi’, which also is of particular significance in the context of this gloss:

CLS (4:38) Item in capitulo de *Vacca* concedit sodomiam tam cum masculo quam cum femina. Dicit enim saracenis quod “non polluant se cum infidelibus nisi credant”; et de mulieribus dicit: “Mulieres uestre aratura uestra, arate eas ut uultis.” Et tamen in eodem capitulo prius dicit quod illi sodomite tempore Loth operati sunt abominabile uicium et pristinis nationibus insuetum.

CONCLUSION

Many other important topics in the doctrine and customs of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad are commented upon by Riccollo da Monte di Croce. There are also brief, even monosyllabic glosses, which have a descriptive or denotative function: a synonym, an identification of a figure, etc., for example:

18v (–) De Christo. Hic incipit de Christo. (2:32)

67r (–) De missione Moisi ad Pharaonem et signa. (= 7:103)

68r (–) Nota pestes Pharaonis et quale et quales eas connumerat. (= 7:133)

121r (–) Nota paradiso Maccometi. (18:31)

120v (–) Et dormierunt in cauerna trecentis annis et adde nouem. (18:25)

All of these interpretations can be analysed in detail with the publication of the text of the glosses to the Arabic Qur’an in BnF Arabe 384. Riccollo da Monte di Croce, one of the most prestigious Christian scholars of medieval Latin Europe, used the entirety of this ample collection of commentaries for composing his important work in refutation of Islam, the *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. These commentaries provide us with an extraordinary group of data points and clues for the study of the perception of the Qur’an and the Muslim religion, which, moreover, had a significant impact on Christendom in the following centuries.

Thus, for example, Nicholas of Cusa mentions Riccollo and uses the *Contra legem Sarracenorum* in his glosses to the *Alkoranus Latinus*; for writing his *De pace fidei* in Berlin, Kues-Bibliothek, MS 108, in 1453; and in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica

Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 4071, for writing the *Cribratio Alkorani* in 1461–1462.¹⁵ In his *Prologus* Nicholas of Cusa mentions that he was familiar with Riccoldo's work and appreciated it more than the work of other authors: "Vidi post hoc Romae libellum fratris Ricoldi Ordinis Praedicatorum, qui Arabicis litteris in Baldaach operam dedit, et plus ceteris placuit."¹⁶ Nicholas of Cusa wrote a gloss to *Alkoranus* II 223 in Vat. Lat. 4071, in which he mentions Riccoldo repeatedly

Habetur in libello fratris Ricoldi, habet omnem azoram de uacca et quod sic dicatur quod non polluant se cum infidelibus nisi credant. Item mulieres uestre aratura uestra arate ut uultis. Hic autem translator dicit mulieres uobis subiectas penitus pro modo uestro ubicumque uolueritiss parate. Inteligit frater Ricoldus sodomiam hic permittere, sed in eodem capitulo reprehendit cum dicit quod illi sodomite tempore Loth operati sunt abhominabile uicium pristinis nacionibus insuetum.¹⁷

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¹⁵ Martínez Gázquez 2015, p. 302; 2016, pp. 487–489 for the use of Riccoldo by Nicolás de Cusa.

¹⁶ *Nicolai de Cusa Opera omnia iussu et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Heidelbergensis ad codicum fidem edita*, VIII: *Cribratio Alkorani*, ed. Ludovicus Hagemann 1986, p. 6.

¹⁷ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4071, fol. 29r.

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DAVIDE SCOTTO

A Spiritual Reaction to Islamic Prosperity

The Power of Sorrow in Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's

Letters to the Triumphant Church

“L'appel de l'Eglise militante est d'abord expatriement,
puis élection de la patrie.”

Louis Massignon, *Les trois prières d'Abraham père
de tous les croyants*, 1949

DID RICCOLDO EXPERIENCE A CRISIS OF FAITH?

On 18 May 1291, after a bloody siege of 43 days, the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil and his army conquered St John of Acre (today Akko, Israel), the last outpost of the crusader states in the Near East. After the Christian occupation of the city following the First Crusade (1104), Acre had become the main seaport in the Eastern Mediterranean, working as a pivotal trade hub for the provision of goods and food for Jerusalem and the Latin Levant. At the same time, it was one of the main headquarters of the Knights Templar, the Hospitallers, and the Teutonic Order, which among other tasks were entrusted to grant Christian pilgrims safe access to the Holy Land.¹ The loss of Acre was understood by Latin Christians as both a political catastrophe and an upsetting turning point in salvation history. Since the rise of Islam in the early 7th century, the capture of Christian capitals by Muslim forces had left a deep imprint on the Western Christian imagination: in the perception of Christian chroniclers and religious writers, the Mamluk conquest of Acre was just the most recent of a huge series of stunning defeats that Muslims had inflicted on Christianity over the previous 700 years, from Damascus to Jerusalem, and from Antioch to Lebanese Tripoli. Prophetical proclamations and eschatological expectations overflowed in the West.²

¹ See Tommasi 1996; Lotan 2012; Musarra 2017.

² See Musarra 2018, pp. 15–32, 65–79.

Ten years after the fall of Acre, the Italian Dominican friar Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (c. 1243–1320) wrote about Islamic doctrine and Muslims' religious practices, basing his arguments on refined scholastic knowledge as well as his own experience in the Near East. With his four Latin works concerning non-Catholic peoples—among which the “Saracens” have a key role—he places himself among the learned ecclesiastics who, through the late Middle Ages, attempted to decipher and withstand the rapid expansion of Islam by writing treatises against its doctrine, translating the Qur'an, and preaching against Muslim belief and practices in both Christian territories and Islamic lands. His literary corpus, though produced at the Convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence between 1300 and 1301, draws extensively on his ten-year mission from Jerusalem to Baghdad (1289–1299). It consists of (1) a book of travels describing his route, the places he visited, the peoples he met and engaged with in the Near East (*Itinerarium* or *Liber peregrinationis*); (2) a handbook for missionaries willing to leave for the East to evangelize Oriental peoples (*Libellus ad naciones orientales*); (3) a collection of five imaginary letters conceived as a reaction to the fall of Acre into the Mamluks' hands (*Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem*); and finally, (4) a systematic polemic against the Qur'an, well known among scholars as *Contra legem Sarracenorum*.³

This latter treatise achieved, in Europe and beyond, an impressive popularity amongst Christian readers between the late medieval and the modern times, exerting a great influence upon the Christian understanding of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an. Two examples shall suffice: the German humanist Nicholas of Cusa mentioned Riccoldo's *Contra legem* in the preface to his *Cribratio Alkorani* dedicated to Pope Pius II (1462) and used it to frame his arguments on the relation between faith and rites, claiming that it was the most authoritative source amongst the books on Islam he had collected between Rome and Byzantium; 80 years later, Martin Luther translated it into German (1542) and relied on it for his polemical invectives against the Turks. As the third part of these proceedings show, starting from the early 16th century, humanists and ecclesiastics (both Catholic and Orthodox) employed manuscript or printed Latin versions of *Contra legem* to write about Islam and, in a series of relevant cases, translated it into vernacular and Slavic languages to outline their analysis of the Muslims they met or imagined in their own days—Arabs, Moriscos, Tartars and Ottoman Turks.⁴

3 Dondaine 1967; Mérigoux & Panella 1986; Mérigoux 1986, including (at pp. 60–142) an edition of *Contra legem* according to one manuscript only, i.e., MS Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Conv. soppr. C 8.1173, f. 185r–218r; Panella 1988.

4 See the respective contributions in this volume.

Riccoldo is much better known for this polemical treatise than his five letters on the fall of Acre on which this chapter focuses. The complete version of the *Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem* is solely preserved by MS Vat. Lat. 7317, a deteriorated codex kept at the Vatican Library whose main *corpus* was copied down in Rome in April 1458 by the German scribe Arnold Melxter of Welm, a presbyter from Cologne working for Cardinal Domenico Capranica. In this rich collection of writings on the Islamic Orient and the Holy Land, Riccoldo's *Epistole* (ff. 249r–267r) and his *Contra legem* (ff. 267r–300r) are written one after the other by Melxter's hand.⁵ A second 15th-century manuscript kept in Florence provides a 14th-century translation into Italian of the first letter and a few passages from the second, bearing witness to a certain interest in this work and in the *Liber peregrinationis* in late medieval Tuscany.⁶

Despite these poor traces, the contents of the *Epistole* cannot be underestimated. It has been observed that they are “of rare kind in the travel literature of the time”.⁷ The association with this literary genre must be due to the fact that the medieval Italian version of the first letter is handed down with Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis* and that their modern translations in both Italian (2005) and English (2012), in a similar fashion, provide these two texts together.⁸ The uncertainty regarding its literary definition, together with the fact that in them Riccoldo does not narrate the stages of his journey but rather references his previous *Liber*, should suggest, however, a different perspective. If read fully and systematically, the *Epistole* involve rather two other genres of Christian literature: on the one hand, they echo the model of city lament harking back to the Book of Lamentations and repeated numerous times down to the Ottoman conquest of Byzantium and beyond; on the other hand, they provide, through peculiar autobiographical and soteriological devices, a commentary on the Book of Psalms and the Book of Job, the latter being reinterpreted in light of Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*.

In the letters, Riccoldo's thorough knowledge of Arabic and Islamic doctrine merges artfully with his ability to provide Christians with heartening spiritual reasons to keep fighting against Islam and the Muslim dominance in the Near East. Besides displaying classical polemical arguments against Muhammad's prophethood and the contents of the Qur'an, these letters represent a unique proof of how a shocking event may

5 On the relevance of this manuscript within the production, transcription and dissemination of Christian works on Islam in Rome after the Ottoman conquest of Byzantium, including Riccoldo's writings, see Scotto 2023.

6 Panella 1989.

7 Shagrir 2012, p. 1108.

8 Riccoldo da Montecroce, *Libro della peregrinazione—Epistole alla Chiesa trionfante*, ed. Cappi 2005; George-Tvrtković 2012.

give rise to complex theological and exegetical reflections on the reasons behind global crisis and the spread of a religious system that was perceived as competitive, antagonistic and challenging to Christianity. Polemics, moralization and complaints are not to be considered as final aims nor as emotional realities in their own right, but rather as discursive strategies entailed by sophisticated letters that, at the same time and paradoxically, speak ultimately about the future of Christians, salvation history and hope in God's unforeseeable plan.

This chapter lingers on how the threatening presence of Muslims in the East allowed Riccoldo to develop a creative meditation on faith, a refined theological and rhetorical manifesto providing the author and his readers with a spiritual shelter from the dramatic events taking place on earth. I am going to examine in particular Riccoldo's experience of "sorrow"—one of the possible translations of the Latin word *tristitia*—by looking specifically at the ways in which he describes his faith in God. I will show how, on a rhetorical level, Riccoldo's exegesis of the Book of Job through Gregory the Great turns out to be the exhortative backbone of the whole collection of his imaginary letters. Referring to Job, it has been claimed that the *Epistole* bear witness to the author's spiritual crisis, particularly to his crisis of faith, as well as to his loss of certainty and hope in God's plan—this implies an interpretation of the Book of Job in a deterministic, literalist and pessimistic fashion.⁹ I aim to challenge this interpretation of the *Epistole* as a desperate lament conceived by an author who finds himself incapable of escaping a fatalistic view of the present, realistically confused regarding God's salvation plan and even suffering from agnosticism. I will demonstrate that by means of careful exegetical and rhetorical strategies, the *Epistole* instead provide substantial evidence of Riccoldo's very faith vis-à-vis the general crisis surrounding him, shedding light on his expectations about the reaction of the Dominican Order—and the Western Church on a broader level—to the last stage of Islamic expansion. According to the theological perspective embraced by the author, speaking about sorrow and dramatic events on the earth does not necessarily result in a pessimistic view of faith nor hampers him—despite the expression of profound concerns about the present—from suggesting a way to regain hope and thus safeguard salvation.

9 See Shagrir 2012. A more context-bound interpretation of Riccoldo's sadness—understood in light of the medieval concept of desperation—was previously provided by Weltecke 2007. Some notes on the autobiographical implication of Riccoldo's self-representation have been provided by Bauer 2021b.

ISLAMIC PROSPERITY, CHRISTIAN DOWNFALL:
A DUALISTIC BACKGROUND

Though fictitiously set in different moments of Riccoldo's stay in Baghdad, his five letters were intentionally written as one consistent literary work and likely finalized soon after his return to Florence in late 1299. As Davide Cappelletti has shown in his introduction to the Italian translation of the letters, the work's literary coherence is proved by its narrative frame, consisting of the preface and the last short letter. Following a circular narrative, these two texts, which begin with the same incipit, provide questions and answers about God's plan that are closely interrelated.¹⁰ Despite Riccoldo providing the writing place of each letter—*scripta in Oriente* for letters 1 to 4, *data in Oriente* for letter 5—it has been rightly inferred that he left the Orient long before finalizing his epistolary work. Given the cross-references and the refinement of his literary strategy, this must certainly be the case, and yet, though already in Florence, he insists on the fact that he experienced the fall of a Christian capital while dwelling alone (*solus*) amongst Muslims, meaning that he was still engaged as a missionary in Baghdad or elsewhere in the Near East. The writing place notwithstanding, this experience-based pattern works as a hermeneutic key in each of the five letters, where the author repeatedly complains about his being abandoned by his Dominican brethren and stranded in the Orient far from his physical and spiritual home: "I have been left alone in Baghdad, in the depths of the East, by my companions, and for many years I have had no news from the West about my brothers or my Order."¹¹ It seems, moreover, that Riccoldo had written several times to the General Minister of the Dominicans, Munio de Zamora, who in winter 1288 had presented and supported his missionary purpose before the Franciscan pope, Nicholas IV, getting, however, no answer from him: "Likewise, I do not know what happened to the master who sent

10 Cappelletti 2005, 'Introduzione', in Riccoldo da Montecroce, *Libro della peregrinazione*, pp. xli–xlii.

11 I am quoting the text of the *Epistole* according to the only extant manuscript, i.e., the idio-graphic MS Vat. Lat. 7317, whose online edition Emilio Panella has provided and revised several times in the last two decades, here f. 252v: "Et relictus sum solus in Baldacco a sociis in profundis partibus orientis, et de occidente a pluribus annis aliqua nova non habeo de fratribus meis sive de ordine." Most recently, Martin Bauer provided a new edition of the text, which I was able to obtain just after writing this chapter. I am referencing it beside the Florence manuscript: Riccoldus de Monte Crucis, *Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem*, ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 98, § 26. In the text above, I reference the English translation provided by George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 145.

me, because I have not received any scrap of a response to the numerous tearful letters I sent him requesting help.”¹²

At the end of the prologue of *Contra legem*, which was certainly written after the letters, Riccoldo gives an account of the origin and intention of his previous epistolary work: the events he witnessed in the Orient were so astonishing to him that he felt the need to give up learning Arabic and studying Islamic doctrine to address an urgent call to “the Celestial Court”. His ongoing work on the Qur’an—translation and exegesis—and the news of the dramatic events from Acre—chronicle and salvation history—turn out to be closely intertwined:

As I was also beginning to translate this law into Latin, I found at the same time so many fabrications, lies, blasphemies and uninterrupted fiction through it all, that I became full of sadness [*attediatus*] and gave up [*dimittere*]. Instead, I wrote some letters to the church triumphant about such blasphemies, where I lamented greatly in that bitter state of mind [*animus amaricatus*].¹³

Following a precise hierarchical order, Riccoldo rhetorically addresses the first four letters respectively to the living God, the Virgin Mary, the Militant and Triumphant Church, the patriarch of Jerusalem Nicholas de Hanapes, who drowned in the sea during the siege of Acre, and other unnamed Dominicans who died as martyrs to defend their city. The fifth letter consists of a brief answer by God to the author’s complaints. The five letters are known under two titles conceived and used alternatively by the author. Both are significant. In the prologue of *Contra legem*, Riccoldo mentions them as *Letters to the Triumphant Church*, a title that points to the troops of saints in heaven victoriously enjoying God’s glory after the resurrection of Christ, as opposed to the living believers who suffer and strive for salvation as members of the Militant Church on the earth waiting for the second resurrection of Christ. The well-rooted concept of Triumphant Church harks back to the early Church Fathers and

12 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola I*, ed. Panella, f. 252v: “Magistro eciam, qui me misit, nescio quid accidit, quia de multis et lacrimosis litteris quas ei pro succursu transmissi nec cedulam aliquam responsionis accepi.” Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 98, § 26. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 145. See also *Epistola III*, ed. Panella, f. 256r.

13 The translation of *Contra legem* is mine, as the only English translation available is unreliable, being based on Martin Luther’s German translation of Bartholomeus da Monte Arduo’s Latin translation of the Greek translation by Demetrios Kydones: see Riccoldo of Monte Croce OP, *Refutation of the Koran*, trans. Londini Ensis 2010, p. 7, where it is claimed that Riccoldo decreased the number of his *Letters to the Triumphant Church*.

was extensively elaborated upon by Augustine, providing a theological pattern with which the whole Dominican order, at the beginning of the 14th century, identified itself and its anti-heretical programme.¹⁴

The concept of Triumphant Church is pivotal to understanding Riccoldo's argumentative strategies. In a skilful way, he systematically correlates the intercession of saints and their spiritual power to intervene in this world to the damages made by Muhammad and the Qur'an. A variant of the work's title is found in both the *titulus* and preface of the letters, wherein they are mentioned as *Letters on the Saracens' temporal prosperity and the destruction of Christians*. This short description perfectly reflects the two-fold argument of each letter. Riccoldo complains about Christian suffering in the Orient and simultaneously expresses deep concerns regarding the successful spread of Islam. In his recurring description of the Near East in the depressing aftermath of the fall of Acre, the splendour of Muslim endeavours in terms of expansion and conquests is dualistically opposed to the physical annihilation and the spiritual weakness of present Christians: "I saw Saracens prosperous and flourishing," Riccoldo writes, "and Christians squalid and dismayed as their daughters, young children, and elders were taken away crying, amid rumours that they were to be forced into prison and slavery among barbarian nations in the remotest parts of the East."¹⁵ He also observes that the law they strictly follow and claim to be God's word, namely the Qur'an, is globally honoured regardless of its blasphemy against his God and the Celestial Court. The friar's insistence on his role of eyewitness and his legitimizing recourse to the concept of experience (*experientia*) have proved fundamental to the understanding of his writings.¹⁶ Complaining about the fact that God's angels pray for Muhammad and assist the Muslims, he underlines the value of experience as a proof of Islamic

14 Evidence of this self-understanding—worthy of further investigation—is provided by Andrea Bonaiuto's fresco on the western side of the so-called Chiostro Verde of the Convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. For the anti-heretical programme of the Dominican Order underlying this fresco, see Polzer 1995.

15 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Prologus*, ed. Panella, f. 249r: "[...] cum viderem sarracenos letissimos atque florentes, christianos vero squalidos atque mente consternatos, cum puelle eorum et parvuli et senes cum uxoribus ad partes remotissimas orientis inter barbaras naciones captivi et sclavi menabantur gementes [...]" Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 82, § 1. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 138.

16 This concept has proved essential to Riccoldo's theological arguing and inter-faith insights: see George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 108–120.

successes, reiterating that “we have seen through experience that they have prospered in almost everything.”¹⁷

SCRUTINIZING MEDIEVAL SORROW (*TRISTICIA*) IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JOB

The author’s complaint about the fall of Acre is symbolically recalled by the Latin transliteration of א, “aleph”, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet used at the end of this title with exclamatory meaning. In medieval Latin literature, aleph was used as an expression of pain, a choice that is continued in these letters and accompanied by a series of consistent Latin substantives (*tristicia*, *admiracio*, *stupor*), adjectives (*afflictus*) or verbs (*obstupescere*) meaning sorrow, astonishment and distress. Riccoldo employs these expressions extensively as a *leitmotiv* to describe his current psychological and spiritual state. The Christianized use of the Hebrew aleph as an incipit is modelled after the beginning of the Book of Lamentations attributed to Jeremiah. The first lament begins with the word אֵיכָה, “how”, which is, according to the manuscript tradition, the Hebrew title of this biblical book. The initial aleph works as the first of a series of acrostics following verse by verse the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In Riccoldo’s letters, the biblical complaint about the fall of Jerusalem into Babylonian hands from 587 BC is symbolically merged with his personal complaint about the fall of Acre into the hands of the Mamluks from AD 1291. Alongside the Book of Job and the Book of Psalms, the Book of Lamentations must have deeply influenced the composition of the *Epistoles ad Ecclesiam triumphantem* for at least three reasons. First, for the theology of retribution they both imply: Jerusalem is conquered by the Babylonians *nostris peccatis exigentibus*, that is, because of the grave sins of the Israelites, and so is Acre by the Mamluks because of Christian sins. Second, for the linguistic register they employ: a rhetoric of emotions aimed at exaggerating and provoking in order to convey other and less immediate meanings. Finally, for the formal structure of both works: five poems or laments in the biblical book, five letters to the Church Triumphant.

In the five rules for missionaries provided in the appendix of his *Libellus ad naciones orientales*, Riccoldo claims that (1) missionaries should not preach to non-Catholics by means of a translator or interpreter, being concerned about the unreliability of merchants; (2) they must “be creative and cultivated in the Scriptures and not rely on

17 Riccoldo, *Epistole*, *Epistola* III, ed. Panella, f. 260v: “et nos post hec per experienciam probamus quod quasi in omnibus prosperantur.” Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 138, § 54. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 161.

our comments”; (3) they have to carefully comprehend the behaviours, concerns and doctrines of each sect they aim to evangelize, religious rites playing a secondary role with respect to the unity of faith; (4) they shall always debate matters of faith with the leaders of each sect, avoiding the involvement of ignorant peoples and the discussion of overly complicated issues of doctrine; finally, (5) it is not enough for a missionary to be well educated, sensitive towards each sect and enlightened in his mind; in addition to that—implying that the requirements previously expressed in the four rules were insufficient—the missionary must be passionate, fervent and tireless, guided by God’s love and by his own, strong will towards saving peoples’ souls, to the point that he was willing to risk his own life in order to accomplish this goal.¹⁸ Half a century ago, the pioneer of studies of Riccoldo’s manuscripts, the Dominican scholar Antoine Dondaine, considered the *regule* as “the most concrete and pragmatic page, but also the most wise and imbued with common sense, that medieval apologetic literature left to us”, and in fact, Riccoldo’s “spiritual testament”.¹⁹ Nevertheless, they have been left, in terms of contents, largely unexplored by scholars.

The second of these rules sheds new light upon Riccoldo’s call for proper and direct use of the Scriptures among non-Catholics. The way he outlines the functioning of God’s judgements in light of the Islamic conquest of Acre as well as the nuances whereby he displays his feelings of sadness and abandonment is a clear example of the centrality of scriptural exegesis in medieval inter-faith debates, in particular in controversies regarding thorny issues of conversion and evangelization.²⁰ Proof of Riccoldo’s inclination to establishing an intensive hermeneutical dialogue with the Scriptures—including the Qur’an—is obvious in the narrative structure of the five letters, wherein the Bible is the hegemonic source on both a literary and a theological level. The way of citing it—extensively, verbatim, directly—is based on the psychological implementation of First Testament models in the present times of crisis, when the Militant Church is suffering from the expansion of Islam. The only (so to speak) biblical commentary quoted by Riccoldo is Gregory the Great’s *Moralia in Iob*, whose importance is to be understood, however, in the light of the fifth letter—God’s answer to Riccoldo—and the circular literary structure of the *Epistole*. Gregory is fundamental insofar as he represents a theological and spiritual *auctoritas*, not because of his exegetical technique applied to the Book of Job,²¹ nor because it is to be used—as the second rule suggests

18 *Riccolodi florentini libelli ad nationes orientales editio secunda telina*, online ed. Villads Jensen, 2014. On Riccoldo’s reflection on the role of Christian martyrs in the fight against Islam, see Scotto 2021a.

19 Dondaine 1967, p. 141.

20 See Szpiech 2012.

21 See Lampe 1976.

avoiding—among non-Catholics. Gregory is, as we shall see, the key figure in understanding Riccoldo's message to his brethren and to Western Christianity on a broader level.

The Book of Jeremiah, the Book of Isaiah, the Book of Psalms and, most extensively, the Book of Job are the biblical authorities referenced to nourish both the lament and the search for meanings that constitute the twofold backbone of the five letters. Thomas Burman has defined Riccoldo's *Epistole* as "his Job-like demand for answers", suggesting an interpretation worth developing further.²² When one looks carefully at the five letters as a single consistent literary work, it is indeed apparent the extent to which its narrative strategy is based on a systematic inquiry into the Book of Job, consulted and mentioned verbatim in order to answer the basic questions on Islam raised in the preface of the letters: how to explain the temporal prosperity of Muslims? Why are they vanquishing Christians, who in turn are disappearing in the Orient? Is God enacting his salvation plan according to the Bible or the Qur'an? It is in light of this specific uncertainty related to God's intentions regarding Oriental and Western Christians—not of Riccoldo's faith in God on a broader and generic level—that Job's mournful words are quoted in key passages of each letter and with different goals: to call for God's response to the present crisis; to give reason for the Muslims' prosperity; to beg God for mercy turning to the saints and martyrs for help; to remind potential readers of the author's sadness and solitude; to question the agency of evil in relation to dramatic events, such as the conversion and the death of Dominicans at Muslim hands. This last was a typical issue of theodicy in turn inspired by the Book of Job.

Riccoldo's rhetorical discourse reflects the edifying and paradoxical narrative underlying the Book of Job. The psychological scheme behind the *Epistole* echoes the plot and the rhetoric of the biblical book. The experience of alienation, estrangement, loneliness and distance from all that is familiar to the righteous protagonist is the result of God's inexplicable and undeserved punishment disrupting Job's life in every respect. In chapter 19, Job complains of having been abandoned by relatives and friends, of having been treated as a stranger by those who were the closest to him: "He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintances are verily estranged from me. / My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. / They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight" (Job 19:13–15). So does, *mutatis mutandi*, Riccoldo acting as *alter Iob*. Despite Job's immense suffering, which the scholastic and moralistic mentality of his friend-theologians cannot in any way explain, he does not give up. On the contrary, he ardently desires his oral appeal to be inscribed in a book that, according to the prophetic tradition

22. Burman 2012, p. 681.

that runs through the First Testament and reaches the sealed book of the Revelation, must be materially preserved forever so that the prophetic appeal may be disclosed, endure, become perpetual and universal. Again, Riccoldo does precisely the same with his letters. *Post factum*, the sufferer becomes capable of looking beyond earthly sorrows because, when he writes, he has already overcome them “by experience”.

Scholars of the Bible have deemed the finale of the book to be a standalone parable pandering to the popular readership of that time and context. It depicts Job as a rich, powerful Oriental man abandoned to lust and wealth, vices and satisfactions allowed him by God as a compensation for the suffering he has long endured. If one reads the finale through a tropological lens, however, it is not earthly glorification that ultimately interests the protagonist of the story, nor his coming back to the state of life that he had possessed before God’s will turned against him.²³ Having survived his mortal exile, Job—regardless of the material shape of his new life—shows himself willing to disclose the right path to those who still suffer on the earth, formulating a *confessio fidei* that, for the very reason that it is imbued with pain, can convince those who doubt and are tempted to give up to seek salvation in the afterlife: “Oh, that my words were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book, / that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever! / For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; / and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:23–26). Like Job inaugurating a new life and Moses on Mount Sinai (cf. Job 42:5; Exodus 33:11), Riccoldo too strives to see God “face to face” (פנים אל פנים) to obtain an answer not only for himself—committed as he is to understanding the apparent contradictions of the divine plan by comparing the Bible and the Qur’an in the light of Oriental events—but to point out to the Dominican Order and the whole *Ecclesia militans*, if not a well-defined solution, at least a spiritual attitude that cannot be renounced.²⁴

GREGORY THE GREAT AND THE RISE OF ISLAM: A CREATIVE JUXTAPOSITION

The hegemonic presence of the Book of Job amongst the other biblical writings that inspired the *Epistole* must be the result of Riccoldo’s admiration for Gregory the Great. To write his letters, the Florentine friar certainly read Gregory’s *Moralia in*

23 See, among hundreds of exegetical proposals and research perspectives, the commentaries, made out of different cultural agendas, by Ceronetti 1972; Spreafico 2013; Ravasi 2020.

24 This is precisely what he recommends missionaries to do in the fifth and—in his opinion—most important of his five *regules generales*. See note 18 above and the respective text.

Job, or at least, a florilegium or epitome of this exceptional commentary, which was widely available in medieval libraries. Riccoldo's consideration for Gregory is made explicit in the third of his letters—addressed “to the whole Militant and Triumphant Church”—where the pope finds a place on an extensive list of saints dwelling in Heaven. Riccoldo summons them one by one, evoking their laudable spiritual characters to arrest the expansion of Islam by calling for their power of intercession. It is not by chance that Gregory's intellectual and exegetical fight against the Antichrist is at the core of his portrait, which turns out to be particularly extensive compared to other descriptions of saints and martyrs. In this portrait, Gregory's *Moralia* is explicitly mentioned as both an authoritative work for Christians and an object of robbery and ransom in the Muslims' hands:

O Saint Gregory, O mind devoted to God, O examiner of hearts and regulator of morals! You have written many useful things in your works (above all in your *Moralia*), not against Mahomet, but rather against the devil and his imitators, against the antichrist and his imitators. But behold, one of the greatest imitators of the devil, that famous precursor of the antichrist, Mahomet, is avenging himself against you! For a little after your time, he arose and corrupted morals and virtues in his Qur'an. He has implanted vices in order to quietly extinguish the Christian faith. He has destroyed Christian cities and churches, and now it has been seven hundred years since he has prevailed by the force of his arms. And after they destroyed Acre, they brought your book *Moralia* all the way to the great city of Nineveh. For it was there that I ransomed your book as if it were a captive slave who had found itself removed from Christendom more than a fifty days' journey by camel in all directions.²⁵

25 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola* III, ed. Panella, f. 258r: “O sancte Gregori, o mens Deo devota, o rimator cordium et ordinator morum! In tuis operibus, et maxime in tuis Moralibus, unquam scripsisti unquam aliquid contra Machometum; plura contra dyabolum et contra imitatores eius, contra antichristum et imitatores eius, utilia ubi multa inveni. Nam parum post tua tempora surrexit et in suo alchorano mores corrumpit et virtutes, vicia inseruit, fidem christianam molliter extinguere(?), civitates et ecclesias christianorum destruxit; et nunc fere septingentis annis, armis et viribus prevalet. Et postquam destruxerunt Accon, librum tuum Moralium portaverunt usque prope ‘Ninivem civitatem grandem’. Ibi enim librum tuum quasi captivum sclavum redemi, qui distabat a christianitate ex omni parte plusquam quinquaginta dietas cameli.” Cf. ed. Bauer, 2021a, pp. 124–126, § 24–25. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 156.

There is no doubt that the choice of Job as an alter ego suitable for conveying Riccoldo's complaints about the fall of Acre to Christian readers results from Gregory's influence. In the letters, Riccoldo draws verbatim from the *Moralia* three times. First (*Moralia*, Preface, 5), when he aims to justify the sins of the Muslims, which "many among them" committed "more out of ignorance than wickedness", thus leaving the option open for their conversion.²⁶ This is in line with what the friar writes in *Liber peregrinationis*, where he claims to appreciate Muslims' piety, morality, hospitality and zealousness in religious rites, prizing their wholesome life over that of Christians while simultaneously arguing against the malicious law of the Qur'an.²⁷ Secondly (*Moralia*, Book IV, 28), when he seeks to awaken his Dominican brethren from the "tranquillity" of their "contemplation" (*sompnus contemplacionis*), urging them to react to the present crisis from their peaceful shelter in heaven in order to prevent future victories by the Muslims.²⁸ Finally (*Moralia*, Book XXIII, 19, with some variants), when he exhorts Christian believers to search for answers in the Scriptures by relying on the examples of their predecessors. This last quotation, one page long, is recorded in the fifth letter, which according to its *titulus* was written "through the doctrine of Blessed Pope Gregory" and, in fact, proves to be entirely inspired by the *Moralia in Iob*. Riccoldo makes clear his attitude towards the Scriptures by recalling Gregory's teachings: "In scripture we will, in fact, find all our trials, if we look. Thus, in scripture, everything which we endure individually is answered collectively. The lives of those who came before serve as an example for those who follow, and so on."²⁹

26 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola* III, ed. Panella, f. 263r: "Multi enim ex eis, ex ignorari potius quam ex malitia peccant." Cf. ed. Bauer 2021, p. 148, § 76. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 165.

27 See chapters 22–29 of the *Liber*, edited in Riccold de Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient: Texte latin et traduction—Lettres sur la chute de Saint-Jean d'Acre: Traduction*, ed. Kappler 1997, pp. 36–205. On the importance of Riccoldo's understanding of Muslims' "works of perfection", see George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 48–68.

28 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola* IV, ed. Panella, f. 265v: "Rogo vos, fratres, propter Deum et vestras sanguinolentas tunicas, quod non differatis tantum nos iuvare, quod sompnus vestre contemplacionis transeat et postea obliviscamini totum et nichil fiat." Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, 162, § 28. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 170. Commenting upon Job 3:13, Gregory the Great understands Job's sleep as an act of contemplation of God the Creator: hence Riccoldo's metaphor. See Riccoldo da Montecroce, *Libro della peregrinazione*, p. 200, n. 223.

29 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola* V, ed. Panella, f. 266v: "In scripturis quippe causas nostras si requirimus, invenimus. Ita enim nobis omnibus in eo quod specialiter patimur comuniter respondetur; ibi vita precedentium fit forma sequencium etcetera." Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 168, § 8. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 172.

Turning back to the present, Riccoldo explicitly relates the sacredness of Gregory's *Moralia* to the current Muslim conquests and the suffering of Christians. To do so, he resorts to a striking autobiographical episode set in the East, in particular along his route to Baghdad. Its veracity aside, the episode bears witness to the rhetorical strategy adopted by Riccoldo when discussing the various damages made by Islam among Oriental Christians, thus urging a reaction among Western Christians. The threat of Islam affected not just Christian doctrine through the spread of the Qur'an, but also the intellectual and cultural legacy of Christianity, which books emblematically symbolize. Riccoldo goes on by telling of when he personally rescued the above-mentioned copy of Gregory's *Moralia* from the hands of the Mamluks who, after the conquest of Acre, seized it "as if it was a captive slave" and brought it to Nineveh, "the great city". The phenomenon of the material abduction of a Christian book with the consequent risk of its profanation is also expressed in the letters through the example of a Christian missal stolen by the Muslims together with a copy of the Gospels and one of Paul's letters. In Nineveh, "fifty days by camel distant from each side of Christianity", Muslims made use of these books to assemble a timpani and a drum: their binding was destroyed and their text erased. Clearly, Gregory's *Moralia* is put on the same spiritual level of holy books as Paul's letters and the canonical Gospels. This insistence on the removal of authoritative books from the hands of Christians, as well as on the physical isolation of Nineveh amid Islamic lands, underlines the risk for Christianity—unless it reacts in a prompt and adequate way—to find itself confined in a spiritual and physical exile.

Considering the prevailing presence of Gregory in all five letters, I suggest that Riccoldo was inspired by the *Moralia in Iob* also in his interpretation of Muhammad as the forerunner of the Antichrist. The theological Christian conception according to which the rise of Islam is regarded as an earthly plague, God's punishment for Christians' sins and the forerunner of the Antichrist, harkens back to Syriac and Greek literature reacting to the early expansion of Islam, with further development in the West taking place through biblical commentaries and spiritual treatises.³⁰ Elaborating upon this well-established trope, in Riccoldo's letters the horns of the apocalyptic Beast (Daniel 8:4; Revelation 13:1–7), which arose to persecute the saints and persuade them to deny their faith, are projected onto Muhammad, who in turn acts to bring both Christians and their books into the Islamic realm. Referring to his own days and the last era of Christian salvation history, Riccoldo adds that the Beast's evil power is long lasting.³¹ In the second letter, he looks at Gregory's work to confront Muhammad,

30 Ducellier 2001; Flori 2007; Conterno 2014; Potestà 2016.

31 For further analysis of Riccoldo's interpretation of the Antichrist's role in the Christian fight against Islam, see Scotto 2021b, pp. 363–394.

who again is described as the Beast of the Apocalypse. Riccoldo claims that in spite of the fact that Gregory, whom he calls for help, never wrote against Muhammad, he provides great support to Christians when in the *Moralia* he brilliantly argues against the Antichrist and his sect. Considering that “sect” is the same word that Riccoldo, following Peter the Venerable’s interpretation of Islam, repeatedly employs to label Muslims, the connection between Gregory’s times and the present is clear. Riccoldo coherently dates the rise of Muhammad back to a few years after Gregory’s time (AD 590–604) and interpreted it as the devil’s revenge for the pope’s successful efforts in repelling the Beast and its followers. Since the Antichrist had suffered a shameful defeat by Gregory, he returned to persecute humanity on the earth by means of a new threat, namely the Islamic one. Riccoldo creatively juxtaposes Gregory’s call against the Antichrist expressed in the *Moralia* to his own call against Islam expressed in his letters.

FLAUNTING FAITH: THE EXHORTATIVE AIM OF THE LETTERS

As a conclusion, the discussion of how Job’s lament is overlaid onto a late 13th-century scenario allows for an examination of Riccoldo’s remarks on his own faith when challenged by the Islamic expansion and its success among Oriental Christians. These observations had to be of great importance to Riccoldo’s intended audience. The genre largely based on scriptural exegesis and the theological sophistication of this epistolary work suggests that it was primarily addressed to Dominicans based in the Italian Peninsula and in Europe at a broader level. While Pope Boniface VIII and Pope Clement V promoted the crusade without achieving any result,³² Dominicans were engaged in the debate about the usefulness of preaching and doctrinal refutation for the conversion of Muslims.³³ And yet, with some exceptions, they were generally ignorant or even indifferent to Islamic doctrines and religious practices.³⁴ Besides his Dominican brethren, Riccoldo might have addressed Franciscan missionaries eager to preach in Islamic lands: he knew about cases of Mendicant martyrs in the Kingdom of Morocco and held towards Franciscans great esteem, asking their founder, “the blessed Francis”, to intercede before God next to “the blessed Dominic”.³⁵

³² Cf. Musarra 2018, pp. 207–234.

³³ On the later-established connection between crusade and mission, see the still-fundamental monograph by Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Toward the Muslims*, 1984.

³⁴ Burman 2018.

³⁵ On the close relationship between Dominique and Francis as intercessors before God in Heaven, see Scotto 2021a, pp. 274–283.

In an article published in 2012, Iris Shagrir interpreted Riccoldo's letter as part of a broader "spiritual crisis" of Christianity that is supposed to explain the primary reasons behind the urgency of writing to God and all the saints dwelling in Heaven. According to this proposal, the fall of Acre dragged Riccoldo into a "crisis of faith" that led him to despair and pessimism. As a Christian believer, "his central values were being undermined" and he found himself "capable of doubt and non-belief".³⁶ In a more nuanced explanation, Emilio Panella suggested that, while Riccoldo experienced "a true crisis of faith" while he was in Baghdad because of the Mamluks' successes, he was nevertheless able, once back in Florence, to regain his faith and even to enhance it, thus "becoming another person"; hence the decision to write his popular *Contra legem*.³⁷ Most recently, scholars have expressed doubts regarding the duration of this crisis; still, no analysis has been conducted on the many hints regarding the dynamics of faith Riccoldo skilfully gives in the letters.³⁸

If read verbatim and understood without carefully considering the paradoxical character of the rhetorical discourse based on the reading of the Book of Job through Gregory the Great's *Moralia*, a series of quotations from the letters can be easily interpreted in line with this view. More than once, Riccoldo questions God and the saints' will to fight for Christians, for they do not intervene in the world to save them from the Islamic threat. Riccoldo's provoking questions, which Rita George-Tvrtković has brilliantly identified and discussed, would in this sense sound like confirmation of his desperation: Why does God pray for Muhammad? Why do the angels too pray for the Islamic Prophet? Why will Christ convert to Islam at the end of time?³⁹ And yet, each time Riccoldo fiercely complains about the present, asking for God's help and for the intercession of the Triumphant Church, he adds a concluding remark stressing the persistence of his own faith. Albeit shorter than his complaining tirades, these statements

36 Shagrir 2012, esp. p. 1113.

37 Mérigoux & Panella 1986, p. vi; Panella 1989, pp. 20–21. While stressing the state of "non-believer" reached by Riccoldo in Baghdad, Iris Shagrir seems to agree with Panella regarding the process of losing and regaining faith between his dwelling in the Orient and his return to Florence: "I suggest that the *Letters* make evident that Riccoldo's personal experiences during his years in the East put his religious convictions to the test, and that this is meaningful despite his having later regained his older certainties" (Shagrir 2012, p. 1108).

38 See Musarra 2018, p. 59: "Non saprei dire [...] se Riccoldo abbia davvero conosciuto una crisi di fede. [...] Tutt'al più, la sua potrebbe essere stata una crisi passeggera." In turn, George-Tvrtković has suggested viewing Riccoldo's open questions on God's plan as the reflection of "a serious theological crisis" (George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 89–90).

39 George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 94–101.

are rhetorically meaningful and cannot be disregarded in an effort to understand the literary strategy behind Riccoldo's lamentations.⁴⁰

If the concept of "spiritual crisis" helps to situate Riccoldo's lament in the broader framework of the military crisis affecting Christianity at the end of the 13th century, the idea that he experienced a "crisis of faith" instead relies on the projection of modern patterns—disenchantment, depression, agnosticism—onto a medieval mind rather than on the exegetical method and rhetorical devices the author applies to convince his Christian readers. The fact that Riccoldo could have lost his faith because of the fall of Acre is contradicted by the complementary arguments expressed in the letters, which reflect a soteriological discourse based on the equal exchange between suffering and reward, namely on the retribution theology emerging from a critically attentive reading of the Book of Job.⁴¹ Riccoldo recalls a well-known quotation from Anselm of Canterbury's *Prosologion*, chapter 1, which in turn draws on Augustine's doctrine, to explain the ultimate essence of Christian faith: "For I do not seek understanding in order to believe, but I believe so that I may understand. And I believe this because unless I believe, I will not understand."⁴² It is true that Riccoldo shows that he does not understand why God has allowed Muslims to subjugate the Christians in the Near East, but—every time he puts into doubts God's intentions—he reiterates that he still believes in His inscrutable will. As for the much-contested relation between faith and reason, he underlines the centrality of faith at the very moment that it confronts God's unintelligible plan regarding the earthly presence of Islam and its victories at the cost of Christian peoples and lands. He must have known that his rhetorical contraposition between the biblical and the Qur'anic salvation plan, brought to the extreme, could have weakened the Christian faith instead of strengthening it in a time of crisis, as it was his intention to do.

Riccoldo's words of sorrow, even when they reach desperate pleas, never result in the modern conception of disenchantment. Regardless of his mounting denunciations against Christian suffering and his incomprehension of God's plan, he increasingly feels the need to show how he will not give up because his faith in the Triumphant

40 See e.g., Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola* I, ed. Panella, f. 252v: "Scio enim, Domine, 'quoniam benigna est misericordia tua' [Ps. 68:17], licet modo non ita clare videam." Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 98, § 27. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 145: "For I know, O Lord, that your mercy is kind, even if I am not able to see it clearly now." Further examples are analysed in the following paragraphs of this letter.

41 Cf. Ravasi 2020, pp. 54–60.

42 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola* I, ed. Panella, f. 249v: "Neque enim quero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. Nam et hoc credo quia nisi credendo non intelligam." Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 86, § 4. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 139.

Church remains firm despite the tragedies suffered on earth by the Militant Church. In the second letter, calling to the Virgin Mary, he explains the reasons behind the temporal prosperity of Islam overturning the common conception of the Islamic expansion *nostris peccatis exigentibus*: “I truly believe that your most wise son did not peacefully concede so many temporal successes to the Saracens; rather it was out of anger that he permitted them. For their successes ‘turn on them like the venom of asps from within’ [Job 20:14]; after every victory and temporal success they are more strongly confirmed in their errors.”⁴³ In the fourth letter, he relies on biblical typology to describe the recent death of the patriarch of Jerusalem Nicholas of Hannapes, drowned in the Mediterranean during the siege of Acre, as analogous to the martyrdom of “Pope Clement” at the end of the 1st century AD. Here he explicitly clarifies the theological function of sorrow: “Thus will our sadness be turned into joy, when we find this to be an occasion of joy and dignity rather than fear it as a cause of sadness and lamentations. Therefore, rejoice ...”

A last quotation from the third and most extensive of the letters, the one addressed to the Militant and the Triumphant Church, helps further clarifying the retribution dynamic displayed in this epistolary work. On both a material (profanation, destruction, corporal death) and spiritual level (conversion, martyrdom, spiritual death), Riccoldo builds an indissoluble bridge between the earthly world of suffering and the glorious Kingdom of God, which shall set free the righteous, i.e., Job and himself, in the world to come. By creatively combining calls for the intercession of saints and polemics against the Qur’an, Riccoldo complains about those Christians, especially those Dominicans, who have converted to Islam in his days. To enhance this lament, he refers to the Qur’an stating that the great biblical Patriarchs too, from Abraham to Noah, had become Muslims: “O holy patriarchs, O ancient fathers of the Old Testament, why did you become Saracens and imitators of Mahomet?” Riccoldo’s use of the Qur’an is rhetorically oriented and theologically sophisticated. According to the Qur’an, since some of these patriarchs had not become Muslims regardless of Noah’s call for conversion to Islam, God provoked the great flood on earth to annihilate those who refused to accomplish His plan. Following the Qur’anic rather than the biblical narrative of the Flood, Riccoldo states authoritatively the reasons for God’s wrath: “For they [i.e., the patriarchs] were Christians, and they did not wish to become Saracens. Nor do I wish to become a Saracen.”

43 Riccoldo, *Epistole, Epistola II*, ed. Panella, f. 255r: “Vere tamen credo quod ipse sapientissimus filius tuus multa prospera temporalia non tam concedit placidus ipsis sarracenis quam permittit iratus. Nam prospera eorum [earum cod.] ‘vertuntur eis in fel aspidum intrinsecus’, quia ex omni victoria et omni temporalis prosperitate quam assequuntur, potius in suis erroribus confirmantur.” Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 110, § 21. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 150.

