Europe, Islam, and the Role of the Church in the Afterlife of a Medieval Polemic, 1301-1543

by

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Abstract

This dissertation, titled "Europe, Islam, and the Role of the Church in the Afterlife of a Medieval Polemic, 1301-1543," analyzes the circulation of the highly influential anti-Islamic polemic *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (Against the Law of the Saracens, c. 1301) in Europe from 1350 through 1550. It explore why late medieval and early modern readers circulated *Contra legem* and how they made use of the text to achieve their own purposes. The history of this text reveals the ways that a high medieval polemical approach to Islam spread within Christendom and impacted Christian-Muslim relations over several centuries. This dissertation also considers the relationships between Europe, the Church, and Islam during a period when religious upheaval within European society leading to the Reformation coincided with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into previously Christian-held lands.

The Italian missionary Riccoldo da Montecroce had composed *Contra legem* in the popular medieval genre of religious polemics – texts that developed arguments disputing other religions' claims to legitimacy. In his polemic, Riccoldo provided readers with an analytic guide to the Qur'an through a series of arguments proving why Islam's holy book was not divinely-inspired. His work became the most widely-read medieval polemic on Islam in later centuries. The text is extant in thirty-one manuscripts in Latin, fourteen in Greek translation, and three in Russian translation. Additionally, the text was printed in Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, and German in the sixteenth century. While previous scholars have widely recognized *Contra legem*'s popularity, my dissertation reconstructs the text's influence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the fifteenth century, the growth of the Ottoman Empire generated a desire within Europe for information on and refutations of Islam. Christian scholars valued Riccoldo's direct knowledge of Arabic and his experiences in the Near East as authentic. Moreover, the adaptability of *Contra legem* insured that these readers could appropriate Riccoldo's knowledge of Islam for their own purposes and in new circumstances. Critical contexts for this reception were the expansion of the Ottoman Empire through the Byzantine Empire and into Europe and a concurring period of religious reforms and attacks on papal supremacy in the western Church. While historians have tended to treat pre-Protestant Church reform and early European reactions to Ottoman growth separately, the reception of *Contra legem* shows these developments were intimately related to one another.

I argue that *Contra legem* became a tool for Europeans who linked the perceived threat of the Ottoman Empire's expansion to the problem of determining authority within the Church. Readers used Riccoldo's descriptions of the dangers of the Qur'an to conflate the Ottoman Empire with a broader Islamic threat to Christian society. Such positioning helped readers to substantiate the divine authority of the Church – and especially the papacy – as a bulwark against this threat. This historical study of knowledge transmission demonstrates the continuing impact that medieval views of Islam had on the religious uncertainties in Europe leading up to the Protestant Reformation. The struggle for authority heightened European fear of Islam, and this Islamophobia fueled the circulation of Riccoldo's book for centuries, even into the modern day.

Introduction: The Origin of Riccoldo da Montecroce's Polemic against the Qur'an

This is a study about a single book with a singular history. Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra legem Sarracenorum* ("Against the Law of the Saracens," c.1301) was the most popular polemic against Islam produced in medieval Europe. For several centuries following its composition, Christians from the Byzantine Empire to Russia, from England to the Iberian Peninsula, read, copied, translated, and published this short treatise on the Qur'an. Its wide proliferation ensured that *Contra legem* influenced thought on Islam for generations of late medieval and early modern Christians. From popular sermons that repeat Riccoldo's stories to learned tomes on the study of the Qur'an that duplicate his arguments, its impact is evident. The reception of *Contra legem* in the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries demonstrates how Europeans produced knowledge about Islam and the divergent reasons behind this production. As such, Riccoldo's popular polemic represents a bridge between the medieval and early modern worlds. The history of the text offers a means of exploring the changes and continuities in Christian thought on Islam over time.

Riccoldo Pennini da Montecroce was born around 1243 in the San Pier Maggiore quarter of Florence.[1] His family was part of the *popolo* class, consisting of craftsmen and shopkeepers. They lived near a Franciscan convent in Florence, and Riccoldo claimed a strong devotion to St

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[1] See bibliography for a full list of works on Riccoldo da Montecroce. He is also variously referred to as Riccoldo de Montecroce and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce by modern scholars. There is an ongoing dispute over the origin of Riccoldo's moniker "Montecroce." While some argue that he adopted the name after his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, others have insisted that it comes from his family tie to the Montecroce region outside Florence.

Francis as a boy.[2] Nevertheless, he entered the Dominican convent of Santa Maria Novella in May 1267 after completing his university education. Two of his brothers, Sinibaldus and Bencivenni, joined Riccoldo over the next two decades.[3] In 1272, Riccoldo went