Riccoldo's ultimate intention is to show that his faith is firm, in contrast to the conversions to Islam of many Christians that took place in the past and—including Dominicans and Oriental Christians—in most recent times. Consistently, the excursus on the Patriarchs' conversion precedes an extensive autobiographical narration where readers are told about Riccoldo's personal meeting with two Muslims in the surroundings of Baghdad. Two Muslim Mongols, whom he labels "servants of the devil", beat him and try to force him to convert to Islam, but in the end he succeeds in resisting their violent attempt. This autobiographical episode depicting Riccoldo as a servant and a camel-driver compelled by force—a job that he could hardly have done while dwelling in the East as a Dominican—confirms the author's rhetorical strategy: he aims at boasting about his spiritual resilience against the attractive, force-based, self-styled religion disseminated by the Mamluks. In light of Riccoldo's recourse to his experience as a compelling theological argument, the moral is clear. It incites Christian readers not to give up in spite of the darkness of the times and simultaneously urges them to find other solutions to repulse the Islamic offer: "for the Saracens could make me a camel-driver, but not a Saracen."⁴⁴

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44 Riccoldo, *Epistole*, *Epistola* III, ed. Panella, f. 260r: "Nam camelarium me potuerunt facere sarraceni, non autem sarracenum!" Cf. ed. Bauer 2021a, p. 136, § 49. Cf. English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 160. Cf. *Epistola* I, where the same episode is narrated in a slightly different form and embellished by a more captivating and equally meaningful finale: "And crying with tears of joy, I said: 'O Lord, I have heard that Mahomet was a camel-driver. Have you not decreed that I, in the habit of a camel-driver, would depose that camel-driver? For regardless of my dress, I will not refuse to fight for you.'" (English trans. George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 142).

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RITA GEORGE-TVRTKOVIĆ

The Christian Theology of Islam

*A Trajectory via Riccoldo da Monte di Croce
and Guillaume Postel*

INTRODUCTION

One year after the 1543 publication of Bibliander's famous compendium of Islamic texts, the French Arabist and one-time Jesuit Guillaume Postel (d. 1581) wrote a 446-page, four-part oeuvre entitled *De orbis terrae concordia libri quatuor*, which argues for world religious concord.¹ While the topics of three books out of four accord with this goal (Book One, philosophical underpinnings of true religion; Book Three, criteria for a single world religion; Book Four, missionary methods for bringing all to that one world religion), Book Two seems out of place with its exclusive focus on Islam. Perhaps Postel considered Islam to be a significant barrier to achieving world peace; after all, *De orbis* does not single out any other non-Christian religions. In any case, Book Two focuses entirely on Islam: it consists of an outline of Muhammad's life, followed by a 72-page summary of the Qur'an, complete with verbatim quotations, paraphrases and commentary. The Qur'anic section of Book Two comprises 16% of the entire *De orbis*—its longest single section. Book Two could easily have been a stand-alone text on Islam, but instead, it is awkwardly inserted into a volume on a tangential topic. This less-than-ideal placement has resulted in Postel's views on Islam being largely overlooked by scholars of historical Christian–Muslim relations.

1 Both Bibliander's 1543 compendium and Postel's 1544 *De orbis* were published in Basel by Oporinus, a Protestant. Bibliander had been Postel's student, and asked Postel to translate select Qur'anic verses in the compendium's second edition of 1550. Bibliander's collection circulated among Catholics, even though it was technically prohibited; a 1593 encyclopaedia of Islam by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino, *Biblioteca Selecta*, was modelled after that of Bibliander.

In his introduction to the Qur'an, Postel compares his translation and commentary to that of his predecessors. He says that Nicholas of Cusa, Denis the Carthusian and other Latin Christians before him wrote inferior books about Islam because they didn't know Arabic.² He does, however, single out the 13th-century Dominican Friar Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (d. 1320) as one of just two acceptable forerunners (the other is Juan Andres Maurus), and even calls Riccoldo a *peritus* in Arabic and Islamic law and customs, which is high praise indeed coming from Postel, the first professor of Arabic at the Collège de France.³

Postel does well to link himself to Riccoldo, since their approaches to Islam are similar in several ways. First, both Postel and Riccoldo frequently mention (indeed brag about) their personal Arabic knowledge as the essential foundation of accurate Qur'anic interpretation, which is in turn necessary to interpret Islam correctly. A claim to linguistic authority, while certainly present among some medieval writers (for example, Ramon Llull notes his own Arabic fluency), was not considered a prerequisite to write on Islam. By the 16th century, however, Postel and others made the case for Arabic's necessity. The second reason Postel does well to link himself to Riccoldo is because both explicitly describe their own personal observations of Muslim praxis, which clearly affect their evaluation of Islam, even though experience was rarely considered an authoritative source of theology, especially in the later Middle Ages, but even into the early modern period.⁴ Third, similarities in method led to a similar ambivalence in their views of Islam, often in the very same book: Riccoldo praises Islamic praxis while condemning the Qur'an, while Postel presents Christianity as the sole religion to harmonize the world yet cannot dismiss Islam so easily, thus devoting an entire book of *De orbis* to it.

Postel read Riccoldo, considered him a key predecessor, and perhaps even saw himself in line with the Dominican. Both should be seen as part of a broader historical trajectory of the Christian theology of Islam, a trajectory that even as early as the 13th and 16th centuries included elements of 20th-century theology, *avant la lettre*.⁵ This chapter will show how Postel shared Riccoldo's focus on language and personal experience, but moved beyond the friar by outlining a longer list of theological similari-

2 Postel, *De orbis*, p. 157.

3 For more on Maurus, see Szpiech 2016.

4 While Riccoldo's reliance on experience as a theological authority was relatively rare in the 13th century, by the early modern period it was becoming more common (e.g., Juan de Segovia).

5 Another theologian in this trajectory is Nicholas of Cusa; it is noteworthy that Martin Luther explicitly mentions consulting Riccoldo, Nicholas and Postel to learn about Islam. See Francisco 2007, pp. 97–128.

ties, and also by venturing into comparative theology. This paper will argue that both the medieval Riccoldo and the early modern Postel moved the Catholic Church one step closer to the official theology of Islam articulated in its 1965 Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*, and beyond.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Before discussing Riccoldo and Postel, two essential terms must be defined briefly: Christian theology of Islam and comparative theology. The Christian theology of Islam is a largely internal discussion drawing upon traditional sources like scripture and tradition (patristic and scholastic texts); it seeks to explain Islam systematically vis-à-vis Christianity. The Christian theology of Islam developed as a subset of the larger project of the Christian theology of religions, a discrete theological topic that has emerged in the years following Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* (1965), a document which sets out the first official Catholic theology of religions.⁶

The Christian theology of religions project is not without its critics. In the late 1980s, Francis X. Clooney and James Fredericks, scholars of Hinduism and Buddhism respectively (and both Catholic priests) suggested a moratorium on the theology of religions, due to an inadequate knowledge of other religions among Christian theologians. Instead, they favoured a new method: comparative theology, which they have defined as "acts of faith seeking understanding which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which ... venture into learning from other faith traditions. This learning is sought for the sake of fresh theological insights that are indebted to [both traditions]."⁷ Clooney and Fredericks stress language learning and a close reading of scripture as key aspects of comparative theology.⁸

RICCOLDO DA MONTE DI CROCE

Elements of both the theology of religions and comparative theology can be found in the writings of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. His magnum opus, *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (c. 1300), was read widely for centuries by both Western and Eastern

6 After the Catholic conciliar document *Nostra Aetate* was promulgated, other Christian denominations such as Anglicans and Methodists wrote authoritative statements on Islam. Examples of Christian theologies of Islam articulated by other denominations include the 1988 Lambeth Conference Resolution 21, 'Jews, Christians, and Muslims: The way of dialogue' (Anglican) and the 1992 resolution 'Our Muslim Neighbors' (Methodist).

7 Clooney 2010, p. 10.

8 Clooney 2010, pp. 57–68.

Christians, having been translated into Greek and back again into Latin, as well as into French, Italian, and other vernacular languages. Bibliander included a Latin version of *Contra legem* in his 1543 compendium, Martin Luther translated it into German, and Nicholas of Cusa praised it as a vital source in his *Cribratio Alcorani*. *Contra legem* thus served as a foundational resource for many later Christians writing on Islam—one could call it a crucial milestone along the historical trajectory of the Christian theology of Islam. Another book of Riccoldo's, *Liber peregrinationis*, while less popular than *Contra legem*, is still important for presaging key aspects of comparative theology, both in terms of method (emphasis on language and experience) and content (comparing similar doctrines such as monotheism, and similar practices such as prayer and study).⁹

One of the most distinctive aspects of Riccoldo's approach to Islam is his reliance on interreligious experience as authoritative. Interreligious experience regarding Islam can be defined as "firsthand observations of and personal interaction with Muslims."¹⁰ It is the starting point for an inductive method of theologizing, which builds theory from there (this is the opposite of the more traditional deductive method, which begins with theory and then reads experience in light of that theory).¹¹ Only since the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) has the Catholic Church formally cited experience as an authoritative source of theology; today, experience is the methodological foundation for certain sub-disciplines, such as contextual theology.¹²

Riccoldo spends much time describing his personal observations of seven Muslim practices he calls *opera perfectionis* ("works of perfection"). He frequently uses the word *experientia* in these descriptions, making it a *de facto* authority for his theologizing about Islam.¹³ For example, he uses the word *experientia* in the prologue of *Contra legem*, to highlight the fact that he studied the Qur'an and Arabic with Muslim scholars—an experience he says informed his conclusions about Islam:

9 Latin text (and French translation) of *Liber peregrinationis* is in *Pérégrination et Lettres* ed. Kappler 1997; English translation in George-Tvrtković 2012.

10 George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 108.

11 The inductive method is discussed by Dupuis 1997, p. 18: "We must insist on the role of dialogue as the necessary foundation of a theology of religions ... From a point of departure in the praxis of dialogue, the inductive operation is immediately immersed in the concrete religious experience of others." He adds that the theology of religions, like any theology, must guarantee the "obligatory encounter of Christian datum and experience", but especially requires a stress on interreligious experience "because of its frequent omission in the past and the need to reestablish a balance between the two sources."

12 George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 111–113.

13 For specific references to the Latin word *experientia* in Riccoldo's works, see George-Tvrtković 2012, pp. 116–119.

While [in Baghdad], I learned Arabic language and its literature at the same time. Reviewing their law most diligently and zealously in their schools, and conferring frequently with their masters, through this experience [*per experientiam*] I understood more and more the perversity of the aforementioned law.¹⁴

Some of Riccoldo's positive interreligious experiences were so shocking that he could not help but express praise for Islam. He repeatedly speaks of being "stupefied" and "amazed". These positive experiences of Muslims were so surprising because they did not align with the negative opinions Riccoldo had held about Islam before he arrived in Baghdad; thus, the *Liber peregrinationis* is full of contradictions. In one section he praises Muslim praxis (e.g., their devotion to study, prayer, almsgiving, reverence for the name of God), while in the section immediately after, he condemns the Qur'an as irrational, mendacious, lax and violent.¹⁵

The second distinctive aspect of Riccoldo's approach to Islam is his explicit reliance on Arabic as a theological authority. While a few others in the medieval Latin West drew upon on their own Arabic proficiency to argue against Islam (Petrus Alfonsi, William of Tripoli, Ramon Martí, Ramon Llull), Riccoldo boasts more frequently and more vehemently about his fluency than anyone else. And he was not alone in thinking that his Arabic mastery made his writings on Islam more authoritative. The author of Riccoldo's obituary in the necrology of his Florentine priory, Santa Maria Novella, highlights Riccoldo's Arabic skill, noting that his fluency enabled him to preach effectively to Baghdad's Muslims.¹⁶ Nicholas of Cusa calls Riccoldo his "most pleasing" source of information on Islam, precisely because "he studied Arabic in Baghdad."¹⁷ Could one call this emerging respect for Arabic *veritas Arabica*, parallel to the *veritas Hebraica* so beloved by Christian Hebraists like the Victorines? Riccoldo was one of the earliest and most explicit supporters of *veritas Arabica* in the medieval West, and Guillaume Postel, as professor of Arabic and contributor to the Bibliander project, helped to renew the idea in the 16th century.¹⁸

14 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, ed. in Mérioux 1986, p. 62. The English translation is my own.

15 George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 129.

16 *Necrologio di S. Maria Novella*, ed. Orlandi 1955, p. 222.

17 Nicholas of Cusa, *Cribratio Alcorani*, ed. Hagemann 1986, pp. 23–24.

18 Thomas Burman discusses the respect certain medieval Latin Christians had for the Qur'an (and thus implicitly Arabic as well) in his book *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom* (2007).

Not only does Riccoldo's theological *method* foreshadow later approaches, but also the *content* of his writings. For example, he explicitly names monotheism as a doctrinal similarity between Islam and Christianity, something others before him such as Peter the Venerable also affirmed. But Riccoldo provides a more detailed picture of Islamic monotheism than Peter. In one discussion of the Trinity, Riccoldo begins by noting that Christians affirm the fundamental Islamic belief in the oneness of God (*tawhid*), or "no association":

their Qur'an says about God "do not say three" (Qur'an 4:171), at once it gives the reason, "because God is the one and only." We do not say contrary, but we affirm with them that God is one, who is not only one, but the most simple. We give Him neither consort nor participant, just as they do not.¹⁹

What is striking about this discussion is that Riccoldo uses *Islamic* terms to describe *Christian* monotheism: "we give him neither consort nor participant". Like later comparative theologians, Riccoldo seems to have gained "fresh theological insights" from his careful study of Islam and its texts, and uses those insights to describe aspects of his own Christian doctrine. Of course, immediately following this discussion, he goes on to condemn Muslims for rejecting the Trinity.

Despite his positive description of Muslim praxis in *Liber peregrinationis*, the vast majority of Riccoldo's writings are focused on condemning the Qur'an. Although he does acknowledge once or twice the beauty of Qur'anic Arabic, he mainly repeats his six-part critique of the Muslim holy book as irrational, mendacious, violent, morally lax, confused and obscure. Is Riccoldo no different than other medieval Christian polemicists, then? If we look at *Contra legem* alone, we could easily conclude that his theology of Islam is mostly uncomplimentary. But if Riccoldo's writings of different genres are examined (*Liber peregrinationis*, an itinerarium; *Epistole ad ecclesiam triumphantem*, letters; and *Ad nationes orientales*, a missionary handbook), his theology becomes more complex, ambivalent, and even contradictory.²⁰ For when his works are read together, we see a theology of Islam that has room not only for praising Muslim works of perfection, but even for using Islam to critique Christianity (for example, in *Liber peregrinationis*, he says that Muslims are more forgiving than the Christians who

19 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem*, ed. Mérioux 1986, pp. 68–69.

20 The essay by Daniel Pachurka in this volume describes his recent discovery of a new, fifth text by Riccoldo, which I have not yet been able to consult.

pray the Our Father daily).²¹ Criticizing one's own religion in light of another is another mark of comparative theology, and is rare among medieval Latin polemicists.²²

GUILLAUME POSTEL

Fast forward to the 16th century, when Riccoldo was being read anew in Western Europe thanks to a retranslation of *Contra legem* into Latin by Picens (1506) from an earlier Greek version by Cydones (c. 1350). This new Latin version (in which Picens misnames him Richardus) was so valued by Martin Luther that he personally translated it into German (Luther follows Picens, calling him "Bruder Richard").

Another reader of Riccoldo in the 16th century was the French Arabist Guillaume Postel.²³ Even though Postel has never been accepted as a mainstream theologian, then or now, he remains a crucial if understudied figure in the history of the Christian theology of Islam. Perhaps one could even say that he is a neglected link in the trajectory from Riccoldo, to Nicholas of Cusa, to Postel's student Bibliander, and then on to those who were influenced by Bibliander's 1543 compendium. Or perhaps Postel is a dead-end in the trajectory, whose methods were forgotten, only to be revived centuries later by theologians completely unaware of his precedent. After all, today Postel is known more by historians and linguists than by theologians. Yet theologians need to look at him anew, because his theology of Islam is ahead of its time: some of his methods were not employed, nor were many of his conclusions reached, by Christian scholars until the mid-20th century.

In this second part, I will discuss the following five aspects of Postel's theology of Islam, some of which are similar to Riccoldo's approach, and some of which push beyond him: 1. The use of Arabic as a theological authority; 2. The use of personal interreligious experience to explain Islamic praxis; 3. A singular focus on the Qur'an; 4. Affirmation of similarities; 5. Nascent comparative theological methods.

The first aspect of Postel's theology of Islam that is similar to Riccoldo's is that both cite their personal Arabic fluency as an authoritative source. Like Riccoldo, Postel also travelled to the Middle East, in 1534–1537 and 1549–1550. He already knew Greek, Spanish, Portuguese and Hebrew, and began studying Arabic in 1536 while in Constantinople. By 1538 he had published two seminal books: *Linguarum duodecim*, which describes twelve Middle Eastern and Balkan languages, including Arabic, and

²¹ English trans. in George-Tvrtković 2012, p. 215.

²² However, it was not uncommon for medieval Latins to hold up examples of pious Muslims as a way to shame their fellow Christians for bad behaviour.

²³ The classic introduction to Guillaume Postel is still William Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi: The Career and Thought of Guillaume Postel* (1957).

Grammatica Arabica, the first of its kind in Europe, and only surpassed by Erpenius in 1613. Also in 1538, he obtained his first academic position: a lectureship in philology and mathematics at the Collège de France. His students there included Bibliander, Joseph Scaliger, and Franciscus Raphelengius. For this and more, Postel has been called “father of Arabic studies in Europe”.²⁴

Postel is as proud of his Arabic fluency as Riccoldo. In the prefaces of both 1538 books, Postel makes the same boast nearly word for word: he says that while he was in Constantinople, it took him less than two years to master Arabic, a feat which so impressed his Turkish teachers that they called him a “demon”. Postel basically says, “I’m not trying to brag”, but then he goes on to brag: “if you already know Hebrew like I do, then Arabic is really easy.” He continues to boast about his Arabic fluency in several later books, including a 1543 argument against Protestants and Muslims, and a 1560 history of the Turks.²⁵

Postel is also similar to Riccoldo in sprinkling his writings with transliterations and translations of key Arabic terms. For example, he uses correct Arabic terms such as “Aiet” (*ayat*, Qur’anic verses), and also *Muslimun* (Muslims), the latter of which was rare at this time, since up to this point *Sarraceni* (Saracens) had been the common medieval Latin word for Muslims. He also includes Muslim sayings like *Alhamdulillah* (thanks be to God) as well as key Qur’anic phrases like *tzirat elmustequim* (“straight path” from sura 1:6), followed by a Latin explanation, “*id est punctum rectum*” for his Christian readers.²⁶

However, Postel uses his Arabic to inform his theologizing in more diverse ways than Riccoldo. First, while Riccoldo only includes a few short lines from the Qur’an in his arguments against Islam, Postel frequently inserts long, verbatim quotations. Furthermore, Postel spills more ink simply quoting and explaining the Qur’an than he does arguing against it. In this, Postel is more like the Dominican William of Tripoli (d. c. 1276), who also includes long, verbatim quotations from the Qur’an—even in the middle of an argument against Islam (William prefers to quote from Qur’anic sections on Mary and Jesus). Second, Postel uses his Arabic skill not only to support his views of Islam, but also to support internal Christian theological arguments. One of the best examples of this can be found in the unpublished manuscript *Du souverain effect de la plus excellente Corone du mond*, where he cites the Jewish Kabbalah, Qur’an and *hadith* to support his argument for the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which

24 Toomer 1996, p. 26.

25 Guillaume Postel, *Alcorani seu legis Mahometi et Evangelistarum concordiae liber* (1543), pp. 6–7, and, by the same author, *Histoire Originale* (1560), pp. 4, 16.

26 Postel, *De orbis*, p. 158.

was being debated among Catholics at the time.²⁷ Postel's use of extra-Christian texts to support an internal Christian argument is rare, though not entirely unprecedented. Two similar cases in the later medieval period include Juan de Segovia (15th century), who enriched his discussion of the Immaculate Conception and Original Sin with references to Islamic texts, and Marquard de Lindau (14th century), who also argued for the Immaculate Conception by citing the Qur'an.²⁸ However, Marquard's argument came via secondary sources (Ramon Martí's *Pugio fidei* and Riccoldo's *Contra legem*), not directly from the Qur'an or *hadith*.²⁹ So while both Marquard and Postel used the same method of argumentation to support the Immaculate Conception, only Postel was proficient enough in Arabic to consult and cite Islamic sources for himself, and cite them directly in his argument.

The second aspect of Postel's theology of Islam that is similar to Riccoldo's is the use of personal interreligious experience to explain Muslim praxis. Postel spent less time in the Islamic world than Riccoldo did: Riccoldo lived for over a decade in Baghdad, while Postel spent roughly four years in the Islamic world, with time in Istanbul, Jerusalem, Syria and North Africa. Yet he still mimics Riccoldo's use of personal interreligious experience to augment his theologizing on Islam. For example, in *De orbis*, Postel interprets sura 1 of the Qur'an (known as "Al Fatiha", the Opening) within the context of Muslim prayer and theology, noting that this passage is the "common prayer of Muslims", and also mentioning the Islamic idea that the "whole of the Qur'an" is contained in Al Fatiha. Furthermore, he goes on to suggest that Al Fatiha is an Islamic prayer comparable to the Christian Our Father, since both are communal prayers said regularly by believers in each respective tradition.³⁰ To his section on Al Fatiha, Postel adds a description of the gestures and frequency of Muslim daily prayer, which he clearly gleaned from personal observation. Interestingly, while Riccoldo likewise describes Muslim prayer in his writings, he focuses almost entirely on *wudu* (ablutions before prayer), and also on peculiar Sufi prayer practices such as going into a trance or spinning around. But Riccoldo says nothing at all about Al Fatiha, which is prayed multiple times a day by all Muslims, nor does he describe the normal movements as-

27 Petry 2004, p. 105. "Du souverain effect de la plus excellente Corone du mond", Paris Bnf MS Fons Français 2114, Folio 61ff. According to Petry 2004, p. 106, MSS 2112–2116 contain (autograph) texts by Postel, including several about Mary. Postel's use of the Qur'an to defend Mary's immaculate conception and perpetual virginity can be found in MS 2114, folios 61ff. I have not yet consulted this manuscript.

28 For more on Segovia's use of the Qur'an in his Christian theological arguments, see Roth & Scotto 2015. See also Mann 2019. For Marquard, see Mossman 2007.

29 Mossman 2007, pp. 175–184, 197–198.

30 Postel, *De orbis*, pp. 157–158.

sociated with the five daily prayers. Instead, Riccoldo focuses on the more unusual aspects of Muslim prayer, while Postel describes more ordinary aspects.

The third aspect of Postel's theology of Islam that is similar to Riccoldo's is a singular focus on the Qur'an. Like Riccoldo, the Qur'an is central to Postel's discussion of Islam. His long summary of the Qur'an in *De orbis* takes up well over 50% of Book II (pp. 157–228). Mostly he abridges the suras; however, he translates nearly verbatim a few passages he deems important, for example the Annunciation story found in sura 19, Maryam. In toto, his presentation of the Qur'an contains roughly 30% verbatim quotes; the rest is paraphrase or commentary.

Like Riccoldo, Postel does not pay much attention to Islamic scholarly apparatus.³¹ Both of them focus their analysis squarely on the Qur'an. But unlike Riccoldo, Postel gives his audience more access to the text. He includes long, verbatim quotes from the Qur'an to enable his readers to consider the text on their own, while Riccoldo only includes short quotes, to support his anti-Islamic arguments. Riccoldo rarely includes long passages. Furthermore, Postel's overall tone is more positive, and thus more in line with Nicholas of Cusa and William of Tripoli, both of whom had a more sympathetic reading of the Qur'an than Riccoldo.³² Postel, William, and Nicholas all focus their efforts on Qur'anic themes which seem parallel to biblical ones, while Riccoldo simply repeats his same six arguments against the Qur'an. Riccoldo concludes that the Qur'an is irrational, while Postel's assumption is that it is rational, and thus worthy of careful study.

The fourth aspect of Postel's theology of Islam that is similar to Riccoldo's is his affirmation of some similarities between Christianity and Islam. Both focus on the doctrine of God. However, Riccoldo is brief and mentions only monotheism, while Postel writes a more extensive account, and focuses not only on monotheism, but also lists several divine attributes: "It is taught by this law [Qur'an] that: God is one, cares, provides, and nourishes all, exacts punishment on the wicked, rewards the good, will judge all humans in the future, resurrection, and very similar precepts from the Old Testament and New Testament can be pulled out."³³ With the line "very similar precepts", Postel explicitly notes the similarities between the Qur'anic and biblical doctrine of God. Furthermore, the Islamic doctrine of God which he outlines here is strikingly parallel to that found in the 1965 Catholic conciliar document *Nostra Aetate*: "[Muslims] adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful,

31 Thomas Burman argues that many medieval Latin Christians, even those with knowledge of Arabic like Riccoldo, read the Qur'an in isolation. See Burman 2015.

32 For a discussion of Nicholas of Cusa's interpretive approach to the Qur'an, dubbed *pia interpretatio*, see Hopkins 1994. For a discussion of William, see George-Tvrtković 2016.

33 Postel, *De orbis*, pp. 142–143.

the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; ... they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead.”³⁴ Postel is clearly a forerunner to *Nostra Aetate*, although it is doubtful its framers knew of his writings.

Why does Postel focus on divine attributes? Like Riccoldo, Postel sees monotheism as a commonality between Islam and Christianity. But Riccoldo does not want to find too many commonalities, since that would take away from his anti-Islamic argument. But Postel *does* hope to find commonalities, since one goal of his book *De orbis* was to unite the whole world under a single universal religion. Perhaps not unlike Nicholas of Cusa's plan in *De pace fidei* (1453), Postel hoped to come up with a list of “lowest common denominators” which could possibly be shared by people of all religions. Therefore, Postel does not stop with the Islamic doctrine of God. He also highlights common scriptural figures such as Abraham and Mary. For example, in his summary of the Qur'an in Book II of *De orbis*, Postel translates several Marian passages in their entirety, including the Annunciation stories found in suras 3 and 19.³⁵ This is unlike Riccoldo, who refuses to see Mary as a commonality, and in fact is critical of the Qur'anic Mary (he claims that the Qur'an confuses Mary the mother of Jesus and Miriam the sister of Moses). In regard to Mary, Postel is more like William of Tripoli and Nicholas of Cusa, both of whom also quote verbatim Qur'anic passages on Mary, and praise Qur'anic mariology for its similarity to the gospels.³⁶

The fifth aspect of Postel's approach to Islam that is similar to Riccoldo's is that both employ comparative theological methods *avant la lettre*. As already noted above, in *De orbis* Part II, Postel includes a lengthy, non-polemical discussion of sura 1 (“Al Fatiha”), a key Qur'anic passage and central prayer in Islam. Not only does Postel translate every single verse of sura 1, but he also includes his own commentary, devoting a half page to discuss just seven verses, which is more than he does for any other part of the Qur'an. As noted above, his commentary includes discussion of how Al Fatiha is used in Muslim prayer. But he also compares the Al Fatiha and Our Father prayers in another, more surprising place: his *Grammatica Arabica*. Throughout the grammar, Postel often selects religious texts as the basis of student exercises: e.g., he translates the Our Father into Arabic, and follows this with the Latin. Postel continues with a translation of the Al Fatiha into Latin, followed by the Arabic. Both prayers, both languages. Of course, this technique is helpful to his Christian students because they know the Our Father

34 Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, section 3.

35 Postel, *De orbis*, pp. 174–177 (sura 3), pp. 204–205 (sura 19). He also comments further on these verses later in Book II, for example on pp. 252, 254–255.

36 See George-Tvrtković 2016.

well. But why does Postel choose to pair the Our Father with Al Fatiha? Linguistically they don't go together (plus his students would not have known Al Fatiha), but theologically they do. The two prayers are in fact comparable in many ways; they are both among the most oft-recited prayers, respectively, in both religions; they are both scriptural; they both present a similar doctrine of God. Thus in the middle of a grammar, a non-theological genre, Postel seems to employ another method of comparative theologians, who intentionally read texts of different religions together—in the original languages—in order to gain insight into their own tradition. Postel is one of the first Latin Europeans who is actually able to do this—juxtapose the Latin Bible and Arabic Qur'an. By performing theology in the middle of a grammar, he seems to presage the comparative method, without articulating it as such. Later, he appears more conscious of his comparisons. For example, in *De orbis*, Postel actually uses the word *comparata* when describing Christ and Mary in the Bible and Qur'an. Perhaps by 1544 he had become more intentional in his comparative theology, six years after the 1538 grammar.³⁷

CONCLUSION

Riccoldo and Postel are most directly and explicitly connected by their skill in Arabic. Indeed, this is precisely why Postel names Riccoldo as a worthy predecessor in *De orbis*. But Riccoldo and Postel are alike in other ways, including using personal interreligious experience to explain Muslim praxis, outlining similarities between Christian and Islamic doctrines of God, and bringing creative theologizing into non-traditional genres. Like Riccoldo, whose theology of Islam appears not only in a traditional polemical text, but also in a pilgrimage itinerary, letters, and a missionary manual, Postel's theology of Islam can likewise be found in books of distinct genres. In fact, Postel never wrote a traditional polemic against Islam. Instead, he inserted his Qur'anic commentary into the middle of *De orbis*, a book about world religious harmony, not Islam. And his Arabic grammar's chrestomathy (language exercises) featured two popular prayers, Al Fatiha and Our Father.³⁸ Ostensibly, this juxtaposition was simply meant to help students practise Arabic using familiar texts. But was he not also presaging the comparative theological method? Why was Postel's theology of Islam articulated in such unusual genres? Perhaps it was because in the 16th century, there was not yet anywhere to put the kind of theology he was writing.

One last observation. Although Riccoldo and Postel both wrote theologies of Islam, neither were traditional theologians. Rather, they were unique for their dual iden-

³⁷ Postel, *De orbis*, p. 155.

³⁸ For more on chrestomathy, see, Hamilton 2017.

tities as both vowed religious and scholars of Islam and Arabic. This special skill set is useful when constructing a sound Christian theology of Islam. And as Postel notes in *De orbis*, few are up to the task, then or now. Postel and Riccoldo are members of an exclusive club of Catholic theologians in history who also happen to be experts in other religions and their respective languages: Hebraists like Andrew of St Victor (d. 1175) and Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1349), Buddhologists like Ippolito Desideri, SJ (d. 1733), Indologists like Sister Sara Grant, RSCJ (d. 2002), and Islamologists like Louis Massignon (d. 1962). Due to their unique skill set and identity, Riccoldo and Postel should be counted as important milestones along the historical trajectory of the Christian theology of Islam. For in their work we can see germs of the official view of Islam articulated by the Catholic church centuries later in its 1965 Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*, a text written by men similar to Riccoldo and Postel: religious order priests who were also scholars of Islam, such as Georges Anawati, a Dominican, and Robert Caspar, a White Father. All are outliers, rare birds who dwell in the borderlands, betwixt and between. These unique scholar theologians—the kind that Riccoldo da Monte di Croce and Guillaume Postel both were—are among the few who are qualified to articulate a robust Christian theology of Islam, and push its development forward.

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THE DISSEMINATION

JACOB LANGELOH

Reasoning with Riccoldo

*John of Ragusa's Fragmentum de Conditionibus Legum,
Written at Constantinople (?) c. 1437*

INTRODUCTION

John of Ragusa (1390/95–1443) was one of the most prolific churchmen at the Council of Basel (1431–1449). Among other honours, such as opening the Council and serving as its secretary general, his greatest mission was to negotiate the union of the churches at Constantinople from 1435–1437. These negotiations are fairly well documented—not least through John's correspondence with the Council and his lengthy report upon return.¹ One might wonder, though, whether he did anything else during the two years that he spent there.

¹ See no. 5 in Krchňák 1960/1961, pp. 54–55. When referring to John's works, I will use the numeration of this groundbreaking study. Most of his writings concerning the Council are edited in *Studi storici sul Concilio di Firenze: con documenti inediti, o nuovamente dati alla luce sui manoscritti di Firenze e di Roma*, ed. Cecconi 1869; *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. Mansi et al. 1901–1927; *Monumenta conciliorum generalium seculi decimi quinti*, ed. Palacký et al. 1857–1935; or *Concilium Basiliense: Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte des Concils von Basel*, ed. Haller 1896–1936. These sources will be abbreviated as Cecconi, Mansi, MC and CB. In Langeloh 2019, I have re-edited some of John's letters and notes from Constantinople along with his treatises on Islam. Apart from Krchňák's own rendition, which draws heavily on John's report, the most complete description of his activities in Constantinople is found in Strika 2000, pp. 155–185. For the latest short overview over his activities at the Council and especially his historiographical writings, see Mann 2016, pp. 54–59.

One of his activities was hunting for books. With the main intention of preparing theological debates between the Greek and the Latin Church,² John brought back a large collection of Greek volumes. After his death in 1443, he left his books to the preachers' convent at Basel and from there they (mostly) ended up at the University Library of Basel.³ Among these, there are several volumes that include his personal notes and sketches, for example, his treatise on ecclesiology⁴ or his disputation with Jan Rokycana. Another set of sketches, contained in Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS E I 1k, allows us to reconstruct one more of his activities in Constantinople. He encountered a group of three Franciscan would-be martyrs, befriended them, probably aided them in writing a treatise justifying their martyrdom, and also wrote two treatises meant to sway Muslims towards Christendom, the latter of which heavily draws on Riccoldo's *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (CLS). As I would like to claim, this encounter with the Franciscans and their *De martyrio sanctorum* are the key to interpreting John's sketches concerning Islam. To show this connection, this article will address several questions: First, what did John of Ragusa write on Islam? Second, how did the contact between John and the Franciscans come to pass? Third, why should John's extant sketches be considered as conversion leaflets and what is the role of *De martyrio sanctorum*? And finally, to what purpose and to what extent does John of Ragusa draw on Riccoldo?

JOHN OF RAGUSA'S WRITINGS ON ISLAM

The manuscript Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, E I 1k contains a section that was named *De Machumeto et Saracenis* by Aloysius Krchňák, who dated it after February 1436 and before September 1437.⁵ He derives the *terminus post quem* from a remark

2 Cf. the end of letter 96: "Quaerimus, quantum possumus, originales libros Graecorum ad verificandum auctoritates, quas habemus ab eis, et nullo modo possumus invenire; nec tamen desistemus ab inquisitione." Ed. Cecconi 1869, no. LXXVIII, ccx–ccxi. Re-edited on a broader and better manuscript base in Langeloh 2019, pp. 344–365.

3 On his testamentary disposition, cf. Escher 1917. On the books he left behind, cf. Schmidt 1919; Vernet 1961; and the additions to Vernet in Hunt 1966.

4 Edited as Johannes Stojkovič, *Tractatus de ecclesia*, ed. Šanjek et al. 1983. Cf. the study by Madrigal Terrazas 1995.

5 Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, E I 1k, ff. 503r–510v. Krchňák 1960/1961, no. 22, p. 60. I will abbreviate "Basel, Universitätsbibliothek" as "UB Basel" from here on. These writings by John of Ragusa, along with some of his letters and diary entries, have been edited with a German translation in Langeloh 2019. Since this article seeks to facilitate access to the primary sources, references are given to both the source material and to my edition. All translations into English in this article from these works are my own.

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 Saracenorum* 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 Saracenorum*.

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 diabolicæ 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 Ioannis 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 "1" 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 transitis 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'Arrezzo 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 Saracenorum*.

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 off 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 possible³⁶ 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.

<i>Fragmentum de Conditionibus Legum</i> (ff. 505rv–510rv–503rv–512rv–504rv) No.	Topic	<i>ll. in ed. Langeloh 2019</i>	<i>Uses CLS book parts</i>
o	Introduction	1–23	8
I	The messenger of the law		
I.1	The prophet himself	24–133	
I.1.1	Was the prophet a good person or not? – Christ yes, Muhammad no.	26–75	I, 8
I.1.2	<i>Counter-argument</i> : “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
I.1.3	Muhammad was not mentally fit to be a prophet – <i>Counter-argument</i> : “Does this not show that the doctrine came from God?”	106–133	4, 8
I.2	Muhammad’s way of advocating his law	133–546	
I.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
I.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
I.2.3	[Digression] <i>Counter-argument</i> : “The holy scriptures were perverted and mention of Muhammad expunged.” Response: Scripture has not been corrupted.	182–374	I, 3
I.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
	<i>Counter-argument</i> : “Is it not the greatest miracle to convert without miracles?”	445–449	

	<i>Response:</i> 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 Qur'an.	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[er]e 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 sentiis 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 confusus, 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.

ferent from that of the Franciscans.² The institutional framework of Riccoldo's writing is clearly influenced by his order, which is decisive both for his personal theological background and studies as well as for the general setting of his journeys as a member of an international collective. John and Nicholas were churchmen of high influence, fervent members of the Council of Basel and working in a mainly European or Mediterranean context. John was a secular priest and professor, later bishop, tending towards Franciscan theology. Nicholas had never been a member of any of the new orders: this bishop of Brixen and cardinal was more affiliated to the *devotio moderna* or traditional orders such as the Benedictines in Tegernsee in Germany or Monte Oliveto in Italy. However, both were deeply interested in Islam as a religion, not simply as a political threat in the form of the Turkish armies. They had already exchanged information and discussed these subjects during the Council of Basel, nearly 20 years before the shock of the fall of Constantinople in 1543.³ At that time and later, their primary source was Robert of Ketton's Latin translation of the Qur'an from 1143, the *Alkoranus latinus*. This remained the main basis for their knowledge about Islam, even when they both became acquainted with the *Contra legem Sarracenorum* of Riccoldo.⁴ How would they react to this influential work of an expert and eyewitness to Islam and its culture?

JOHN OF SEGOVIA

John of Segovia (c. 1393–1458) is an important and prominent figure of the 15th century, both as a theologian and as a church politician, especially during the long-lasting Council of Basel. He was nearly elected antipope, but had neither rank nor wealth, as he was not an aristocrat. Therefore, Amadeus VIII, duke of Savoy, was finally chosen instead, taking the name of Felix V. Concerning the Western analysis and refuta-

2 Cf. Müller 2002; for Riccoldo cf. esp. George-Tvrtković 2012a. For a broader setting cf. Tolan 2002. For the missionary strategies of the Franciscans and Dominicans cf. Tolan 2002, pp. 214–255.

3 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Epistula ad Nicolaum de Cusa* (Vat. lat. 2923 = V f. 4v; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 3): “Memore quippe arbitror dominacionem vestram metuendissimam quod, dum Constantinopolim itura foret, multo rogatu meo concessit michi ut copiarum facerem librum Alchoran, non continentem magis vero sectam Sarracenorum sistentem, de quorum ritibus observanciaque moribus ac modo conversionis eorum multa diebus illis invicem conferebamur.” Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Epistula ad Iohannem de Segobia*, ed. Klibansky & Bascour 1970, p. 97: “Spes est quod omnes Teucrici acquiescerent fidei sanctissimae Trinitatis ex rationibus tactis in scripto reverendissimae paternitatis vestrae, quas et alias Basileae audiavi a vobis, quando mihi Richardum de Sancto Victore laudastis.”

4 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem Sarracenorum* [= *Contra legem*], ed. Mérioux 1986.

tion of Islam in the 15th century, John was not only one of the most productive and innovative proponents, but also one of the main pioneers. By the early 1430s and even before, Islam had already become an important issue in his copious and broad theological work. Over several decades before the fall of Constantinople, he had made repeated efforts to obtain reliable information on Islam. During the Council of Basel, he discussed these subjects with Nicholas, as they both recalled nearly 20 years afterwards. John's voluminous treatise *De gladio divini spiritus*, written soon after the catastrophe of 1453, and his new trilingual edition of the Qur'an elaborated together with the Muslim faqīh Iça Gidelli are outstanding scholarly works and documents of this innovative thinking in the 15th century, even though in general he shares the main characteristics of the late medieval world.

The main sources⁵ on the relation between John and Riccoldo are:

- *Errores legis Mahumeti* (various excerpts from the *Alkoranus latinus*, most probably begun during John's first reading of the Qur'an in 1437 in Basel or shortly afterwards)
- *Epistula ad Nicolaum de Cusa* (2 December 1454)
- *Replica magne continencie ad Iohannem Cabilonensem episcopum* (long letter to Jean Germain, 18 December 1455)
- *De gladio divini spiritus mittendo in corda Sarracenorum* (begun in 1453).

When did John become aware of Riccoldo's work? It cannot be determined whether or not John was already familiar with *Contra legem* when working on his *Errores* in the years before 1450. One excerpt from sura 2:223 which could be taken either directly from Riccoldo or indirectly from a gloss alluding to Riccoldo's translation is formu-

5 The texts are available in:

Johannes de Segobia, *Errores legis Mahumeti*, ed. Bündgens *et al.* 2013.

Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio divini spiritus*, Roth 2012. Quotations will be given with chapter number (Consideratio) and line number.

Johannes de Segobia, *Epistula ad Nicolaum de Cusa*, ed. Scotto 2012 (partly ed. Cabanelas Rodríguez 1952).

Johannes de Segobia, *Replica magne continencie ad Iohannem Cabilonensem episcopum*, ed. Scotto 2012 (partly ed. Cabanelas Rodríguez 1952).

For more details about the origin and content of these texts see my introduction to *De gladio* (ed. Roth 2012) or the valuable, although not always up-to-date information in Wolf 2014.

lated in a fashion that points towards Riccoldo and his *Contra legem*.⁶ It reads differently in his *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum*, which is widely indebted to Ramon Martí's *De Seta Machometi*.⁷ The same passage is copied almost verbatim in *De gladio*, Consideratio 9, ll. 43–48 with only a slight variation or specification, namely: “Ut vero aiunt quidam, passus iste in Arabico expressius et clarius describitur.”⁸ This passage is found in Riccoldo, *Contra legem* 6, ll. 40–41: “Mulieres uestre aratura uestra, arate eas ut uultis.”⁹ It should be noticed that “aratura” in *Contra legem* and “a natura” in John’s texts can be explained as a reading or a writing mistake because of using abbreviations. The formulation “aiunt quidam” or “quidam asserunt” could be a hint to Riccoldo; however, the plural form could also confirm that John thinks of a gloss to his *Alkhoranus latinus*, where somebody had annotated this way to translate this Arabic passage. We know that John had read the copy of the *Alkhoranus latinus* which John of Ragusa had brought from Constantinople where it had been copied in 1437 and which was the exemplar for Theodor Bibliander’s print of 1543. In this manuscript Robert of Ketton’s translation was corrected or commentated in the margins or at the end of the text.¹⁰ From this single citation we cannot with certainty conclude whether, how much and since when John knew of Riccoldo and his *Contra legem* in the years before 1450.

The first evident and clearly datable hint to John’s knowledge of Riccoldo can be found in his *Replica* to Jean Germain: “Even the predicant mentioned, as I suppose, in your letters, who said he had been at the university of the Saracens, did not say that. Indeed, I have his treatise written in 17 chapters and many others in Latin and vernacular

6 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Errores*, ll. 200–204: “De abusu autem mulierum dicit: Mulieres vobis subiectas penitus pro modo vestro, vbicumque volueritis, parate Deum timentes, ad quem omnium fiet reditus, qui bonis premium, malis cruciatum tribuit. Vt vero quidam asserunt, passus iste in Arabico sic dicit: Mulieres vestre a natura vestra arate eas, ubi uultis.”

7 Cf. Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum*, ll. 211–212: “Mulieres vestrae sunt aratio vestra. Ergo intrate arationem vestram, quocumque modo volueritis.”

8 Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Consid. 9, ll. 46–47.

9 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem* 6, ll. 40–41 (ed. Mérigoux 1986, p. 84).

10 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Epistula ad Nicolaum de Cusa* (V 9rv; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 15): “Nondum vero habui [sc. translationem in idiomate nostro], sed habui librum qui Constantinopoli, ut apparet, correcte fuit scriptus, dum illic Iohannes de Ragusio remansit. In glosis quod in nonnullis veritati pepercit non exprimens quantam sermo arabicus habet legis illius obscenitatem. Aliquas eciam postillas habet declarantes quorundam passuum obscuritatem.” John received this manuscript from Basel, where he himself had seen it in the library of the Dominicans, cf. to this complex history *De gladio*, ed. Roth 2012, XXXVII–XXXVIII. As John had sent the manuscript back to Basel, Beatus Rhenanus was able to see it in Basel and Bibliander to make use of it for his print.

Hispanic with me, one recently sent instead of the book Qur'an, really large in size, but the person who wrote it only read little in the Qur'an, attributed many things falsely to it, and inserted a lot of other fables."¹¹

The *Replica* dates from 18 December 1455, and alludes in this passage to a part of the letters which the bishop of Chalon sur Saône, chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece and advisor of the duke of Burgundy Jean Germain, had sent him in 1455. Unfortunately, these letters, also mentioned in a shorter letter from 18 December 1455, are lost. John confirms that he possesses Riccoldo's *Contra legem*. Maybe he had received it very early, for example, in Basel. It is also possible that John already had read *Contra legem* in 1454 when he corresponded with Nicholas, as he mentions the falsification of scriptures in his letter of 2 December 1454 and later associates it with Riccoldo.¹² As he calls it "novus tractatus"¹³ in his correspondence with Jean Germain, it is likely that he had obtained in the time before the end of 1455, possibly together with the *Alkoranus latinus* from the Convent of the Dominicans in Basel or different writings he had received after further inquiries in 1455 from Spain which he alludes to in the letter to Jean Germain. Among these writings there was also one of Pedro Pascual (c. 1327–1300), mistakenly thought to be a translation of the Qur'an.¹⁴

WHICH WORKS DID JOHN KNOW?

John possessed *Contra legem* even some years before the famous manuscript collector Nicholas of Cusa, who had provided him with writings during the Council of Basel and with whom he exchanged letters in 1454. It is likely, but not certain, that John was familiar with other works such as *Liber peregrinationis* or *Ad nationes orientales*. At the

11 Johannes de Segobia, *Replica magne continencie* (V 58r; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 121): "Eciam nec dicit ille predicator vestris ut estimo mencionatus in litteris qui dicit se fuisse in Studio generali Sarracenorum. Tractatum quippe eius XVII capitulis expletum aliosque plures penes me habeo in latino vulgarique yspanico unum novissime destinatum pro libro Alchoran quasi tanti voluminis, sed qui edidit parum per Alchoran legit multa illi falsa imponens aliisque plurimis insertis fabulis."

12 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Epistula ad Nicolaum de Cusa* (V 27v–28r; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 63): "De falsificacione autem ut quidam dicunt Christianis imposita per eos, multiplicatissima et habundans Deo auxiliante aderit satisfactio ..." See below, note 26.

13 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Replica magne continencie* (V 71v–72r; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 153): "Subiungit autem, quod testatur quidam novus tractatus, apud Baudas locum caliphe Studium generale est erectum et secta Mahumeti ad formam doctrine auctentice composite et reducta per inquisicionem et discursum scientificum."

14 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Epistula ad Johannem Cabilonensem* [18 December 1455], ed. Cabanelas Rodríguez 1952, p. 326.

end of *De gladio* he writes about Muslim universities,¹⁵ in a passage with three interesting pieces of information: the existence of a kind of university in Baghdad, the public financial support for students, and the existence of a supreme faqīh. The first two could have been taken from *Contra legem*,¹⁶ but the third rather resembles passages that can be found in the *Liber peregrinationis* and not in *Contra legem*.¹⁷

At the end of *De gladio*, John gives several pieces of advice that resemble the *Regulae*¹⁸ of Riccoldo at the end of his *Ad nationes orientales*. These will be discussed later. As the *Regulae* were sometimes transmitted separately, it is possible that they, too, were known to John. Thus, one can assume that John not only knew *Contra legem*, which he mentions directly, but maybe also the *Liber peregrinationis* and with even less probability the *Regulae* though he never mentions them explicitly as separate writings. None of these texts is mentioned in his *natio* written in 1457, the year before his death.

15 Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Consid. 38, ll. 497–507: “Quod utique sustentamen Saraceni non facile habent, quando, ut multi affirmant, non habent nisi unum generale studium quodque tam minimum est Sarracenorum desiderium ad scientiam capescendam, quod inibi expensis communibus multi et fere omnes advenientium sustentantur. ... Sistente igitur tanta apud Sarracenos penuria et generalium studiorum et virorum, in illo unico, sicut dicitur, etiam communiter residet primus ac supremus Alfaquius eorum ad eumque per omnes Sarracenorum reges principes ac communitates super materia legis fit recursus.” Similar ideas can be found in John’s *Replica magne continencie* (V 71v–72r; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 153): see above, note 13.

16 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem*, prol., ll. 57–58 (ed. Mériçoux 1986, p. 62): “Vnde cum transissem maria et deserta, et peruenissem ad famosissimam ciuitatem Saracenorum Baldaccum, ubi generale ipsorum solemne habetur studium, ibi pariter linguam et litteram arabicam didici.” Cf. idem, ch. 13, ll. 99–102 (ed. Mériçoux 1986, p. 121): “Quod aduertens quidam Calipha de Baldacco ... edificauit ... scholas solemniissimas et reformauit studium Alchorani et ordinauit quod de quibuscumque prouinciis uenirent in Baldaccum ad studium Alchorani, studentes haberent cellas et stipendia necessaria de comuni ...”

17 Cf. Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Liber peregrinationis*, ed. Kappler 1997, pp. 154–160: “In eadem ciuitate scilicet in Baldacco fuit sedes et principalitas Sarracenorum quantum ad studium et religionem et quantum ad dominium. Ibi enim regnabat Califfa quod interpretatur successor, scilicet Machometis, et dicunt Sarraceni quod ipse erat facies dei in terra ... in loco generalis studii ... Et ut multa paucis uerbis comprehendam, sciendum est quod ipsi conueniunt in Baldacco ad studium de diuersis prouinciis; habent autem in Baldacco plura loca soli studio et contemplationi deputata ad modum magnorum monasteriorum nostrorum et uenientibus prouidetur in comuni ...”

18 Cf. Dondaine 1967, pp. 168–170.

CONTENT AND METHOD

John's rhetoric, or rather his method, in respect to Muslims strongly opposes traditional missionary and especially violent activities against Muslim nations. Therefore, conformity and similarities with Riccoldo are more superficial than deep.¹⁹ Looking at the major contents and the tenor of their works, the theological background and fundament are clearly different. Many individual subjects may be similar or even the same, but the general aim is different, for example, the idea of a *contraferentia* and that of an unwanted though unavoidable coexistence of the different religions.

Riccoldo makes some positive observations about Muslim society and piety, but John goes further still. He appreciates and believes in their real thirst for understanding and knowledge, as his different conception of the relationship between faith and knowledge would naturally lead him to do. However, generally speaking, John considers Riccoldo to be one of the earlier Christian authors who do not evaluate Islam according to the main source, that is the Qur'an. These authors either based their conclusions on a few excerpts or they were not able to grasp its true meaning. In John's opinion, Riccoldo was no exception.²⁰ John even reproaches him for not having finished his translation of the Qur'an, using the excuse that the content was too disgusting. John almost becomes angry because of this lack of respect of a Christian scholar for the religious tradition of the Muslims. John's point of view is not motivated by the presupposition of an intrinsic value of the Islamic tradition, but by the experience that such disregard and arrogance would be a hindrance to any negotiations. It would make talks even more difficult or completely fruitless, and confronting Muslims in this way could strengthen their prejudices towards Christians. In this context, John quotes a Muslim

19 Cf. Vigliano 2017, p. 287: "... elle [la rhétorique de l'adresse aux musulmans] concorde pour une bonne part avec les règles édictées par Riccoldo da Monte Croce." p. 289: "... *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, que notre théologien [i.e., John of Segovia] consulte volontiers. Riccoldo inspirerait alors son unique et modeste tentative pour systématiser sa rhétorique, par quatre recommandations numérotées. La vraie originalité du *De gladio*, de ce point de vue, est de détourner les méthodes missionnaires au profit d'un discours opposé aux missions."

20 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Replica magne continencie* (V 58r; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 121): "Etenim, sicut vestra dominacio attestatur, si aliqui legem Mahumeti impugnarunt hoc fuit solum per modum excerptorum. Dicam ego et unum aliud quod multos perlegi tractatus, dyalogi et alias formas habentes, adhuc tamen nec vidi unum omnino conformiter ad librum Alchoran in omnibus suis excerptis dicentem. Eciam nec dicit ille predicator vestris ut estimo mencionatus in litteris ..."

proverb about Christians in Spain: "They paint as they like". He compares this way of refuting Islam with a game of chess against oneself, a useless and uninteresting game.²¹ Believing that in order to kill the Sirens, one has to approach them, rather than just remain at a secure distance,²² John attempts to avoid this type of self-deception or auto-immunization and improve on his behaviour. He collected all available material on Islam and even employed a Muslim faqih (Iça Gidelli) not only to help him to make a new Latin translation, but also to provide him with a reliable introduction into the Islamic creed.²³ In his own way of working he also tried to avoid the mistakes of the authors he criticized; thus, John widely excerpts from and quotes the Qur'an. When he realized that his Latin translation was not reliable, he initiated a new and complete translation and with the help of his faqih he worked on his famous, so-called trilingual Qur'an. He even started to revise his voluminous *De gladio* with this new translation, but had to stop due to illness and other works, and perhaps because he realized that the sheer volume might hinder him from completing it in his lifetime.

MATERIAL TAKEN FROM RICCOLDO

Concerning "Islamica", John relies on the *Alkoranus latinus* and the historical work of Vincent of Beauvais, some other chronicles, several works from the so-called *Collectio Toletana*, especially Petrus Venerabilis and the so-called *Apology of pseudo-Al-Kindi*. Nonetheless, Riccoldo is an author who is more or less directly present in John's works. The way John selects material from *Contra legem* corresponds with the critical estimation he has for this author. This can be shown best with the long and only verbatim quotation taken from *Contra legem*. It relates to the miracle of the scission of the

21 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Replica magne continencie* (V 58r; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 122): "De quo non miror nec de predicatore illo quia ipsemet fatetur pre abhominacione non potuisse intendere ad completam libri interpretacionem, sed et illud animadvertitur quod huiusmodi impugnaciones fiunt absque parte. Unde in Yspania commune est proverbium Sarracenos in derisum adversus Christianos dicere quod pingunt sicut volunt. Est utique forma hec ludentis ad scacos semet cum ipso, qui pro suo libito vincit aut vincitur. Quo circa michi gaudium permaximum est invenisse contradictorem, cuius omni cum humilitate gratiam depono ut continuare dignetur." Cf. Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem*, prol., ll. 61–63: "Et cum inceperim eam in latinum transferre, tot inueni fabulas et falsitates et blasphemias, et eadem per omnia in locis creberrimis repetita, quod tunc attediatus dimisi ..."

22 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Praefatio, ll. 83–239, esp. l. 94.

23 Cf. Wiegiers 1994.

moon. John quotes seven lines word by word.²⁴ But he is not interested in Riccoldo's translation, even though it could be considered more reliable as a result of Riccoldo's experience and excellence concerning the world, language and literature of Arabia: all Qur'anic verses concerning miracles are as usual taken from Robert of Ketton's translation. John is not interested in the translation, but rather in the interpretation of the miracle by Muslim authors, an aspect that he only finds in Riccoldo's work. Riccoldo in turn had taken this from his main source for the knowledge of Islam, the so-called *Liber denudationis* or *Contrarietas Alfolica*. Apart from this quotation, John alone structures and writes his long chapters about miracles in the Qur'an: *De gladio*, Consideratio 26 about miracles in general and Consideratio 27 more specifically about the miracle of the Seven Sleepers. The way he investigates and validates the importance of miracles for Islam and its law also originates in John's own hermeneutical approach, although the subject itself is discussed extensively by Riccoldo, for example, in *Contra legem* ch. 7.

Thus, it is not surprising that John takes hardly any material directly from Riccoldo. Among the occasional material one finds, for example, John's mention of the caliphate. John knew about this institution from *Contra legem* and he supposes that it prevented Muslims from converting to other religions by means of fear and oppression.²⁵ An-

24 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Consid. 26, ll. 118–124, taken from *Contra legem* ch. 4, ll. 54–62 (Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, ed. Mérigoux 1986, pp. 78–79), cf. the introducing and commenting passages ibidem, Consid. 26, ll. 116–117 and 124–126: “Quo vero ad tertium narratum miraculum de lunae divisione expositio praemittitur, quam, ut scriptum reperii, faciunt Sarracenorum doctors dicentes ... Consona profecto textui glossa: Talis quidem fabula talem meruit expositionem, ut prae textu irrisione sit dignior.”

25 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Replica magne continencie* (V 58r; ed. Scotto 2012, p. 123): “Illa ratio forte que precipua est nunc accurrit, quia cum secundum eorum legem semper eorum propheta sit unus per successionem Mahumeti locum tenens, semper se remittent ad illius iudicium, quod in Iudeis non contingit nullum dominum habentibus temporale utque ille predictor in suo dicit tractatu apud maiores Sarracenorum agendum est ceteris omnibus illi sua iudicia submittentibus.” In Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Liber peregrinationis*, the caliph as “successor Machometis” is mentioned, but not the expression “semper se remittent ad illius iudicium.” However, the idea of suppression could easily be deduced from Riccoldo's notes, cf. *Liber peregrinationis*, ed. Kappler 1997, pp. 154–156 (as above, note 17).

other point is the argument of the falsification of the scriptures (*taḥrīf*). He clearly indicates that he had read this in Riccoldo's book, most probably *Contra legem*.²⁶

Further material that John seems to treat with respect to Riccoldo can be found in the four *avisamenta* at the end of *De gladio*, a kind of rule set for Christians on how to address Muslim dialogue partners. These more or less general pieces of advice are de facto more than four, as each point is often divided into two or three sub-items.²⁷ Some of them apparently correspond to Riccoldo's *Regulae* and are quite similar. Looking more at the details, however, one can easily see that John neither copies nor even follows Riccoldo and no direct quotation can be identified.²⁸ Still, it cannot be excluded that John had read the *Regulae* and was inspired to conclude his work with similar advice of his own. It becomes clear that John transmits some basic features of his own theory on how to explain the Christian creed to non-Christians and how to determine the relationship between faith and reason in general, which would rarely be developed or accepted by Dominican friars.

The four pieces of advice are:

- advice I: not to discuss and to debate the tenets of faith through interpreters
- advice II: to deal with the Saracens with honesty and respect
- advice III: to address the leading persons, not only the lesser-ranking ones, as they are the only ones allowed to discuss subjects relating to law and belief
- advice IV: to be prudent not to explain the great truths of faith to those who cannot accept them and would deride or ridicule them according to Matthew 7:6, "do not cast your pearls before swine"; to be firmly convinced that faith is not contradictory to reason and science, but corresponds with divine reason.

Advice I is similar to Riccoldo's *regula* I, but the latter is more concrete, especially in the consequence, namely to learn Arabic and its dialects. As John had direct experi-

26 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Consid. 32, ll. 174–178: "Ut autem legi in parvo quodam libello praedicatoris unius, qui dicit se moratum diu inter Sarracenos, ubi viget studium eorum, et cum eis plures habuisse collationes de lege, Sarraceni Christianis imponunt falsificasse evangeliorum librum." Cf. Ibidem, Consid. 29, ll. 223–227. *Contra legem* is also called *libellus* in Vat. lat. 4071, f. 29r, but *tractatus* in *Replica magne continencie*, cf. above, note 11. The subject of the corruption of scripture is discussed in *Contra legem*, ch. 3, ll. 22–43 (Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, ed. Mérioux 1986, pp. 71–72); Riccoldo mentions his sojourn in Baghdad in *Contra legem*, prol., ll. 56–61.

27 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Consid. 38, ll. 431–563.

28 Vigliano 2017, pp. 287–296, esp. 289, assumes a more direct dependence of John from Riccoldo with respect to the *Regulae* and the systematization of his method which cannot be confirmed in this article.

ence in talking to Muslims and it was a well-known fact that merchants were unable to translate matters of faith, one cannot deduce much from this similarity. Advice II, often repeated and reflected in John's works, is not represented in the *Regulae*, however Riccoldo reports frequently on polite customs and the use of the honorific in the Orient. *Regula* IV proposes "eis loqui reverenter et humiliter", but only because of the hypocritical nature of the Orientals, not because they were misled and blinded to the truths of the Christian faith.²⁹ Advice III and IV are covered entirely by the content of *regula* IV, but do not share its presuppositions. *Regula* V, an exhortation to the future missionary, has no equivalent in John's *avisamenta*, apart from the general hint that the legates should have a clear knowledge of the matters of faith that should be explained. However, that is not mentioned in his four *avisamenta* and it is not explained in as much detail as in *regula* II (Christian expositions) and *regula* III (knowledge about Christian denominations) about the scholarly preparation that missionaries need in order to talk to the Oriental Christians Riccoldo mainly aims at. Obviously, John could have developed the *avisamenta* on his own, as they are more or less explicitly rooted in his theology and personal experience.

In sum, there is little material taken from Riccoldo. While John of Ragusa's passages about Muslim belief were nearly completely drawn or paraphrased from Riccoldo, John of Segovia followed the translation of Robert of Ketton. He always mistrusted Riccoldo to a certain extent. Even when he questioned the translation by Robert with which he had worked, he did not recourse to Riccoldo as an expert. He started right from the beginning with a completely new translation made by a Muslim, not by a Christian with the help of a Muslim, as Robert did. Nor did John content himself with the various partial translations that he found in works by Christians. In this respect, John seems to be a kind of pre-humanistic scholar with an eagerness to obtain the best possible available sources, which seemed to exclude the writings of Riccoldo, in John's opinion.

This is due to the fundamental difference in their theological background and the completely different methodology of mission and interreligious discussions. John had become acquainted with the Dominican theory of anti-Islamic disputation in his early years. In his *Repetitio de fide catholica* from 1427, he quotes Thomas Aquinas and his *Summa contra gentiles* I 6 or refers to material he obviously read in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*, both Dominicans.³⁰ As his Dominican confrère Ramon Martí, Riccoldo directly and indirectly depends on Thomas Aquinas. This is well established and can easily be verified by the many quotations one can find, such as, for example, in

29 Cf. Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Ad nationes, regula* IV: see Dondaine 1967, p. 169.

30 Cf. Madrigal Terrazas 2004, pp. 223–225.

Contra legem ch. 1, l. 100, he quotes from the same source as Ramon Martí, i.e., Thomas's *Summa contra gentiles* I 6, as John will do more than hundred years later. In *Ad nationes orientales* it is again the *Summa contra gentiles* that is used for different passages.

John never supported or even accepted the Dominican method. According to him, faith and reason or science are compatible in the same act.³¹ That results in a completely different methodology of mission. In *Contra legem* ch. 2, Riccoldo shows that one cannot prove the belief in the divine Trinity. With Isaiah 7:9, "nisi credideritis, non intelligetis," he confirms that some Christian tenets can only be proposed and shown by relying on the Bible, not by demonstrating them with reason. Therefore, one has to first destroy the Islamic revelation in itself and bring its prophet into discredit; second, prove the reliability of the divine scripture; and third, show the Christian tenets on the basis of scripture as authority.³² John is actually in accordance with Riccoldo's first step.³³ Yet, he clearly reflects that this first step cannot be accepted by someone who still casts doubt on the Christian faith and is convinced of the truth of his prejudices. Therefore, John insists on a respectful way of dealing with Muslims, not because he thinks that there is much truth in the Qur'an, as Nicholas might think, but because this respect is the only reasonable, practicable and Christian way to convince Muslims of the Christian truth. However, according to John, Riccoldo's second step is not inevitable. John displays a different conception of belief and reason. This makes it superfluous to prove the divine origin of Christian scripture. Therefore, the argument of the falsification of the Christian scripture surprises John, but he does not dwell very long on refuting it because it is of no systematic importance for his missionary strategy. Of course, John does not reject Isaiah 7:9, but he believes that through reason one can

31 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *Repetitio de fide catholica* (ed. Madrigal Terrazas 2004), p. 205: "Prima est quod habitus fidei et habitus scientiae possunt simul esse. ... Et secunda propositio quod habitus scientiae est compossibilis cum actu fidei." Cf. the different conception in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II q. 1, a. 5.

32 Cf. Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem*, ch. 2, ll. 18–21 and 63–65: "Et licet non habeamus rationes ad probandam Trinitatem et alia que sunt fidei, quia tunc fides non esset fides, nec meritoria, habemus tamen auctoritatem Euangelii cui et Alchoranus dat testimonium, et habemus miracula. ... insistendum est ad confutationem tam perfide legis, et ostendendum quod non sit lex Dei, et quod Saraceni tenentur recipere auctoritatem Euangelii et ueteris Testamenti."

33 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Consid. 29, ll. 177–179 and 184–187: "Non vero sic est de secta Sarracenorum, siquidem negato, quod Mahumet fuit verus propheta dei, nullam aliam scripturam habent, per quam hoc intentum suum probare valeant. ... Etenim cum tota eorum secta dependere videatur ex eo solum, quod affirmant Mahumet fuisse dei verum prophetam, ut verisimiliter creditur, nullatenus audire vellent, quoscumque in principio locutionis blasphemantes prophetam suum."

access the main Christian tenets. Christian dogmata are accessible and provable by divine reason which is beyond the capacity of human reason and should not be confused with it, though human reason can follow and unfold the rationality of divine reason. Thus, the most important step in practice, if not in theory, is not the destruction of the Islamic revelation, but respect for the sincerity of their believers in order to open the way to discuss Christian faith by reason, not by authority (*auctoritates*). Only an honourable way of dealing with them as religious actors will open their minds and their hearts to hear those arguments that could destroy their false prejudices about the Christian faith, and then motivate them to follow those arguments taken from reason alone that will prove the Christian truths and then make them reject deviating opinions.

Together with Riccoldo and many others, John is convinced that the Qur'an is the work of Satan, and that the prophet is his instrument. But this theory requires a different practice. John no longer considers Muslims simply to be devilish and wicked, as he did in his *Repetitio de fide catholica*, but deceived and misled. John's general theological standpoint opens for him a way to deal with Muslims as potential Christians, that is "via pacis et doctrinae", and to open the idea of Christian council even to those more notorious heretics. John repeatedly points out how the Council of Basel had successfully negotiated with the Hussites who at that time were considered as heretics and who were compared with the Muslims not just by coincidence.³⁴

NICHOLAS OF CUSA

Nicholas of Cusa came into contact with Riccoldo's work very late in his intellectual career, specifically in his last ten or even five years.³⁵ We cannot thus claim that Riccoldo was an important author to him, at least not compared with Raimundus Lullus, Dionysius Areopagita, Meister Eckhart, Proklos and many others. *Contra legem Sarracenorum* is in fact the only of Riccoldo's works that Nicholas mentions in the foreword to his *Cribratio Alkorani*: "Vidi post hoc Romae libellum fratris Ricoldi Ordinis praedicatorum, qui Arabicis litteris in Baldach operam dedit, et plus ceteris placuit." (*Cribratio*, prologus, n. 4).³⁶ *Contra legem* is also the only work preserved

34 Cf. Soukup 2013; Wolf 2014, pp. 111–114; Roth 2021.

35 On Cusanus and Islam, see esp. Hagemann 1976; Euler 2010; Pasqua 2013; Levy *et al.* 2014.

36 The *Cribratio Alkorani* is quoted according to Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio Alkorani*, ed. Hagemann 1986.

in the manuscripts that can be traced back to Nicholas and his famous library.³⁷ As Nicholas normally tried to obtain most of the oeuvre of an author he appreciated, it seems likely that he had never read more than this one work of Riccoldo. Apart from the marginalia to his manuscript of *Contra legem*, the references in the *Cribratio* and some marginalia to the *Alkoranus latinus*, which José Martínez Gázquez recently identified in the Vatican manuscript Vat. lat. 4071,³⁸ we do not have any other material to determine what Nicholas knew and thought about this Dominican friar over 150 years older than himself and how much he had read of him. According to his writings, the only work he had read was *Contra legem*. It is most probable that Nicholas had no access to other works by Riccoldo, especially not *Ad nationes orientales* or its *Regulae*. If his exemplar of *Contra legem* traces back to the manuscript Vat. lat. 7317, which contains *Contra legem* and the *Epistulae ad Ecclesiam Triumphantem*,³⁹ one could speculate whether he had seen these letters. However, there are no hints to be found in his works to suggest this to be the case, and the chronology of Nicholas's knowledge of Riccoldo opposes it.⁴⁰ In addition, the *Liber peregrinationis* does not play any role in his argumentation.⁴¹

WHEN DID NICHOLAS FIRST COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE WORK OF RICCOLDO?

A copy of *Contra legem* is to be found in Codex Cusanus 107, at the end of the codex, after *Contra perfidiam Mahometi* of Denis the Carthusian (about 1402–1471). As Denis finished his lengthy opus on Islam before the death of Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455), we can presume that the copy of *Contra legem* was only added to the work of Denis some years later. According to Mérioux, the copy of *Contra legem* could depend on the manuscript Vat. lat. 7317, an enormous collection of “Islamica” dating from 1458 and belonging to the library of Cardinal Domenico Capranica

37 Cf. Codex Cusanus 107, f. 194r–232r. At the present state of knowledge, one cannot determine if this manuscript is the one he had seen in Rome or if it only is a copy. There are many marginalia from Nicholas's own hand and their content and context are closely connected to the *Cribratio*, so one could hardly imagine Nicholas to have annotated this manuscript after having finished writing the *Cribratio*.

38 Cf. Martínez Gázquez 2015; 2016.

39 Cf. Dondaine 1967, p. 133.

40 George-Tvrtković (2012a, p. 41) thinks of some similarities of the *Epistulae* and *De pace fidei*, but without precise arguments. The same holds true for her article ‘After the fall’ (2012b).

41 Costigliolo (2010, pp. 339, 347) points to the traits Nicholas gives the Tatars in *De pace fidei* which could indicate a relation to this text. But she herself refers to difficulties this assumption would provoke.

(1400–1458), who died on 14 August 1458.⁴² Cusanus claims to have seen Riccoldo's work in Rome. He arrived in Rome in the summer of 1458 after having left his diocese of Brixen. If Nicholas added any marginalia in Capranica's manuscript, it should be examined in future studies, but Mériçoux gave no indication about this and the digitized version of the manuscript seems to show no marginalia at all.⁴³ Of course, Nicholas intended to supply Pope Pius II with information about Islam and with his own idea of how to deal with it. Therefore, scholars normally dated the *Cribratio Alkorani* to be finished before the letter of Pius II written for Mehmet II, which was finalized after September or October 1461. As he mentions the *Tractatus* of John of Torquemada, which was completed in 1459, the *Cribratio* should accordingly be finished after 1459 and before October 1461.⁴⁴ Yet, no traces of the *Cribratio* can be found in the letter of Pius II. In Vat. lat. 4071, Nicholas indicates when he commentated this manuscript which he used for the *Cribratio*: "Nota quando liber fuit translatus: 1143. Sunt nunc 1462."⁴⁵ From this note one could even infer that Nicholas accomplished the *Cribratio* very late, maybe even after autumn 1461 and after the letter of Pius II, so he would not have been able to influence Pius II directly. However, Nicholas seems to have read Riccoldo, if one follows his summary in the *Cribratio*, after Denis, but before John of Torquemada, and so a date before 1459 is indicated.⁴⁶ A second examination after a first reading could have happened when working on the *Cribratio* and writing the marginalia in Vat. lat. 4071.

As he had read a couple of lengthy books about Islam, including the *Alkoranus latinus*, Denis the Carthusian and the *Rescriptum Christiani et Sarraceni*, and also shorter works such as Thomas Aquinas's *De rationibus fidei*, it is remarkable or even astonishing that he ranks Riccoldo higher than these authors, all the more as there are fundamental divergences between his own and Riccoldo's general concepts and methods

42 Some information about this manuscript and Riccoldo can be found in Weltecke 2007.

43 See http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.7317.

44 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), pp. XIII–XIV.

45 Cf. Martínez Gázquez 2016, p. 474, n. 4.

46 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio*, prol., n. 4, ll. 1–8, h VIII, pp. 6–7: "Demum concitavi fratrem Dionysium Carthusiensem, ut scriberet contra Alkoranum; qui fecit et misit opus suum magnum Nicolao papae. Vidi post hoc Romae libellum fratris Ricoldi Ordinis Praedicatorum, qui Arabicis litteris in Baldach operam dedit, et plus ceteris placuit. Vidi et aliorum fratrum de ea materia scripturas Catholicas, maxime sancti Thomae de rationibus fidei ad Cantorem Antiochenum et ultimo reverendissimi domini cardinalis sancti Sixti [sc. Johannis de Tur-recremata] haereses et errores Mahumeti vivis rationibus confutantis." "Demum – post hoc – ultimo" seems to indicate a chronological order.

regarding the understanding of Islam, as will be shown. His high regard for Riccoldo can be inferred from several of his remarks:⁴⁷

- “quidam sapiens ...”: *Cribratio*, I, ch. 4, n. 29, l. 2 (h VIII, p. 29)
- “quidam devotus et Arabicae linguae peritus, qui in Baldach studio Akorani operam dedit ...”: *Cribratio*, I, ch. 5, n. 37, ll. 6–7 (h VIII, p. 35)
- “quidam peritus”: *Cribratio*, I, ch. 6, n. 40, l. 7 (h VIII, p. 37)
- in the marginalia, Cusanus refers to him more briefly and technically as “frater Riccoldus” (Vat. lat. 4071, ff. 29r; 33r).⁴⁸

MATERIAL TAKEN FROM RICCOLDO IN THE *CRIBRATIO*

Nicholas probably never met a Muslim in person. Although he was interested in these subjects and had already attempted to get direct and reliable information about this religion before and during his voyage to Constantinople in 1437, his knowledge was meagre compared to the first-hand information of the expert and missionary Riccoldo. As a consequence, much of the material on Islam, the Qur'an, Muhammad and the Near East is taken from Riccoldo. From the very start of his *Cribratio*, Nicholas depends on the help of *Contra legem* when he discusses the differences in sura numbering systems between the Latin tradition of Robert of Ketton and the general Arabic tradition in the beginning of *Cribratio*, I, ch. 1, n. 20 (h VIII, p. 21).⁴⁹ Working on his own translation of the Qur'an from Arabic via Spanish, John was no longer interested in this characteristic of Robert's translation.⁵⁰ Riccoldo explains the Arabic numbering of the suras in *Contra legem* ch. 11, ll. 19–27, from sura 2 up to sura 5, both by numbering them and by quoting their Arabic name. More than other authors, Riccoldo must have been the expert and specialist in Islamic studies in Nicholas's eyes. There are other suras whose names are cited according to Riccoldo in the *Cribratio*. Besides sura 2 and sura 3 we find 'Elmeide' ("desk") (sura 5; *Cribratio*, I, ch. 5, n. 37, l. 7, h VIII, p. 35), taken from *Contra legem*, ch. 16, 'Eluael' as "palm tree" (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 4, n. 29, l. 15, h VIII, p. 30, taken from *Contra legem*, 6), and 'capitulum prophetarum' (*Cribratio*, II, I, ch. 3, n. 170, l. 2, h VIII, p. 137, taken from *Contra legem*, 7). Yet, where Riccoldo does not provide the necessary information, Nicholas is not able to identify the sura appropriately. The sura of the Seven Sleepers which is not named in *Contra legem* is

47 Cf. Martínez Gázquez 2016, p. 488.

48 Cf. Martínez Gázquez 2016, p. 479, n. 18, and p. 491.

49 Cf. for the philological background Castells Criballés 2007.

50 Cf. the text of his *Praefatio in translationem*, in Martínez Gázquez 2003.

therefore called ‘capitulum septem dormientium’ in *Cribratio*, III, ch. 10, n. 190, l. 2 (h VIII, p. 152), although this is not the correct Arabic name (sura 18, *al kahf*).⁵¹ With the *Alkoranus latinus*, Nicholas was not able to give the correct names of these suras by his own. He even quoted the Qur’anic verse 5:46 twice, according to *Alkoranus latinus* (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 5, n. 36, ll. 9–11, h VIII, p. 34) and *Contra legem* ch. 16 (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 5, n. 37, ll. 7–10, h VIII, p. 35; cf. Codex Cusanus 107, f. 229r).⁵² Because of the great differences in the two translations and his limited knowledge of the Qur’an, Nicholas was not able to identify these passages as two translations of the same text. Characteristically, this is the only quotation from the Qur’an taken from Riccoldo; for the rest, Nicholas always draws from Robert of Ketton. Nicholas did not try to reconstruct the true wording of the Qur’an, for example, by comparing the text of *Alkoranus latinus* with the quotations in *Contra legem* and the *Epistula Saraceni* (pseudo-Al-Kindi). Reading and studying Riccoldo and other writings about Islam, especially those which seemed to deliver first-hand material, never led Nicholas to question the reliability of the *Alkoranus latinus* or that of his other sources, and so in this respect we should not call Nicholas a humanist. John of Segovia was far more critical or even sceptical towards his sources, And it was he who on the one hand was far more deeply rooted in traditional theological thinking than Nicholas, but who on the other hand developed his biblical philological accurateness to a new kind of humanistic philological criticism. Thomas Burman summarized this trait as “the oscillation between polemic and philology.”⁵³

In the *Cribratio Alkorani*, many different observations or remarks can be traced back to Riccoldo, while only a few, mostly concerning Muhammad and his life, to pseudo-Al-Kindi. Among them there are several of Nicholas and Riccoldo’s prejudices, such as: “multi sapientes eorum secrete evangelium summa devotione amplectuntur” (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 6, n. 40, ll. 5–6, h VIII, p. 37); “sapientes eorum sciunt, quod falsitas Alkorani de facili deprehenderetur, si ad legendum sacros et veraces dictos libros admitterentur” (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 6, n. 40, ll. 8–10, h VIII, p. 37; *Contra legem*, ch. 15); “deo ... mendacium adscribi ... in Alkorano pro maximo peccato habetur” (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 7, n. 43, ll. 14–16, h VIII, p. 39; *Contra legem*, ch. 12); “quendam Califam Christianum crucem in secreto pectoris continue portasse ac philosophos Alkoranum deridere” (*Cribratio*, II, ch. 1, n. 87, ll. 11–12, h VIII, p. 73; *Contra legem*, ch. 13). Following Riccoldo, but misinterpreting him, Nicholas assumes that a caliph still reigns in Baghdad, whom he addresses personally at the end of his work (*Cribratio*, III, ch.

51 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), p. 227, n. 84.

52 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), p. 227, n. 84.

53 Burman 2007) p. 186; cf. Roth 2014, p. 557.

18, n. 224, ll. 3–12, h VIII, p. 178; *Contra legem*, ch. 16). He is said to prohibit lectures on philosophy and the Christian gospel (*Cribratio*, II, ch. 1, n. 87, ll. 8–10, h VIII, p. 86). “Lord” (“dominus”) is the main name of God for Muslims who are not able to distinguish the use of this title for God from its use as a salutatory address (*Cribratio*, Alius prologus, n. 12, ll. 10–15, h VIII, p. 14; *Contra legem*, ch. 9). Sometimes, different sources seem to form a common ground for Nicholas’s concepts. Qur’an means collection or “praeceptorum collectio” (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 1, n. 20, l. 3, h VIII, p. 21), which is confirmed by “collectaneum praeceptorum” in *Contra legem*, prologus, ll. 47–48, Mérigoux, 62, but Petrus Venerabilis already had called it “collectio praeceptorum.”⁵⁴ The same is true about the tradition that four different Qur’ans had once existed (*Cribratio*, I, n. 21, ll. 4–8, h VIII, 22; *Contra legem*, ch. 13, but also pseudo-Al-Kindi). Yet, the explanation of the name Furqan as “separation” is taken from the *Doctrina Machumeti* (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 1, n. 20, l. 4, h VIII, p. 21) because there is no equivalent in *Contra legem* to explain this word.

The whole chapter *Cribratio*, I, ch. 4, h VIII, pp. 29–33, ‘Quod Alkoranus fide caret, ubi sacris scripturis contradicit,’ relies in many points on *Contra legem*, ch. 6 and 9. A long quotation is taken verbatim from *Contra legem*, ch. 6, ll. pp. 62–71. While Riccoldo tries to demonstrate the Qur’an to be self-contradicting, Nicholas only illustrates Muhammad’s dependence on several non-Arabic, namely heretic or Jewish, teachers. They are said to have provided him with views and narrations in the Qur’an that conflict with Christian truths even today. He learns from Riccoldo that Muhammad was illiterate and that his language skills were limited to the Arabic language (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 4, n. 29, ll. 2–11, h VIII, pp. 29–30; *Contra legem*, ch. 6). This is closely connected with another set of problems, that is to say, the inconsistency of the Qur’an and Islamic doctrine as a whole.

As to the aim of Muhammad’s preaching, Nicholas tends to follow Riccoldo. Confronted with the fact that his mission to both Jews and Christians was going to fail, Muhammad, who was convinced of being the foretold of the New Testament (cf. John 14:16 and 14:26, and sura 61:6), is said to have been inclined to react with violence. Nicholas adopts this common position in Christian anti-Muslim polemic from Riccoldo’s *Contra legem*, ch. 9. He also attests this idea by quoting a non-Qur’anic verse taken from ch. 7, ll. 41–44, “Iussit deus me gentes gladio expugnare” (*Cribratio*, II, ch. 3, n. 168, ll. 7–8, h VIII, p. 136), together with other material taken from the Qur’an via Riccoldo (*Contra legem*, ch. 6, 7 and 9). When repeating these reproaches (*Cribratio*, III, ch. 8, n. 184, ll. 2–4, h VIII, p. 148), he makes use of different sources. Many medieval authors, including Petrus the Venerable, were able to endorse his conclusion:

⁵⁴ Cf. Petrus Venerabilis, *Summa totius haeresis*, n. 1, l. 15 (ed. Glei 1985, p. 2).

But you have seemed to me, oh Muhammad, to have sought the power of dominating under the pretext of religion. For you reduce all [matters] to the sword; and even by the sword you strive to obtain tribute.⁵⁵

But Nicholas is not willing to follow Riccoldo—and with him most medieval Christian writers—in proclaiming that neither God nor Muhammad is the main author of the Qur'an, but the devil himself (*Contra legem*, ch. 13). Nicholas annotated many passages in his exemplar in Codex Cusanus 107, but not this statement. He does not follow Riccoldo in this radical idea. Of course, Nicholas excludes the possibility of God being the author of the Qur'an based on the many errors he finds in it. One striking example for him is the name of Maria's father who is not Imram or Amram, but Joachim (*Cribratio*, I, c. 4, n. 32, ll. 8–14, h VIII, p. 32). This piece of information is taken from *Contra legem*, c. 9, ll. 119–129. Nicholas tried to elucidate the reason for the strange mingling of the name Mary or Miriam with that of the sister of Aaron, thus seemingly confusing the sister of Moses with the mother of Jesus. This puzzling problem challenged an enquiring mind such as that of Nicholas. Even today, it can only be solved—whether or not convincingly is a matter of debate—by introducing further assumptions. One of the lengthiest passages he writes in the margin of the *Alcoranus latinus* in Vat. lat. 4071 deals with this very issue. Nicholas already discussed this in the Codex Cusanus 108, f. 37r.⁵⁶ But it was obviously Riccoldo's expertise in the Qur'an and Arabic which leads him to his conclusion. In Vat. lat. 4071, f. 32r, he even replaces the name Joachim with Amram in the Latin text of the Qur'an and he notes in the margin to sura 3:33–35: “vxor Ioachim. verus textus dicit Amram.” The final statement, that the original text has Amram, i.e., Imram, must have been deduced from Riccoldo. At the end of sura 2, Vat. lat. 4071, f. 31v, Nicholas notes: “Intitulatur solet Amram. et quidam libri habent hunc tertium capitulum (c. *abbrev.*) et ita secundum de vacca durat usque huc.” The identification of sura 3 as sura Al Imram is repeated in *Cribratio*, I, ch. 5, n. 35, ll. 4–5, h VIII, pp. 34–35: “in principio V capituli

55 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), III, ch. 8, n. 184, ll. 2–4, p. 148, and the list of possible sources for this assumption (translation according to Jasper Hopkins): “Sed visus es mihi, o Mahumete, praetextu religionis dominandi potentatum quaesivisse; omnia enim gladium resolvit et gladio saltem ad tributum pervenire contendis.”

56 Codex Cusanus 108, f. 37r: “de Joachim et Anna et sancta Maria filia”, and another marginal written at a different time with another quill: “nota quod alibi legitur textum dicere sic uxor Amram et cetera et fuit Amram pater Mariae sororis Moisi / et reprehenditur iste liber de mendacio et ignorantia in hoc per prudentes.” Maybe “prudentes” hints to experts like Riccoldo, and thus this marginal could have been written when Cusanus was working on the *Cribratio*.

seu Soret Amram”, and in *Cribratio*, I, ch. 1, n. 20, ll. 8–10, h VIII, p. 21: “Orientales vero primam Azoaram aiunt durare usque Soret Amram, quod est quintum capitulum in libro Hispaniarum.”

Nicholas returns to this question in the final chapters of his book. In *Cribratio*, III, ch. 17, n. 220–223, h VIII, pp. 174–178, when he calls the Sultan of Baghdad to proclaim the belief in Maria as Mother of God, *theotocon*. The issue of Mary as Aaron’s sister finds a clear solution here, not very genial, but rather disappointing and prejudicial: “Considera, si Mahumetus per Iudaeos sibi assistentes deceptus fuit” (*Cribratio*, III, ch. 17, n. 221, ll. 12–13, h VIII, p. 176). Here we can see that Nicholas does not follow Riccoldo in the *Cribratio*. Although he considers him to be a great expert in Arabic, he quotes Ketton’s translation. He does not try to examine his source thoroughly, but contents himself with a reliable and comprehensible text. A pre-humanistic *ad fontes*, back to the sources, is not his primary goal. That this could be reproached in a real discourse with Muslim scholars does not seem to bother him; indeed, he does not even appear to realize it. For other topics, for example, Abraham and his belief, Nicholas is more dependent on other writings, for example, on the *Doctrina Mahumeti* (*Cribratio*, III, ch. 12, n. 198–203, h VIII, pp. 158–162).

All in all, the impact of Riccoldo on Nicholas is not as great as one could conclude from the hymn of praise with which Nicholas introduces Riccoldo. Sometimes Nicholas and Riccoldo share similar opinions, although the precise wording differs. Nicholas reads Riccoldo quite closely. When the matter does not seem to be clear, Nicholas drops the item—he is not interested in mere speculation. One prominent example is the moral disqualification of the Qur’an by imputing its proclamations. This idea seems to originate from Riccoldo.⁵⁷ Nicholas does not deduce the same idea from the Qur’an and does not treat the subject in the *Cribratio*. In *Cribratio*, II, ch. 19, n. 156, ll. 1–5, h VIII, pp. 126–127, he quotes the Qur’an according to Ketton’s translation, but omits the allusion to sodomy. In Vat. lat. 4071, f. 29r, one finds the reasons why Nicholas is reluctant to mention this point in his own work:

In Riccoldo’s book one finds the whole surah about the cow, and that it is said in that way, that they shall not pollute themselves with infidels if they do not believe. In the same way: Your women are your field, plough [them] as you like. But here the translator says: Treat the women that are subjected to you in the way you wish and wherever you want. Brother Riccoldo understands here that sodomy is permitted, but in the same chapter he rejects it

57 Cf. Martínez Gázquez 2016, p. 490.

when he says that the Sodomites in the time of Loth practised this abominable vice, unknown to former nations.⁵⁸

Thus, Nicholas contents himself with quoting the *Alkoranus latinus* and discussing the problem of polygamy, not sodomy:

That is also proved by many other things which he permitted regarding women, as, for example, the following in chapter 3: "Treat the women that are subjected to you in the way you wish and wherever you want." And in chapter 8 he permits as many wives as each man is able to dominate, or chastise.⁵⁹

On the one hand, Riccoldo is an important and precious source for Nicholas, whose own knowledge about Islam and the Orient is limited compared with the expertise of Riccoldo. He informs us of his efforts to get more information when he had contact with the Dominicans in Pera during his voyage to Constantinople. On the other hand, using Riccoldo as a source and his lack of knowledge concerning the world of Islam do not force Nicholas simply to follow Riccoldo and to copy his results and conclusions. Even when working on Islam, Nicholas tries to do his best and works through the *Alkoranus latinus*. Where his favourite subjects are concerned, for example, Trinity and Christology, he is completely independent of Riccoldo and writes his lengthy explanations without taking Riccoldo's chapters on these problems into consideration. Both aspects, in some way, resemble John of Segovia. All in all, the whole structure,

58 Cf. the text in Martínez Gázquez 2016, p. 490, whose text has been slightly corrected: "Habetur in libello fratris Ricoldi, hanc omnem azoram de vacca [i.e., sura 2:221 and 223] et quod sic dicatur quod non polluant se cum infidelibus nisi credant. Item mulieres uestre aratura vestra arate ut vultis. hic autem translator dicit (ml scr. et del.) mulieres vobis subiectas penitus pro modo vestro ubicumque volueritis parate. intelligit frater Ricoldus sodomiam hic permittere, sed in eodem capitulo reprehendit cum dicit quod illi sodomite tempore loth operati sunt abhominabile viciū pristinīs nacionibus insuetum." Nicholas does not criticize Riccoldo who had already realized that the Qur'an rejects sodomy. The passage in Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem*, ch. 6, ll. 38–43 (ed. Mérioux 1986, p. 84), reads: "Item in capitulo de vacca concedit sodomiam tam cum masculo quam cum femina. Dicit enim saracenis quod 'non polluant se cum infidelibus nisi credant'; et de mulieribus dicit: 'Mulieres uestre aratura uestra, arate eas ut vultis'. Et tamen in eodem capitulo prius dicit quod illi sodomite tempore Loth operati sunt 'abhominabile uiciū et pristinīs nationibus insuetum'."

59 Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), II, ch. 19, n. 156, ll. 2–6, pp. 126–127 (translation according to Jasper Hopkins): "Probant et hoc plura, quae circa mulieres permisit, ut illud capitulo III: 'Mulieres vobis subiectas penitus pro modo vestro, ubicumque vulueritis, parate.' Et capitulo VIII tot permittit uxores, quod quiverit quisque subiugare seu castigare."

substance and direction of the *Cribratio* is completely independent from Riccoldo. It is deeply rooted in Nicholas's own speculative theology, which he developed further with regard to new challenges both from outside, for example, Islam, and from inside. The *Cribratio* is not a simple adaptation of his ideas from *De pace fidei*, written nearly a decade previously. The central idea of presupposition is now extended to a broader methodology with *manuductio* and *pia interpretatio*.⁶⁰

The differences from Riccoldo become manifest from the beginning of the *Cribratio*. In order to prepare a pious interpretation of the Qur'an, Nicholas starts his deliberations by introducing Muhammad as a harmless Christian, who was misled both by his Nestorian and thus heretic teacher Sergius⁶¹ and the Jews. They led him either to misinterpret Jesus Christ and his mother Maria or to make Christians ridiculous, insinuating that they were venerating their bishops and clerics as gods when calling them "domini". As a young, simple-minded and unfortunately misled Christian, Muhammad never thought of contesting or rejecting the belief in God's Trinity (*Cribratio*, Alius prologus, n. 11–15, h VIII, pp. 21–17). These short statements in the second prologue depend heavily on general assumptions about Muhammad in medieval Christian polemics. Nevertheless, they already reflect Nicholas's method in contrast to that of Riccoldo.⁶² Of course, Nicholas does not absolve Muhammad in all respects. However, he does not see him "as an adversary of Christ but as a (partly unwitting) vehicle of Christ's self-disclosure to the Arabs".⁶³ This is the central hermeneutical idea for Nicholas, to which he returns in the third book of *Cribratio*, III, ch. 5, n. 178, h VIII,

60 Cf. Kerger 2009, pp. 107–225.

61 The legend of Sergius or Bahira as Muhammad's teacher mingles various heretic features, which either can be traced back to Arius, who did not accept the divinity of Jesus Christ as being of the same nature (*homoousios*) as the father, or to Nestorius, who questioned the expression mother of God (*theotokos*). The short explanation of Nicholas in *Cribratio* n. 14 refers to Sergius/Nestorius to follow the so-called Nestorian Christological heresy, denying a real union of God and man in Jesus Christ. Nicholas indicates that he follows pseudo-Al-Kindi here, although he could have taken this information from *Contra legem* or indirectly from the compilation he could read in Denis the Carthusian's work. In Codex Cusanus 108, f. 116rb (pseudo-Al-Kindi) he notes in the margin: "Nota historiam veram de ortu Mahmeth", but explains the Nestorian heresy on his own. Cf. *Cribratio* (h VIII), Alius prologus, n. 11, ll. 2–3, p. 13: "Refert nobilis ille Arabs Christianus, de quo supra memini, Sergium monachum ..." Cf. also the *Index fontium*, ibidem, ad locum.

62 Hopkins 1994, p. 77, discusses this passage and stresses the difference from Riccoldo in a similar way.

63 Hopkins 1994, p. 71. However, I would not agree in the following, though tentative statement of Hopkins about Riccoldo (p. 71): "But it is remarkable that Nicholas and, in an inchoate way, Riccoldo himself approach the Koran through *pia interpretatio*."

p. 143, and which guides him in his Philippic against the sultan in *Cribratio*, III, ch. 18, n. 224–228, h VIII, pp. 178–181.

It seems strange that Muhammad never seems to have questioned the concept of the Trinity, as we know that normally Christian medieval authors were well aware that Islam rejects Trinitarian faith. Even Nicholas observes that various suras seem to oppose the Christian creed, especially sura 4:171–172, which he himself mentions in *Cribratio*, II, ch. 1, n. 87, ll. 13–18, h VIII, p. 73. Riccoldo names this as the first error in the long and detailed list with which he starts his *Contra legem* (*Contra legem*, ch. 1, ll. 7–13). Yet he does not confront Muhammad's preaching nor the Qur'an with the binary code of truth and error. He does not write against the law of the Saracens, but he searches for the truth in it. Therefore, he strengthens both the idea of *pia interpretatio*, a benevolent or pious interpretation, and that of rationality, *manuductio* and *intellectus* in its very specific, non-scholastic, rather pre-humanist way of thinking.⁶⁴ Nicholas's philosophical–theological speculations about the Trinity allow him to reconcile in his Latin translation the explicit and obvious monotheism the Qur'an still preserves with the Trinitarian nature of God. God as *unitas* or *infinitem*, considered in itself, is absolutely one. Even though Nicholas associates different ideas with the Muslim creed, the *shahada*, he is well aware of the clear monotheism it proclaims.⁶⁵

Only in respect to creation and the plurality of beings must God as the origin of all be considered to be Trinitarian.⁶⁶ This is necessary from a philosophical perspective and indispensable to avoid contradictions in the Qur'an itself, too. Nicholas points to some verses that are still being discussed to this day, such as “Iesus Mariae filius deique nuntius suusque spiritus et verbum Mariae caelitus missum existit” (sura 4:171; *Cribratio*, II, ch. 11, n. 112, ll. 9–10, h VIII, p. 91). To this scriptural proof from the Qur'an Nicholas adds the classical proof of Scholastic theology taken from the scripture, for example, the New Testament such as Matthew 28:19 (*Cribratio*, II, ch. 11, n. 114, ll. 10–11, h VIII, p. 92). As Nicholas already had stated in his letter to John of Segovia in 1454, it should be easy to convince the Saracens of the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity.⁶⁷

Riccoldo was a member of the Dominican Order and to judge from his writings, some kind of disciple of Ramon Martí. He supported the Dominican conception of

64 Cf. Roth 2000.

65 Cf. esp. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), III, ch. 1, n. 159, but also III, ch. 2, n. 165–167, pp. 134–136.

66 Cf. to this subject esp. Resch 2014.

67 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Epistula ad Iohannem de Segobia*, pp. 97–98, esp. p. 98, ll. 5–8: “Expertus sum tam apud Iudaeos quam ipsos Teucros non esse difficile persuadere trinitatem in unitate substantiae. Sed circa unionem ypostaticam, in qua principaliter ultra unum Deum colentes nostra fides consistit, non minus difficile erit nunc quam semper ab initio.”

the relationship of philosophy and theology. He would not have been able to share Nicholas's assumptions about the rationality of the Trinitarian belief and even less his non-Scholastic "demonstrations".⁶⁸ Nicholas's belief in and his emphasis on the rationality of the Christian fundamental dogmas helps him to not simply reject the Qur'an and its content. He is not reluctant to find some seeds of truth in this text and does not follow the Dominican scheme of argumentation. The Dominican strategy could be summarized as destruction and replacement, namely first to reject Muhammad's trustworthiness as a prophet, then to demonstrate how erroneous, abominable and contradictory to all human concepts of rationality and morality his prophecies are, finally to prove the reliability of the Christian scriptures in order to conclude with proving the Christian faith on the basis of the scripture. Therefore, Daniel Pachurka correctly categorized a writing he newly ascribed to Riccoldo as "Anti-Muhammad-Werk" in comparison to *Contra legem* as his "Anti-Qur'an-Werk",⁶⁹ which would reflect perfectly the preacher's way of thinking. The first point is to reject the anti-Christian objections and arguments of a false faith and then to reconstruct from this *tabula rasa* on the basis of the Holy Scripture, that is divine revelation, the true Christian faith. This method is reflected and recommended in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles* and in his *De rationibus fidei* and in some way, realized by Ramon Martí in his commentary on the Christian creed, the *Explanatio Symboli Christiani*, but also in his opus magnum, *Pugio fidei*.⁷⁰

John follows this method to a certain degree, but not Nicholas. A striking example is the way in which he deals with the denial of the crucifixion in the Qur'an. According to Nicholas, Muhammad did not openly confirm the crucifixion, because he wanted to prevent the Arabs from repudiating the Christian creed. As he could not explain the crucifixion without presupposing the dogma of the human and divine nature of the person of Jesus Christ, therefore he "maybe", as Nicholas says, hid the cruel death of Jesus Christ. Nicholas does not qualify this as false or even heretic, but stresses the possibility for the experts to explain the Christian dogma with the Qur'anic texts.⁷¹

68 Cf. Roth 2017, with further literature; Nicholas's concept of belief in comparison with Thomas Aquinas and others is developed in Roth 2000.

69 Cf. Pachurka 2016 in Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Tractatus seu disputatio*, p. XXXVIII.

70 Cf. Roth 2017, and esp. Giletti 2015, who with reference to the works of Laureano Robles clearly stresses the indebtedness of the *Pugio fidei* from the *Summa contra gentiles* and the *Summa theologiae*.

71 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), II, ch. 13, n. 124, ll. 3–12, p. 99: "Voluit igitur secundum piam interpretationem occultare ipsis vilem mortem et quod adhuc viveret et venturus esset affirmare. ... Dicit tamen hoc taliter, quod sapientes elicere possunt evangelium verissimum esse, ut patebit."

Of course, the Qur'an remains a more than problematic religious law to Nicholas's eyes. There are numerous items where he simply agrees with Riccoldo and follows him. Yet his method, as elaborated in *De pace fidei* and in some *Sermones* from 1453,⁷² which consists of demonstrating that Jews and Muslims implicitly believe in Jesus Christ, keeps him from simply rejecting the Qur'an as a whole. This optimism leads him to interpret sura 28:49, "Librum isto meliorem vestrum dictum affirmantem afferte eumque benivole sequar", as if Muhammad wanted his followers to acknowledge the Christian Gospel as the better book.⁷³ Nicholas is convinced that "the Gospel is the light of the truth of the Qur'an" (*Cribratio*, I, ch. 6, n. 39, l. 1, h VIII, p. 36). He does not even touch the idea of the falsification of Christian scripture, although he could have read about it in *Contra legem* ch. 3. Indeed, he should have realized its basic relevance for all argumentations taken from scripture. In some way, the concept of *pia interpretatio* causes a kind of organizational blindness in Nicholas's work.

The great differences in both method and substance become even more apparent in the way and the extent to which Nicholas relies on Riccoldo. The second book of *Cribratio* as a whole, containing Nicholas's systematic Trinitarian and Christological discourse, is written without any reference to Riccoldo although Nicholas estimates him highly and ranks him over all the other writings on Islam to which he had access. For Nicholas, Riccoldo is not an authority on these important dogmatic and systematic tenets and their communication. While he warmly recommends Riccoldo and borrows information from him, at the same time he bypasses his methodical principles and unfolds his own theological conclusions not only in a completely independent way, but even in contrast or even opposition to Dominican theology.

CONCLUSION

John and Nicholas come from quite different theological and ecclesiastical backgrounds, but have a similar experience in dealing with religious opponents that might have astonished Riccoldo. John is heavily indebted to his remarkable encounter and discussion with Muslims in 1431 where he was able to successfully combat their theological prejudices. Nicholas talks about a similar encounter with Jews and Turks

72 Cf. esp. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Sermo* 126, n. 7 (1453), ed. Donati 2007, pp. 22–23, ll. 1–50.

73 Cf. sura 28:49, and Nicolaus de Cusa, *Cribratio* (h VIII), I, ch. 4, n. 34, ll. 8–13, p. 33, with Nicholas's comment: "Librum isto meliorem vestrum dictum affirmantem afferte eumque benivole sequar. Ecce quomodo non vult affirmare Alkoranum evangelio praeferendum. Non sunt igitur ea, quae in Alkorano continentur, ut dei verba acceptanda, quando prioribus a deo traditis et per Alkoranum admissis libris adversantur."

whom he could convince of the rationality of the Christian belief in the Trinity.⁷⁴ They had witnessed the encounters of the Council of Basel with the Hussites and the fierce debates that finally led to a more or less viable agreement in the Prague *Compactata*. This was an outstanding example for both theologians of how one could try to deal with the Muslims *via pacis et doctrinae* or *via concilii*. In Basel, with the Prague *Compactata* as a result, the Western Church had—maybe for the first time—successfully negotiated with an enemy who was clearly thought to be heretical and whose obstinacy and unwillingness to abjure his errors could not be overcome by force. Riccoldo's personal experiences were far more negative, as can be seen in his *Epistulae ad Ecclesiam Triumphantem*. John and Nicholas focus on the positive results or, in a kind of basic optimism, neglect the negative aspects in the further development as the peace with the Hussites was quite fragile and threatened from both sides.

Besides this more general transcultural, historical and personal background, one should also take into account another factor with great impact in the 15th century. As Riccoldo was not a secular priest, but a member of the religious order of the Dominican friars, one should compare the methods of John and Nicholas with that of the great mendicant orders.⁷⁵ The theology of John of Segovia has many concepts and principles in common with Franciscan theology. However, these common features do not lead him to follow the previous methodology of mission already present in the first monastic rule of the Franciscan Order. They could be summarized under the general idea of humility, either by living as a Christian in simplicity and submission among the infidels or by openly confessing and preaching the Christian faith in the Trinity and the salvation in Jesus Christ.⁷⁶ On the contrary, John criticizes this (to his eyes) naïve way of preaching Christian truth or more precisely of causing disconcertment. According to him, it is completely useless or even counterproductive to confront those with the content of Christian faith who, because of prejudice and lack of knowledge, cannot help but misunderstand or repudiate both believers and belief. The effects up to his time had been meagre, modest or even nil. Not even martyrdom was granted to most of those awkward Christian missionaries, as John states with direct reference to Saint Francis.⁷⁷ Neither John nor Nicholas share the Franciscan concept of mission.

The same holds true for the Dominican methodology. Of course, both protagonists of the 15th century agree with the Dominican mendicants' emphasis on erudition

74 Cf. Nicolaus de Cusa, *Epistula ad Iohannem de Segobia*, p. 98, ll. 4–5: "Expertus sum tam apud Iudaeos quam ipsos Teucros non esse difficile persuadere trinitatem in unitate substantiae."

75 For a short comparison of their missionary strategies cf. Tolan 2002, pp. 214–255.

76 Cf. Müller 2002, pp. 115–134, with reference to *Regula non bullata*, ch. 16.

77 Cf. Johannes de Segobia, *De gladio*, Consid. 5, ll. 76–99, and Consid. 34, ll. 99–171. John even deliberates *ibidem* how the devil himself obstructs any positive effect.

and scholarship in theology and languages as necessary elements for those chosen to preach among the infidels. But both circumvent the theoretical dissociation of faith and reason that is prominent in Dominican theology and more or less canonical in Dominican schools after Thomas Aquinas. Yet, their concrete alternatives are quite different. John rejects Riccoldo directly and methodically, but follows some main conclusions and results concerning Muhammad, the Qur'an and the practical rules for interreligious debates. Though there is some valuable content in the Qur'an, all in all it is the product not of a misled, albeit honest Muhammad, but the hideous product of the devil himself. This is no well-meaning interpretation; instead a clear dismantlement is needed. But this should not be the first step in respect to the Muslims, who could not help being offended by such an attempt, but rather eliminating prejudices and misunderstandings. Here it is reason that can provide the general and common fundament, which will help to disclose the Christian truth, not scripture alone as Dominicans think. Ultimately, John rejects Riccoldo's general method, but shares his judgement of the Qur'an and Muhammad as being instruments of the devil. Nicholas, on the contrary, integrates the Qur'an as a basis into the interreligious debates about the main tenets of Christian faith. Moreover, he defends Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an. In some way, he extends his quite-as-much-ingenuous-as-naïve *pia interpretatio* from the field of Muslim sources to that of Christian apologetics. He praises Riccoldo although this method is not compatible with his own. He selects the material according to his own needs and overlooks all points that would thwart or counteract his own concept of the rationality of the Christian faith.

In this respect, John and Nicholas are on common ground, which they both expressed in their correspondence in the year 1454. That they made opposing conclusions regarding Riccoldo is of less importance than the point at which their relationships to Riccoldo cross. The crossing point of the chiasmus in their relationships to Riccoldo is theoretically the new concept of faith and reason, practically the openness to discussion and debate with religious adversaries, not merely to prove the falseness and heresy of their statements, but to convince them of the rationality of one's own position, namely the Christian faith. This new starting point, however, was not able to gain a foothold during the lifetimes of John and Nicholas, nor in the following centuries, but it could be fruitful in our own time. This will require and presuppose, above all, an openness and willingness to trust in rational argumentation in one's own religion on all sides and enough self-confidence to know that accepting the other as a dialogue partner will entail questioning the truth of one's own belief.

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EDUARDO FERNÁNDEZ GUERRERO

*“Tam falsorum christianorum quam
falsigraphorum sarracenorum crimina”*

*Christian Reform and the Contra legem Sarracenorum
in the Early Modern Period**

In the *Epistola drizata per un servo de Dio alla setta delli Agareni*, a short book printed in Venice c. 1534, its then-anonymous Christian author, under the initials “P.A.”, presented a letter to Sultan Suleiman encouraging him to convert. In the prologue to this letter, the anonymous writer explained the circumstances that led him to pen the letter to the Ottoman ruler. He writes that his commitment was the result of a series of ecstatic experiences he had after seeing, in August 1525, “some Turks speaking their language” in Venice. As a result of this, after coming back to his senses:

by grace of He my God I learned that my tormented mind had been taken back to this world, and in it, I yet felt the growing incorruptible rational desire to see both the Christian clergy together with the people reformed, as well as the whole sect of Muhammad converted perfectly to the true faith of my lord Jesus Christ, which thing cannot be anymore ... without the immense foretold punishments.¹

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1 Paolo Angelo, *Epistola drizata per un servo de Dio alla setta delli Agareni ditti Saraceni, annontandoli el gran mysterio che lo omnipotente Dio Iesu Christo vero Signore tene a punir le iniquita de falsi christiani per reformare, & cōfortare li boni a far bene, & patir male, & per conterire prestamente, & convertire le Mahumetice genti alla sua fede orthodoxa Santissima* c. 1534),

The encounter with those Turks, according to his account, and the visions that followed, triggered in the author a very specific desire: to see “il christiano clero con il popolo reformato” and with it the conversion of Muslims, both of which could only come to be after the prophesied catastrophes looming over Christianity. Church reform and conversion, presented and argued through revelations and prophecies, are recurring themes in the writings of the Venetian priest Paolo Angelo, who hides behind the initials “P.A.”, but they are also some of the central nodes of Christian religious life in the first half of the 16th century. Angelo utilized a wide array of texts in his call for moral, intellectual and spiritual reform, publishing and translating them in the many titles for which he was responsible. Particularly relevant here, however, is his use of the treatise against Islamic doctrine known as *Libellus contra legem Sarracenorum* (or *Contra legem*²), which he not only copied in manuscript form and addressed to Pope Adrian VI, but later translated into Italian and summarized in his *Epistola drizata*.³ The connection of Riccoldo’s work with concerns such as Church reform, conversion and revelation can shed light on a variety of less-studied ways in which the *Contra legem* was read in early modern Italy as well as on the very hopes and expectations of the earlier 16th century.

f. [2]r [hereafter *Epistola drizata*]. On the only surviving copy of it, the identification of Viani and Lovre as its printers, and its date, see note 44.

- 2 The title stems from the autograph’s *incipit*, written by Riccoldo himself: ‘Incipit libellus quem composuit frater Riccaldus Ordinis Predicatorum, contra legem Sarracenorum’. See Mériçoux 1986, p. 60. Note, however, that the way Riccoldo referred this work was the *incipit* of Psalm 118, as he writes in his *Libellus ad nationes orientales* (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, ms. Conv. Soppr. C8.1173; hereafter Conv. Soppr. C8.1173, f. 220r): “De Sarracenis autem nihil amplius addo ad illud quod scripsi in illo tractatu ‘Quot sunt dies servi tui’, ubi per legem eorum confutatur lex ipsa”, as noted by Burman 2012, pp. 687–688. Some scholars still refer to it by ‘Confutatio Alcorani’, the title of the edition printed in Basel c. 1507: Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum ex graeco nuper in latinum traducta*, c. 1507).
- 3 The ms. copy is kept in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana ms. 3026 (hereafter Ricc. 3026); the full translation was published in Paolo Angelo, *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad Saracenos: cum libello satietatis, cui soli sit semper omnis laus honor et gloria nobis autem obedientia fidelis et pura tantum. Amen*, 1523–c. 1525) [hereafter *Epistola ad Saracenos*] while a summary of it appeared in the *Epistola drizata*. While the date of print for the *Epistola ad Saracenos* is not specified, the printer mark used in the front page (Zappella 1986, no. 688) was used by printer Alessandro Bindoni until his death in July 1523 and later (up until 1524) by his heirs Agostino and Benedetto. Considering this, the date in the *explicit* of the ms. (13 July 1523), and the reference to August 1525 in the *Epistola drizata* (cf. note 1), it seems safe to assume it was printed between July 1523 and c. 1525.

ANGELO AND HIS MANUSCRIPT COPY
OF THE *CONTRA LEGEM* FOR ADRIAN VI

While the Turkish encounter of 1525 described in the *Epistola drizata* is presented as the origin of Angelo's interest in the conversion of Muslims, he was involved in the diffusion of the *Contra legem* before that. In 1523, he addressed a manuscript copy of Riccoldo's work in Latin to Pope Adrian VI during his stay in Rome.⁴ In his prologue to the copy, Angelo describes how he immediately travelled to Rome after hearing of the pope's election to offer himself at the pontiff's service. He summarizes God's revealed plans for the Church as the victory over Muslims and "false Christians" (i.e., morally corrupt Christians), or in other words, the end of Ottoman expansion and the beginning of Church reform. Certainly, these were pressing matters for Adrian VI from the very beginning of his pontificate.⁵ Through the prologue, it becomes clear how Angelo envisions the victory over both Muslims and "false Christians" as part of the same project, but also how the latter was much more important. For instance, in his opinion, even if the spiritual consolation and joy of Jesus Christ was unknown to Muslims, it was unknown too (which was a far worse prospect):

to ... the most bestial, false Christians who corruptedly languish and lie dead in the sins of their utmost infidelity, which the Justice from Heaven, with its inscrutable judgement will very soon begin to strike in this pitiful age of ours, as heavens have already started doing with numerous punishments and disasters, so that angels purge and exterminate this infidelity as they already started doing.⁶

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- 4 Ricc. 3026 is mentioned in the main repertories of Riccoldo's works: Dondaine 1967; Mérigoux 1986; Kaeppli & Panella 1993. For newly discovered copies, see note 63. The history of the Dutch pope's library is unknown, and one could expect that after his death it would have passed to the Vatican Library: for the latest work on the pope, see Verweij 2009. A ms. belonging to Adrian VI is now kept in Leuven, Bibliothek Godgeleerdheit, Grand Séminaire, 17. I thank M. Verweij and M. Lodone for this information.
- 5 Ricc. 3026, f. 1v: "Sed Sanctitati tue pro semper me presentem palam atque absentem offero ... usque dum queque Deus ... predestinauit ac revelavit, totaliter exequata conspiciam et inimicos eius mahumethanos falsosque christianos cervice dura obduratissimos funditus positos ... cernere queam." On Adrian and the Ottoman expansion, Setton 1976, pp. 201–203.
- 6 Ricc. 3026, f. 2r: "Et ... brutalissime genti Christiane false languenti corrupte et in peccatis infidelitatis maioris defuncte. Que tandem iustitia de celo prospiciente inscrutabili suo iuditio hac infelici nostra etate, ... cito atque brevissime multiplicibus flagellis atque ruinis iam divinitus percutere ceptis ut divinitus per angelos ministratis plurimum conquassandam prout iam ceptum est et expurgandam."

It was the moral corruption and sinful behaviour of Christians that unchained the prophesied punishments, including the Ottoman threat and the many calamities ravishing Italy at the time.⁷ Although the prologue to the manuscript dedicated to Adrian VI presents the *Contra legem* as a tool to encourage “those few good Christians still surviving in the lands of the Muslims” to resist in their faith against the Ottomans,⁸ Riccoldo’s work is also presented as a useful tool to expose the sinful deeds of the “false Christians”:

I wanted to spare no effort and write this to reveal and make clear the most horrible crimes and sins of both the false Christians as well as the false-writing Muslims, which cry out to God; also, to expose the vast floods of all the terrible punishments already appearing and hidden only to the blind. ... I want also to complain against the blind and the leaders of these blind people who deserve to be confounded ... and against those who have less faith than a grain of mustard, who can’t even believe that all of these things were done and must be done.⁹

The prologue elaborates on the issues of Church reform and the sinful “false Christians”, and Angelo presents himself as a prophet warning Christianity of its errors. Compared to these, the references to the Ottomans are few and, more importantly, very different from future positions that Angelo would take shortly after. For instance, towards the end of the prologue, after a lengthy discussion on the current state of Christianity, Angelo writes a few lines about his desire to see with his own eyes vengeance on the Muslims, in accordance with the well-known medieval anti-Islamic topics

7 He asks in a rhetorical question whether the Church “malorum dierum fedata deturpata vituperata (cum tantum fedari deturpari vituperari nequeat) luxuris et pravis voluntatibus eorum condemnata est ad mortem in peste in fame et omni ruina mali ita ut tandem a spurcissimo apro Turcharum infestissimo nostre patrie hosti exterminanda sit?” (Ricc. 3026, f. 2v).

8 Ricc. 3026, f. 3r: “Interim ne ubi pars Christianorum subiugaretur ab apro machomet praefato forsan ibi et seducantur electi et ut veri chisticolae si qui sunt pauci forsitan ut tempore Mathathiae genitoris Machabeorum armati lorica iustitiae facultatibus cunctis expositis apprehendere arma et scutum et in adiutorium Ecclesie sancte exurgere animentur praeparentur curent atque festinent.”

9 Ricc. 3026, f. 3r: “Volui laboribus parcere nullis istaque conscribere sic ut tam falsorum christianorum quam falsigraphorum sarracenorum crimina atque peccata gravissima ad dominum clamantia de longe diluviaeque vasta prefatorum horribilium flagellorum omnium iam implicita occultaque cecis explicita claraque fiant ... Volo insuper querelam magnam facere de cecis ducibusque cecorum confundendorum ... et contra eos qui non habent tantam fidem quantum est granum synapis, qui nec et credere possunt quia omnia istec facta faciendaque.”

concerning a *vendetta* on Muslims and the reconquest of Jerusalem.¹⁰ However, Angelo leaves to Riccoldo a more specific account of their sins, saying “in the following book ... the crimes of this cursed pagan sect will be openly exposed as not smaller than those of the false Christians who must be proven wrong.”¹¹ Last, Angelo encourages Adrian VI, both here and in his previous letters to the pope, to celebrate a council to reform the Church and to resume Pius II’s project of a crusade against the Ottomans.¹²

10 Ricc. 3026, f. 3v: “multifariam spiritualiter crucifixi accerbioem durioemque vindictam, quam [*sic*] vindicta supra Hierusalem de qua scribit et Iosephus et sic erit. Nam ipsi pessimi infideles desperati, ligatis manibus et pedibus in conspectu spiritualium hominum fidelium dei, mittuntur in clibanum gehenne ignis ardentis sulphure spiritumque procellarum ubi loco petulantia abominabiliumque lasciviarum suarum erit fletus et stridor dentium. Intelligit ne omnia istec animales et brutales hi homines? Nequaquam, sed in sibi suaso honore proprio corripiendo positi, iumentis insipientibus comparati, similes fient illis. Etenim omnia sancta spernunt, euntes in adinventionibus suis, guadentes ignorantia matre sua que in cunctos errores malitie duplicis eos larvatos adeo vinxit ut numquam redimi dissolvique possint nisi prefatis flagellis penitus destruantur et eorum exosa memoria horribili cum sonitu et odioso pereat super terram penitusque aboleatur.”

11 Ricc. 3026, f.

12 Ricc. 3026, f. The letters were published in his *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad sanctissimum in Christo patrem et D. N. D. Clementem divina providentia Papam septimum* (1525) [hereafter *Epistola ad Clementem*: the only copy to my knowledge reporting the printer’s name and date is Trieste, Biblioteca Civica Attilio Hortis, codex Petrarca III 942]. His first letter, ‘Quoniam lucem ...’ (ff. 23r–26r), dated April 1523, presents Angelo in third person as a visionary, inspired by the Holy Spirit and comparing himself to the Apostles, who left home, fame and comfort to follow God and Adrian’s project of reformation (most likely implying a request for the permission to preach which would be denied or never granted to him as he would write later, cf. *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 61r: “et dogliomi forte non mi esser al publico parlare concesso”). The second, ‘Sapientes seculi ...’ (ff. 26v–28v) alludes to a previous letter dated May (“in vigilia Ascensionis”) 1523, and elaborates on the expected *diluvium* for 1524, while also requesting from the pope his judgement on the letters he previously had sent to him. That previous letter is found later in the book (ff. 29r–31r) with the *incipit* ‘Cum omne ...’, where he insists on the need to purify the Church, proposing two tools for it: a new crusade and a general council. While he does not seem to have met Pope Adrian VI in person, there are reasons to believe he was in Rome between 1522 and 1525: on the one hand, the watermark used in the paper of the ms. allegedly sent to Adrian VI locates it in Rome (Briquet 6443, var. Rome 1502–1518); on the other, Angelo’s knowledge of the Roman curia (cf. *Epistola ad Clementem*, ff. 26r and 31r) includes information about the bishop of Ávila Francisco Ruiz, cardinal López de Carvajal and his friend the bishop of Antivari Lorenzo Boschetti, which seems to have been acquired from first-hand experience. Note that similar calls for crusade are found in the prologue to the print version of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum* (from Greek to Latin, 1507), dedicated to King Ferdinand of Aragon. Last, on the familiarity of Angelo with Pius II’s work, note that his uncle Paolo Angelo senior was close to the Della Rovere pope, who, allegedly, even created him cardinal *in pectore* (cf. below, note 13).

Angelo describes how the antigraph used to produce the copy sent to Adrian VI belonged to his uncle, Paolo Angelo senior, archbishop of Drisht in Albania.¹³ After his death, it passed to Angelo's father, Pietro, but it was lost after the fall of Drisht to the Ottomans: then, according to Angelo's account, many of his family's belongings were taken to Constantinople as spoils of war, some of which his father managed to ransom for a high price. While the account of the antigraph's provenance is most likely included simply to increase the rarity of Angelo's gift to Adrian VI, other passages of the prologue are concerned with much more practical matters. According to it, God had wanted the *Contra legem* to remain hidden from the common people until the present, when He used Angelo to bring Riccoldo's work to the pope, as "not even the smallest leaf in a tree moves" without God's will.¹⁴ He therefore asks the pope to commission translations of the *Contra legem* into "Spanish, French, German and other Catholic languages" to be then printed by experts, promising to translate it himself into *vulgare* as a matter of divine will.¹⁵ "If you do so," Angelo writes, "I do not doubt that as soon as it is known by the Christian people, everyone will be rallied to stand and fight against the treacherous sect of the Muslims."¹⁶

The manuscript is briefly described by Mérigoux, and while only a critical edition of the transmission of the *Contra legem* could reveal what additions and interventions in the text should be attributed to Angelo, there are some features in the manuscript worth discussing.¹⁷ First, the text is close to Riccoldo's autograph in terms of textual variants, but with minor humanist and graphic interventions.¹⁸ Secondly, a small body

13 Also known as Pal Engjëll in Albanese or Paulus Angelus in Latin (whenever confusion may arise, I'll call him Paolo Angelo senior). His appointment as cardinal *in pectore* is mentioned by Angelo in the *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [12v]: "quel homo ... etiam cardenal eletto per il q. Summo Pontefice Pio Secondo. E si chiamava Paulo Angelo arcivescovo di Durazzo." See on him Laporta 2004.

14 Ricc. 3026, f. 3v: "Non ignoret insuper S. T. quod ille forte qui terribilis est in consiliis super filios hominum sine cuius voluntate nec folium quidem arboris movetur minimum usque nunc a vulgo christianorum prefatum libellum occultare voluit et per me ... electum forsitan ad confundendam fortia queque ad sanctitatis tue manus perducere."

15 Ricc. 3026, f. 4r: "obsecro ipsam ... ut ... indulgens in Hispana, Gallica, Theuthonica et aliis catholicorum linguis transferri per peritos faciat et imprimi per expertos, nam ego in vulgarem sive maternam linguam curabo trasferre latinam sive italicam."

16 Ricc. 3026, f.

17 Mérigoux 1986, pp. 38–39. The dissertation by Katharine G. Waggoner Karchner (2019b), p. 240, provides a potential stemma of the tradition of the *Contra legem* based on her study of 29 copies that seemingly relates Angelo's copy to five others on the grounds of their *explicit* or the absence of Riccoldo's marginal notes in the main text.

18 The copy examined by Riccoldo himself, which was edited by Mérigoux (1986), can be found in Conv. Soppr. C8.1173, ff. 185r–218r. Such interventions, for instance, replace the word 'mun-

of short marginal notes summarizing the contents of the text was copied together with the text by the copyist in the first two folios, while two other hands (M₂ and M₃) added and corrected the text throughout the whole manuscript.¹⁹ Signs of reading and usage by the two different readers are found in the manuscript such as brackets, *maniculae* or “nota”, although they are not many.²⁰ Finally, the entire text is copied by the same hand, bound in red goatskin, with gauffered edges and covers gilded with vegetal designs, the front of which bears an inscription claiming the book for Pope Adrian VI.²¹

This manuscript reveals some key features of Angelo’s thought about Islam. Some, like its association with false Christians, Church reform and prophesized punishments, would remain present in his future dealings with the *Contra legem*.²² Others, such as the call for a crusade, would be replaced, as we shall see, with an alleged “conversion” approach in his later writings.²³

THE *EPISTOLA AD SARACENOS* AND THE TRANSLATION OF THE *CONTRA LEGEM*

Shortly before describing his encounter with the Turks in Venice, Angelo states that the *Epistola drizata* was not the first letter that he addressed to the sultan:

dum’ from Riccoldo’s original with ‘orbem’, ‘michi’ with ‘mihi’ or ‘ypocrisi’ with “hypocrisi”, (f. 5r), among others. These, however, cannot be attributed to Angelo’s quill as they also appear in other witnesses.

- 19 See, for instance, the corrections by a reader (M₂) of ‘dilectionis’ with ‘delectationis’ (f. 23r), ‘vaccationis’ with ‘vetationis’ (f. 15 v) or by another reader (M₃), what seems a correction: ‘Mahometus’, related by a cross sign to the word in the text ‘Machometus’ (f. 5v).
- 20 M₃ writes ‘nota’ to the section that starts “Nominat enim ipsum, verbum Dei ...” (f. 6v), “sine patre et de virgine natus” (f. 6v) and “Haec fuit tota sua intentio” (f. 7r). The single manicule appears to point to “Nam Abrae facte sunt repromissiones ...” (f. 12r); the brackets contain from “quod si dixerint” to “monarchiam mundi” (f. 14v) and from “Divisimus et dedimus ...” to “de spiritu nostro” (f. 29r).
- 21 “Di-Adr-VI-P6-M”. Whether the book belonged or not to Adrian VI, however, is unclear, as there are no studies about his library (cf. note 4).
- 22 Cf. note 3.
- 23 Angelo’s relative knowledge of contemporary politics is clear from the careful manufacture of his letters to gain influence among religious and political leaders, discussing even the *tehditnameler* or letters of threat sent by Suleiman to the king of Hungary (cf. note 30). Less than two months before Angelo dedicated his copy of the *Contra legem* to him, Adrian VI had promulgated the bull *Monet nos veritas*, declaring a three-year truce among the Christian kingdoms to allow them to launch a crusade against the Ottomans. Cf. Setton 1976, p. 218.

It will not be a surprise to you (sir Sultan) if previously with almost the same zeal and spirit that spoke to the Apostle Paul and to the aforementioned Saint Gregory I wrote to you my persuasive epistle dedicating to you this roughly the book of the blessed friar Riccoldo against the Qur'an.²⁴

This previous letter was his *Epistola ad Saracenos* containing his translation of the *Contra legem* "per la promessa fatta a Papa Hadr. TI [*sic*]".²⁵ It was printed in Venice between late 1523 and c. 1525, and contained, along with the translation, a prologue presented as a letter to encourage Suleiman to convert to Christianity, together with other minor texts, both original and borrowed from different sources.²⁶ Although the Latin prologue in the manuscript copy dedicated to the Dutch pope was relatively short, the new Italian prologue to the print translation published in the *Epistola ad Saracenos* contains much more information about the Venetian priest's thought. He continues to associate false Christians with Muslims and he insists that his mission was ordained by God by "certa, anzi expressa comissione et comandamento". Christ, Angelo writes, "has spoken several times in my heart and in my mind in his traditional spiritual way", instructing him to "to urgently warn on his behalf all of the unbelieving false Christians, Muslims and Jews" about their need to convert.²⁷ He declares that God has explicitly designated his age to be the time of reform and renovation of the universal Church and outlined this process, which consists of penitence, abandoning their infidelity and bad customs, and inducing a final conversion of the heart. Otherwise, he warns the sultan, the impending punishment and destruction would be worse than the seven Egyptian plagues.²⁸

24 *Epistola drizata*, IV: "impero non para a te (Sultanem effendi) si altre volte quasi con quel medemo zelo et spitio che parlaua nello apostolo Paulo et nel prefato Diuo Gregorio io te habi scritta la epistola suasoria dedicandote el sacrato libello cosi rozzamente del beato frate Ricoldo contra lo alcorano."

25 Cf. note 3. *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 17r.

26 These are *Articuli sanctissime Christiane fidei ... sive rethia preparata* (ff. [2]r–[2]v, a comparison chart of citations from both First and Second Testament about a series of topics), the *Ultima prophetia consumata a giorni nostri sopra li inimici tutti de Cristo* (ff. 60r–61r, a prophecy explaining Muslim expansion as a result of Christians' sins), followed by an epilogue by Angelo (ff. 61r–57 [i.e., 64]r), and a prayer entitled *Christicole omnes veraces pro Ecclesie sancte universalis reformatione supplicantes ita orant ad Dominum* (f. 57 [i.e., 64]v). Cf. notes 36–38.

27 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]r.

28 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]v: "Dio ha expressamente sententiato senza revocatione che vol reformare et renovare tutta la universal Ecclesia sua et destruggere tutti gli inimici de quella con ogni specie de mali penali et acerbissime tremebunde ruine perche loro sono assai piu obdurati che non furono li pessimi egiptii al tempo dela grande oppressione del populo de

Angelo describes a generalized state of unparalleled moral corruption and sin that, he says, is too long to be described in detail.²⁹ Instead, out of love and hopes for the conversion of Islam, Angelo decides to mention only one sin, committed by the sultan: the *tehditname* sent to the king of Hungary threatening to destroy Christianity.³⁰ For his repentance, and to open “li occhi del intelletto” to God’s grace, Angelo proposes the sultan a prayer:

Allah true God, Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Virgin Mary, mother of God, forgive me for I am a sinner who feels more compunction and pain for my sins than most of your Christians ... I beg you show me the way through which I must go, for I have lifted my soul to you, my God, I will not be ashamed of trusting in you but I will have faith in you and will never be confounded.³¹

However, Angelo is certain that the sultan will not immediately convert, for God’s plans are different: like a lion tied to a chain, the Ottomans will ravage and punish Christians only as far as it is God’s will, and only after serving this purifying purpose will the sultan’s miraculous conversion take place. Again, the reason for this is solely the sinful state of Christianity. As Angelo writes, Christians

have their most bold sins conglomerated on earthly matters, and they are much bigger and more vast than those of your poisonous sect of Muhammad because in truth there is as much difference between Muhammad’s sin and

Israel in Egypto ... non meno, anzi assai piu fara de brevi esso Iesu Christo contra li inimici dela sua croce.”

29 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]v: “non mi affatichero in particular nominarli ... et cosi nel grasso suo lasserolli inestessi defrigere.”

30 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]v: “El qual peccato lhai forse scordato et drieto le spalle fora buttato. Ma Dio ... se ha dignato che io ... lhabbi non gia in terra veduto esser scritto ma registrato indelebilmte (fin al pentire et tua conversione) nel folio stellato et excelso throno del Maximo Dio immortale aman dextra dove el nome de Machometto non fu scritto mai ne comendato. Ma ben si contiene che tu blasfemante temerariamente scrivesti al Sacro Re de Ungharia et la tua bocca in celo mettendo minaciasti voler distruggere la indestruttibile et inexpugnabil secta del glorioso signor Iesu Christo.” The *tehditnameler* or “letters of threat” were a consolidated genre of diplomatic correspondence that developed in the Ottoman court, meant to provoke the enemy to force them to appear in the battlefield.

31 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [6]r.

that of the heretics as between the sin of ignorance and the sin of boastful and manifold malice.³²

Angelo describes the moral corruption stopping the sultan from conversion in strong terms:

those who are now baptized and raised in the rite of the faith of baptism are in such way in the religion and cloisters whence light should come out that in this plagued world full of diabolical poison they observe none of the commandments or laws of God, they do not obey the holy gospel and they respect no vows; what is more, they do no good deeds with their heart but rather they strive to perform with their mouth and exterior acts those beautiful ceremonies from which they may detract some advantage, honour or pleasure for themselves and not for Jesus Christ, whom they rather angrily hate with their dark, petulant and most horrible heart ... And thus you could not find any clearly good example nor any spiritual help, for charity is already fully extinct.³³

If Suleiman converted in such a context, he would be forced to hide, like Angelo himself and all good true Christians.³⁴ Instead, he encourages the sultan to wait until the time comes: only then will Angelo fully reveal the Christian faith to him. This anticipated moment is nothing else but the destruction of false Christians, or at least their true conversion. He further explains to Suleiman that, since everything is vain in this world, he should not believe much in his victories, for their only reason was the sinfulness of Christians and their lack of concord: should they repent and fall back to God's grace, they would easily defeat the Muslims.³⁵ Therefore, while waiting for this time to come, Angelo presents the sultan with a much-needed gift, something that will serve him and his sect as a preparation and introduction to Christianity: "that angelical and divine opusculum compiled by the former reverend father Riccoldo", i.e., the *Contra legem*.³⁶

32 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [6]v.

33 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. [6]v–[7]r.

34 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. [6]r–[7]v: "Verum a nasconderte astritto seresti ... giache per rabida sua invidentia della gran forma[?] non lassano ben vivere i proximi suoi, neanche te sultanem effendi lasseriano con tua setta salvarte ... seresti constricto deventar con tua setta quel certo proselito de antiqui farisei falsi et de Christo capital hosti et ne linferno aspetaristi dopia pena."

35 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. [7]v–[8]r. Cf. note 36.

36 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [9]r. The last sections of the prologue elaborate on Angelo's vision of

It may be worth noting, before discussing the text of the *Contra legem*, that Riccoldo's work is not the last text in the *Epistola ad Saracenos*. Immediately after, Angelo introduced a fragment from John Mandeville's travel book, titled *Ultima prophetia consummata a giorni nostri sopra li inimici tutti de Cristo* and elaborating on the idea of Christian sin and moral corruption as the ultimate cause of Muslim power.³⁷ This prophecy is followed by an epilogue written by Angelo, where he further explains the reasons that led him to writing this book and focuses on the specific sins of false Christians and their preachers, whom he describes as worse than the Muslims themselves.³⁸ Lastly, the book ends with a prayer in Latin for the reformation of the Church, vaguely modelled on the Lord's prayer, with important allusions to conciliarism, universal conversion of infidels and the arrival of an Angelic Pope.³⁹

Islam, the need of free will for conversion, and the need of moral and spiritual reform from both false Christians and Muslims. He proves to have read the *Contra legem* as he quotes Qur'anic passages cited by Riccoldo, some of which he presents as introduced by the Holy Spirit as a "safety device" that would allow Muslims to realize the errors of their faith. It is particularly indicative of Angelo's readiness to change discourse to see no mentions made to a crusade, as in the prologue to Adrian VI, but rather expression of fraternal love towards the sultan. Angelo also seizes the occasion to extensively present his family, his descendance and deeds.

- 37 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. 60r–61r: "Il soldano ... domandolo a che modo se governavano li christiani ... lui li rispose che per la gratia de Dio se governavano bene et lui [i.e., the Sultan] gli disse che esso Ioanne errava ... perche veramente loro bene non fanno ... perche gli prelati de christiani a Dio servire non stimano. Essi ... vanno tutto el giorno per le taverne, giocando, bevendo, mangiando a modo de bestie ... cosi gli altri christiani se sforzano luno et laltro barattare ... Et cosi per gli peccati loro hanno questa terra perduta quale tenemo nui ... perche nui de certo sapiamo che quando voi christiani al vostro Dio servirete bene esso vi vora aiutare et nui contra voi nulla potremo. Et bene sapiamo per prophetia che in questa terra regneranno gli christiani quando loro serviranno al suo Dio ..." Angelo's interventions are mostly to turn Mandeville's account into indirect speech and to expand some epithets. Mandeville's book of travel was printed in Venice twice in the ten years before Angelo composed his *Epistola ad Saracenos*, both of which match the numeration of chapters used by Angelo to quote Mandeville (ch. 120): John Mandeville, *Ioanne de Mandauilla, qual tracta de le piu marauegliose cose ...* (1521) and John Mandeville, *Joanne de Mandauilla: qual tracta delle più marauegliose cose ...* (1515).
- 38 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. 61r–57 [i.e., 64]r. On the question of preaching, cf. note 12. Angelo's bad opinion of current preachers (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 63r): "Item ... fanno predicar la dottrina non sana per pessimi predicatori et carnalissimi peggio che Turchi et Mori quali solamente recitano quello fa a loro proposito de pigliare credito alcuuo [sic]." Of false Christians he says (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 63r): "palesemente piu vergogna nulla hanno vivere a modo de bestie piu inordinati et lascivi che non fanno gli anteditti figlioli del pravo Alcorano." The description of their sins focuses on luxury, gluttony, arrogance, and material vanity.
- 39 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. 57 [i.e., 64]v–59 [i.e., 65]r: "ad sanctum tam clamatum tamque expectatum generale concilium unanimiter convocentur ... fiat vera pax in virtute, fiat omnibus cor

While it is hard to make any claims about Angelo's interventions in the Latin text of the *Contra legem* in the absence of a critical edition, we can however compare his manuscript version to its translation. First, it seems clear that Angelo followed the apograph of the manuscript version of the *Contra legem* for Adrian VI, as the corrections and additions made to it after its copy are clearly not present in the Latin text of Riccoldo's work used for the translation.⁴⁰ The text combines a tendency to a *verbum de verbo* translation, often using words from the same Latin lexical root, with frequent amplifications from Angelo's own pen, mostly denigrating Islam but also introducing proverbs.⁴¹ Both the manuscript version and its translation skip some small sections.⁴² The text also provides an interesting picture of Angelo's intellectual profile: he does not seem to know any Greek or Arabic, despite the sporadic use of Ottoman Turkish words, and he might have known Riccoldo's *Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem*.⁴³

unum, fiat Angelicum unum ovile, fiat divinus et unus pastor adveniens ad regnum tuum ... Aperi portam tue sancte fidei gentibus universis que christianis in virtutibus dominantur." For the interest of Angelo on Church reform, cf. Fernández Guerrero 2018.

- 40 For instance, in Ricc. 3026, f. 7v, the words "et dixit quod filius Israel" are cancelled, but they still appear in translation in *Epistola ad Saracenos* f. 20v: "dixe cosi videlicet che il figliolo de Israel..."; or f. 15v, where 'vacationis' is later corrected by a reader with 'vetationis' while the translation retains the previous reading, f. 32v: "che nel capitulo vacationis conseguita ...". It is clear from its notes that the ms. was confronted with another copy or copies of the *Contra legem* to correct the text.
- 41 For example, in Ricc. 3026, f. 15r: "Octavo considerandum est quod etiam sine omni miraculo lex Mahometi posset acceptari a mundo", translated in *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 32r: "Ottavo e da considerare che anchora senza ogni miraculo la lege de Machomet potria esser acceptata dal mondo." Amplifications, or the translation of a word with two or more words, can be found in the translation of the original "confutare principales obscenitates tam perfidae legis" (Ricc. 3026, f. 6r), translated by Angelo in *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 18v as "le principal obscenita et errori de tanta perfida lege plenamente convincendo confutare, prosternere et annihilare." Regarding his denigratory additions, he continues the description of Muhammad by Riccoldo in Ricc. 3026, f. 18r as 'lubrico dracone' with the words "dissoluto, et ali atti de ogni venera abominabil volupta dato tutto" claiming that he had, other than 'sedutto' as Riccoldo writes, "decetto, in abyssato, destrutto, et ale tartaree pene deducendo condotto" the biggest part of the world. In some cases, Angelo opts for a discrete translation of a graphic passage, such as the list of body parts to be washed before prayer in *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 34r.
- 42 This suggests that the textual tradition of the *Contra legem* may not be necessarily uniform. Both the ms. and the print text are missing the fragments edited in Mérigoux 1986, p. 93, ll. 71–76 and p. 99, ll. 250–252.
- 43 He either wrongly transcribes Greek lexical loans or fails to notice the errors present in his antigraph, which he then perpetuates through the translation: for instance, he writes "Atropomofortis" (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 20r) for "antropomorphositis", while he translates the name of the sura 'Elmearem' (i.e., At-Tahrīm) as "vetatione over avaterina" (*Epistola ad Saracenos*,

THE EPISTOLA DRIZATA

Likely printed nine years after the *Epistola ad Saracenos*, the *Epistola drizata* is a short booklet that, with the addition of a new prologue, recapitulates the contents of the *Epistola ad Saracenos*. This is openly stated by Angelo when he describes Jesus compelling him to write this new book:

that same spirit of the lord ... Jesus Christ ... who taught me to write to you inside and outside has compelled me, or even forced to enucleate out of the salutary epistle aforementioned some brief conclusive chapters, in which most of its contents are found.⁴⁴

f. 32v), i.e., “anathema” (ἀνάθεμα). For the Arabic, the many mistakes in the translation of the sura’s names prove this beyond doubt: see, for instance, *Epistola ad Saracenos* f. 20r, where about the sura ‘Elhagar’ (i.e., Al-Hijr) he writes “che se interpreta Bap”, likely a poor reading of the abbreviation of the original “lapis”, or *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 34v, where the original “Elrahman quod interpretatur miserator” is translated as “nel capitolo Alharamen che se expone se [sic]”, a mistake that is present already in Ricc. 3026, f. 17r. Other mistakes, however, were added as the type text was prepared at print, where the sura ‘Arrahamen’ (i.e., ar-Rahmān) became ‘Alharamen’ (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 34v). His knowledge of Ottoman Turkish does not go beyond a few words such as titles of the sultan (“Urumelden, Stambuliden, Naduliden, Caramaneliden, Sultan Sulamani”, *Epistola ad Saracenos* f. [III]r), some formulas (“sultanem cis effendi”, *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [III]v, an egregious mistake in terms of Ottoman courtly etiquette), or the word ‘caur’ (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [IV]r). Regarding his knowledge of Riccoldo’s *Epistole*, Angelo seems to know more than just the title of the text as he translates the reference to them made by Riccoldo himself in his prologue to the *Contra legem* (Ricc. 3026, f. 5v: “scripsi quasdam epistolas ad ecclesiam triumphantem”) adding a reference to the militant Church (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 18r: “scrissi alcune epistole ala militante et anchor di sopra ala triumphante ecclesia”) which features prominently in the third letter. On this light, the line from *Epistola drizata*, f. [6r] where he writes that Islam “piu alli boni et veri che a rei et falsi christiani procura nocere” could likely be linked to the description of the martyrdom of Oriental Christians in Riccoldo’s fourth letter.

- 44 *Epistola drizata*, f. [3r]. See note 1 for the full title. The copy is kept in the Cambridge (Massachusetts), Houghton Library, Ott.195.3. The type, woodcuts and frontispieces are the same as those in books printed by Bernardino Viani at the expense of the bookseller Comino da Lovere, such as Pietro da Lucca, *Opusculo de trenta documenti, del reuerendo padre don Pietro da Luca canonico regolare* (1525) or Gerardus de Zutphania, *Libro de le ascensione spirituale, necessario a qualunque vole far profecto ne la vita religiosa* (1526). Da Lovere had printed Angelo’s edition of the prophecies attributed to Vicente Ferrer under the title *Mirabilis prophetiarum interpretatio de fine mundi* in 1527 while Viani produced the copies of his *Epistola ad Clementem* in 1525. The frontispiece of the *Epistola drizata* includes a woodcut depicting a European king seemingly giving audience inside a pavilion.

Its prologue elaborates on the issues of Church reform, discussing Angelo's divine mandate to write to the sultan and prepare him for conversion, as well as the divine punishments for Christians' sins and the final conversion of Muslims which "tutta presto presto sara".⁴⁵ After this prologue, the main body of text is divided in 66 chapters which vary in length but are mostly one sentence long each, summarizing the contents of the *Epistola ad Saracenos*. Most of these chapters summarize, however, the prologue of the *Epistola ad Saracenos* and not the translation of the *Contra legem*, focusing on Angelo himself, the corrupted state of the Christendom and the need for moral and spiritual reform. Only about a quarter of them deal with the conversion of the sultan, and the difficulties arising from Suleiman's own pride and the bad example of false Christians.

This focus on the moral and spiritual reform of Christianity, where Angelo's descriptions of himself provide the image of what true Christians are like (i.e., persecuted and suffering), fits well with the handful of chapters from the *Contra legem* that are actually summarized in the *Epistola drizata*. For instance, chapter 35 (*Epistola drizata*, f. [6r] "The felicity, happiness and true good of man is not in the things of this world, nor in the exterior senses of the afterlife, as the Qur'an states. It consists instead of the other, eternal life after the first one and gathering all things in Christ, the most glorious and greatest good") repeats the topics from chapter five of the *Contra legem*. Equally, chapters 55 and 57 condemn gluttony and sodomy in terms similar to those of chapters six and eight of Riccoldo's polemical treatise. On the other hand, shorter references, for example, to Muhammad's ignorance and lies (*Epistola drizata*, f. [8r]) can be found in chapter nine while the condemnation to Hell of all Muslims (*Epistola drizata*, f. [5v]) can be found in chapter five.

EARLY MODERN READINGS OF THE *CONTRA LEGEM*

While it does not contain a full summary of the *Contra legem*, the *Epistola drizata* shows extensive knowledge and careful usage of Riccoldo's polemical treatise, focusing on Christianity as well as moral and spiritual reform. Such usage becomes more meaningful, however, when briefly compared to some other ways early modern Christian readers engaged with the *Contra legem*.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Epistola drizata*, f. [3v].

⁴⁶ A topic yet to be fully addressed: while fragmentary, see Piemontese 1996b; Cavallero 2016; also George-Tvrtković 2012. See also the conclusions to this essay.

Humanist readings

Renaissance Florence was an important centre for the circulation of the *Contra legem*, both in Greek and in Latin.⁴⁷ While Riccoldo's autograph was available for consultation at the library of the Dominican convent of Santa Maria Novella, his treatise was also read in Florence beyond the Order of Preachers.⁴⁸ Marsilio Ficino relied on Riccoldo's account in the *Contra legem* as his source on the prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an for the composition of his *De Christiana religione*, which focused on the supernaturality of Christian revelation.⁴⁹ While Ficino still claimed the superiority of Christianity over Islam, his tone is far from that of medieval religious polemics: in fact, his usage of Riccoldo's treatise concentrates on historical events, the origins of Muhammad and of Islamic religion.⁵⁰ These topics were also the focus of Bartolomeo Fonzio, a 15th-century Florentine poet who was able to borrow Marsilio Ficino's copy of the *Contra legem*, bound together with other texts from the *Corpus Cluniacense*,

47 Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. gr. 706 contains a copy of Demetrius Kydones' translation of the *Contra legem* with notes by Isidore of Kiev added during his stay in Florence for the continuation of the Council of Basel between 1439 and 1445, which took place in Santa Maria Novella. This ms. would later join the library of Pope Sixtus IV: cf. Müntz & Fabre 1887, p. 226.

48 See, for instance, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Acq. e doni 431 (hereafter Acq. e doni 431), assembled and partly copied in 1439 at the Florentine Augustine convent of Santa Maria Regina Coeli: on it, see Fratini & Zamponi 2004, p. 48. As Mérigoux (1986, p. 6) notes, the first inventory from Santa Maria Novella's library made in 1489 provides the shelf-mark ("in nono bancho") of the autograph *Contra legem*: that it (or copies close to it) was used by readers to collate their own copies of the *Contra legem* is seen precisely in Acq. e doni 431, where readers collated their manuscript, copied from the first *recensio* of Riccoldo's treatise, with the later redactional stages of the autograph and corrected mistakes, according to Mérigoux (1986, p. 38), in the transcription of Arabic words.

49 Vasoli 1988; Piemontese 1996b, p. 242. For a recent edition of *De Christiana religione*, see Marsilio Ficino, *De christiana religione* ed. Guido Bartolucci 2019. In these same years Girolamo Savonarola also used the *Contra legem* for his *Triumphus crucis* (among other works), in a less conciliatory tone than Ficino. Cf. Mérigoux 1986, pp. 50–51. Ficino owned a ms. containing the *Corpus Cluniacense*, with minor additions including Riccoldo's *Contra legem* and *Itinerarium*: Piemontese (1996b, pp. 245–246) suggests that Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, ms. H.II.33 (c. 1525), may be a direct copy of Ficino's ms., now lost. I believe, following Vasoli 1997, that his letters to the king of Hungary Matthias Corvinus regarding his role as defender of the faith against Islam are more to be read as an attempt to secure a position at the king's court than as a heartfelt call to crusade.

50 A summary of these can be found in Katinis 2014.

to read and take notes regarding the genealogy and life of Muhammad.⁵¹ Fonzio combined in his notes Riccoldo's account with other more modern sources such as Bartolomeo Platina's *Vitae Romanorum pontificum* in his quest for the reconstruction of the origins of Islam, in a manuscript that, for the rest, contains mostly notes and fragments of historical works.⁵² This interest of Florentine humanists in Riccoldo as a historiographical source is reinforced by the presence of a full copy of the *Contra legem* in the preparatory notebooks of Sigismondo Tizio for his lost *Historia barbarica*, devoted to Islamic expansion and the lives of Muhammad, Saladin and Bayezid II up to the wars between the Ottoman sultan and the Safavid sophy.⁵³

Polemics against Islam—and Protestants

Riccoldo's treatise against the Qur'an was also crucial for early modern polemical literature as a source of information regarding Islam: if Alonso de Espina is to be considered the first Western theologian to follow Riccoldo's arguments about the superiority of Christianity over Islam in his *Fortalitium fidei* , Juan de Torquemada took entire passages from the *Contra legem* for his *Contra principales errores perfidi Machometi*, most likely through Petrus de Pennis' work.⁵⁴ Together with these, both the *editio princeps* of the *Contra legem* printed in Seville in 1500 and its translation

51 Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 673 (hereafter Ricc. 673), f. 122v: "Riccoldus ebron theologus occidentalis in eo libro quem scripsit contra legem sarracenorum dicit Christum et apostolos fuisse ante Maumethum sexcentis annis. Maumethus enim surrexit tempore Eraclii qui incipit regnare anno secentesimo decimo", taken from ch. 9 of the *Contra legem*. Fonzio adds in the margin a reference to Riccoldo's *Itinerarium*: "Ideo ante tempora nostra circiter an. 259 fuit et Papae instituto multas prouincias peregrinavit et brevem hystoriam itineris sui edidit quam habet Marsilius Ficinus una cum hoc volumine contra Saracenos et Alchoran." In f. 123r, a note by Fonzio reads: "De Maumetho ex libro Marsilii Ficini in quo Alchoran est." These notes occur in ff. 122v–123v in the ms.

52 On Platina and Islam, see Meserve 2008, pp. 79, 95, 120–122. For Fonzio's ms. see de Robertis & Miriello 1997, pp. 51–52.

53 The copy of the *Contra legem* among his preparatory notebooks for the *Historia barbarica* is now in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat. 9374, ff. 24r–75v. See Piemontese 1996a, p. 222, for a description of the texts contained in this ms. and a discussion of Tizio's sources. More recently, see Mahmoud Helmy 2013. I thank M. Lodone for this information.

54 Echevarria 2012. Such a claim regarding Torquemada is advanced by Adeva Martín 2007, based on the copied passages and the presence of de Pennis' treatise in one ms. copy of Torquemada's *Contra errores*. They are actually two: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Barb. lat. 856 and Vat. lat. 976. Against this, see Waggoner Karchner 2019b, pp. 156–178. For the library of Torquemada, see Izbicki 1981.

printed in Toledo and Seville the following year bear witness to the interest in Riccoldo's work in Spain after the fall of the kingdom of Granada.⁵⁵ However, its readership went beyond mere theological confutations of Islam: some, like Gonzalo Arredondo y Alvarado or Martin Luther, used Riccoldo's treatise moved by the pressing need to articulate a response to the Ottoman expansion, while others, such as the Dominican Giovanmaria Tolosani, relied on Riccoldo's account of Islam as a heresy in his *De conflictu et pugna inter catholicos doctores et haereticos, ex Apocalipsi* for a treatise broadly devoted to the Protestant heresy.⁵⁶

Polemics against Christians: Angelo's case

Angelo's interest in the *Contra legem* can hardly be compared to those previously mentioned: far from the case of some of its models, such as the *Epistola ad Mahumetum* by Pius II, the conversion of Muslims was for Angelo a rhetorical trope to articulate its main idea, i.e., the need for reform in the Church and in the heart of Christians.⁵⁷

During his prolific editorial career, Angelo cultivated a wide array of interests: from prophetic anthologies to exegetical treatises, historical chronicles and religious polemics.⁵⁸ He addressed them to important recipients, showing a significant knowledge of ecclesiastical and lay politics, and urged his readers to support him. This latter aspect, has regrettably led many scholars to portray Angelo as an eccentric, desperate

55 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Improbatio Alcorani* (1500); *Reprobacion del Alcoran* (1501); *Reprobacion del Alcoran* (1502). Before, however, copies seem to have circulated in Iberian Dominican convents, e.g., Santo Domingo de Silos, as registered in the 1770 catalogue studied by Boylan (1992). This copy does not appear in the later catalogue in Whitehill & Pérez de Urbel 1929, suggesting that it was lost between that period, as no other extant copy seems to match its description.

56 For Gonzalo Arredondo, cf. de Bunes Ibarra 2014. See instead the contribution by Ehmann in this volume for Luther's translation of the *Contra legem*. Tolosani's work was edited by Camporeale (1986), later reprinted in Camporeale 2002. Note that Tolosani was a friar at the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence in the same years as another reader of Riccoldo, Girolamo Savonarola.

57 Angelo knew of Pius II's letter, as he mentioned it in the *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [4r] ("Perche etiam olim ultra li altri la felice me Pio secondo al qual tuo bisavo Sultan Machomet scrisse ne tamen alcun frutto dal scriver piissimo suo potete sequire"). On the circulation of Pius II's *Epistola*, see Aenea Silvio Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), *Epistola ad Mahumetem*, ed. Glei & Kobusch 2001, pp. 98–114. For the similarities and differences between the Senese pope's letter and Angelo's *Epistola ad Saracenos*, see the conclusions to this essay.

58 Some of his works are mentioned by McGinn 1992; Rhodes 1993; and Fernández Guerrero 2018.

character of scant intellectual means.⁵⁹ However, despite this variety of themes and addressees, a common thread runs across his work: the concern for spiritual and moral reform in the Church on the eve of imminent divine punishments. This, together with his constant efforts to gain support from the high circles of religious hierarchies and the careful adaptation and rebranding of his discourse according to its recipients, suggests that Angelo's interest in the *Contra legem* was not necessarily motivated by a genuine interest in Islam. For Angelo, who had called for a harsh vengeance against Muslims in the form of a crusade when addressing Adrian VI a few years earlier, the hopes for the conversion of Sultan Suleiman were a flag under which rally his own co-religionists and encourage them to convert "false Christians" into true believers: for him this was the only way to put a stop to Christian defeats, Ottoman expansion and the impending threats of floods, plagues and divine punishments. While the conversion of Muslims had an important place in the imaginary of Christian millenarianism, for Angelo the focus was set on the reformation of Christianity as a *conditio sine qua non* for the end of Ottoman expansion and the conversion of Muslims.

The different texts assembled with the translation of the *Contra legem* in his *Epistola ad Saracenos*, together with the passages chosen from it for the later summary in the *Epostola drizata*, show a consistent effort by Angelo to connect Riccoldo's work with his concerns about the Church's moral and spiritual reform. Unlike many humanists of his time, Angelo was not interested in a history of Islam nor did he show an intellectual or historical interest in Islamic faith.⁶⁰ He presented the work of Riccoldo as a tool to compel Christians to fight against Islam in a crusade, but also as a mirror for Christians to see their own sins, as he himself wrote in the prologue for the *Contra legem* prepared for Adrian VI: "in the following book by fr. Riccoldo the crimes of this cursed pagan sect will be openly exposed as not smaller than those of the false Christians... and both opposites against each other will appear more clearly in contrast".⁶¹ Angelo sets this very opposition of false Christians and Muslims in a more rhetorical fashion by declaring in the prologue of the *Contra legem* for Adrian VI that his goal is nothing but to expose the sins and crimes of "tam falsorum christianorum quam falsigraphorum saracenorum", in a polyptoton that equates the falseness and moral corruption of both.⁶²

59 Tognetti 1970; McGinn 1992.

60 61 While the *Epistola ad Saracenos* does report some of the marginal notes present in Ricc. 3026, most others are new, note Arabic words or suras, and were most likely added by the printers themselves and not by Angelo.

61 Cf. note 12.

62 Cf. note 9.

CONCLUSIONS

Angelo continued an epistolary model, i.e., a letter addressed to the Ottoman sultan encouraging him to convert to Christianity, that had been used shortly before him by Pius II. The latter's *Epistola ad Mahumetem*, however, has been the object of many scholarly interpretations, from those who saw in it a genuine attempt to convert Mehmet II "in a mood of despair and within a well-established missionary tradition"⁶³ to others who considered it a self-promotional exercise with prophetic undertones.⁶⁴ Yet, both addressed the sultan as a potential second Constantine, and both had in mind rather a Christian audience than an Ottoman ruler:⁶⁵ but while Piccolomini's discussion of Mehmet II's conversion seems to be ultimately focused on political matters, Angelo calls for a different type of conversion; a Christian conversion more in line with Riccoldo's original mindset.⁶⁶

Riccoldo's treatise against the Qur'an enjoyed a wider circulation from its composition in the 14th century onwards than previously thought, as recently surfaced witnesses have demonstrated in the last few years.⁶⁷ It is worth noting, however, that such

63 Hankins 1995, p. 129. Similar remarks by e.g. Kenneth Setton or Franco Gaeta are discussed in Özden Mercan 2017, pp. 72–73. I thank F. Özden Mercan for kindly sharing her essay with me.

64 Viallon 2011.

65 A position first advanced by Schwoebel 1967, p. 66 and later taken up by Bisaha 2002 and Özden Mercan 2017.

66 On this, cf. Scotto 2021.

67 Waggoner Karchner 2019a; González Muñoz 2020. An important note on this matter is the disappearance (most likely a theft) of one copy, Pistoia, Biblioteca Leoniana, ms. 31, dated 1442, which resurfaced first in an auction catalogue *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures, London Tuesday 18th June 1991* (Sotheby's 1991, p. 84, lot 82) and last in Kaeppli & Panella 1993, p. 264, being now lost. Waggoner Karchner reports its existence in her dissertation as "an unverifiable citation" (2019b, p. 231) and González Muñoz wrongly reports this ms. as still extant in the Pistoiese library (2020). The theft of manuscripts and miniatures in Pistoia between 1980 and 1990 is discussed by Murano 2009, p. 768, n. 54. Note too that Ricc. 673, described by Dondaine 1967 as containing a copy of the *Contra legem* contains only some references to it and not the actual text: for more on this ms., see note 51. Last, a copy of the *Contra legem* was found among the sources compiled by Sigismondo Tizio for his lost *Historia barbarorum* by Piemontese (1996a, p. 222). A later, 18th-century copy in Rome, Archivum Generale Ordinis Predicatorum, ms. XIV. 181, mentioned by Kaeppli & Panella (1993), has not been mentioned in the other inventories of the *Contra legem*, perhaps due to its later composition. Murano (2009) discusses a copy of the *Contra legem* made and owned by Giordano de Michele Giordani, most likely a translation into Italian, as the vast majority of his books were in Italian: I have been unable to identify any ms. of the *Contra legem* that could match the description by Giordano, i.e., a "libro di mia mano in cartta mezana non legato". Murano implies that the lost copy from Pistoia could be this; however, its early composition date (1442) suggests otherwise.

circulation did not just take place in manuscript form, in Latin or under the name of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce: 18 print editions from the early 16th to the early 17th centuries appeared in Latin, Spanish, German, Greek, and in Angelo's case, Italian; together with these print translations, over 20 manuscript copies in Greek circulated, while Riccoldo's treatise also appeared in Latin manuscript copies under different names such as Mattheus de Remago or through reworkings such as Petrus de Pennis' *Tractatus contra Alchoranum*.⁶⁸ Beyond the question of circulation, tracing such reception and active readings of the *Contra legem* requires first to acknowledge the complex, subtle and unique ways in which literary contacts occur.⁶⁹ And while an exhaustive history of Riccoldo's treatise and its influence in early modern Europe is well beyond the scope of this essay, the case of Angelo constitutes a unique part of its intricated circulation, being more than simply anti-Islamic or historiographical and erudite.

It is not hard to imagine the reasons for Angelo's interest in the *Contra legem*. As the first generation of his family born in Venice, Angelo was not unfamiliar with puzzling news of Islamic expansion similar to that which Riccoldo heard during his travels; he surely knew of the fall of Drisht, his family hometown, and the modern episodes of the Ottoman expansion through the family oral tradition. If Riccoldo believed to have found a theoretical answer for the conundrum of Muslim prosperity in Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*,⁷⁰ Angelo's more practical and contradictory rationale explained it as the result of the sinful and corrupt state of modern Christianity. On the one hand, and away from a retributive logic, Angelo's deeply eschatological views posited suffering as the quintessential deed of a good Christian, only to be overcome by the final conversion of false Christians and, with them, Muslims, triggering thus a golden age of peace, grace and justice for all. On the other, he explained Ottoman expansion and other events such as the expected *diluvium* of 1524 as the necessary punishment for Christianity's corrupted state.

Both Angelo and Riccoldo, however, would turn their eyes to Christianity in order to cope with the crisis of Islamic puissance: Angelo, urging Christians to spiritual,

68 Panella (1988) discusses many of these. Moreover, he mentions a 17th-century manuscript copy of the print Latin translation by Bartolomeo Picerno from Demetrius Cydones' Greek version kept in Rome, Archivio della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione delle Genti, ms. Miscellanee varie XIa. While Emilio Panella and John Tolan have pointed out the strong parallels between the two works, Fernando González Muñoz is preparing a critical edition of Petrus de Pennis' treatise, which sheds light on the extent to which de Pennis reused, most often verbatim Riccoldo's *Contra legem*.

69 A great example for the necessary attention to this issue remains Drory 1993.

70 Cf. on Riccoldo's interpretation of the Book of Job in light of Gregory's *Moralia*, see Davide Scotto's chapter in this book.

doctrinal and even intellectual reform; and Riccoldo, encouraging Oriental Christians to resist while reprimanding those in the West for their lack of religious zeal. Perhaps the greatest divergence between the two authors lies in their intellectual methods and backgrounds: while Riccoldo sets forth a rebuttal of the Qur'an following medieval Aristotelian scholastics, focused on its inconsistencies and perceived lack of logic, Angelo is closer to Savonarola's positions, highlighting Islam's lack of *lumen naturale* and *supernaturale* and relying overall on revelation as a source of knowledge for the majority of his intellectual endeavours.⁷¹

The entanglement of Church reform and prophecy in the first half of the 16th century is well known; less so, perhaps, are the ways in which perceived religious crises such as Ottoman expansion or even the Protestant Reformation were read not as divine punishments, but as a time inciting Christians to introspection and self-assessment, following the exegesis of Gregory the Great of the story of Job. Even readers of the *Contra legem* devoted to a thorough confutation of the Qur'an, such as Guillaume Postel, envisioned their ultimate project as a spiritual, intellectual (and therefore political) reform of Christianity.⁷² For many other early modern readers of Riccoldo, such as Paolo Angelo or Girolamo Savonarola, this implied not just the conversion of Muslims or Jews but first and foremost the true conversion of Christians.

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71 See, for instance, *Epistola drizata*, f. [4v]. On Angelo and revelation, cf. Fernández Guerrero 2018.

72 Secret 1957. See also the contribution of Rita George-Tvrtković in this volume.

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JOHANNES EHMANN

Luther's Translation of Riccoldo

A Specific Protestant Reception of a Medieval Tradition of Islam

HISTORICAL APPROACH AND SOME DISTINCTIONS¹

For almost his entire life, the reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546) had an interest in the Ottoman Turks and Islam. His interest stemmed from the expansion of the Turks, which saw as its preliminary culmination the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Their expansion would lead them into the Orient and into the Mediterranean area. The political and military situation came to a head when Hungary was defeated in the Battle of Mohács in 1526 and Vienna came under siege in 1529. The year 1529 also saw the publication of Luther's two major works on the Turks, in which he attempted to comfort occidental Christianity and to encourage legitimate military resistance.

By 1529, a decade had passed since Luther's most essential reformatory insights. His theological convictions, which he had developed in the 1520s, showed an obvious connection to the threat of the Turks. In his theology of repentance (1517/1518) for instance, Luther rejected the war against the Turks as a religiously motivated crusade. Between 1523 and 1526 he drafted his positions on questions of holy authority and on the ethics of war and peace. Luther would hold onto the following positions his entire life: that the war against the Turks was not a holy war against non-believers and that it was both necessary and legitimate. In his 1528 *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony*,² he states: "The authority must protect its people from illegitimate violence, whether that violence stems from questions of faith or from other

¹ Cf., in general, Francisco 2007; Ehmann 2008.

² Cf. Ehmann 2017b.

reasons.” Thus, the Turks must be fought for reasons of legitimate self-defence, not because they are non-believers.

In 1529, a new reasoning emerges. Ethical questions (the military conflict with the Turks) are supplemented by the theological question of the conflict with Islam—not as an inquiry into religious history, but as an inquiry into the religious ideology of the Turks. Luther presupposes a reciprocal dynamic between religion and politics. Subsequently, he extends his attention from the Ottoman Turks to Islam, from the sphere of politics to faith and from faith back to politics.

Essential to Luther’s approach to the Turks and Islam is his differentiation of “two regiments”. This differentiation rules out a religious war against the Muslim Turks, but allows for military resistance. The latter does not serve the purpose of yielding merit in the eyes of God, but is divinely ordained obedience before the earthly authority tasked with maintaining peace and order. Thus, one of Luther’s most essential approaches in his occupation with Muslim Turks becomes obvious: to fill in the missing pieces of information as regards the “Turkish predisposition in worldly and clerical (!) spheres.”³

SOURCES OF LUTHER’S ISLAMIC STUDIES

This raises the question of from where Luther’s knowledge of Islam stemmed. It must not be underestimated that all through his life Luther tried to grow more knowledgeable about Islam. More than enough tales and horror stories, spread via pamphlets, were floating around, but finding authentic, reliable information proved difficult. Three basic sources need to be distinguished:

1. Luther used a work that he later edited and published, adding his own preface: *The Book of the Rites and Customs of the Turks*, originally titled *Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequiciis turcorum*, first published in 1481 by George of Hungary. Luther published a reissue of the book in 1530 with a new preface. The reissue is an attempt to portray one’s political enemy in a certain light, but it also shows a willingness to move beyond mere horror stories. Many of Luther’s favourable statements about the Turks probably have their basis in this tract. He certainly considered it “current”—the tract had been written about 30 years after the conquest of Constantinople—because it dealt with an issue that once again under consideration: Christian life under Islamic rule, i.e., preservation of one’s faith, on the one hand, and the surprising phenomenon of Islamic toleration of Christians, on the other. The Habsburgs had had an eye on Hung-

3 Cf. Martin Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (1883–2009) [= WA]; WA 30/2, p. 121.

ary since the Battle of Mohács in 1529, in which King Louis II lost both his kingdom and his life. This had major political implications

2. In addition to the *Tractatus*, Luther also took note of a work that is now considered one of the most influential tracts in (inter-)religious studies: Nicholas of Cusa's exploration and evaluation of the Qur'an, *Cribratio Alkorani* (1461). In all likelihood, Luther came into contact with this work even before he had read the *Tractatus*. Luther did not actually make use of the *Cribratio*, even though he recognizes the efforts of its author to deter Christians from Islam and to lead them back to their faith.⁴
3. The *Confutatio*, Riccoldo's major work against Islam, assumed major significance in Luther's work. Two points are of central importance: Luther suggests that by 1530, he had tried numerous times to get his hands on a copy of the Qur'an—to no avail—and that he distrusts Riccoldo's *Confutatio*, which he had read multiple times. He believed that it had been written with the intention of painting a negative picture of Islam—to the benefit of the Pope (!). He also could not believe that Islam was as irrational as Riccoldo portrays it. The situation changed drastically in 1542. Having seen a disputable Latin translation of the Qur'an, Luther starts trusting the *Confutatio*. Thus, Riccoldo, to whom Luther refers as "Richard", becomes Luther's primary witness against Islam, with the *Confutatio* serving as Luther's main text to denounce Islam. Once more, Luther is keenly interested in finding out "what Mohamed's faith is. Everybody was content to know that he was [just] an enemy of the Christian faith. But where and how [and] piece by piece has not been heard, even though it needs to be known."⁵

DID LUTHER KNOW THE QUR'AN?

Riccoldo becomes Luther's key witness because of the supposed congruence of the former's works with the Qur'anic doctrines. Luther states this quite clearly, but it is still a problematic postulation. Luther reports reading the Qur'an on Shrove Tuesday (21 February) 1542, but it is unclear what should be gleaned from this fact. On the one hand, seeing that Luther, based on his own accounts, had not known the Qur'an prior to this reading, it is not clear on what Luther's negative assessment of the Latin

4 Cf. WA 30/2, p. 205.

5 Cf. WA 53, p. 272.

translation is based. On the other hand, there is no bibliographical record of a Qur'an edition in Wittenberg. Therefore, I maintain that Luther was studying Islamic traditions, but not the Qur'an itself as it was printed shortly afterwards in Basel (1543).⁶ At best, it is possible that he had access to handwritten excerpts, possibly a collection of texts assembled by Heinrich of Eppendorf and printed in Strasbourg in 1540. Resolving this question is almost impossible. It is crucial for the reception of Riccoldo that Luther recognizes Riccoldo's polemics printed in 1542 as an authentic reproduction of the Qur'an, and he therefore bases his own refutation of Islam on the *Confutatio*: "I have learned that this Brother Richard [i.e., Riccoldo] has not fabricated his work, but writes in accordance with the Qur'an. And it can be stated that Brother Richard lived 200 years ago in the time of Albert, when the Dominican Order was still young."⁷

Luther rightfully pointed out that Riccoldo's opponent was Islam rather than the Turks. This is because the Turks had not even been heard of during that time, in contrast to the rule of the Saracens, which had been known for centuries.

RICCOLDO'S *CONFUTATIO* AND LUTHER'S REFUTATION

It is well known that Riccoldo Pennini OP engaged in the "mission to the Mohammedans". He had travelled extensively enough to emphasize his knowledge of the Arabic language and Islam confidently. Whether these claims are accurate is not of concern for now. But it is crucial that Riccoldo penned an extensive, refuting work, which he finalized in Florence in 1300. As a careful reader of the *Doctor Ecclesiae* Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Riccoldo's goal was to refute Islam by taking recourse to scholastic theology, which owes methodological leanings to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, positing connections and differences. Muslims are mistaken, Riccoldo believes, but there are ethically sound Muslims and wavering ones who are secretly Christian and who are but a small distance removed from the "truth" (and baptism). There is, however, no possible salvation for Muslims devoid of ethical boundaries—by which Riccoldo means Christian norms.

What was Luther, reformer, enemy of scholastic theology and critic of Aristotle, supposed to do with such polemical work? After all, the *Confutatio Alcorani* had been published almost 250 years before Luther's lifetime. Luther was sceptical. As mentioned before, he had read it numerous times and found that it was too critical of Islam and overly intent on portraying Islam in too negative a light in comparison to the papal Church. Thus, Luther took somewhat of a "historical-critical" perspective.

6 Cf. Ehmann 2008, pp. 419–422.

7 Cf. WA 53, p. 272.

Subsequently, Luther translates this scholastic critique of Islam from Latin into German and, at the same time, from a medieval scholastic style into reformatory language. Luther adheres to the Dominican friar Riccoldo's view of Islam while writing a current reformatory text—a highly fascinating process because Luther, with the help of countless omissions and additions, succeeds in turning this minutely detailed indocination into a “book of consolation” for the evangelical community.

It is a piece of good fortune that the genesis of Luther's text can be traced quite accurately. His refutation (*Verlegung*) of Islam is not only part of his reformatory oeuvre, but also part of Riccoldo's reception history.

In using the *Confutatio* as the centrepiece of his refutation, Luther inserted himself into the complex tradition of the work of a Dominican friar from the High Middle Ages. Riccoldo's work was published with the title *Contra legem Sarracenorum* in 1300. Around 1350, it was translated from Latin to Greek by Demetrius Kydones (1324–1397), who equipped it with a new function by turning it into a text opposing the Ottomans, who were threatening the Byzantine Empire. Then it was translated back into Latin—the original might have been lost—by Bartholomeus Picens of Monte Arduo, now as a polemic against Islam and as a call to crusade directed at King Ferdinand, duke of Calabria. This text—only now entitled *Confutatio Alcorani*—not only survives to this day, but Luther's own personal copy is stored in the Saxon State and University Library in Dresden.

This shows how Luther acquired and worked with the *Confutatio*. Luther adopted the table of contents of the *Confutatio* as well as the printed marginalia; at the same time, he made handwritten additions. In order to give structure to his thinking, he scribbled questions (even polemical ones) and notes, swear words and terms of disgust (mostly regarding sexual matters) into the margins. Crucial passages are underlined, dispensable and vague ones crossed out.

Most notable about his revision is that Luther consistently deletes all of Riccoldo's ontological and speculative inquiries.⁸ These deletions are accompanied by additions (on roughly the same scale) that—amplified by Luther's metaphorical language—radically change the rhetorical mode of the *Confutatio*. In the time of the Reformation, this scientific inquiry into Islam from the High Middle Ages is turned into an inquiry into the persuasions of faith of a Protestant community. As in the works on Turks that had preceded it, this was about solidification and solace, about denouncing a crusade and supporting resistance at the same time, but now—and this is what sets the *Verlegung*

8 For example, Luther discarded the parts of the *Confutatio* which show the Qur'an's irreconcilability with the Aristotelian doctrine of virtues. Cf. WA 53, pp. 373–375. Ehmann 2008, pp. 94–99.

apart—it becomes about opposing the core of the Islamic faith as a fanatic and religion centred on law, about defending against a “carnal” religion preoccupied with women, murder and spoils. Subsequently, Islam is faithlessness that destroys ethical and political pillars by doing away with divinely ordained classes (church, magistracy, marriage). Further, the church is destroyed through the misguided teaching of arrogated signs in the Qur’an, the magistracy by way of warfare; the institution of marriage through polygamy and stipulations in sexual law.

Ultimately, Luther clings to the medieval polemical tradition from the point of view of religious studies. He cannot arrive at a different, new or—based on today’s standards—“appropriate” understanding of Islam. He brings back the old view of Islam as (only) Christian heresy and criticizes the irrationality as well as the suprarationality of Islam sharply. This irrationality Luther saw in the Islamic rites; suprarationality he saw in the monism of its theory of God, which attempts to perforate the mystery of God. Being a polemic, Luther respected few boundaries, particularly when criticizing Mohammed. Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that at issue were age-old questions of different systems of faith.

This is not meant to be an excuse. But still, a historically just judgement has to take into account that the complex history of Riccolodo’s work was not beneficial to a measured portrayal of Islam either. What Luther deems absurd is often the result of opaque written traditions (following multiple translations) that were clearer in the original of 1300.

The intention of Luther’s text was not that of Riccolodo’s. Luther penned a book of consolation based on Riccolodo’s work, complete with a preface and an epilogue that suggest a decidedly apocalyptic vision. The Protestant community of the 1540s is threatened by the military success of the Turks, by the reports of pillaging, rapes and abductions in the conflict areas. It is under pressure from orthodox magistrates, but at the same time obliged to carry out its duty in fighting the Turks. But—this is the challenge facing Luther—there are even people that are yearning for Turkish rule and for a faith promising success, money and women. This, however, is just one side of the coin. Increasingly, Luther associates opposition to Islam with the pope’s agenda. Indeed, the pope is worse than Mohammed and the Turk. This is because the pope murders the human within (the soul) by preventing the proclamation of the Gospel, whereas the Turk only murders the outer being (the flesh) with his military aggression.

Subsequently, Mohammed and “the Turk” fit into the nervousness about the end-times and may play the role foreseen for them by God. Mohammed is not the Anti-christ; that role is filled by the pope. Thus, at this stage, Luther’s arguments clash with Riccolodo’s original work.

BASEL COUNCIL (MAGISTRATE) FOR THE PRINTING OF THE QUR'AN

One might think that Luther not only discarded the Qur'an, which he called "an abominable book", but tried to suppress it.⁹ But this is not the case. When Robert of Ketton's (faulty) Latin translation was reprinted in Basel without permission of the magistrate, which led to the incarceration of its printer, Oporinus, Luther defended the printer and even saw to it that a new preface was added.¹⁰ Luther believed that any sane person would react with disdain and indignation upon perusing this text, which is why a reprinting could be condoned. These might not be the right reason for a printing of the Qur'an, but the Basel Qur'an printing from 1543 is still part of the history of slowly evolving Islamic studies in the Western world. Apologetic polemics might be one thing, but freedom and courage to achieve an accurate understanding of Islam quite another.

Undoubtedly, Luther was not able to achieve an authentic understanding of Islam in his time. He was too dependent on sources of which he could not yet gain a critical understanding. At the same time, he clearly intended not to fight the inter-religious war by unconscionable means, but instead tried to attain knowledge about Islam. That his polemic against Islam often ventures into crude and obscene territory is probably not to be excused, but at least this can be explained if one takes the historical context into account. After all, Luther believed that he knew the "real" Islam based on a proper reading of the Qur'an and that he was exposing it as a religion of debauchees and imperialist barbarians. Consequently, he fights with all his rhetorical might "until death against the Turks and the Turk's God",¹¹ as he puts it elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

Any historical analysis requires putting events into context. As regards the study of Luther, this entails the methodological perception of Islam as a religion of the Turks, setting it against the backdrop of Turkish imperialism in the 16th century. In addition, there is a dependence on the scholarly tradition of the Middle Ages, namely Robert of Ketton's translation of the Qur'an (12th century) (albeit indirectly), Ric-

⁹ Cf. WA 53, pp. 569–572.

¹⁰ This does not, however, answer the question of whether Luther knew this edition (no later than 1543).

¹¹ "Ego vsque ad mortem luctor aduersus Turcas & Turcarum Deum." WA.BR 5, 166,1–167,19.

coldo's *Confutatio* (1300), Nicholas of Cusa's *Cribratio* (1460/1461) and George of Hungary's *Tractatus de ritu et moribus Turcorum* (c. 1481).

Incidentally, Luther's approach regarding the Turks and Islam differs decidedly from his approach regarding Jews. His analysis of the Jews, theologically speaking, deals primarily with the great promise and delivery, which makes it about graphology. With respect to the Turks, however, he is interested in the relationship between indulgence and crusade (topics within Christianity), then the legitimacy of military opposition (ethics), and only after 1529 is he concerned with the "religion". A crucial difference lies in the fact that, from a theological standpoint, the Jews are regarded as a biblical chosen people that defies its (fulfilled) promise (thus losing its promise) while Islam is treated as heresy from a religious-historical standpoint.

Luther draws on medieval tradition for rhetorical ammunition to back up his reformatory refutation of the Islamic, i.e., the Qur'anic, truth claims centred on Mohammed. Luther's reception (1542) of Riccoldo da Monte di Cruce's *Confutatio Alcorani* (1300) is a salient example of this.

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MARCO ROBECCHI

Riccoldo after Riccoldo

The Liber peregrinationis and Its Vernacular Translations

It is not necessary to summarize Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, his travel account. Here I will only briefly recap that in the first part of his travel account he describes his pilgrimage in the Holy Land; then follows a long section dedicated to his encounter with Turks, Mongols, Kurds, and the three Christian heresies of Jacobites, Maronites and Nestorians; finally, the last section presents the Islamic religion, seven of its virtues and six of its—principally theological—faults.

As far as we know, during the Middle Ages Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis* was translated three times, twice into Italian vernacular and once into French. Today we know seven Latin manuscripts, three Italian and seven French: seventeen in total, enough for it to be considered a well-known text. In the following pages, through the six journalists' questions of "who, what, when, where, why and how?", I will examine the different types of reception of Riccoldo's work across the Middle Ages. First, I will try to examine the Latin manuscripts and their relations, the period when they were copied, who decided to copy and assemble them with other texts, and try to see how Riccoldo's text changed depending on the context of its circulation. I will apply the same method to the Italian and the French translations, and will conclude with the aim of understanding how the language, the period and the region can change the reception of Riccoldo's account.

THE LATIN MANUSCRIPTS

In 1967 Father Antoine Dondaine was one of the first to study the Latin manuscript tradition of Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, following on from the 19th-century

study of Reinhold Röhricht who counted seven manuscripts.¹ No more Latin manuscripts have been discovered, so the count still stands at one manuscript kept in Berlin, one in Rome, one in Turin, two in Wolfenbüttel and two in Paris. It is possible, of course, that more manuscripts might be found by digging in libraries and archives, but these seven are enough to understand the principal issues concerning the circulation of Riccoldo's account.

Two modern editions of the Latin text exist: the first was published by Johann Carl Moritz Laurent in 1864, based on the manuscript Wolfenbüttel 40; the second and more recent was published by René Kappler in 1997, based on the Berlin manuscript which, as far as we know, was copied in Santa Maria Novella in Florence, by the same scribe who copied the *Ad nationes orientales* of the manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, C 8.1173; furthermore, the Berlin manuscript contains some handwritten notes and additions made by Riccoldo. This explains its importance for the edition. Nonetheless, the study of each individual manuscript is worthy of more attention than we might think. Analysing the region of production, diffusion and readership of these copies offers us greater insight into their history and their cultural context.

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, lat. qu. 466 [= B]

Parchment, early 14th century (*ante* 1320), 216 × 145 mm; 69 ff. Digital version: http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN792518055&PHYSID=PHYS_0001&DMDID=.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 1–24v.

The Berlin manuscript is the oldest copy of the text and was produced during the author's lifetime. It was copied in Florence before 1320 (the year of Riccoldo's death), and belonged to Matteo di Fianza da Barletta who left a note dated 1333 at the end of the text. This Dominican, who lived in Naples, attentively read the text, adding many comments and glosses concerning the sites visited by Riccoldo, the etymology of some names, and some biblical quotations. The manuscript is composed of two physically separate sections: the first contains Riccoldo's account, followed by a guide to the Holy Land named *Innominatus VII*, and some brief texts concerning the Orient and biblical characters successively copied in the blank pages (maybe by the same Matteo

¹ See Röhricht 1884; Dondaine 1967.

di Fidanza); the second section contains the *Liber descriptionis Terre Sancte* written by Burchard of Mount Sion (ff. 36–62v) and *Priester John's Letter* (ff. 62v–65).²

Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberiniano Latino 2687 [= V]

Parchment, late 14th century; 48 ff. Digital version not available.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 1–12v.

The Vatican manuscript was probably copied in Florence before the end of the 14th century. It was part of a bigger manuscript that contained 22 texts concerning the description of the world based on biblical events. Today it contains Riccoldo's *Liber*, a description of the Holy Land (ff. 12v–30), a description of the wonders of Rome (ff. 30–37) and the Latin version (version LA) of Marco Polo's *Milione* (ff. 37–48v). This manuscript was probably known by the Florentine humanist Domenico Bandini who read it for the redaction of his *Fons memorabilium universi*.³

Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, H.II.33 [= T]

Paper, early 16th century, 330 × 325 mm; 269 ff. Digital version not available.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 235–246.

The third Latin manuscript is kept in the National Library of Turin. This is a copy from the end of the 15th century, or possibly the beginning of the 16th century. It was copied in the Venetian region by a humanist interested in the Islamic religion. It contains Robert of Ketton's translation of the Qur'an (ff. 7–205v), a *Cronica Sarracenorum* (ff. 207–223v), Herman the Dalmate's translation (ff. 224–232v), Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, *Letters* I and III (ff. 246–246v) and his *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (ff. 247–267v). The first part of Riccoldo's text, dedicated to the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is missing; the scribe was only interested in the ethnographic description of Asiatic peoples, of heretics and of the Islamic religion.⁴

2 *Priester John's Letter*, a fictional work about an imaginary Christian emperor living in the Far East, was often believed to be true during the Middle Ages. Travellers such as Wilhelm von Rubruk, Marco Polo and Jordan Català tried to find his kingdom, obviously without result. See Simion & Reginato 2015, an article which contains rich and complete bibliographical information.

3 See esp. Gautier Dalché 2003; Gadrat-Ouerfelli 2013; 2015, p. 53.

4 Casali 2008–2009.

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 40 Weiss. [= W]

Paper, 15th century (1460/70), 293 × 210 mm; 110 ff. Digital version: <http://diglib.hab.de/?db=mss&list=ms&id=40-weiss&lang=en>.⁵

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 73v–94v.

Ms. W was copied between 1460 and 1470 by the Carthusian monk Heinrich von Diessen in Cologne, who also copied a collection of travel accounts and descriptions of the world for Nicholas of Cusa. This manuscript contains Pipino's Latin translation of Marco Polo's *Milione* (ff. 1–57v),⁶ Odoric of Pordedone's *Relatio* (ff. 57v–73v),⁷ Riccoldo's account and Wilhelm von Boldensele's *Liber de ultramarinis partibus* (ff. 95–110r),⁸ all of which will be discussed further below. In any case, it is clear that Heinrich von Diessen, who made many comments and annotations, was interested in the description of the world as he even attempted to draw up a map of the Asiatic continent.⁹

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cord. Guelf. 41 Weiss. [= X]

Paper, mid-15th century, 295 × 217 mm; 254 ff. Digital version: <https://diglib.hab.de/?db=mss&list=ms&id=41-weiss>.¹⁰

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 160vb–179rb.

Ms. X was copied in the middle of the 15th century. It is now composed of three sections, the first and the second copied in the Flemish region, the third somewhere along the Rhine. The first section contains Cicero's *Oration in Verrem* (ff. 1–50), the second section contains a description of Flanders (ff. 51–88), and the third section contains Roger Bacon's *De regionibus* (ff. 91–120v), the Latin translation (version L) of Marco Polo's *Milione* (ff. 121–160v), Riccoldo's *Liber*, Burchard's *Descriptio Terre Sancte* (ff. 179v–197v), Odoric's *Relatio* (ff. 225–236v), John of Plan Carpine's *Historia Mongolarum* (ff. 236v–254v) and a *Pilgrim's book* (ff. 197v–224v). As we can see, the interest of this manuscript to its readers lies in its travel accounts and descriptions of the world.¹¹

5 See the description by Butzmann 1964, pp. 159–160.

6 On this version, see Dutschke 1993; Gadrat-Ouerfelli 2015, pp. 63–94.

7 Recently published by Annalia Marchisio, see Odorico da Pordenone. *Relatio de mirabilibus orientalium Tartarorum*, ed. Marchisio (2016).

8 Deluz 1972; 1997.

9 Gadrat 2006; 2010; Gadrat-Ouerfelli 2015, pp. 293–315.

10 See the description by Butzmann 1964, pp. 161–164.

11 This manuscript is studied by Paolo Chiesa (2014).

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 3343 [= P]

Paper, 15th century (*post* 1470), 298 × 205 mm; 173 ff. Digital version not available.¹²
 Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 80v–85v.

Ms. Paris 3343 is a 15th-century manuscript (*c.* 1470), copied between the North of France and Flanders. It contains *c.* 1,193 Latin and French texts and fragments copied by a French humanist. Only the last part of Riccoldo's *Liber*, concerning Muslims' virtues and faults, was copied. This fragment follows an extract of the 14th-century *Apparicion maistre Jehan de Meun* (ff. 79v–80) written by Honoré Bovet, which deals with a discussion between a Dominican and a Muslim about the Roman church.¹³ The scribe of this manuscript was clearly interested in the Islamic religion.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 6225 [= Q]

Paper, second half of the 15th century, 210 × 150 mm; 266 ff. Digital version: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100370665/fr.item.r=latin%206225>.¹⁴
 Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 154–162.

This 15th-century manuscript exclusively contains the last six chapters of Riccoldo's account of Muslims' faults. It is composed of seven sections copied in the German region and perhaps assembled by a preacher active against the Ottoman Empire's expansion. Some of the text concerns the Diet of Ratisbon of 1454;¹⁵ it also contains an excerpt from Riccoldo's *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (ff. 164–175).

12 See the description: <http://archivesetmanuscripts.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc61229t>. For more information about the manuscript: Ouy 2006; Menegaldo 2015, p. 68.

13 Honoré Bovet, *L'apparicion maistre Jehan de Meun et le Somnium super materia scismatis*, ed. Arnold (1926); Paviot 2003, pp. 50–51: "L'auteur y présente en fait une critique de son temps. L'intervention du Sarrasin permet de rappeler l'état lamentable de l'Europe chrétienne vis-à-vis des Musulmans. Il souligne la division de l'Église qui a permis la conquête de la Grèce, la vie dans les délices que mènent les Francs. Par cet intermédiaire, Honoré Bouvet se permet aussi des attaques contre les marchands parjures, contre les officiers, contre l'Église de Rome."

14 See the description: <http://archivesetmanuscripts.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc61229t>.

15 E.g., f. 1: *Enumeratio Principum et Legatorum qui comitiis Ratisponae, tempore Friderici III. anno 1454, pro foedere contra Turcham interfuerunt*; ff. 6v–13; Joannis de Castillione, *Exhortatio in Turchos*

The Latin manuscripts' context: Cultural implications

The seven Latin manuscripts can be divided into two groups based on textual and physical data. I have renamed them, for practical purposes, the “Italian family” (mss. BVT) and the “North European family” (mss. WXPQ).¹⁶

This distribution corresponds approximately to Kappler’s proposition. Even though he did not analyse each manuscript and he did not make an exhaustive *collatio* of all the witnesses, he proposed a separation of this group of manuscripts into two textual families. In his view, ms. B was the most authentic and original, while the other six manuscripts depended in different ways on it. This hypothesis contains a few imprecisions that I will not discuss here, but will try to summarize. The Berlin manuscript contains some 70 additions, handwritten by Riccoldo, concerning the distances that he covered in the Holy Land. The two Wolfenbüttel manuscripts contain a great number of these annotations, while in the Vatican and the Turin manuscripts they are lacking. I think that Riccoldo wrote a first version of his *Liber*, copied in the Berlin, Vatican and Turin manuscripts (the “Italian family”); after that, he added to the Berlin manuscript by indicating these distances, which were copied and modified by the copyist of the ancestor of the North European family and transmitted to the two Wolfenbüttel manuscripts (the “North European family”). Although this is a simplification, it is interesting to notice that textual and material facts correspond with one to another and with the diffusion of the text in geographical space and time.¹⁷

These two families of manuscripts form the basis of the two vernacular branches. The “Italian family” is the source of the two Italian translations that were created and copied in the Peninsula and circulated only in Tuscany, so that the direct link is evident. On the other hand, the “North European family” forms the basis of Jean le Long’s French translation: as he translated it in 1351, a Latin version of Riccoldo’s text must have travelled to Flanders or north-east France at some time between 1300 and 1350.¹⁸

We can, therefore, draw certain conclusions. Riccoldo’s *Liber peregrinationis* was, firstly, read as a travel account and as a description of Asiatic wonders, as we can suppose from the Berlin, Vatican and the two Wolfenbüttel manuscripts (mss. BVWX).

¹⁶ Robecchi 2016a, p. 442.

¹⁷ See Robecchi 2020b, pp. 115–149.

¹⁸ See Robecchi 2016a; 2020a, pp. 56–60. I tried to demonstrate that Riccoldo’s account reached the north together with Odorico’s *Relatio*, written in c. 1330. I cannot exclude a passage from Tuscany to Veneto and then way up to Flanders or the Rhenian region, possibly following merchants’ or intellectuals’ itineraries.

At the end of the 15th century, it then became a sort of source of information about the Islamic religion: the fall of Constantinople in 1453 is to be seen as the major catalyst for a new need in Europe to understand and oppose Islamic expansion (mss. TPQ).¹⁹

The four “older” manuscripts (mss. BVWX) seem to stress an aspect that does not correspond to the original will of the author, but rather respond to the public’s taste. Indeed, Riccoldo’s aim, as he declares in the prologue of his text, was to write a guide for other friars who wanted to preach the Christian faith in the Orient, among the heretics: *Ut fratres qui vellent laborem pro Christo adsumere pro fide dilatanda sciant quo indigent et ubi et qualiter magis possunt proficere*,²⁰ he says. Only the younger manuscripts (TPQ) show an evident interest in Muslims and heretics.

THE TWO ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS

The two Italian translations have recently been studied by Meriem-Faten Dhouib and Andrea Bocchi.²¹ They are transmitted by three manuscripts. The first translation (*Fi*) is contained in the manuscript Florence, Laurenziana Pluteo 89 N 104 Sup. 4 (*Fir*: paper, early 15th century, 285 × 210 mm; 134 ff.) and Paris, Italian 99 (*Fiz*: paper, late 14th century/early 15th century; 100 ff.). The two are almost identical, and they were copied in Florence at the same time; their handwritten form is the so-called *mercantesca*. They contain the *Fioretti* of Saint Francis,²² a catalogue of his miracles and examples, followed by a *Legend* of his life.²³ Riccoldo’s account consists of the first part, the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.²⁴ The aim of the scribes is clear. The two bourgeois, possibly merchants, with enough wealth and cultivation, created a type of devout collection, maybe for their private meditation and prayer, following the example of Saint Francis and in the steps of Riccoldo, one of the most famous Florentine pilgrims and Dominicans of the 14th century. We can presume that it is not simply a fragment of the whole text, but rather a translation that was deliberately intended to be limited to the first part.

19 See the opinion of Emmanuelle Vagnon (2017, concerning Bernhard von Breydenbach’s *Peregrinatio*, written after 1484, which seems to be “un compte-rendu utile, dans une atmosphère de polémique anti-turque et d’esprit de croisade” (p. 108).

20 Kappler 1997, p. 36.

21 Dhouib 2009; Bocchi 2017.

22 *Fir*: ff. 71a–63rb; *Fiz*: ff. 1–58ra.

23 *Fir*: ff. 82rb–119ra; *Fiz*: ff. 61ra–89rb. *Fir* adds *Considerazioni sopra le stimmate* of Saint Francis, ff. 63rb–82ra.

24 *Fir*: ff. 120ra–128rb; *Fiz*: ff. 90ra–96ra. *Fir* adds *Legend of Saint Eustache*, ff. 128va–134rb.

Andrea Bocchi recently published the edition of the second vernacular translation, named *Pi*. He clearly states that this translation was made in Pisa, probably in the monastery of Santa Caterina, a productive centre of vernacular translations.²⁵ Furthermore, this translation shows a strong interest in geographical, ethnographic and historical facts, much more than in theological aspects. The *Pi* translation is transmitted by the manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, (Magliabechiano) II.IV.53 (paper, second half of the 14th century, 300 × 220 mm). It is composed of two different sections: the first is dedicated to the *Liber peregrinationis* (ff. 1–25v) and also contains a part of Riccoldo's *Letters* (ff. 26–33v), *Priester John's letter* (f. 34) and numerous orations; the second section, copied in the 15th century and added in the 18th century, contains a translation of a surgical text (ff. I–CI: Guglielmo da Saliceto, *Chirurgia*). The first section clearly shows the interest of the copyist in the Orient and in religious practices.

I have tried to identify the Latin sources of these translations. The first translation (*Fi*) belongs to a textual tradition close to the Vatican manuscript, as it does not contain any of ms. B's additions of distances and notes. The second (*Pi*) belongs to a (missing) manuscript close to the Berlin manuscript, as it contains the additional distances but not all the notes; the ms. B and the *Pi* translation also share some errors, as Andrea Bocchi's study confirms.²⁶ Thus we can affirm that the two Italian versions derive from two manuscripts of the "Italian family", disseminated in Tuscany between Florence and Pisa in the 14th century, and that the readers were interested both in the pious aspects of Riccoldo's pilgrimage and in the description of a wondrous world contained in his account, similar to the situation testified by the oldest Latin manuscripts.

JEAN LE LONG'S FRENCH TRANSLATIONS²⁷

Finally, the *Liber peregrinationis* was translated, once, into French. The translator was Jean le Long d'Ypres, a Benedictine monk, abbot of the famous and powerful monastery of Saint-Bertin in the city of Saint-Omer in the French region of Nord-

²⁵ Bocchi 2017, pp. 29–30.

²⁶ See Bocchi 2017, p. 20: "è probabile che il testo latino del *Liber peregrinationis* seguito dal volgarizzatore fosse assai vicino (comparativamente) all'originale, potendovi trovare lezioni corrette rispetto a quelle errate di B o, in un caso, integrate dal suo correttore che sappiamo essere lo stesso Riccoldo." See also Robecchi 2020b, pp. 153–158.

²⁷ For a more detailed study of the French tradition of the text, its circulation and its readership, see Robecchi 2020a. Here I will limit myself to a few points.

Pas-de-Calais.²⁸ In 1351 he translated six works concerning the East and containing knowledge of the Asiatic continent. Four of these are travel accounts and geographical treatises: the first is the retranslation of the Latin *Flos historiarum*, originally written in French by Hayton of Corico and translated into Latin by Nicole Faucon, a description of the 14 kingdoms of Asia, the history of the Mongol Empire and the history of Arab conquests;²⁹ the second is Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, a description of the Middle East;³⁰ the third is the *Relatio* written by the Franciscan Odorico da Portenone, describing the Far East;³¹ the fourth is the *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus* written by the German Dominican Wilhelm von Boldensele, describing the Egyptian kingdom and the Holy Land,³² and the last two works are the *Lettres*, a pair of letters exchanged between Khan Toghon Temür and Pope Benedict XII,³³ and a small anonymous treatise named *De statu, conditione ac regimine magnis Canis*, two texts about the Mongol Empire's relations with the papacy and about the situation in the Franciscan mission of Cathay.³⁴ By selecting these works, written in the first half of the 14th century, Jean le Long created what we can call a *summa geographica* of the knowledge of the Orient, of the friars' missions in the East, and of the description of the Mongol Empire and its relationships with the papacy in the 14th century. Jean le Long's textual source is a Latin manuscript that belongs to the "North European family";³⁵ thus he acted more as an editor than as a simple translator.

I surmise that the first readers of Jean le Long's translations were the 14th-century north-eastern French merchants and bourgeois lay people, principally fascinated by oriental marvels, exotic peoples and adventurous travels.³⁶

28 The biography can be read in Andreose & Ménard 2010, pp. xxv–xxxix. See also Robecchi 2020a, pp. 19–23.

29 The original French and the Latin translation are edited in Kohler 1906; Jean le Long's French translation is edited in Dörper 1998.

30 See the edition in Robecchi 2020a. I also propose an edition of the "North European" Latin text.

31 Andreose & Ménard 2010.

32 Deluz 1972.

33 Concina 2018.

34 Gadrat 2007.

35 Robecchi 2016a, p. 450.

36 On this topic, see Robecchi 2019b. I try to affirm this by also basing my deductions on lexical and stylistic facts, as no explicit information is given by the translator.

The manuscripts of the French translations

The six translations have been transmitted by six manuscripts.

Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale 667 [= A]

Parchment, mid-14th century (1368), 325 × 250 mm; 130 ff. Digital version: <http://memoirevive.besancon.fr/ark:/48565/a011323184966C4MLuB>.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 46rb–84va.

This is the oldest manuscript. It was copied in 1368 (only 17 years after Jean le Long translated the six works mentioned above)³⁷ probably in St-Omer, the city where the translator was abbot. It contains only the six translations, and so it reflects the translator's original ambition. It is a modest manuscript, with a simple illustration on f. 11ra and a few decorations here and there. Rare, anonymous handwritten notes show generic interest in European personalities cited in the text (f. 43a *de Edoart roy Angloys*; f. 45va *des crestiens par Saint Loys*), in saints and biblical sites (f. 85rb *Saint Anastasius*; f. 92rb *de Saint Thomas Apoustre*; f. 85va *de Archa Noe*; f. 86va *de Job*; f. 85va *de l'Abre Sec*) and in Mongols' habits (f. 60rb *de inimico humani generis* and *de obediencia et concordia*).

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12202 [= B]

Paper, late 15th century (c. 1480), 280 × 208 mm; 183 ff. Digital version: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90615942.r=fran%C3%A7ais%2012202?rk=21459;2>.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 56v–108.

This manuscript belongs to the same textual family as the Besançon manuscript; it was copied in the north-eastern region of France at the end of the 15th century. It too is a modest multi-textbook in one piece and produced in a single operation. It contains Jean le Long's work (ff. 2–172), an excerpt of Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum historiale* concerning the life and death of Mahomet (ff. 172v–173), and the anonymous translation of a Latin legend about Mahomet and the rise of Islam, known as *Anonymus Pisanus* (ff. 173–184).³⁸ It is witness to a new state of the Europeans' relationships with Islam. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Christian knowledge of Islam became

37 As a note added by the scribe after the prologue states: *Et ad present abbé d'icellui lieu 1368* (and currently abbot of this monastery Anno Domini 1368) f. 1r.

38 See Robecchi 2016b.

necessary, whether it was for attempting to achieve reconciliation, or for promoting a new wave of crusades.³⁹

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12202 [= C] and London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho D II [= D]

C = Vellum, early 15th century (c. 1410), 290 × 200 mm; 146 ff. Digital version: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52510403h.r=francais%201380?rk=21459;2>.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 53vb–94vb.

D = Vellum, early 15th century (1404–1410), c. 315 × 230 mm; 149 ff. Digital version: https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Otho_D_II&index=2.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 38ra–60vb.

Manuscripts *C* and *D* are “brothers”: they were both copied in the first decade of the 15th century, in the same Parisian workshop. The Cotton manuscript belonged to Jacqueline of Luxembourg after the 1430s, but she cannot be the original buyer, as she was not yet born when the manuscript was produced. It is a collection that includes Jean d'Arras' *Roman de Mélusine*: on the one hand, this association emphasizes the “pseudo-historical” role of the crusade fought by the sons of Melusine against Muslims; but on the other hand, it highlights the fictional and wondrous nature of Jean le Long's work.⁴⁰ The Parisian ms. *C* is not as rich as the Cotton ms. *D*: it is incomplete, since the spaces for illustrations are blank. Nevertheless, it is interesting for the numerous notes, more than 50, handwritten on the border: these reveal the same level of curiosity as the Besançon manuscript's reader, except that this reader seems much more interested in wonders and in strange creatures.

I won't look in detail at the 16th-century printed edition by Jean de Saint-Denys of Jean le Long's work, published in Paris in 1529 (= *g*; Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 30v–53). He printed the six translations as if they formed a unique text and he entitled it *L'hystoire merueilleuse, plaisante et recreative du grand Empereur de Tartarie seigneur des Tartres nommé le grand Can*. He clearly desired to sell it as a *roman* of wonders and delight, and not as an encyclopaedic text. The source of this edition was a manuscript similar to *C*.

39 In fact, after 1453, a number of works on Islam made their appearance, such as the treatises of Nicholas of Cusa, Segovia, Jean Germain, Piccolomini, Juan de Torquemada, Alonso de Espina, Denys the Carthusian, etc. I do not want to delve into the field of Christian theological treatises on Islam, but I would like to thank Davide Scotto for these details.

40 See Robecchi 2019a, on the manuscript and the role of the *Roman de Mélusine*.

Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, fr. 2810 [= *E*] and Bern, *Burgerbibliothek*, ms. 125 [= *F*]

E = Parchment, early 15th century (c. 1410), 421 × 300 mm; 301 ff. Digital version: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52000858n.r=fran%C3%A7ais%2012202?rk=42918;4>.

Riccoldo's *Liber*: ff. 268r–299v.

F = Parchment, mid-15th century, 325 × 235 mm; 287 ff. Digital version: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/it/description/bbb/0125/Mittenhuber>.

Ms. *E* (the famous *Livre des merveilles*) was commissioned by the powerful John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy, who presented it to his uncle, the influential bibliophile John duke of Berry, in 1413. MS *F* was copied for Charles, duke of Orleans, the duke-poet.⁴¹ These were some of the most powerful men in 15th-century France, relatives of the kings of France.

The two manuscripts differ from the other four in their content and structure. They contain Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* and John of Mandeville's *Livre des merveilles* or *Livre des voyages*.⁴² Principally, ms. *F* is a *recueil* containing three pieces written at different times or places (one manuscript with Mandeville, one with Marco Polo and a third with Jean le Long's translations) and related in a unique manuscript according to the desire to emulate the more prestigious ms. *E*.⁴³

The textual tradition of the French translations

We can divide the seven manuscripts in French into two textual families:⁴⁴ family α , formed by mss. *AB*; family β , formed by two sub-groups: γ , formed by mss. *CD*, and δ , formed by mss. *EF(H)*. The β family differs from α for obvious textual reasons, but also, and more significantly, for the social environment of its diffusion. The four β

41 During the Stockholm conference, Professor Stefan Schreiner kindly informed me of the existence of a 19th-century manuscript held in Moscow, in the Russian State Library, Φ .256 no. 602, that belonged to Nikolai Petrovič Romyancev's personal library. This manuscript, that I name *H*, seems to be a copy of the *F* manuscript, as I have noticed from a comparison of their prologues. See Robecchi 2020a, pp. 83–84.

42 The two added texts belong to two different textual traditions, so that the Bern ms. cannot be the copy of the Parisian ms. For the section of Jean le Long's texts, on the contrary, *F* seems to be a *descriptus* of *E*.

43 For the history of the composition of this manuscript, see Robecchi 2017.

44 I will not consider here the print *g* and ms. *H*, but I can affirm that *g* seems to be a copy derived from *C*, while *H* seems to be a copy of *F*.

manuscripts (except *H*) belonged to noble families, while we can suggest that the α manuscripts probably belonged to bourgeois or lay persons interested in the geographical and religious aspects of Jean le Long's work (*vide supra*). Three of the four "noble" manuscripts contain *romans* (the *Roman de Mélusine* by Jean d'Arras, Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* and Mandeville's *Livre des merveilles*) that explicitly emphasize the entertaining and wondrous character of Jean le Long's works. And perhaps, these four manuscripts reveal, rather more than the other two, the primary, original will of the translator. From his style and his modifications, we can deduce that Jean le Long has *mis en roman* six Latin works.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the translation of two texts such as the *Lettres* and the *De statu*, much more documents and essays than accounts and stories, indicates that he also seriously considered the documentary and "scientific" dimension of his work, as the two α manuscripts seem to testify. It is important to remember that we cannot consider a text only by means of our modern critical standards. If we correctly consider the "entretissage de réseaux tantôt participatifs, tantôt concurrents"⁴⁶ that underlie medieval manuscript collections and the fluidity of genres in the late Middle Ages, our six manuscripts clearly speak of and reveal the elusive nature of this kind of literature; a kind of literature "sfuggente nel suo statuto letterario, refrattario all'attribuzione di facili etichette e valutazioni sommarie."⁴⁷ Scientific, theological and geographical interest can easily live together with marvels and amusement, in the same manuscript as well as in the same text.⁴⁸

CONCLUSIONS

Riccardo's account travelled through centuries and through languages. Created as a guide for pilgrimage in the Holy Land, it became at the same time a geographical treatise on the Near East, a description of wondrous people such as the Mongols, and a theological treatise about heretics and Muslims, who are sometimes praised as perfect, faithful men, sometimes condemned as the devil's descendants. It is a complex work, the reception of which has changed through time and space.

We can therefore attempt to represent three different aspects of the manuscript transmission and reception of Riccardo's *Liber*:

45 About the traductological questions of Jean le Long's work, see Robecchi 2019b.

46 Azzam 2005, p. 657.

47 Barbieri 2004, p. 157. The author talks about Marco Polo's *Devisement*, but we can easily apply his description to all the so-called "geographical literature".

48 We can find the same *mélange* in Marco Polo's *Devisement dou monde*; see Barbieri 2008, p. 51: "[the *Devisement*] incrocia sistematicità enciclopedica e coloriture romanzesche, didatticismo e fantasia."

1. Guide for the Holy Land and geographical treatise:⁴⁹

Latin: BV, 14th century (Italy) – WX, 15th century (Northern Europe)

Italian: *Fi*, 14th century (Pilgrimage + geography of the Holy Land)

French: Ø (generic interest)

2. Description of wondrous people and wonders:

Latin: BV, 14th century (Italy) – WX, 15th century (Northern Europe) – T, 16th century (Italy)

Italian: *Pi*, 14th century

French: Jean le Long's translations, 14th century

Manuscripts *DEF*, 15th century (nobles) > addition of romances

3. Theological treatise about heretics and Muslims:

Latin: PQ, 15th century (France/Germany) – T, 16th century (Italy)

Manuscripts TQ > addition of Riccoldo's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*

Italian: Ø

French: B, 14th century > addition of Vincent of Beauvais and *Anonimus pisanus*

We can also remark that the association with other texts seems to follow a fairly similar pattern within the manuscripts:

- Riccoldo's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*: ms. lat. TQ (theological treatise)
- Riccoldo's *Epistolae*: ms. lat. T; ms. it. *Pi* ("theological" treatise)
- Marco Polo's *Devisement*: ms. lat. VWX; ms. fr. *EF* (travel account)
- Odorico's *Relatio*: ms. lat. WX and Jean le Long's translations (travel account)
- Boldensele's *Liber*: ms. lat. W and Jean le Long's translations (travel account)
- Burchard's *Descriptio*: ms. lat. BX (pilgrimage guide)
- *Priest John's Letter*: ms. lat. B; ms. it. *Pi* (fantastical description).

This is a very important point of Riccoldo's reception in the Middle Ages, as it demonstrates that medieval people could understand, exploit and take advantage of the different readings that this text could present. An attentive reading of literary facts and material sources demonstrates the richness of interpretations made possible by a comparative analysis of the manuscripts transmitting Riccoldo's text and the way these interpretations differ with time and space.

49 I could consider an additional distinction between guide for pilgrims and source of information for geographical treatises, but it will not change the results proposed here.

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STEFAN SCHREINER

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce in an East European Context

Some Remarks on the Reception of Riccoldo's Works in Russian and Polish Literature and Its Historical Context

RICCOLDO IN RUSSIAN

In the Russian Empire, Riccoldo's most important anti-Islamic book, his *Improbatio Alcorani*,¹ printed under various titles (see the Bibliography below), was known—at the latest—from the second half of the 15th century: first through Dimítrios Kidónis' Greek translation, second via the theologian and interpreter Maximos the Greek, alias Maksim Grek as he is called in Russian, and third through an anonymous Russian

1 Frater Riccoldus Florentinus de ordine predicatorum: *Improbatio Alcorani – Contra legem sarracenorum*, ed. Antonio de la Peña (Sevilla: impressus hispali: p[er] Stanislaum polonum, anno a nativitate domini iesu christi m.d. [1500] xx. die marcij), with its Spanish translation *Reprobación del Alcorán* followed in Sevilla: por Magno Herbst y Juan Pegnitzer, Año de Mill. & quinientos & uno año [1501], reprinted in Toledo: por maestro Pedro Hagenbach/aleman, Año de Mill. & quinientos & dos años [1502]. On the Sevilla edition and its Spanish translation see, Cándida Ferrero Hernández, 'De la Improbatio Alcorani a la Reprobación del Alcoran o la fortuna hispánica de un texto apologético', in *Miscellanea latina*, ed. María Teresa Muñoz García de Iturrospe y Leticia Carrasco Reija (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios Latinos – Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2015), 537–543, and Pino Valero Cuadra, 'Traducción y combate por la fe: La Reprobación del Alcorán por Riccoldo da Montecroce en la España del siglo XVI', in *Revelación y traducción en la Orden de Predicadores*, ed. Antonio Bueno García (Mittelalter und Renaissance in der Romania 7) (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2018), 227–237. For a critical edition of the Latin text based on MS Florence C 8.1173, ff./f. 185r–218v, see Jean-Marie Mérigoux, 'L'ouvrage d'un frere precheur florentin en Orient à la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le *Contra legem Sarracenorum* de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce', *Memorie Domenicane* 17 (1986), 1–144, translated into (modern) Italian in Riccoldo da Montecroce, *I Saraceni: Contra legem Sarracenorum*, a cura di Giuseppe Rizzardi (Firenze: Nardini, 1992), 55–181.

translation of Dimítrios Kidónis' Greek version completed possibly in the 15th century, but certainly not later than the first decade of the 16th century.²

Two early editions of Riccoldo's book, containing Riccoldo's work in Bartholomaeus Picens de Montearduo's Latin retranslation of Dimítrios Kidónis' Greek version (f. iv) and published under the title *Contra sectam Mahumeticam non indignus scitu libellus* in Paris in 1509 and 1511 respectively,³ are to this day held in the Russian National Library (Российская Национальная Библиотека / РНБ) in St Petersburg, founded in 1795 as the Imperial Public Library (Императорская Публичная Библиотека / ИПБ) and opened to the public in 1814.⁴ In addition, the Russian National Library also holds a copy of the first, 1543 edition of Theodor Bibliander's *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran* etc.,⁵ where Riccoldo's book in Dimítrios Kidónis' Greek version as well as in Bartholomaeus Picens' Latin retranslation can be found.⁶ Though it is not clear when these two copies found their way to St Petersburg and eventually into the Imperial Public Library, it can be assumed that they were there from an early time of the library's ex-

- 2 For a brief summary of the reception of Riccoldo's *Confutatio Alcorani* in Russian scholarship, see Aleksej G. Dunaev, 'Кидонис Димитрий', in *Православная энциклопедия*, XXXII (Moskva, 2013), 640–656, esp. 649a–c. Of the new, not completed yet *Православная энциклопедия*, ed. Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Moskva 2000ff., thus far (2023) 71 vols (A – Feofan Zatvornik) appeared in print, accessible also online through <https://www.pravenc.ru/>.
- 3 *Ricoldi Florentini Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum; ex graeco nuper in latinum traducta per Bartholomeum Picenum de Montearduo* (Basileae [Basel]: ex officina [Nicolai] Kessleri, 1507, 34 ff., 4°); cf. further, *Ricoldi ordinis praedicatorum contra sectam Mahumeticam, non indignus scitu libellus* (Parisijs [Paris]: ex officina Henrici Stephani, anno MDVIII [1509], in 4°); *Contenta Ricoldi ordinis praedicatorum contra sectam Mahumeticam, non indignus scitu libellus. / Cuiusdam diu captiui Turcorum prouincie septemcastrensis, de vita & moribus eorundem alius non minus necessarius libellus [...]. / Adiunctus est insuper libellus de vita & moribus Iudaeorum Victoris de Carben olim iudei nunc Christi miseratione Christiani* (Parisijs [Paris]: ex officina Henrici Stephani, Anno Domini 1511, Vltima Aprilis), ff. 2r–28v / 29r–62v / 63r–86v; and *Turchice spurcitie et perfidie Suggillatio etc. [...] Posterior Alcoranum Turchice perfidie instrumentum validissimis argumentis improbat, confutat, explodit. Est autem Richardi ordinis praedicatorii et graeco (cum apud latinos minus cultus extaret) nuper translatus [...]*, ed. Jean Lemaire de Belges (Paris: les Frères de Marnef sub Pelicano, MDXIII [1514]), ff. 1r–48v / ff. 49r–87v. – On the Paris edition of 1509 see also the entry in Guillaume de Bure, *Catalogue des livres de la bibliothèque de feu M. le Duc de la Valliere*, 3 vols (Paris: chez Guillaume de Bure fils Aîné, 1783), I, 273, no. 835.
- 4 Shelf numbers 16.56.4.24 (Parisijs [Paris], 1511 edition) and 16.173.3.38 (Parisijs [Paris], 1509 edition).
- 5 Shelf number: 16.95.1.25a.
- 6 See notes 11 and 12 of this essay.

istence. Moreover, a copy of the Basel edition of *Contra legem*, dating to 1507, can be found in the Volodymyr Ivanovich Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine (Ukrainian: Національна бібліотека України імені Володимира Івановича Вернадського) in Kiev.⁷

However, long before Riccoldo's original Latin text appeared in print for the first time in 1500,⁸ and Bartholomaeus Picens' Latin retranslation was printed that same year, Riccoldo's book had become known among Orthodox Christians in Eastern Europe thanks to the aforementioned Dimítrios Kidónis who had translated the original Latin text into Greek.

Dimítrios Kidónis (Δημήτριος Κυδώνης, Thessaloniki c. 1324/5–1397 Crete) was a Greek diplomat and theologian, translator and prolific writer.⁹ When, and by what way he came across Riccoldo's book, we do not know. His Greek translation of the Latin text, bearing the title Ῥικάρδου τοῦ τῷ τάγματι τῶν παρὰ Λατίνοις καλουμένων Ἀδελφῶν Πρεδικατόρων κατειλεγμένου ἀνασκευῇ τῆς παρὰ τοῦ καταράτου Μαχουμέθ τοῖς Σαῦρρακηνοῖς τεθείσης νομοθεσίας, was completed somewhere between the years 1354 and 1360. Only a few years later, in 1386, Dimítrios handed it over to an unnamed friend in Thessaloniki who subsequently made it known.

According to the title, Dimítrios called the author Ρικάρδος (*Rikárdos*),¹⁰ and this name appears in Russian literature as well. In the later Russian translation of his work, however, Riccoldo's Italian name was transliterated differently, and Riccoldo became, "somewhat Russianized"—Риклад (*Riklad*).

From the early 15th century onwards, Dimítrios' translation was copied several times and circulated in various manuscripts in the Orthodox Christian world, including Russia. But it took almost two more centuries before the Greek text was printed for the first time. It was the famous book printer Theodor Bibliander (born Buchmann,

7 Shelfmark: IA-273.

8 The *editio princeps* of Riccoldo's book was printed in Sevilla in 1500; cf. note 1 above.

9 Cf. Dunaev, 'Кидонис Димитрий' (note 2), 640–656, by the way, the most informative article on him.

10 Likewise, from the Greek Ρικάρδος derived is the German *Richard* or *Reichard* by which Riccoldo is named and referred to in German literature since the middle of the sixteenth century. Thus, e.g., Martin Luther calls him "Bruder Richard" in his German translation of Riccoldo's *Confutatio Alcorani*; see his *Verlegung des Alcoran Bruder Richardi / Prediger Ordens / Anno 1300* (1542), in *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar, 1920), LIII, 261–396. Interestingly, in his re-translation of Riccoldo's *Confutatio Alcorani* from Greek into Latin, Bartholomaeus Picens de Monte Arduo follows the Greek version and likewise gives Riccoldo the name *Ricardus* or *Richardus* (see, e.g.: *Ricardi ex Ordine Fratrum qui apud Lationos 'Praedicatores' appellantur Confutatio Legis latae Saracenis à maledicto Mahometo*, Rome: apud Aloysium Zannettum, 1606).

1504?–1564) in Basel who published Riccoldo's work in Dimítrios' Greek version in his well-known Qur'an edition *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran*¹¹ along with Bartholomeo Piceno de Montearduo's (15th-/16th-century) retranslation of the Greek text into Latin,¹² and an appended—likewise in its Greek original with Latin translation—tractate on *Christianae fidei confessio, facta Saracenis* by an anonymous author (*incerto autore*), but according to the editor's introductory note exhibiting some similarities with Riccoldo's text.¹³

The questions, however, of by whom, and when, Dimítrios' Greek translation came to Russia, cannot be answered, at least yet. In any case, Dimítrios' translation must have reached the Russian Empire not later than the middle or second half of the 15th century, and it is very likely that in the following years it was copied there several times, as can be inferred from the various copies preserved in collections of Greek manuscripts stored in libraries of cathedrals and monasteries, such as in the former Patriarchal [later Synod's] Library (Патриаршая [later Синодальная] Библиотека) in Moscow. Among its many Greek manuscripts,¹⁴ there is quite a number containing anti-Islamic

11 *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran [...]*, opera & studio Theodori Bibliandri, 3 vols [Basel: Nikolaus Brylinger for Johannes Oporin], 1543. On Bibliander's Qur'an edition, see, Victor Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Reforme. Etudes sur l'attitude des réformateurs zurichois envers l'Islam 1510–1550* (Lausanne: Éditions L'Âge d'homme, 1978; San Francisco: ISP, 1998), chapter VII; Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Qur'an im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 42) (Beirut, 1995), esp. chapter III; Lucia Felici, 'L'Islam in Europa. L'edizione del Corano di Theodor Bibliander (1543)', *Cromohs* 12 (2007), 1–13; *Alcoran latinus*, III: *Editiones Theodori Bibliandri (1543 & 1550)*, ed. Anthony John Lappin (Rome: Aracne, 2011), XI–XX.

12 *Machumetis Saracenorum principis* (note 11), II, 83–165; Richardi [Ricoldus de Monte Crucis] [...], *Confutatio legis latae Saracenis a maledicto Mahometo*, translata ex Romana linguam in Graecam per Demetrium Cydonium, deinde per Bartholomaeum Picenum de Montearduo rursus e Graeco in Latinum conversa. Bibliander's 2nd Qur'an edition, printed in Basel in 1550, has the Latin text only (II, cols. 122–184). Bartholomeo Picerno de Montearduo's translation in turn served Martin Luther as basic text for his translation of Riccoldo's work; see Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Confutatio Alcorani* (1300). Martin Luther, *Verlegung des Alcoran* (1542), kommentierte lateinisch-deutsche Textausgabe von Johannes Ehmann (Corpus Islamo-Christianum, Series Latina, 6) (Würzburg: Echter, 1999).

13 [Theodor Bibliander:] *Machumetis Saracenorum principis* (note 11), II, 166–178: *Christianae fidei exomolegesis, sive confessio, Sarracenis facta, cum primis quidem pia, & spiritum planè apostolicum redolens, è Graeco conversa, incerto autore*. Bibliander's 2nd Qur'an edition, printed in Basel in 1550, has the Latin text only (II, cols. 183–192); cf. also Dunaev, 'Кидонис Димитрий' (note 2), col. 649c.

14 The Greek manuscripts of that library have been catalogued several times. The first catalogue was compiled by Christian Friedrich von Matthäi (Gröst 1744–1811 Moskva), *Accurata codi-*

polemical writings by various authors. In his catalogue of these Greek manuscripts, Archimandrite Vladimir (Filantropov, Vladimir 1842–1916 Moskva) lists no fewer than a dozen voluminous bundles of such Greek anti-Islamic polemical writings.¹⁵

Without going into details of these Greek manuscripts, manuscript no. 235 of Archimandrite Vladimir's catalogue titled "Сборникъ большею частию полемическаго содержания противъ Магометанъ" ["Collection of mostly polemical texts against the Mahometans"] deserves special attention. According to the data obtainable from it and the respective catalogue description, the collection, consisting of 324 folios (in 4°), was completed in the year 1627.¹⁶ From among its various texts, of particular interest in our context is text no. 3 copied on ff. 4–163, and titled: Βίβλιον Ρικάρδου τοῦ Λατίνου κατὰ Μωάμεθ ἐξηγηθὲν παρὰ Γεωργίου ῥήτορος τῆς μητροπόλεως Αἰνῶν.

That this text is the Greek version of Riccoldo's book, despite its attribution to a certain (otherwise unknown) Γεώργιος ῥήτωρ τῆς μετροπόλεως Αἰνῶν,¹⁷ becomes clear from its last page, as well as its first sentence as quoted in the catalogue. On the last page of the text (f. 164v), in a note titled 'Εγκώμιον', it is said that this Γεώργιος was not the "author" of the work, but the one who copied it, and it was "Димитрій, который перевелъ сіе сочиненіе съ латинскаго на греческій [*sic*] языкъ" ["it was Dimitrij who translated that work from the Latin into the Greek language"].¹⁸ In addition to

cum graecorum mss, bibliothecarum mosquensium sanctissimae synodi, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1805), the second by Archimandrite Savva, *Указатель для обозрѣнія Московской Патриаршей (ныне Синодальной) ризницы и библиотеки* (Moskva, 1855; ²1858; ³1859; 41872; 51883), and the third by Archimandrite Vladimir (Filantropov), *Систематическое описаніе рукописей Московской Синодальной (Патриаршей) Библиотеки*, pt. I: *Рукописи греческія* (Moskva, 1894), 807. This catalogue was translated into Modern Greek and published in 1896; later augmented by N. P. Popov, *Рукописи Московской Синодальной (Патриаршей) библиотеки*, I: *Новоспасское собрание*, II: *Собрание рукописей Московскаго Симонова монастыря* (Moskva, 1905–1910), and Fëdor B. Polyakov, Boris L. Fonkič, *Греческіе рукописи Московской Синодальной библиотеки: Палеографическіе, кодикологическіе и библиографическіе дополненія к каталогу архимандрита Владимира (Филантропова)* (Moskva, 1993).

15 See, e.g., Archimandrite Vladimir, *Систематическое описаніе* (note 14), pt. I, 284 (Ms. no. 225, ff. 258–260, and 260–265), 285 (Ms. no. 226, ff. 251–261), 286 (Ms. no. 227, ff. 501–512), 298 (Ms. no. 231, ff. 62–69), 301 (Ms. no. 232, ff. 1–20), 305 (Ms. no. 234, ff. 7–48), 435 (Ms. no. 317, ff. 160–176), 436 (Ms. no. 315, ff. 184–185, and 216–240), 448 (Ms. no. 317, ff. 160–176), 452 (Ms. no. 318, ff. 166–169), 592 (Ms. no. 393, ff. 170–171), and 598 (Ms. no. 436, ff. 304–334). For further references see also the volume's *Index* under противъ Магомета и Измаильтянь [against Mahomet and the Ishmaelites].

16 Archimandrite Vladimir, *Систематическое описаніе* (note 14), pt. I, 306–307.

17 Archimandrite Vladimir, *Систематическое описаніе* (note 14), pt. I, 306; cf. Dunaev, 'Кидонис Димитрій' (note 2), col. 649c.

18 In the catalogue's *index of authors*, Dimítrios is given the honorary name and "title" of

that, convincing proof concerning the identity of the text is provided by the sentence quoted from the beginning of the Greek text (f. 4): Πόσαι εἰσὶν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ δούσχου σου etc., that is identical with the beginning of Dimitrios' translation as printed in Bibliander's Qur'an edition as well as in its later reprint (in both Greek and Latin) in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* (154, cols 1035–1170).¹⁹

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As mentioned above, this and similar copies of the Greek version of Riccoldo's work, which can be found in manuscript collections of other monasteries and/or cathedral libraries as well, are however not the only examples affirming the presence of Riccoldo and his work in Russia. One more example is supplied by Maximos the Greek (Μάξιμος ὁ Γραικός), alias Maksim Grek (Максим Грек) as he is known in Russia, who more than likely contributed to the dissemination of Riccoldo's anti-Islamic polemical ideas in Russia as well.

Maximos or Maksim, born Michail Trivolis (Μιχαήλ Τρίβολης, Arta [Greece] c. 1475–1556 Sergiev Posad) and known also as Maximos the Hagiorite (Μάξιμος ὁ Ἁγιορίτης) or Maximos the Philosopher (Μάξιμος ὁ Φιλόσοφος), was a Greek monk who had studied in Italy (in Bologna, Florence, Ferrara, Milan, Padua and Venice) and was greatly influenced by Italian philosophers such as Marsilio Ficino (Marsilius Ficinus, Figline Valdarno 1433–1499 Careggi/Firenze), Angelo Poliziano (Agnolo Ambrogini or Angelus Politianus, Montepulciano 1454–1494 Firenze), Pico della Mirandola (Mirandola 1463–1494 Firenze) and others, but lived for a while in Russia and eventually died there.²⁰

“Димитрій σοφώτατος [Dimitrij the Wiser]” and likewise identified as the one who “перевелъ с латинскаго сочиненіе Рихарда противъ Магомета [who translated from Latin Richard's work against Mahomet].”

- 19 No less interesting, by the way, are the two texts following Dimitrios' translation in this MS no. 235, i.e., texts no. 4 (ff. 165–199): Βιβλίον κατὰ Σαρακηνῶν, ὅπερ ἐξήγησε Γεώργιος ῥήτωρ μητροπόλεως Αἰνῶν [Book against the Saracens as explained by [the same] Georgios rhetor of the city of Ainos] and no. 5 (ff. 200–229): Неизвѣстнаго διάλεξις οὐ ἐν ᾧ Χριστιανισμῷ с Измаилиянина [An anonymous' διάλεξις of a Christian with an Ismaelite about faith], that, after a longer introduction, begins with Ἀρχὴ τῆς διάλεξεως, Ὁ Χριστιανὸς λέγει πρὸς τὸν Σαρακηνὸν ὃ Ἰσмаηλίта. Ἀγαρηνὲ, εἶπε μοι, ἂν ὁμολογῇς τὸν Χριστὸν βέβαια πὼς εἶναι λόγος Θεοῦ (f. 206).
- 20 On him see, e.g., Jack V. Haney, *From Italy to Muscovy. The Life and Works of Maxim the Greek* (Humanistische Bibliothek; Texte und Abhandlungen, Reihe 1: Abhandlungen, 19) (München: Fink, 1973); and on his time in Russia: Nina V. Sinitsyna, ‘Новые данные о российском периоде жизни преподобного Максима Грека (материалы для научной

In Russia, Maksim became, and still is, famous for his many theological and philosophical writings, not least for his translations of sacred texts into Church Slavonic (among others, he translated the Psalms). In our context, however, Maksim deserves attention as the author of a number of polemical treatises and pamphlets, for example, against all sorts of Christian heresies, including, from his perspective, Armenians, Latins (Catholics), Lutherans,²¹ and foremost, Muhammad and Islam. Still well known today, the following three tractates are examples of his anti-Islamic writings: (1) “Слово обличительно на агарянскую прелесть и умысливагося ея скверного пса Моамефа” [“Word of rebuke against the Hagarenes’ temptation and the mangy dog Mahomet who concocted it”];²² (2) “Слово 2-е о том же к благоверным на богоборца же Моамефа” [“A Second Word to the pious against the theomachist Mahomet”];²³ and (3) “Ответы христианам противу агарян, хулящих нашу православную веру христианскую” [“Answers for Christians against the Hagarenes who insult our Christian Orthodox faith”].²⁴

More than a hundred years ago, the Russian historian and bibliographer Vladimir Stepanovič Ikonnikov (Kiev 1841–1923 Kiev)²⁵ observed in his monumental study on Maksim Grek’s life and works that in Maksim’s anti-Islamic writings ideas can be traced that suggest that he was not only familiar with, but also influenced by, Riccoldo’s work, which he even may have used as a source of inspiration, as Ikonnikov assumed.²⁶ Though discernible traces are there, the question, however, remains unanswered, thus far at least: did Maksim use Dimitrios’ Greek version of Riccoldo’s work when writing his anti-Islamic treatises, or had he access to a Russian translation of it? To answer that question, further research is needed.

Dimitrios’ Greek version of Riccoldo’s work must have been translated into Russian at the latest at the turn of the 15th to 16th century, as from that time it spread in

биографии), *Вестник церковной истории* 4 (2006), 221–236.

21 Maksim Grek, *Сочинения*, I: *Догматические сочинения*. Maximos’ respective polemical writings are accessible online through https://www.biblioteka3.ru/biblioteka/maksim_grek/dogm_soch/index.html.

22 Maksim Grek, *Сочинения*, I: *Догматические сочинения* (VI), 77ff. (accessible online through https://www.biblioteka3.ru/biblioteka/maksim_grek/dogm_soch/txt03.html).

23 Maksim Grek, *Сочинения*, I: *Догматические сочинения* (VII), 131ff. (accessible online through https://www.biblioteka3.ru/biblioteka/maksim_grek/dogm_soch/txt04.html).

24 Maksim Grek, *Сочинения*, I: *Догматические сочинения* (VIII), 151ff. (accessible online through https://www.biblioteka3.ru/biblioteka/maksim_grek/dogm_soch/txt05.html).

25 On him see Raisa A. Kireeva, ‘Иконников (Ikonnikov)’, in *Православная энциклопедия*, XXII (Moskva, 2009), 30–31.

26 See, Vladimir S. Ikonnikov, *Максимъ Грекъ и его время. Историческое изслѣдованіе* (Kiev, 1915), 247.

that language under the title “Сказаніе о срацынской вѣрѣ” [“Account of the Saracen faith”]. Further information that corroborates this assumption can be found in a manuscript that once belonged to the private library of Graf (Count) Nikolai Petrovič Rumyancev and is listed in the printed catalogue of his library.

The statesman Graf (Count) Rumyancev (St Petersburg 1754–1826 St Petersburg), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chancellor of the Russian Empire under Czar Alexander I, was, and still is, widely known and famous for his huge private library. In addition to innumerable printed books, he owned an impressively rich collection of historical documents, manuscripts, coins, maps and incunabula which were to form the nucleus of the Rumyancev Museum in Moscow, opened after his death and transformed later into the Russian State Library.²⁷

Rumyancev’s library is not only well known, but also well catalogued. In the first half of the 19th century, Aleksander Christoforovič Vostokov (born Alexander Woldemar Osteneck, Arensburg 1781–1864 St Petersburg), one of the many Germans who lived and worked in St Petersburg in the 19th century, compiled a monumental 902-page (in 4°) catalogue of Rumyancev’s library that was printed in St Petersburg in 1842.²⁸ In his catalogue, Vostokov mentions a Russian translation of Riccoldo’s work forming the last part of a manuscript that to date, however, has not yet been researched.²⁹ In Vostokov’s catalogue, this manuscript is listed under no. 204, and consists of 491 folios containing a great variety of texts. The Russian translation of Riccoldo’s work is copied at the very end on folios 454a to 491a.³⁰

27 See, e.g., Galina V. Aksenova, ‘Шедевры книгописного собрания графа Н. П. Румянцева из истории скриптория Соловецкого монастыря в первой половине XVII века’, *Альманах «Соловецкое море»* 12 (2013), 41–45; Svetlana Skrydlevskaia, ‘Граф Н. П. Румянцев – коллекционер и нумизмат’, in *Банкаўскі веснік* (Minsk, 2010), 8–14; М. М. Kleveniskij, *История библиотеки Московского публичного Румянцевского музея. 1862–1917: очерк / Государственная б-ка СССР им. В. И. Ленина* (Moskva, 1953).

28 Aleksander Ch. Vostokov, *Описание русских и словенских рукописей Румянцевского музея* (St Petersburg, 1842).

29 On this manuscript, see also Konstantin V. Veršinin, *Мерило Праведное как памятник древнерусской книжности и права*, PhD Diss. (Moskva, 2016), 46–47, note 212: “Среди читающихся здесь памятников – «Сказание о срацынской вере», до сих пор не исследованный перевод антимусульманского сочинения Рикольдо да Монтекроче” [“Among the manuscripts – «Сказание о срацынской вере» [Account of the Saracen faith], until today not researched translation of an anti-Islamic work by Riccoldo da Montecroce”].

30 Manuscript description in Vostokov, *Описание русских и словенских рукописей* (note 28), 273a–274a. This manuscript is referred to also by the theologian and church historian Evgenij E. Golubinskij, *История Русской Церкви*; I, pt. 1–2: *Период первый, Киевский или Домонгольский*, II, pt. 1–2: *Период второй, Московский или от нашествия Монголов до митрополита Макария включительно* (Moskva, 1880 [1901–1904], 1900–1911 [Reprint

At the beginning of his two-page entry on this Russian translation, Vostokov wrote:

л. 454. Начало сей книзѣ изложено бысть от латинина Риклада. Сущу ему бывшу в чину учителя по закону саракиньскому и паки възвратившуся ему к своей вѣрѣ латиньстеи. Здѣсь, в 17 главахъ содержится обличеніе Магометовыхъ лжеученій [f. 454. Beginning of this book authored (or: narrated) by the Latin (Catholic) Riklad (i.e., Riccoldo). He had been in the position of a teacher of the Saracen religion and then again returned to his Latin (Catholic) faith. Here, in 17 chapters, one can find the refutation of the Mohammedan (or: Mohammed's) false teachings (or: misbeliefs)].³¹

As to the origin of that manuscript, the author of the catalogue states that it was written, i.e., copied, around the year 1517 and afterwards presented to the then Archbishop of Novgorod Macarius (Makarij), the later Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia.³² This information finds confirmation in a recent study by F. Voronin where he writes that

Эта рукопись была собственностью Макария еще в бытность его Новгородским архиепископом, что показывает следующая приписка к ней: «Книга на новгородцких еретиков, архиепископа Макария великого Новгорода и Пскова» (Описание рукописи Румянцев, муз., с. 273) [This manuscript was possession of Macarius when he still was Archbishop of Novgorod, as the following footnote proves: “Book about Novgorod’s heretics, by Archbishop Macarius of Great Novgorod and Pskov” (see *Description of the manuscripts in the Rumyantsev Library*, 273)].³³

The quality of the Russian translation, however, was already a matter of dispute more than a hundred years ago. The Russian linguist and historian of Slavic languages and literatures, Aleksej Ivanovič Sobolevskij (Moskva 1856–1929 Moskva), who undertook the first comprehensive study on the translations into Russian made from the

2010]), II, pt. 2, 274. The manuscript is accessible online under the URL: <https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/256/f256-204/#images-461-498>.

31 Vostokov, *Описание русских и словенскихъ рукописей* (note 28), 273a–b.

32 Vostokov, *Описание русских и словенскихъ рукописей* (note 28), 273b.

33 F. Voronin, ‘Святитель Макарий, митрополит Московский и всяя Руси, и его литературная деятельность’, in *Богословские труды* 32 (St Petersburg, 1996), 121–222, here 163.

14th to the 17th centuries,³⁴ stated bluntly: “язык—плохой церковнославянский; изложение—нескладное” [“language—bad Church Slavonic; translation—inadequate”]. Whether Sobolevskij is right or not, however, should be left to the experts on Byzantine Greek and Old Church Slavonic languages to judge.

Regardless, this Russian translation of Riccoldo’s tractate apparently must have been copied several times, for a few more copies (manuscripts) of it are extant, for example, in the library of the St Troickaya Sergieva Lavra (Sergiev Posad) and described in its catalogue, published in the second half of the 19th century.³⁵ According to this catalogue, the manuscript, or rather the collection of various texts completed in the first half of the 16th century and listed under no. 730 [no. 1855] “Палея с прибавлениями”, contains on folios 363 to 394³⁶ a tractate that has no title, but is introduced with the same words as the text in manuscript no. 204 of the Rumyancev Library quoted above:

Начало книзѣ сей сложено бысть отъ латынина Риклада, сущу ему бывъша въ чину учитель по закону саракинскому, и пакы възвративъшуся ему къ своей вѣрѣ къ латыньской въ свою си, имуще предсловіе сицево [Beginning of this book authored (or: narrated) by the Latin (Catholic) Riklad, he had been in the position of a teacher of the Saracen religion and then again returned to his Latin (Catholic) faith].³⁷

and, in addition to that, starts (нач[ало]) with the same sentence of the Russian translation of Riccoldo’s work that likewise can be read in manuscript no. 204 (ff. 454a–491a) of the Rumyancev Library:³⁸

Колико есть дни раба твоего, когда сътвориши ми отъ гонящихъ мя судъ [= Πόσαι εἰσὶν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ δοῦσχου σου etc.].

34 Aleksej I. Sobolevskij, *Переводная литература Московской Руси XIV–XVII вв. Библиографические материалы* (St Petersburg, 1903), 325.

35 Friars Arsenij / Pajij, *Описание Славянскихъ рукописей Библиотеки Свято-Троицкой Сергиевой Лавры*, 3 vols (Moskva, 1878–1879).

36 Ms. no. 730 [no. 1855], ff. 363–394, in *Описание Славянскихъ рукописей Библиотеки Свято-Троицкой Сергиевой Лавры* (note 35), III, 119–122, here 121. The manuscript is accessible online under the URL: <https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/304-i/f-304i-730/>.

37 *Описание Славянскихъ рукописей Библиотеки Свято-Троицкой Сергиевой Лавры* (note 35), III, 119–122, here 121.

38 Vostokov, *Описание русскихъ и словенскихъ рукописей* (note 28), 273a–274a, here 273b.

as the author of the catalogue of the St Troickaya Sergieva Lavra library already noticed characterizing the text as

Обличеніе Магометовыхъ лжеученій, раздѣл. на 17 главъ [Refutation of Mahomet's false teachings (or: misbeliefs), divided into 17 chapters]

and redirecting the reader to "Оп. Рум. Муз. стр. 273" ["the Catalogue of the Rumyantsev Museum, 273"] for further information.

Thus, there can be no doubt that the text contained in manuscript no. 730 [no. 1855], ff. 363–394, of the St Troickaya Sergieva Lavra library is but a copy of the same text being part of the manuscript no. 204, ff. 454a–491a, of the Rumyantsev Library.

One more copy of Riccoldo's text in Russian can be found also in a bundle of 22 different manuscripts (texts) stored in the library of the Monastery of St Paphnutius in Borovsk (Kaluga region) under the shelf mark Рук. no. 1. The manuscripts were copied on paper in the second half of the 16th century. The voluminous bundle consists of 491 leaves. Riccoldo's text (no. 22) is the very last work being part of that bundle and comprises the leaves 454a to 491a. The manuscript was identified and described in 1891 by Pavel Mikhailovič Stroeв (Moskva 1796–1876 Moskva).³⁹

Interestingly, the catalogue of the St Troickaya Sergieva Lavra library quoted here mentions on the same page in its description of manuscript no. 730 [no. 1855] one more text, copied on ff. 418–426, that bears almost the same title: "Сказаніе о вѣрѣ срациньстѣй" ["Account of the Saracen faith"], but begins (нач[ало]) differently with the words:

Есть же и донинѣ дръжащій преліцающе люди служба исмаилтеска, рекше вѣра срацинска [Until now, there are countless people of the Ismaelite religion or Saracen faith respectively].⁴⁰

However, to answer the question whether this text is another translation of Riccoldo's work or a completely different tractate, further comparative studies of both texts are needed.

An abbreviated version ("выписаны строки по нужѣ вкратцѣ вѣдѣнія ради") of the Russian translation of Riccoldo's work can also be found in another manuscript

39 See Pavel M. Stroeв, *Описание рукописей монастырей Волоколамского, Новый Иерусалим, Саввина-Сторожевского и Пафнутиева-Боровского*, with introduction and indices by Nicolai Barsukov, St Petersburg 1891, 294–296, here p. 296 no. 1 (22).

40 Ms. no. 730 [no. 1855], ff. 418–426, in *Описание Славянскихъ рукописей Библиотеки Свято-Троицкой Сергіевоы Лавры* (note 35), III, 121.

that is also preserved in the library of the St Troickaya Sergieva Lavra, i.e., in manuscript no. 812 [no. 1923] “Лампада или Сборник”, ff. 407a–412b, which according to its colophon was completed in the year 1665.⁴¹ The respective text on f. 407a begins with:

Сказаніе о срацыньской вѣрѣ, изложено бысть отъ латынина Риклада, и проч. [Account of the Saracen faith, authored by the Latin Riklad etc.]

To identify this tractate, the author of the catalogue refers the reader to his entry on the aforementioned manuscript no. 730: См. no. 730, л. 363 (see no. 730, f. 363) and explains that

Все эти строки, прибавимъ въ заключеніе, показываютъ огромную начитанность, обширныя сведенія владельца рукописи [all these lines which we are quoting here, prove the enormous erudition and comprehensive knowledge of the master of the manuscript].⁴²

Unfortunately, wherever this Russian translation (or: translations?) of Riccoldo’s work is (are) mentioned, quoted or referred to, no name of a translator is given. Therefore, it (they) is (are) regarded to be the work of an anonymous scholar.

Nonetheless, the “Сказаніе о срацыньской вѣрѣ” [“Account of the Saracen faith”] was often used and widely spread; the above-mentioned Metropolitan Macarius was in part responsible for its dissemination.⁴³

Macarius/Makarij, born Mikhail (Moskva c. 1482–1563 Moskva), was the most notable cleric, theologian, historian and icon painter as well as high-ranking political figure in the first half of the 16th century in Russia. In 1523 appointed Archimandrite of the famous monastery in Mozhaysk, and in 1526 Archbishop of Novgorod and Pskov, in March 1542 he was elected Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia and soon became one of the closest advisers to Czar Ivan IV Groznyi [“the Terrible”] (1530/1547–1584). During his campaign against the Kazan khanate, Ivan IV left Macarius in Moscow to “protect the czardom”, which made him a *de facto* temporary head of state.

41 Ms. no. 812 [no. 1923], ff. 407a–412b, in *Описание Славянскихъ рукописей Библиотеки Свято-Троицкой Сергіевой Лавры* (note 35), III, 263–264, here 264. The manuscript is accessible online under the URL: <https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/304-i/f-304i-812/#images-414-420>.

42 *Описание Славянскихъ рукописей Библиотеки Свято-Троицкой Сергіевой Лавры* (note 35), III, 264.

43 The literature about Macarius is too extensive to be summarized here.

In our context, however, Macarius deserves attention for his *opus magnum*, his “Великія Минеи Четїи” or, in modern orthography, “Великие Минеи Четїи” (*Veli-kiye Minei Čet’i*), sometimes also called “Четїи-Минеи” (“Čet’i-Minei”) or referred to as “Макарьевские Минеи (*Makar’evskiye Minei*): *The Great Menaion (Menaia)* or *Great Monthly Readings*”.⁴⁴

These *Great Monthly Readings* may be regarded as an official, authoritative collection of works relevant to the Russian Orthodox Church and its theological tradition and consist of a great variety of works including biblical books (with prologues and commentaries), *Paterika* (πατερικόν βιβλίον “father’s book”), i.e., “Lives of the Fathers”, original and/or translated hagiographic writings, works of Church Fathers and all sorts of theological (including polemical) writings of Greek and Russian ecclesiastical authors, and also translations of “Western” writings. All the works included into these *Great Monthly Readings* were selected by Macarius himself.

The *Great Monthly Readings* are arranged in twelve handwritten volumes with 1,500 to 2,000 folios each; each volume corresponds to a certain month (beginning with September, ending with August), and is subdivided into days. Today, several versions (recensions) of Macarius’ *Great Monthly Readings*, compiled and completed in the 1530s, 1540s and 1550s, are known:

The first version goes back to Macarius himself, who compiled it between the years 1529 and 1541 and handed it over to the St Sofia Cathedral in Novgorod; hence its name, *Sophia collection* (Софійский свод).⁴⁵ The second—augmented and most authoritative—version, completed in 1552,⁴⁶ was stored in the Library of the Cathedral

44 The Russian word минея (pl. минеи) is derived from the Greek μηναιον.

45 See the catalogue by Dimitrij I. Abramovič, *Софійская библиотека (Описание рукописей)*, 3 vols (St Petersburg, 1905–1910), II (1907), 319, index s. v. Макарий, Московскій митрополигъ 9, 15, 41, 100, 109, 115, 124, 140, 144, 153; III (1910), 367, index s. v. Макарий, Московскій митрополигъ 11, 20, 21, 52, 54, 62, 111, 129, 134, 135, 136, 142, 144, 183, 232, 282.

46 This version was edited and published by the “Imperial Archaeographic Commission” (Императорская археографическая комиссия) under the title *Великие Минеи Четїи собранные всероссийским митрополитом Макарием*, 16 vols, St Petersburg, 1868–1916 (not complete, months May to August are missing). New edition: *Великие Минеи Четїи митрополита Макария. Поучения в Неделю святых Праотец* (St Petersburg, 2009 ff.) (to be completed). – A very ambitious German-Russian project to publish all monumental volumes in scholarly editions (including respective textual, philological etc. studies) that meet the requirements of modern text-critical editions, was launched at the beginning of the 1990s; but thus far, very few volumes came out of the press only. For further information see <https://www2.slavistik.uni-freiburg.de/Forschungsprojekte/lesemnaeen.htm>. – On the significance of Macarius’ *Great Monthly Readings* as monuments of old Russian religious literature see, Igumen Makarij (Veretennikov), ‘Великие Макарьевские Четїи-Минеи – сокровище духовной письменности Древней Руси’, in *Богословские труды* 29 (Moskva, 1989), 106–126.

of the Dormition of the Moscow Kremlin⁴⁷ and therefore is called *Dormition collection* (Успенский свод or Успенские Макарьевские Четвы Миней). A third version, the so-called *Czar's collection* or the *Czar's Monthly Readings* (Царский список or Царские Четвы Миней), was copied between the years 1559 and 1564 for presentation to Czar Ivan IV. This version, however, is not complete, as March and April are missing.⁴⁸ The fourth and fifth versions, the so-called *St Troickaya Sergieva Lavra copy* (Список Свято-Троицкой Сергиевой Лавры), because it is stored in the library of the St Troickaya Sergieva Lavra in Sergiev Posad,⁴⁹ and the *Chudov monastery copy* (Список Чудова монастыря), both copied in 1600,⁵⁰ are likewise incomplete. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the *Great Monthly Readings* were revised several times, among others, by German Tulupov, I. I. Milyutin and St Dimitryj of Rostov (Makarov 1665–1709 Rostov). St Dimitryj's version of the *Great Monthly Readings* is still in use today.

Here, in Macarius' *Great Monthly Readings*, Riccoldo's work can be found among the writings recommended to be read on 31 July, as F. Voronin observed:⁵¹

47 See the catalogue by Aleksandr V. Gorskij / Kapiton I. Nevostruev, *Описание славянских рукописей Московской Синодальной (Патриаршей) библиотеки*, 3 pts. in 6 vols (Moskva, 1855–1917; reprint: Monumenta linguae slavicae dialicti veteris, 2) (Wiesbaden, 1964), contains the description of Slavic manuscripts no. 1–576, continued by Tatyana N. Protas'eva, *Описание рукописей Синодального собрания (не вошедших в описание А. В. Горского и К. И. Невоструева)*, ed. M. V. Ščepkin, 2 vols (Moskva, 1970–1973), containing the description of manuscripts no. 577–1051. Cf. also the comprehensive indices compiled by Emel'yan M. Vitošinskij, *Указатель именной и предметный к труду А. В. Горского и К. И. Невоструева «Описание славянских рукописей Московской Синодальной библиотеки»* (Warszawa, 1915) [Reprint in Wiesbaden, 1964 (Monumenta linguae slavicae dialecti veteris, 6)].

48 See the catalogue by Aleksandr V. Gorskij – Kapiton I. Nevostruev, *Описание Великих Четвехъ-Миней Макария* (Чтения въ Императорскомъ Обществѣ Истории и Древностей Россійскихъ при Московскомъ Университетѣ (Moskva, 1884, no. 1; 1886, no. 1); and *Описание рукописей синодального собрания (не вошедших в описание А. В. Горского и К. И. Невоструева)*, ed. Tatyana N. Protas'eva, I: *Mss. no. 577–819*, II: *Mss. no. 820–1051* (Moskva, 1970–1973), I, 191–211: “Великие Миней-Четы Царские,” here MS no. 182: 203–205.

49 See the catalogue *Описание Славянскихъ рукописей Библиотеки Свято-Троицкой Сергиевой Лавры* (note 35).

50 See the catalogues by Nikolaj P. Petrov, ‘Книгохранилище Чудова монастыря’, *Памятники древней письменности* 5/4 (1897) 141–199, and Tatyana N. Protas'eva, *Описание рукописей Чудовского собрания*, ed. Nikolaj N. Pokrovskij (Novosibirsk, 1986), containing the description of 372 manuscripts of the Chudov Monastery, which once were part of the Patriarchal Library.

51 Vopoin, ‘Святитель Макарий, митрополит Московский и всяя Руси’ (note 33), 163.

Под 31 июля помещены: переводное сочинение Риклада Латинянина о сарацинской вере, содержащее в себе обличение магометанства [Under 31 July included: the translated work of the Latin [Catholic] Riklad on the Saracen faith, which contains a refutation of Islam].

Voronin, however, was not the first to make that observation. The same was already said by Vladimir Stepanovič Ikonnikov in his book on Maksim Grek:

Уже въ Минеяхъ Макарія новгород[ской] и москов[ской] ред[акцій] встрѣчается “Сказаніе о срацынской вѣрѣ,” о которомъ замѣчено: „Начало сей книзѣ изложено бысть отъ латынянина Риклада, сущу ему бывшу въ чину учителя по закону срачиньскому и паки возвратившюся ему къ своей вѣрѣ латыньстѣй“ (въ Великіе Минеи-Четьи „Царскіе“, см. мѣс. іюль № 182, л. 810–829, отд. въ 17 главахъ, Троицкой лав. № 730, XVI в.). Оригиналъ его греческій переводъ сочиненія Рихарда (XIII в.), сдѣланный Димитріемъ Кидонскимъ (спис. ориг. Синод, библ., № 360 [= по. 235]). Далѣе, появляются переводныя статьи, касающіяся Магомета, турокъ и ихъ завоеваніи (XV–XVI).⁵²

Already in the Novgorod and Moskva versions of Macarius' *Monthly Readings* the “Сказаніе о срацынской вѣрѣ” [“Account of the Saracen faith”] can be found, about which it is said: “Beginning of this book authored (or: narrated) by the Latin (Catholic) Riklad (i.e., Riccoldo); he had been in the position of a teacher of the Saracen religion and then returned to his Latin (Catholic) faith again” (in the Czar's' *Great Monthly Readings*, see month July no. 182, ff. 810–829, divided into 17 chapters, in the Troickaya Lavra [version] no. 730, 16th century). Its original is the Greek translation of a work by Riccoldo (13th century) that was done by Dimítrios Kidónis (for the original see Synodalnaya Biblioteka [Patriarchal Library], no. 360 [= no. 235]). Then follow translated treatises concerning Mahomet, the Turks and their conquests (15th/16th centuries).

Similar information is also given by the above-quoted Aleksej Ivanovič Sobolevskij. In his *Переводная литература Московской Руси XIV–XVII вв.* (*Translated Literature of the Moscovian Rus' 15th–16th Centuries*), Sobolevskij wrote:

52 Ikonnikov, *Максимъ Грекъ и его время* (note 26), 247; cf. Sobolevskij, *Переводная литература* (note 34), 235, 238.

Сказаніе о срацынской вѣрѣ. Начало сей книзѣ изложено бысть отъ латынина Риклада, сущу ему бывшую въ чину учителя по закону срацынскому и пакы возвратившуюся ему къ своей вѣрѣ латыньстѣй вѣвсѣси (sic). Имущу предсловоіе сицево. Начало: Колико есть днѣй раба твоего, когда сътвориши ми отъ гонящихъ мя судъ [...]. Извѣстно намъ по спискамъ іюльской книги Макарьевскихъ Миней, обѣихъ – новгородской и московской – редакцій (подъ 31 числомъ). Одинъ изъ списковъ – Троицкой Лавры № 730 – относится къ XVI вѣку. Переведено съ греческаго языка. Оригиналъ – греческій переводъ сочиненія нѣкогого Рихарда (XIII вѣка), сдѣланный Димитріємъ Кидонскимъ (списокъ оригинала – Синод. № 360 [= № 235])

Account of the Saracen faith. Beginning of this book authored [or: narrated] by the Latin (Catholic) Riklad (i.e., Riccoldo); he had been in the position of a teacher of the Saracen religion and then returned to his Latin (Catholic) faith again. That is what the preface says: Beginning [of the book]: Πόσαι εἰσὶν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ δούλου σου; πότε ποιήσεις μοι [...]. It [the book] is known to us from the compilations of the July volume of both Macarius' *Monthly Readings*, the Novgorod and Moskva recensions (under 31 July). One of these compilations, Troickaya Lavra no. 730, dates back to the 16th century [The book] is translated from the Greek language. The original, the Greek translation of the work of a certain Richard (13th century) was made by Dimitrij Kidonskij (copy of the original – Synodalnaya library no. 360 [= no. 235]).⁵³

As already observed (see pages 338–341), manuscript no. 204 of the Rumyantsev library was part of Macarius' library when he still was Archbishop in Novgorod. Therefore, it is very likely to assume that this manuscript served him as the source not only for his study of Riccoldo's work, but also as the text which he decided to include into his *Great Monthly Readings*, thus making it an official text of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁵⁴

However, Macarius did not include the complete Russian translation of Riccoldo's work into his *Monthly Readings*, for as Sobolevskij and others already noticed:

53 Sobolevskij, *Переводная литература* (note 34), 325.

54 Vohonin, 'Святитель Макарий, митрополит Московский и всяя Руси' (note 33), 213, note 442.

русский переводъ – неполный; въ немъ находятся только предсловіе, главы 1-я, 2-я, 13-17-я (всѣхъ главъ 17), именно главы съ историческимъ содержаніемъ [Russian translation – not complete; it contains the preface and chapters 1, 2 and 13 to 17 (from among 17 chapters) only, that is, those chapters that are of primarily historical content].⁵⁵

For what reason Macarius decided to select these chapters only, we do not know. Nevertheless, this abridged Russian version of Riccoldo's work found its way into all three major compilations (and subsequently most important printed editions) of the Metropolitan's *Great Monthly Readings*: (1) the *Sophia collection* (Софійское собрание), MS no. 1323 (completed in 1538), ff. 453a–464d;⁵⁶ (2) the *Dormition or Uspenskij Collection* (Успенский своД), MS no. 996 (completed in the early 16th century), ff. 462–476; and (3) the *Czar's collection* (Царский список), MS no. 182 (completed in 1559), ff. 810–829.⁵⁷

Archimandrite Iosif (Ivan Levickij, 1831–1891) is responsible for including both a comprehensive annotated overview of the contents and a detailed description of all texts in Macarius' *Great Monthly Readings*.⁵⁸ Based on the *Dormition or Uspenskij Collection* of Macarius' *Great Monthly Readings*, Archimandrite Iosif offers an exposé of the abridged version of Riccoldo's book that, after a short introduction:⁵⁹

f. 462 Начало сей книзѣ изложено бысть отъ латынїна Риклада, сущу ему бывшу въ чину оучителя по закону саракиньскому. и паки възвратившюся ему къ своей вѣрѣ латыньстей въ вся си. имущу пресловіе сицево. Нач[ало]: Колико е[сть] днїй раба твоего, ког[д]а сътвориши ми отъ гонящихъ мя соу[дѣ] etc. [Beginning of this book authored [or: narrated] by the Latin (Catholic) Riklad (i.e., Riccoldo); he had been in the position of a teacher of the Saracen religion and then returned to

55 Sobolevskij, *Переводная литература* (note 34), 325.

56 See, Abramovič, *Софійская библиотека* (note 47), II: *Четьи Миней*, no. 1323, 131–154: “Великая Миней Четья на м. июль [Great Monthly Readings for the month July],” and here 153–154: “под 31 июля [31st July].” Today, this manuscript (Соф. no. 1323) is stored in the Russian National Library (Российская национальная библиотека) and accessible online under the URL: <https://kp.rusneb.ru/item/material/velikie-minei-cheti-iyul>.

57 See note 47 above.

58 Archimandrite Iosif (Levickij), *Подробное оглавление Великих Четиих-Миней Всероссийского Митрополита Макария, хранящихся в Московской Патриаршей (ныне Синодальной) библиотеке*, 2 vols (Moskva, 1892).

59 Archimandrite Iosif, *Подробное оглавление* (note 58), II, col. 338–339.

his Latin (Catholic) faith again. That is what the preface says: Beginning [of the book]: Πόσαι εἰσὶν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ δούσχου σου; πότε ποιήσεις μοι etc.]

lists the seven selected chapters, giving the number of the respective chapter, and then quoting from the Russian (i.e., Church Slavonic) translation, its title and its first two sentences: f. 463, ch. 1; f. 464, ch. 2; f. 465, ch. 13; f. 466, ch. 14; ff. 467–470, ch. 15; f. 471, ch. 16; ff. 472–473, ch. 17 (first part);⁶⁰ f. 474, ch. 17 (remainder). The exposé concludes with the paragraph: “Въ концѣ книги приписано: О прѣвнѣ св. Алексія митрополита въ Ордѣ, и о лѣтахъ Магомета” [“At the end of the book appended are (texts) on a Metropolitan St Alexius’s visit to the [Golden] Horde, and on Mahomet’s life”].⁶¹

This reference to the two texts appended to Riccoldo’s work convincingly proves that the manuscript that Metropolitan Macarius had at hand when selecting the chapters to be included into his *Monthly Readings* was indeed the manuscript that later belonged to Graf Rumyancev’s library and is listed in its catalogue under no. 204, ff. 454a–491a (see pages 338–341),⁶² for, according to Vostokov’s description, in MS no. 204 the same two texts are copied at its very end.⁶³ Unfortunately, neither Archimandrite Iosif nor Aleksander Christoforovič Vostokov give any further information about which version of “Mahomet’s life” is referred to here. Thus, only further study of the manuscript will allow anything to be said about its identity and origin.⁶⁴

The other writing, however, retells a well-known story or rather legend related to St Alexius (born Elephtherius Fëdorovič Byakont, Moskva ?1304–1378 Moskva), who from 1354 was Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia.⁶⁵ According to the version of the

60 Here Archimandrite Iosif adds: “according to its content, it belongs to chapter 16;” see his *Подробное оглавление* (note 58), II, col. 339.

61 Archimandrite Iosif *Подробное оглавление* (note 58), II, col. 339.

62 Vostokov, *Описание русских и словенскихъ рукописей* (note 28), 270b–274b.

63 Vostokov, *Описание русских и словенскихъ рукописей* (note 28), 273b.

64 However, it might not be excluded that it is a Russian version of a text like *Vita Machometae* of uncertain origin and attributed to a certain twelfth century Adelphus (?); see, Bernhard Bischoff, ‘Ein Leben Mohammeds (Adelphus?) (Zwölftes Jahrhundert)’, in *Anecdota novissima. Texte des vierten bis sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. Bernhard Bischoff (Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, 7) (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1984), 106–122, Latin text 113–122; on this text see Hans-Werner Goetz, *Die Wahrnehmung anderer Religion und christlich-abendländisches Selbstverständnis im frühen und hohen Mittelalter (5.–12. Jahrhundert)*, 2 vols (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), I, 313–314. For the first time translated into German with commentary by Paul Dräger: ‘Ein Leben Mohammeds. Von einem unbekannten Verfasser (*Incerti auctoris Vita Machometae*)’, *Millennium* 15 (2004), 177–231.

65 A. A. Turilov / R. A. Sedova, ‘Алексий (Alexius)’, in *Православная энциклопедия*, I (Moskva, 2000), 637–648.

story transmitted in the *First Sofijskaya Chronicle* (Софийская первая летопись),⁶⁶ in August 1357, the Khan of the Golden Horde, Jani Beg (Джанибек or Жанибек, d. 1357), after having successfully conducted a military campaign against Azerbaijan that culminated in the conquest of the city of Tabriz, summoned the Metropolitan to his residence and asked him to cure his mother Taidula or Taitugly-Khatun (d. 1361) who was suffering from a serious eye disease, possibly blindness. Metropolitan St Alexius went to the Khan's residence and miraculously healed his mother. As a token of appreciation and expression of his thankfulness, the Khan—as the story relates—freed the Orthodox Church from taxes and granted the Metropolitan a piece of land in the Moscow Kremlin, on which St Alexius together with the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh (1314–1392) founded the later famous Chudov Monastery.⁶⁷

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It was, however, not only Riccoldo's anti-Islamic polemic *Contra legem Sarracenorum* or *Improbatio Alcorani* that was known and spread in Russia and—as we will see—in Poland as well. His *Liber peregrinationis*,⁶⁸ his itinerary to the countries of the East, was no less known, finding its way to Russia and Poland in a French translation rather than in its original Latin version.

Riccoldo had written his itinerary in Latin, but long before the Latin text was ever printed, it appeared on the market translated into other languages. Whereas the itinerary's original Latin version, based on its Berlin manuscript (Staatsbibliothek lat. 4°.466, ff. 1r–24r: *Liber peregrinationis fratris Ricculdi Ordinis Predicatorum*), was published for the first time only in 1864,⁶⁹ it was made accessible much earlier through

66 See, *Полное собрание русских летописей*, I, pt. 1: *Софийская первая летопись* (Moskva, 2000), cols. 432–433; cf. Elena Lebedeva, 'Чудов монастырь в Москве', in *Православие* (internet journal), <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/53.html>.

67 The Chudov Monastery was destroyed by the Soviets in 1929–1930.

68 Riccoldo de Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient : texte latin et traduction. Lettres sur la chute de Saint-Jean d'Acre*. Traduction par René Kappler (Textes et traductions des classiques français du Moyen Âge, 4), Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997. Cf. Pietro Amat di San Filippo, *Biografia dei viaggiatori italiani colla bibliografia delle loro opere* (Studi biografici e bibliografici sulla storia della geografia in Italia, 1) (Rome, 1882), 687–690; Jacobus Quétif et Jacobus Échard, *Scriptores ordinis Predicatorum recensiti, notisque historicis et criticis illustrati*, 2 vols (Paris, 1719–1721), I, 504–506; Titus Tobler, *Bibliographia geographica Palaestinae. Zunächst kritische Übersicht gedruckter und ungedruckter Beschreibungen der Reisen ins Heilige Land* (Leipzig: Verlag von SD. Hirzel, 1867), 30–31.

69 *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor, Burchardus de Monte Sion, Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, Odoricus de Foro Julii, Wilbrandus de Oldenborg*, quorum duos nunc primum edidit, duos ad fidem

its French and Italian translations. Its (first) French translation, completed as early as 1351, circulated in several manuscripts under different titles (e.g., *Le ytineraire de la peregrination frere Riculd de l'ordre des freres precheurs*),⁷⁰ before its *editio princeps* came out of the press in Paris in 1529 (*recte* 1530). The first Italian translation of the itinerary was made in 1783 and the second in 1794.⁷¹ Finally, in 2006, Riccoldo's itinerary appeared in a modern Russian translation.⁷²

The (first) French translation of Riccoldo's itinerary was the work of the Benedictine monk Jean le Long d'Ypres (Jean de Longdit, Johannes Longus Yperius or Iperius, c. 1340 [?]1315]–1383), Abbott of the famous Saint-Bertin Monastery in Saint Omer,⁷³ who is also known for his translations (from Latin into French) of some other travelogues and related books written in the 13th century, among them

- the Franciscan monk Odoric de Pordenone's (Pordenone c. 1286–1331 Udine) *Relation du Frère Odoric de Frioul (Itinerarium de mirabilibus orientalium Tartarorum)*, written in 1329–1330 about his travels to China;
- the Armenian historian Hayton or Héthoum de Korykos's (c. 1230 [1245?])–c. 1309) *La fleur des estoires d'Orient*, written in 1307 and translated on the basis of its Latin version prepared by Niccolò Falconi;⁷⁴

librorum manuscriptorum recensuit Johann Christian Moritz Laurent (Leipzig, 1864; ²1873), 101–141; cf. the commentary thereon by Pierre Mandonnet, 'Fra Ricoldo de Monte-Croce, pèlerin en Terre Sainte et missionnaire en orient. XIIIe siècle', *Revue Biblique* 2 (1893), 44–61, 182–202, 584–607.

⁷⁰ On the extant manuscripts see, Marco Robecchi's article in this volume.

⁷¹ *Itinerario ai paesi orientali di fra Riccoldo da Monte di Croce Domenicano scritto del XIII secolo*, dato ora in luce da fra Vincenzio Fineschi Sacerdote dello stesso ordine (Florence: nella stamperia di Francesco Mouïcke, 1783; ²1794); ne edition: *Il libro delle peregrinazioni nelle parti d'Oriente di fra Ricoldo da Montecroce*, ed. Ugo Monneret de Villard (Rome: Ist. Storico Domenicano, 1948).

⁷² *Миссия проповедника [The Mission of the Preacher]*, in Nikolai S. Gorelov, *Книга странствий* (St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo «Azbyka-klassika», 2006), 140–200.

⁷³ On him see, Henri de Laplane, *Les abbés de Saint-Bertin d'après les anciens monuments de ce monastère* (Saint-Omer, 1854), I, 329–346; Gillette Tyl-Labory, 'Jean Le Long', in *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: le Moyen Âge*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr et Michel Zink (Paris: Fayard, 1992 [²1994]), 805–806, and Steven Vanderputten, 'Jean de Langhe', in *The Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy and Cristian Bratu (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 909.

⁷⁴ Cf. Sven Dörper, *Die Geschichte der Mongolen des Hethum von Korykos (1307) in der Rückübersetzung durch Jean le Long, Traitiez des estas et des conditions de quatorze royaumes de Aise (1351), kritische Edition mit parallelem Abdruck des lateinischen Manuskripts Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, R 262* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1998).

- the Dominican friar Guillaume or Wilhelm de Boldensele's (born Otto de Nyenhusen, d. c. 1339 Cologne) *L'estat de la Terre sainte et aussi en partie de la terre de Egipte (Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus et praecipue de Terra sancta)*
- *L'estat et gouvernance du grant kaan de Cathay, souverain empereur des Tartres (De statu, conditione ac regimine magni Canis)*, an account of the Mongol Empire in China and the Franciscan missions there, written between 1316 and 1334 and attributed to the Archbishop of Sultaniyeh, and finally
- the Emperor of China's *Lettres du Grand Khan au souverain pontife aux chrétiens d'Orient*, dispatched by his embassy in 1338 to Pope Benedict XII (born Jacobus Novelli or Jaume Nouvel/Jacques de Nouvelles, Savardun c. 1285/1334–1342 Avignon).

Together with his French translation of Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, Le Long's collection of translations was first published by Julien Hubert and Jean Saint-Denis in Paris in 1529 (*recte* 1530) under the title *L'hystoire merveilleuse, plaisante et recreative du grand empereur de Tartarie, seigneur des tartares, nommé le Grand chan*.⁷⁵

One of the manuscripts (copies) of Le Long's French translation of Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis* is stored until today in the Russian State Library (Российская Государственная Библиотека) under item number Ф.256 no. 602, ff. 2a–75b (the manuscript is accessible online: <https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/256/f256-602/#images-7-81>). In the library's catalogue, the manuscript is described as

Путешествие на Ближний восток монаха Рикюльда де Монтекруа, 1296 г. Книга о путешествии брата Рикюльда на Восток была написана на латинском языке и переведена на французский братом Жаном Лелонгом из Ипра, в 1351 г. Сохранность: полная [Journey of Friar Rikuld de Montekruya to the Near East, in the year 1296. The Book on Friar Rikuld's journey to the East was written in Latin and translated into French by Friar Jean Lelong of Ypres in the year 1351. State of preservation (of the manuscript): complete (i.e. 76 II leaves in folio)].

⁷⁵ Re-edition of Jean le Long's French translation in Louis de Backer, *L'Extrême Orient au Moyen Âge d'après les manuscrits d'un flamand de Belgique moine de Saint-Bertin à Saint-Omer et d'un prince d'Arménie moine de Prémontré à Poitiers* (Paris, 1877), 256–334. Cf. the description of the edition in Arthur Dinaux et al., *Archives historiques et littéraires*, I: *Les hommes et les choses du nord de la France et du midi de la Belgique* (Valenciennes: Archives du Nord, 1783), 521a–522b, s.v. "Jehan de Long Dit."

In addition to that, the entry in the library catalogue informs that the manuscript once also belonged to the private library of the aforementioned Graf (Count) Nikolai Petrovič Rumyancev. On the occasion of a travel to France, Graf Rumyancev (himself a “fan” of French literature) had commissioned the copy and brought it to Russia to store it in his private library, nowadays part of the Russian State Library.⁷⁶ However, Aleksander Christoforovič Vostokov’s catalogue of Rumyancev’s private library does not contain any entry on this manuscript, simply because he catalogued only manuscripts written in [Old] Slavonic and/or in Russian, as he explicitly stated on the title page. Nevertheless, the existence of the manuscript was made known in Russia in the 1830s and 1840s.

One of the first scholars—if not *the* first—to study that manuscript was the German-born Russian historian, linguist, philosopher and bibliographer Friedrich von Adelung (1768–1843), alias Fëdor Pavlovič Adelung (Stettin 1768–1843 St Petersburg), as he called himself in Russian. In addition to a number of other books that he authored, he also wrote (in German) an analysis of travel writings (itineraries and memoirs) about Russia prior to 1700 that was published posthumously in two volumes in St Petersburg in 1846.⁷⁷ Some 15 years later, these two volumes were translated into Russian and printed in Moscow.⁷⁸ In the first volume, there is a chapter on Riccoldo’s itinerary.⁷⁹

Interestingly, an English translation of von Adelung’s chapter on Riccoldo appeared in print as early as in 1851, authored and published by Richard Henry Major (1818–1891), geographer and curator of the map collection of the British Museum. Preparing for print the edition of an English translation of Siegmund (Sigismund) Freiherr von Herberstein’s (Wippach 1486–1566 Wien) most important *Rerum Moscovitarum Commentarii*,⁸⁰ Major not only studied von Adelung’s work, but translated several of

76 Cf. Klevenskij, *История библиотеки Московского публичного Румянцевского музея* (note 27).

77 Friedrich von Adelung, *Kritisch-literarische Übersicht der Reisenden in Rußland bis 1700*, 2 vols (St Petersburg, 1846).

78 Friedrich von Adelung, *Критико-литературное обозрение путешественников по России до 1700 г. и их сочинений*, 2 vols (Moskva, 1864).

79 Adelung, *Kritisch-literarische Übersicht der Reisenden in Rußland* (note 77), I, 121–122; in the Russian translation (note 78), I, 79–81.

80 Sigismund von Herberstein, *Rerum Moscovitarum Commentarii. Synoptische Edition der lateinischen und der deutschen Fassung letzter Hand Basel 1556 und Wien 1557*, erstellt von Eva Maurer und Andreas Fülberth, redigiert und herausgegeben von Hermann Beyer-Thoma (München: Osteuropa Institut, 2007). On the author see, Friedrich von Adelung, *Siegmund Freiherr von Herberstein. Mit besonderer Ruecksicht auf seine Reisen in Russland* (St Petersburg, 1818); Egor E. Zamyslovskij, *Герберштейн и его историко-географическія извѣстія о Россіи съ приложеніемъ матеріаловъ для историко-географическаго атласа Россіи XVI в.* (St Pe-

its chapters and included them in full into the *Introduction* to his edition; among them von Adelung's chapter 12

on Riccoldo da Montecroce. 1296.

In 1296, Riccoldo da Montecroce, or Ricaldus de Monte Crucis, a Dominican of Florence, Sanctius de Bolea, Guillelmus Bernardi, Bernardus Guille, and several other monks, were sent by Pope Boniface VIII to the Saracens, Bulgarians, Kumans, Alans, Chazars, Goths, Russians, Nestorians, Georgians, Tatars, and other oriental and northern people; and Riccoldo left [p. XLVIII] an "Itinerarium peregrinationis" of his travels, the original text of which is not, however, extant. Jean Lelong, a Benedictine monk of Ypres, translated the work into French in 1351, and through this translation we are acquainted with Riccoldo's travels.

Four copies of Lelong's translation are known, which correspond with each other pretty well. One, which contains, with the travels of Haitho, those of Oderic, Boldensel, and the Archbishop of Sultanieh, in folio, adorned with miniatures, is to be found in the Royal Library of Paris, marked No. 7500 C. A copy of this was made by the Chancellor Baron Rumänzow, which is to be found in the library of the Rumänzow Museum, under No. 40. This translation bears the following title –

Cy commence le livre de peregrination de l'itinaire et du voyage que fist ung bon preu d'omme des freres precheurs qui ot nom frere Riculd, qui par le commendement du Saint Pere ala oultre mer pour prechier aux mescreans la foy de Dieu, et sont en ce traictié par ordonnance contenuz les royaumes pays et provinces, les manieres diverses des gens, les loys, les sectes, les creances, etc. Et fut ce livre translatez du Latin en François en l'an de grâce mil cccii fait et compilé par frere Jehan Lelong d'Ypre, moine de l'eveschée de taroenne. Folio.

It was printed with Haitho's work, entitled –

tersburg, 1884); *450 Jahre Sigismund von Herbersteins Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii: 1549–1999*, ed. Frank Kämpfer (Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europa, 24) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002).

L'hystore merveilleuse plaisante et recreative du grand empereur de Tartarie, seigneur des Tartares, nomme le grand Can, etc. Paris, 1529; sm. f.

The second copy of Lelong's translation is to be [p. xlix] found in the City Library of Berne, in the same manuscript containing Marco Polo.

The third, in the Cotton Collection of manuscripts, British Museum, with the press-mark, Otho D. II.

The fourth, in the Archiepiscopal Library of Mentz. An extract of the "Peregrination" will be found in Murray's "Discoveries and Travels in Asia", vol. I, p. 197, etc.

Ricold de Montecroix, voyageur et missionnaire en Asie. In *Nouveaux Mélanges Asiatiques* par M. Abel-Rémusat, vol. II, p. 199–202.⁸¹

In our context, it is worthwhile to notice that Friedrich von Adelung, the author of this chapter, though living and writing in St Petersburg in the first decades of the 19th century, had not only information of, but apparently also access to, the 1529 Paris edition of Riccoldo's travelogue, which he quotes word for word.

From among the chapters of Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis*, for the readers in the Eastern part of Europe of particular interest were, of course, chapters IX to XII, containing Riccoldo's account of the peoples and countries of the East, and foremost his reports on the Tatars and Mongols,⁸² and it certainly would be an interesting subject for further studies to search systematically for traces of Riccoldo's itinerary in Russian and Polish historiographical, geographical and travel writings.⁸³

81 [Richard Henry Major (ed.)] *Notes upon Russia: Being a Translation of the Earliest Account of that Country, entitled Rerum Moscovitarum Commentarii by the Baron Sigismund von Herberstein, Ambassador from the Court of Germany to the Grand Prince Vasiliev Ivanovich, in the years 1517 and 1526*, translated and edited with Notes and Introduction by R[ichard] H[enry] Major, 2 vols (London, 1851), I, 47–49.

82 That in that regard to this day nothing has changed, can be inferred from the modern Russian reception of Riccoldo's itinerary; cf. Gorelov's translation as printed in his *Книга странствий* (note 72) that focuses on the same chapters, too (140–200).

83 See the material collected by Zamyslovskij, *Герберштейн и его историко-географическія извѣстія о Россіи* (note 80), esp. 316ff., 329ff., 341ff., 353ff.; cf. also Roman Hautala, 'Католические миссионеры в империи монголов (XIII–XIV вв.)', *Східний світ* 2–3 (2013) 74–80.

RICCOLDO IN POLISH

In the Polish context, i.e., in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Riccoldo became known primarily through imported editions of his works, comprising individual editions of his writings, as well as editions containing one or more of them, such as Theodor Bibliander's Qur'an edition (see above note 11), which found their way first into private collections and later on into public libraries. From the 15th and 16th centuries, a number of Polish and Lithuanian noble families had owned sometimes rich private libraries with many manuscripts and printed books; and from the 18th century some of them were made public libraries and, thus, opened to the public. In addition, from the early 18th century catalogues of these libraries were arranged, and many of them appeared as printed books.

The most famous of these libraries to mention but one only, was undoubtedly the library founded by the Załuski brothers, i.e., Bishop Andrzej Stanisław Załuski (Jedlińsk 1695–1758 Kielce), Bishop of Płock (from 1723), Łuck (1736), Chełmno (1739) and finally Kraków (1746), politician, senator and in the years 1735 to 1746 Chancellor of the Great Crown, and Bishop Józef Andrzej Załuski (Warszawa 1702–1774 [he died imprisoned in Kaluga, Russia]), Bishop of Kiev, politician and diplomat, and not least a renowned bibliophile and bibliographer, and author of many books. Together, the two brothers collected a library of more than 450,000 books and manuscripts that in the 18th century was one of the largest book collections in the world. On 8 August 1747 they opened their library and made it accessible to the public, thus, founding the first public library in the Eastern part of Europe.⁸⁴

An impressive, alphabetically arranged lexicon of the most important private and public libraries and archives, which down to the second half of the 19th century existed in the territory of the Polish Kingdom, Galicia, the Grand Duchy of Poznań and the Western provinces of the Russian Empire (that is, those territories that prior to its partition at the end of the 18th century were part of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth), was compiled by Franciszek Radziszewski (1817–1885), librarian, bibliographer and teacher in Radziszewo Króle (Podlasie). In this lexicon, the author not only presented the public and private libraries and archives, outlining their history

84 The first catalogue of that library was compiled by its first librarian Jan Daniel Janocki (alias Johann Daniel Jänisch or Janozki; Międzychód 1720–1786 Warszawa) and published in German: *Nachricht von denen in der Hochgräflich Zaluskischen Bibliothek sich befindenden raren polnischen Büchern*, I (Dreßden [Dresden]: bey George Conrad Walther, 1747); II–V (Breßlau [Wrocław]: bey Johann Jacob Korn, 1749–1753); and Jan Daniel Janocki, *Specimen catalogi codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Zalusianae* (Dresdae [Dresden], bey George Conrad Walther, 1752).

and developments, but also provided valuable bibliographical information about their treasures and catalogues.⁸⁵ However, many of these libraries did not survive, being destroyed during wars or taken away by the victors,⁸⁶ or, as after the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, were removed to Prussia, Austria, and, above all, to Russia, such as the Załuski Library which in 1794/5 Czarina Ekatarina II ordered to be transferred to St Petersburg, where it became the nucleus of the Imperial Public Library (opened in 1814 and today the Russian National Library, St Petersburg).⁸⁷ In addition, the later destruction of libraries during World War I and World War II must not be overlooked.⁸⁸ This is, however, not the right place to go into more detail; but the reference to these libraries and their catalogues allows us to maintain that Riccoldo was present in the Polish–Lithuanian context as well: Riccoldo's works are listed in a number of (printed) catalogues, and despite their often tragic history and vicissitudes of their fate, in some libraries at least they are still extant and accessible today. To give just a few examples:

A copy of the *editio princeps* of Riccoldo's refutation of the Qur'an printed in Seville in 1500 under the title *Improbatio Alcorani* (with its Spanish translation *Reprobación del Alcorán* following a year later in 1501, and reprinted in Toledo 1502) can be found

85 Franciszek Radziszewski, *Wiadomość historyczno-statystyczna o znakomitszych bibliotekach i archiwach publicznych i prywatnych tak niegdyś byłych jako i obecnie istniejących w krajach dawną Polskę składających, a mianowicie: w Królestwie Polskim, Galicyi, W. Ks. Poznańskiem i zachodnich guberniach Państwa Rossyjskiego* (Wilno, 1875); cf. also *Kolekcje historyczne: Księgozbiory szlacheckie XVI–XVII wieku*, I, ed. Ewa Wyszynska, II, ed. Krystyna Opalińska & Marianna Czapnik (Prace Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie, 30, 32), Warszawa: WUW, 2004–2009, and the website "Biblioteki XVII wieku w Polsce" (<https://www.whk.up.krakow.pl/biblioteki/bib17/index.html>).

86 Like the library of the once famous Jesuit Seminar in Braniewo that is now part of the University Library in Uppsala (Sweden); see, Michał Spandowski, 'Biblioteka dawnego Kolegium Jezuickiego w Braniewie w zbiorach biblioteki uniwersyteckiej w Uppsali', in *Stan badań nad wielokulturowym dziedzictwem dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. Wojciech Walczak – Karol Łopatecki, thus far vols I–VI (Zachowanie polskiego dziedzictwa narodowego, 2–3, 6, 10–12; Białystok, 2010ff.), II, 93–102.

87 See, e.g., *The Inventory of Manuscripts from the Załuski Library in the Imperial Public Library*, ed. Olga N. Bleskina and Natalia A. Elagina (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2013), and Tomasz Szwaciński, *Biblioteka Załuskich w Petersburgu / Библиотека Залуцких в Петербурге*, online: <https://www.polskipetersburg.pl/hasla/biblioteka-zaluskich-w-petersburgu>.

88 Cf., e.g., Jan Świeczyński, *Katalog skradzionych i zaginionych dóbr kultury / Catalogue of stolen and missing cultural achievements*, ed. Wojciech Jaskulski – Piotr Ogrodzki (Warszawa, 1988), and the website of the *Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa / Institute of National Heritage* and the material published in its quarterly *Ochrona Zabytków* (a bibliography of all relevant issues published between 1948 and 2010, in *Ochrona Zabytków* 64 [2011], no. 252–255).

in the National Muzeum of Kraków, stored there among the volumes that once were owned by Count Emeryk Zachariasz Mikołaj Hutten-Czapski (Stańków n. Minsk 1828–1896 Kraków),⁸⁹ a polyglot high-ranking Polish official in the Czarist administration, who was at the same time a passionate bibliophile and well known for his impressive, remarkably rich private library and collection of coins and medals.⁹⁰ In the catalogue of his library, Riccoldo appears under the name *Riccoldus Florentinus*, i.e., as spelled on the title page of the *editio princeps* of his book.

Another copy of the *editio princeps* is part of the collection of the famous Czartoryski Library in Kraków (shelf no. Ink. 278 II). The Czartoryski Library holds also an incunabulum containing Riccoldo's *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum / ex graeco nuper in latrinum traducta* (shelf no. Ink. 225 II), which according to the catalogue entry was printed in Rome in 1485 (34 leaves in 4°).⁹¹ In addition to that, the Czartoryski Library is owner of a fine manuscript (186 leaves in 8° *una manu scriptum*) that was copied in Florence in the 15th century. According to a note on the front page, the manuscript once was part of the private library of the well-known historian Tadeusz Czacki (Poryck [today Pavlivka, Ukraine] 1765–1813 Dubno) and, under the name of *Ricoldus de Florentia*, contains (*inter alia*) two of Riccoldo's works in Latin: on ff. 1r–119v *Liber de redemptione de cautione terrae sanctae Ricoldi de Florentia* (incipit: 'Postquam divino propiciacionis munificencia [...]'), and on ff. 120r–167r *Incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi de Florentia ordinis predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum et dividitur in 17 capitula*.⁹²

Since in earlier Polish literature Riccoldo is equally referred to as *Ricoldus* or *Ricardus Florenczyk* (*Ricoldus* or *Ricardus Florentinus* or *Riccoldus de Florentia* respectively), it can be assumed that the Seville edition as well as the aforementioned manuscript must have reached Poland well before the 19th century, all the more so, as it was a

89 Riccoldus Florentinus: *Improbatio Alcorani*, ed. Antonio de la Peña (Sevilla: Stanislaus Polonus, 1500), 34 ff. in 4° / shelf no. MNK VIII–XV.104. Cf. the book description in Iwona Długopolska, *Różnimy się w wierze. Dowody koegzystencji wieloreligijnej na ziemiach Rzeczypospolitej w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie* (Kraków: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2015), 53–54, and *Inkunabuly w bibliotekach polskich / Incunabula quae in bibliothecis Poloniae asservantur*, ed. Alodia Kawecka-Gryczowa (Wrocław: ex Officina Institutii Ossoliniani, 1970), no. 4764.

90 *Catalogue de la collection des médailles et monnaies polonaises*, 5 vols (St Petersburg, 1871–1916).

91 The incunabulum is accessible online under the URL: <https://cyfrowe.mnk.pl/dlibra/publication/1244> (Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich) (retrieved 28.08.2020).

92 For a detailed description of that manuscript see, Stanisław Kutrzeba, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Musei Principum Czartoryski Cracoviensis*, II, Cracoviae [Kraków] 1908–1913, pp. 199–200. The incunabulum is accessible online under the URL: <https://cyfrowe.mnk.pl/publication/19014> (Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich) (retrieved 28.08.2020).

Polish book printer, Stanislaus Polonus (Stanislao del Reyno de Polonia, Stanisław z Królestwa Polskiego, or Stanisław z Polski, d. after 1552), to whom we owe the *editio princeps* of Riccoldo's original Latin text, printed in Seville in 1500.⁹³ The import of the book from Spain to Poland was undertaken by intermediaries for Polish Jesuits, who were well known for their close contacts with their fellow *fratres* of the *Societas Jesu* in Spain, Italy and France, and contributed significantly to the dissemination of Western anti-Islamic polemical literature in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁹⁴

The 1511 Paris edition of Riccoldo's book, that is: Bartholomaeus Picens de Montearduo's Latin retranslation of Riccoldo's work from Dimítrios Kydónis' Greek version and printed under the different title *Contra sectam Mahumeticam*,⁹⁵ is listed by Karol (Józef Teofil) Estreicher (Kraków 1827–1908 Kraków), bibliographer and long-standing director of the Jagiellonian (University) Library and “father of the *Polish National Bibliography*”,⁹⁶ as part of the Polish National Library.⁹⁷

Copies of Theodor Bibliander's Qur'an edition (with Riccoldo's *opus* being part of volume 2) are stored *inter alia* in the Jagiellonian (University) Library in Kraków⁹⁸

93 See Aloys Ruppel, *Stanislaus Polonus, ein polnischer Frühdrucker in Spanien* (München: Oficyna Warszawska im Ausland, 1946); new (enlarged) edition: *Stanislaus Polonus: polski drukarz i wydawca wczesnej doby w Hiszpanii*, transl. by Tadeusz Zapiór (Warszawa, 1970). At the beginning, Stanislaus worked together with the German printer Meinard Ungut (d. 1499 in Seville). Riccoldo's book was the first book that Stanislaus printed alone, after the passing away of his companion, and taking this opportunity to introduce a new signet: *S. Polonus* (see, *Improbatio Alcorani*, f. 34r).

94 Cf. Stefan Schreiner, 'Anti-Islamic Polemics in Eastern European Context: Translation and Reception of "Western Writings" on Islam in Polish Literature (16th–18th Centuries)', in *Esperienza e rappresentazione dell'islam nell'Europa mediterranea (secoli XVI–XVIII)*, a cura di Andrea Celli e Davide Scotto, monographic issue of the *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 51 (2015), 541–584.

95 Ricardus (de) Montecrucis, *Contra Sectam Mahumeticam* (1–18b), *De Moribus, conditionibus et nequitia Turcorum* (19a–62b), *De Vita et Moribus Judeorum Victorie de Carben* (63a–86b) (Parisiis [Paris]: ex officina Henrici Stephani, 1511), 4°, 2b–3a: table of content of Riccoldo's 17 chapters.

96 *Bibliografia Polska*, vols I–XXII (Kraków, 1872–1908), continued by his son Stanisław Ambroży Estreicher (Kraków 1869–1939 Sachsenhausen) and his grandson Karol Estreicher (Kraków 1918–1984 Kraków), until vol. XXXIV (Kraków, 1951).

97 *Bibliografia Polska* (note 96), vol. XXII, 541a; online <https://www.estreicher.uj.edu.pl/skany/>

98 *Catalogus librorum saeculi XVI qui in Bibliotheca Jagiellonica Cracoviensis asservantur / Katalog druków XVI wieku ze zbiorów Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*: BJ 16, curavit Marianus Malicki; confecerunt Margarita Gószka [et al.], 8 vols (Bibliotheca bibliographica Aureliana, 192–199; Baden-Baden: Koerner, 2002–2007), II (2002): *Bibliander – Cz.*; shelf no. 2.430.470 A.

and the Warsaw University Library.⁹⁹ In addition to these, Riccoldo appears under the names *Richardus de Montecrucis* and *Richardus Florentinus* respectively in the printed catalogue of the library of the then-called *St Vladimir Imperial University* (Императорский университет Святого Владимира) in Kiev, which was opened on 8 November 1833. Consulting that catalogue, its reader/user is redirected to the following entries:

No. 9965 *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum*, [a *Richardo de Montecrucis* latine scripta, a *Demetrio Cydonio* graece versa] ex graeco nuper in latinum traducta [a *Bartholomaeo Piceno de Montearduo. S. l., an. et typ. not.*] in-4,¹⁰⁰ and

No. 51450 *Vitae* (Machumetis, Saracenor. principis, eiusq. succeseorum) ipseq. Alcoran, quo velut authentico legum divinar. codice Agareni et Turcae aliiq. Christo adversantes populi reguntur; quae, ante annos 400, vir multis nominib. etc. Petrus abbas cluniacensis, per viros eruditos, ad fidei christianae ac sanctae matris ecclesiae propugnationem, ex arabica lingua in lat. transferri curavit etc. Haec omnia in unum volumen redacta sunt, opera et studio *Th[eo]d[o]r[i]*. *Bibliandri*, qui collatis etiam exemplarib. lat. et arab. Alcorani textum emendavit et marginib. apposuit annotationes, quib. doctrinae Machumeticae absurditas, contradictiones, origines errorum divinaeq. scripturae depravationes atq[ue] alia id genus indicantur etc. [Basil. 1543]. in-f.

Access: Confutationes legis Machumeticae, quam vocant Alcoranum, singulari industria ac pietate a doctissimis atq. optimis viris, partim latine, partim graece etc. olim scriptae, ac magno studio hinc inde conquisitae inq. lucem editae. Quor. catalogum versa pagina continet. Adiecta quoq. est *L. Vivis Valentini*, viri doctiss[imi], de Mahumete et Alcorano eius censura, ex libris

99 *Katalog druków XVI wieku w zbiorach Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie / Catalogue of the XVI century printed books from the collections of the Warsaw University Library*, ed. Teresa Komender – Halina Mieczkowska, 7 vols (Prace Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Warszawie, 26,1–7) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1994–2017), II, pt. 2, B: *Bibliander* – Bzowski, no. 9331/95, and II, pt. 1, no. 3649/99.

100 *Каталогъ книгъ библиотеки императорскаго университета Св. Владимира / Catalogus librorum Bibliothecae Caesariae Universitatis S. Vladimiri*, 5 vols (Kiev, 1854–1858), I (1854–1855): A–C, 312b, no. 9965.

ipsius de veritate fidei christianae decerpta, una cum alijs lectu dignissimis etc.

Historiae de Saracenor[um] a[tque] Turcar[um] origine, morib[us], nequitia, religione, reb[us] gestis etc., deq. itinerib[us] in Turciam; una cum vitis omnium turcicor. imperatorum ad nostra usq. tempora alijsq. lectu dignissimis etc. Quor[um] catalogum proxima statim pagella indicabit etc.

Ioannis Cantacuzeni, constantinopolitani regis, contra Mahometicam fidem christiana et orthodoxa assertio, graece conscripta ante annos fere 200, nunc vero latinitate donata, *Rodolpho Gualthero Tigurino* interprete etc. Basil. [1543].

Του ευσεβεστατου και φιλοχριστου βασιλεως Ιωαννου του Καντακουζηνου του δια του και μοναχικου μετονομασθεντος Ιωασαφ Μοναχου κατα της των Σαρακηνων αιρεσεως απολογιαι δ. Του αυτον κατα του Μωαμεθ λογοι δ. Christianae religionis acerrimi propugnatoris, D. *Ioannis Cantacuzeni*, imperatoris constantinopolitani, qui assumpto monachi habitu *Ioasaph Monachus* est cognominatus, contra Saracenor. haeresim, pro christiana religione apologiae IV. Eiusd[em] contra Mahometem orationes IV, nunc primum in lucem editae [gr.] etc. Basil.¹⁰¹

A systematic study of Central and Eastern European libraries and their extant catalogues certainly would unearth many more examples.

The mere “physical” presence of a book, however, does not yet say anything about its being read and used. But with regard to the Seville edition of Riccoldo’s book as well as Bibliander’s Qur’an edition, we have reason to assume that they were read and used indeed, as can be inferred at least from their quotations in Polish books on anti-Islamic polemics, on which I gave an overview in my 2015 article. An example is that of the Jesuit Teofil (Bogumil) Rutka (Kiev Voivodship 1622–1700 Lwów), philosopher and theologian, who undoubtedly was the most important interpreter-translator of “Western” anti-Islamic polemical writings into Polish and at the same time a remarkably prolific writer and author of polemical literature. He had lived and worked for some time as a missionary in Istanbul, where he learned Turkish and Arabic and studied Turkish his-

101 *Κατάλογος книгъ библиотеки императорскаго университета Св. Владимира / Catalogus librorum Bibliothecae Caesariae Universitatis S. Vladimiri*, V (1857–1858): S–Ž, 255b, no. 51450.

tory. He spent the second half of his life in Kraków, where he served as chaplain at the court of the Grand Crown Hetman and committed himself to writing.¹⁰²

As far as Riccoldo's presence in Polish literature is concerned, from among the many books and pamphlets that Teofil Rutka translated into Polish or authored himself, two are in our area of special interest: his abbreviated translation of Tirso González de Santalla SJ's (Arganza, León 1624–1705 Rome) *Manuductio ad conversionem Mahumetanorum in duas partes divisa*,¹⁰³ and his Polish version of Filippo Guadagnoli's (Magliano 1596–1656 Rome) refutation of the Qur'an and Islam, originally published in 1631 in Rome under the title *Apologia pro Christiana Religione, qua respondetur ad obiectiones Ahmed Filii Zin Alabedin, Persae Asphahensis, contentas in Libro inscripto Politor Speculi*.¹⁰⁴

Rutka's abbreviated translation of González' *Manuductio* appeared in print under the title *Rękoprowadzenie Do nawrócenia Mahometanów*.¹⁰⁵ In the second part (vol-

102 On him and his works see Józef Brown, Władysław Kiejnowski, *Biblioteka pisarzy asystencji polskiej Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, translated from the Latin by Ks. W. Kiejnowski (Poznań, 1862), 352–355; further Jan Reychman, *Znajomość i nauczanie języków orientalnych w Polsce XVIII w.* (Wrocław, 1950), 25–26; *Bibliografia Literatury Polskiej – Nowy Korbut*, III: *Piśmiennictwo Staropolskie* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1965), 188–190; Jerzy Nosowski, *Polska literatura polemiczno-antyislamiczna XVI, XVII i XVIII w.*, 2 vols (Warszawa, 1974), I, 401–402; Ludwik Grzebień, 'Rutka Teofil (1622–1700)', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, XXXIII (Kraków, 1991–1992), 203–204; Svetlana V. Sukhareva, 'Литературный мир Теофила Рутки', *Studia Humanitatis* 3 (2014) <https://www.st-hum.ru>; Schreiner, 'Anti-Islamic Polemics in Eastern European Context' (note 94), esp. 562–576.

103 Full title: *Manuductio ad conversionem Mahumetanorum in duas partes divisa. In prima veritas religionis catholicae-romanae manifestis notis demonstratur. In secunda falsitas mahumetanae sectae convincitur*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1687 [2nd ed. Dillingen, 1689]). On the *Manuductio* see Emanuele Colombo, *Convertire i musulmani. L'esperienza di un gesuita spagnolo nel Seicento* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2007); Emanuele Colombo, 'Even among the Turks: Tirso González de Santalla (1624–1705) and Islam', *Studies on Jesuit Spirituality* 44 (2012) 1–41. Cf. also Emanuele Colombo, 'A Muslim Turned Jesuit: Baldassarre Loyola Mandes (1631–1667)', *Journal of Early Modern History* 17 (2013), 479–504.

104 [Filippo Guadagnoli] *Apologia pro Christiana Religione, qua a R. P. Philippo Guadagnolo Malleanens, Clericorum Regulae Minorum S. Theologiae & Arabicæ linguae Professore, respondetur ad obiectiones Ahmed Filii Zin Alabedin, Persae Asphahensis, contentas in Libro inscripto Politor Speculi* (Rome: Typis Sac[rae] Congreg[ationis] de Prop[aganda] Fide, MDCXXXI [1631] Superiorum Permissu).

105 [Tirso González de Santalla] *Rękoprowadzenie Do nawrócenia Mahometanów z Manudukcyi Przewielebnego X. Thyrsa Gonzaleza Generała Societatis IESV, Łacinskim językiem w Madrycie Roku P. 1687 wydany, Innocenciuszkowi XI Najwyższemu Biskupowi Rzymskiemu przypisany, Przez iednego Kapłana tegoż Zakonu [i.e. Teofil Rutka], na Polski język przelożony, Ruku Pańskiego, 1694, we Lwowie w Drukarni Kollegium Societatis IESV, 253. Fragments*

ume) of his *Manuductio*, González de Santalla dealt at length with the *Alcorani et Mahometanorum errores*, but before discussing and eventually rebutting them, he gives a brief account of the sources, authors and their *opera* that he drew upon (Part II, book 1, ch. 1) in his refutation. Among these authors and works, of special importance are Riccoldo and his anti-Islamic polemic that is assigned a prominent place.¹⁰⁶ Though Rutka's translation is only an abbreviated version of González's work, he nevertheless does not omit references to Riccoldo; to the contrary, in Rutka's Polish version, as with González's original, Riccoldo is prominently present.¹⁰⁷

Rutka's other book worthy of mention here is his *Alkoraan na wywrocenia Wiary Chrześcijańskiej od Machometa spisany, y z pocztu Ksiąg Boskich wypisany, abo wyrzucony* (sine loco [possibly Lwów] 1699),¹⁰⁸ which is based on Filippo Guadagnoli's aforementioned *Apologia pro Christiana Religione*.

As stated in the subtitle of the book, with his *Apologia pro Christiana Religione* Guadagnoli responded to a polemic that a certain *Ahmed Filii Zin Alabedin*, i.e., the Persian philosopher and Shi'ite theologian Sayyed Aḥmad b. Zayn al-'Ābedīn 'Alawī 'Āmeli Eṣṣafahānī (d. between 1644 and 1650), had written under the—not without reason—long, but symbolic title *Meṣqal-e ṣafā' dar taḡlīa va taṣḡīa-ye āyīna-ye ḥaqnqmā* ("The polisher of purity to burnish and make clear the mirror showing the truth") to respond to an anti-Islamic polemic that a certain contemporary Jesuit, who was active as a missionary in Persia and/or India, had written and published in Persian under the title *Āyīna-ye ḥaqnqmā* ("The mirror showing the truth").¹⁰⁹

When Aḥmad b. Zayn al-'Ābedīn's book arrived in Rome in 1625 and was presented to Pope Urban VIII, he commissioned Filippo Guadagnoli—at this time certainly one of the leading Italian orientalists, if not *the* leading one among the Jesuits¹¹⁰ and well

of that translation are reprinted in Nosowski, *Polska literatura* (note 102), II, 41–125.

106 González de Santalla, *Manuductio ad conversionem Mahometanorum* (note 103), II, 3 ff.

107 González de Santalla, *Rękoprowadzenie do nawrócenia mahometanów* (note 103), 44–46; see also the fragments reprinted in Nosowski, *Polska literatura* (note 101), II, 47–48.

108 Cf. the introduction in Nosowski, *Polska literatura* (note 102), II, 184–185, and the selected chapters of the book reprinted on pages 185–259.

109 On him and his book see, Henri Corbin, 'Aḥmad 'Alawī', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, I (1984), 644–646; an updated version, published 2011, is available online: <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ahmad-b-15>.

110 Giovanni Pizzorusso, 'La preparazione linguistica e controversistica dei missionari per l'Oriente islamico: Scuole, testi insegnanti a Roma e in Italia', in *L'Islam visto da Occidente. Cultura e religione del Seicento europeo di fronte all'Islam*, a cura di Bernard Heyberger et al. (Genova: Marietti, 2009), 253–288; *L'Ordine dei chierici regolari minori* (Caraccioli): *Religione e cultura in età postidentina*, a cura di Irene Fosi e Giovanni, monographic issue of *Studi medievali e moderni: arte, letteratura, storia* 27 (2010), esp. 245–278; Giovanni Piz-

known not least for his translation of the Bible into Arabic¹¹¹—to provide an answer and come up with a strong refutation of it. Guadagnoli successfully did what he was ordered to do, first in Latin, and few years later again in Arabic,¹¹² using as his prime source of information about Islam and the life of the Arabian prophet a book titled *Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán* (printed in 1615),¹¹³ which

zorusso, 'Filippo Guadagnoli, i Caracciolini e lo studio delle lingue orientali e della controversia con l'Islam a Roma nel XVII secolo', and 297–314; Andrea Trentini, 'Il Caracciolino Filippo Guadagnoli controversista e islamologo. Un'analisi dei suoi scritti apologetici contro l'Islam'. Further, Giovanni Pizzorusso, 'Tra cultura e missione. La congregazione de *Propaganda Fide* e le scuole di lingua araba nel xvii secolo', in *Rome et la science moderne. Entre Renaissance et Lumières*, a cura di Antonella Romano (Rome: École française de Rome, 2008 [2009, 2013]), 121–152.

- 111 *Biblia Sacra Arabica Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide ivssv edita ad usum Ecclesiarum Orientalium &c.*, 3 vols (Rome, 1671). Cf. Ronny Vollandt, 'Che portano al ritorno qui una Bibbia Arabica integra. A history of the Biblia Sacra Arabica (1671–1673)', in *Greco-latina et orientalia. Studia in honorem Angeli Urbani Heptagenarii*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala et Samir Khalil Samir (Córdoba: CNERU – CEDRAC, 2013), 401–418.
- 112 The *Apologia pro Christianana Religione &c.* was printed in Rome 1631, few years later, Guadagnoli published it in Arabic (Rome, 1637); a revised and enlarged version: *Considerationes ad Mahomettanos cum responsione ad obiectiones Ahmed filii Zin Alabedin, Persae Asphahanensi*, came out in Rome in 1649.
- 113 Juan Andrés, *Confusión o refutación de la secta mahomética y del Alcoran* (1515), ed. Elisa Ruiz García y María Isabel García-Monge, 2 vols (Mérida: Editora Regional de Extremadura, 2003); Italian translation: *Opera chiamata confusione della setta machumetana*, composta in lingua spagnola, per Giouan Andrea gia Moro / Alfacqui etc. [...] tradotta in italiano, per Domenico de Gaztelu (Stampata in Spagna ne la città di Seuiglia [i.e. Venice], 1537); Latin translation: Johannes Andreas, *Confusio sectae Mahometanae*, translated by Johannes Lauterbach von Noskowitz (Waesberg: Officina Johannis, 1656); French translation: *Confusion de la secte de Muhamed. Liure premierement composé en langue Espagnole par Iehan André, iadis More & Alfaqui et tourné d'italien en françois* par Guy le Féure de la Boderie (Paris: chez Martin le Jeune, 1674). On the book and its author see Elisa Ruiz García, 'La confusión de la secta mahomética y la Cazzariasdos obras conflictivas', *Alborayque. Revista de la Biblioteca de Extremadura* 1 (2007) 19–39; Ryan Szpiech, 'Preaching Paul to the Moriscos: The *Confusión o Confutación de la Secta Mahomética y del Alcorán* (1515) of "Juan Andrés"', *La Corónica* 41 (2012), 317–343, and Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative. Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Hartmut Bobzin, 'Bemerkungen zu Juan Andrés und zu seinem Buch *Confusion dela secta mahomatica* (Valencia 1515)', in *Festgabe für Hans-Rudolf Singer. Zum 65. Geburtstag am 6. April 1990 überreicht von seinen Freunden und Kollegen*, hg. Martin Forstner, pt. 2. (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1991), 529–548. Spanish version: 'Observaciones sobre Juan Andrés y su libro *Confusion dela secta mahomatica* (Valencia, 1515)', in *Vitae Mahometi, reescritura e invención en la literatura cristiana de controversia*, ed. Cándida Ferrero Hernández y Óscar de la Cruz Palma, (Madrid: CSIC, 2014), 209–222.

the converted Morisco Juan Andrés (before 1475–after 1504) had written against Islam and the Qur'an in defence and justification of his conversion to Christianity.¹¹⁴ Guadagnoli's book consist of four parts: in its first two parts, the author "proves" that the Bible is of divine origin and its transmission and tradition are fully reliable, whereas the Qur'an is but a forgery of the Arabian prophet; in the third part, he explains the secrets of the divine Trinity; and in the fourth part, he explicates the dogma of divinity of Christ.

Teofil Rutka's book, however, is not a translation of Guadagnoli's *opus* into Polish. Since he knew about the genesis of Guadagnoli's book, in his "introduction to the gentle reader" (pp. A3r–4r), he in detail retells the story of *Philippus Guadagnolus* and his book being a response to Ahmed Filij Zin Alabedin's *Politor speculi* etc. and added that he rendered "this *Apologia* or defence of the Christian Faith" into Polish in order to enable "also in Poland many people to make use of it; therefore, I translated it for the Poles into Polish, abridging it in some places, but enlarging it in some other" (A3v). This applies particularly to its second part. "In order to avoid confusion" and to make clear that his book is more than a "mere" translation, he also did not title it "*Apologia* or defence of the Christian faith" (A4r), but intentionally called it *Alkoran na wywrocenia Wiary Chrześcijańskiej od Machometa spisany, y z pocztu Ksiąg Boskich wypisany, abo wyrzucony*—"The Alkoran written by Machomet to overthrow the Christian faith, but taken out of the list of Divine Books."

Rutka's book consists of three parts: the first part (1–57) explains "what the Qur'an commands the Muslims to believe regarding the Holy Scriptures or Old and New Testaments, but not all who follow Muhammad know." In the second part (58–171), the author deals with "the Qur'an and Muhammad as its inventor", and in the third (172–232) with "Muhammad himself" to prove that he is neither a prophet nor a messenger sent by God.

As noted above, Rutka's book is not a translation of Guadagnoli's work. In many places, Rutka abridged it, or augmented it considerably adding to it quotations, as he said, from works of "*Authorowie, którzy przeciwko Alkoranowi pisali*" ["authors who have written against the Qur'an"] (A2r–v). The list of authors to whom he refers or quotes is remarkably long and proves the author's erudition and wide knowledge of relevant polemical literature. It deserves even more attention as quite a number of authors and works mentioned in it likewise appear in Theodor Bibliander's edition of the Qur'an. Though Rutka does not mention any author and/or text printed in

¹¹⁴ Mercedes García-Arenal & Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain: Converted Muslims, the Forged Lead Books of Granada, and the Rise of Orientalism* (Studies in the History of Religions, 142) (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 303.

the first volume of Bibliander's edition, it nevertheless cannot be excluded, but seems rather very likely that he had access to a copy of it, as can be inferred from a comparison of Rutka's list of quoted authors with the table of contents in volumes 2 and 3 of Bibliander's edition. Without going into further details,¹¹⁵ it may suffice here to note that from among the 20 authors to whom Rutka referred, three seemed to have been of special interest and importance, for he dedicated a special introductory chapter to them, quoting in detail the headings of all chapters of their respective books and even summarizing them. These three authors are:

firstly, "*Mikoláy de Cusa Kárdynál in Cribatione Alcorani, żył około R. P. 1454* (*Cardinal Nicolaus Cusanus* [Nikolaus of Kues; Kues 1401–1464 Todi] *in his Cribatio Alcorani, lived around A. D. 1454*),"¹¹⁶

but foremost, "*Rikárdo* (ábo *Rikoldo*) *Theolog ex Ordine Prædicatorum* (*Ricardo or Riccoldo* [*da Monte di Croce*], *theologian of the Dominican Order*),"¹¹⁷

and finally, *Ian Kantakuzenus Cesarz, á potym Mnich Konstántinopolski w Apologiach y Orácyach przeciwko Máchometowi. Żył około R. P. 1350* (*Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos* [Ἰωάννης VI Καντακουζηνός; Constantinople 1292–1383 Mistra, Byzantine emperor 1347–1354], *afterwards monk in Constantinople* [he named himself *Joasaph Christodoulos*] *in his Apologies and Speeches against Mahomet. Lived around A. D. 1350*).¹¹⁸

Whereas Rutka's exposé of the table of content of Nicolaus of Cusa's *Cribratio Alcorani* (A4r–B2r) appears to be an almost literal translation of the respective table of contents printed in Bibliander's edition (II, 24–26, and in the second printing II, cols 37–38), he offers a much broader summary of Johannes Kantakouzenos' four *Apologiae* (B3v–4r) as well as of his four *Orationes* (B4r–C2v). Compared with the rather brief headings of the 17 chapters in all editions of Riccoldo's *Improbatio Alcorani* or *Confutatio Alcorani*, except for its re-edition by Marcus Antonius Serafinus OP in Venice in 1609,¹¹⁹ which offers a long exposé of its contents (arc. †4 = 10 pp.), Rutka's version

115 See the synopsis in Schreiner: 'Anti-Islamic Polemics in Eastern European Context' (note 94), 569–575.

116 In Bibliander's Qur'an edition (1543) in II, 21–82, and in the second printing (1550) in II, cols. 31–122.

117 In Bibliander's Qur'an edition (1543) in II, 83–178 (Greek and Latin texts), and in the second printing (1550) in II, cols. 122–184 (Latin text only). Cf. Nosowski, *Polska literatura* (note 102), II, 185–186.

118 In Bibliander's Qur'an edition (1543) in IV (Latin text) and V (Greek version), and in the second printing (1550) in II, cols. 193–358 (Latin text only). Cf. Johannes Kantakuzenos, *Christentum und Islam. Apologetische und polemische Schriften. Griechisch-deutsche Textausgabe*, ed. Karl Förstel (Altenberge: Oros, 2005).

119 *Propugnaculum fidei, toti christiane religioni adversum mendacia, & deliramenta Saraceno-*

likewise contains an expanded version of the table of contents. Though the headline of chapter 17 is missing (B2r–3r), his exposé resembles Marcus Antonius Serafinus' exposé in almost every line. Therefore, it seems to be very likely that Rutka not only used Bibliander's edition, but had also access to Serafinus's edition:

Summá Rozdziałów

Propugnaculum fidei (see note 119),
arc. †4

Ktore w sobie Księga Rikárdá / (ábo Rikoldá) Theologá ex Ordine Prædicatorum ná pohánbienie Alkoranu nápisana / zámýka. Te z Łáćínskíego íęzyká przeníosił ná Grecki Demetrius Cydonius, á z Greckiego ná Łáćínski Bartholomæus Picenus de Montearduo.

ROZDZIAŁ 1. *Zámýka w sobie przednieysze tego práwá błędy, to íest Sabelliaństwo, Ariaństwo, Mácedoniaństwo, Nestoriaństwo.*

Mahumetus cum Sabellio, negat Trinitatem. Cum Arrio, & Eunomio, asserit Christum esse puram creaturam. etc.

R. 2. *Iakiego sposobu trzymać się mamy, gdy z Máhometánami dysputujemy.*

[...] *Non est disputandum cum Saracenis de fide nostra, sed ostendere fidem illorum friuolam esse [...].*

R. 3. *Práwo Máchometowe nie íest Boże: bo o nim áni stáry, áni nowy Testáment nie świadczy, że íest Bożym. Także że Saráćeni winni są słuchác stárego Testamentu y Ewangeliey, że Pismo S. nie íest od Chrześćian zepsowane, że Wodz Sáráćeński był Chrześćianinem, ná ktorego pierśiach krzyż po śmierci náleżiony.*

[...] *Dicunt Saraceni, quod Iudæi corruperunt legem Moysi, & prophetarum, & Christiani corruperunt Euangelium, & quod non remansit de ueritate legis, & Euangelij, nisi quantum est in Alkorano [...] Calipha de Baldaco moritur Christianus, & ad collum eius, crux inuenta fuit.*

rum, Alchorani præcipuè, maxime utilè. Authore [...] F. Ricoldo, Florentino Ordinis Prædicatorum, impressum denuo. & illustratum Opera [...] F. Marci Antonii Serafini Veneti [...] (Venice: apud Dominicum de Imbertis, 1609).

R. 4. *Ieszcze nie iest Boże: Bo nie ma kształtu mowy y sposobu zgadzającego się z pismem Bożym.* *Lex Saracenorum non est consona legi Dei, quoniam habet stilum metricum; &c.*

R. 5. *Ieszcze nie iest Boże: bo się nie zgadza w sentenciách, ábo wyrozumieniu z pismem Bożym.*

R. 6. *Alkoran w wielu się rzeczách samemu sobie sprzeciwia.* *[...] contrarietates multe inueniuntur in eo; tamen multe in eo repetuntur*

R. 7. *Alkoran żadnym się cudem nie utwierdził.* *Moses, & alij prophetæ fecerunt magna, & inaudita miracula; & Christus venit cum [...] signis maximis; Mahumetus autem nullum signum fecit.*

R. 8. *Alkoran iest przeciwny rozumowi: Bo to przeciwko rozumowi iest, áby práwo tak święte, iáké ony rozumieią być w Alkoranie, od Bogá dáne było człowiekowi wydzierczy, cudzołożnikowi, mężoboycy, krzywoprzyśiężcy, kłamcy, bluźniercy &c. Tákie przeciwko rozumowi iest, żeby Bog tak święte tak sprosne prawo stánowił. Przeciwny rozumowi y ono tych dwóch propozyciy związanie.* *[...] quod lex Saracenorum sit omnino irrationabilis [...]. Est omnino irrationabile, quod lex tam sancta (ut aiunt Saraceni) sit ministrata per tam sceleratum hominem, raptorem &c.*

Nie iest Bog, tylko Bog y Máchomet Prorok iego. Tákie, że różność sekt iest od Bogá różnych Proroków posyłającego, przymuszania do wiary, obmycia zabobonne, błogostawieństwo w rokoszách cielesnych, przysięgi Boże przez wierne miásto, przez sad figowy, przez oliwniki, &c. *[...] quod beatitudo constitit precipue in actu gullæ & luxuriæ. [...] Pluries dicitur in Alchorano, quod Deus iurat per urbem fidelem, per ficetum, & oliuetum.*

- R. 9. *Alkoran iáwnie zámyka w sobie klámstwo o sobie samym, o Chrześcianach, o Żydách, o Apostołách, o Pátryárchách, o Diablách, o Aniołách, o Pannie Nayśw., o Bogu. Tamże wspomniona księga Máchometowá máiącá w sobie dwánáście tysięcy propozycji, z których tylko trzy tysiące prawdziwych było.* *Multa falsa Mahumetus de suo intermiscet in Alchorano [...] de seipso, [...] de Christianis, [...] de Iudeis, [...] de Apostolis, [...] de Patriarchis, [...] de Demonibus, [...] de Angelis, [...] de Beata Virgine, [...] de Deo. [...] Mahumetus fecit librum, ubi sunt duodecim millia verba, ex quibus triamillia tantum dicit esse vera.*
- R. 10. *Że Alkoran iest gwałtowny, ábo Tyráński. Támże masz, że dwóch Wuiow swoich chciał Máchomet zábić, ieśliby Alkoranu nie przyjęli. Tenże umárt mówiąc: Pánie ty wieś że dla samey boiázni śmierci Máchometánem zostáie / y Alkoran przyimuie.* *Lex Saracenorum, est lex occisionis, & mortis [...]. Dicit Mahumetus patruí suo, quod si non fieret Saracenus, occideretur [...].*
- R. 11. *Że Alkoran nie ma w sobie porządku, iáko ma Stáry y Nowy Testáment, że w nim Máchomet iáko Sennik, ábo przez sen gada.* *Quæ sunt a Deo, ordinata sunt. Lex vetus, & Euangelica procedunt ordine naturæ, temporis, & historie. Alchoranus, sine ullo ordine procedit.*
- R. 12. *Że Alkoran iest niesprawiedliwy. Bo się diablóm podoba, bo Bogá klámcą czyni, bo do wiela złego prowadzi &c.* *Alchoranus, placet Dæmonibus. Alchoranus, est causa omnium malorum [...].*
- R. 13. *Że Alkoranu wynálezca iest Diabeł, á pomocnicy iego Żydzi y Hereticy. Támże Odmiáná Alkoranow.* *Principalis author Alchorant non fuit. homo, sed Diabolus firmiter a sapientibus creditur. [...] Mahumetus habuit in suo consortio viros hæreticos, & scelestissimos [...].*
- R. 14. *O wymyśle iego, y widzeniu báiká cudownie ućieszna, która się z powieściami prawdziwemi Lucianowemi porównać może.* *Mahumetus composuit fictam, atque ridiculosam visionem [...].*

R. 15. O sześciu pytaniach Alkoranowych, y zacności Chrystusowej względem Máchometá. 1. Czemu w wielkiej liczbie o sobie mówiącego tak wiele razy wprowadza Alkoran? Tąże też Troycá w imionách, Boga, Słowa, y Duchá S. wyraża się. 2. Pytanie o Duchu S. 3. Iako Chrystus SŁOWO Boże? 4. O Księgách Moyżeszowych y Ewángeliey. 5. O Towarzystwie Bożym. 6. Czemu Alkoran wiele chwalebnych rzeczy o Chrystusie powiada, á o sobie mało, y to podłych.

Dubia, & quæstiones sex mouentur in ipso Alchorano. 1. [...] quod Alchoranus, aliquando loquitur de Deo in singulari, aliquando in plurali. [...] 2. mentionem facit de Spiritu Sancto [...]. 3. [...] secundum Alchoranum quod Christus [...] sit Verbum Dei [...]. 4. Mahumetus in Alchorano valde comendat sacram scripturam, & Evangelium [...]. 5. Quid sibi vult Mahumetus [...] scribens, credite in Deum, & nuntium: obdite Deo, & nuntio? 6. Queritur, quare [...] Alchoranus multa magnifica dicit de Christo, & de Mahometo multa vitia [...].

R. 16. O Zacności Ewángeliey względem Alkoranu. Żadney nie masz kontrádykcyey w Ewángeliey, ani kłamstwá, ani gwałtu, ani żadney niedoskonáłości. Tamże się zbiiá to, że Diabli przez Alkoran zbáwieni będą.

Evangelium preeminet incomparabiliter Alchoranum [...] non est blanditorium, nec fabulam vllam in se continet [...].

Summary of the chapters which are included into the Book of Ricardo (or Ricoldo), the theologian ex Ordine Prædicatorum, written in refutation of the Alcoran. This [book] was rendered by Demetrius Cydonius from the Latin language into Greek, and from the Greek into Latin by Bartholomæus Picens de Montearduo.

Ch. 1. *Contains the major errors of that law, that is, Sabellianism, Arianism, Macedonianism, and Nestorianism.*

Ch. 2. *Which way we should behave when we enter a dispute with Mahometans.*

Ch. 3. *The Mohammedan Law is not Divine law, because neither the Old nor the New Testament testify to it that it is Divine. Likewise, that the Saracens have to listen to the Old Testament and the Gospel, that the Holy Scripture has not been falsified by Christians, that the Leader of the Saracens was a Christian, on whose breast after his death a cross was found.*

Ch. 4. *And it is also not Divine, because it has not the forms of speech (language) that is consistent with the Divine Scripture.*

Ch. 5. *And it is also not Divine, because it is not consistent in its sayings or explanations with the Divine Scripture.*

Ch. 6. *The Alcoran is contradicting itself in many instances.*

Ch. 7. *The Alcoran is not certified (evidenced) by any miracle.*

Ch. 8. *The Alcoran is against reason: Since against reason is that such a holy law, as they see in the Alcoran, could be given by God to a man [who is] a thief, a fornicator, a murderer, a false-swearer, a liar, a blasphemer, etc. It is likewise against reason that God instituted such holy and obscene law alike. Against reason are also the two statements bound together: there is no god, but God, and Mahomet is his Prophet. Likewise, that the variety of sects is from God, who has sent different Prophets, coercion to faith, superstitious ablutions, blessings over carnal lusts, Divine oaths by the City of security, by the Fig, by the Olive, etc. (cf. sura 95:1-3)*

Ch. 9. *The Alcoran contains in itself lies regarding itself, the Christians, the Jews, the Apostles, the Patriarchs, the Devils, the Angels, the Holiest Virgin: God. There it also explained that Mahomet's book consists of 12,000 words, of which 3,000 only are true.*

Ch. 10. *That the Alcoran is violent or tyrannical. There you find that Mahomet wanted to kill two of his uncles because they would not accept the Alcoran. One of them died saying: Lord, you know that it is out of fear only that I become a Mohammedan and accept the Alcoran.*

Ch. 11. *That the Alcoran does not have a right order, as the Old and New Testaments have; that Mahomet speaks in it like a Dreamer or in the way of a dream.*

Ch. 12. *That the Alcoran is unjust. Since it pleases the devils, since it makes God a liar, since it leads to much evil etc.*

Ch. 13. *That the inventor of the Alcoran is the Devil, and his helpers are Jews and heretics. Therefore, the variety of Alcorans.*

Ch. 14. *On his fantasy and vision, a wonderfully nice story, that can be compared to Lucian's True Stories.*

Ch. 15. *On six Alcoranic questions and the superiority (pre-eminence) of Christ to Mahomet. 1. Why the Alcoran introduces the speaker (i.e., God) so many times speaking about himself in the plural? Therein is also a Trinity mentioned in the names: God, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. 2. The questions about the Holy Spirit. 3. What is the sense of Christ being Divine WORD? 4. On the Books of Moses and the Gospel. 5. On the Communion with God. 6. Why does the Alcoran say so many praiseworthy things about Christ, but about itself only few, and deplorable ones.*

Ch. 16. *On the superiority (pre-eminence) of the Gospel to the Alcoran. In the Gospel, there is no contradiction, neither lie nor violence nor any imperfection. There, however, a conglomerate that the Devils will be saved through the Alcoran.*

Rutka's books were widely spread; copies of them are listed in many library catalogues, and he and his works are dealt with in almost all histories of Polish literature written in the 19th and early 20th centuries as well as in encyclopaedias. Therefore, it can be taken almost for granted that thanks to Rutka (and others like him), Riccoldo's name and at least an outline of his book were likewise widely spread and known in the Polish context.

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Riccoldo da Monte di Croce

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Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, a Dominican friar, embarked on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1288 and spent years as a missionary in Muslim Baghdad, learning Arabic and studying the Qur'an. After returning to Florence, he wrote extensively about non-Christian peoples. *Liber peregrinationis* recounts his travels and includes ethnographic observations and theological discussions. His *Libellus ad nationes orientales* explores Eastern religions and conversion strategies, with a focus on the Mongols. *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, a detailed critique of the Qur'an, had a significant influence on Christian European understandings of Islam, impacting figures like Nicholas of Cusa, Guillaume Postel and Martin Luther.

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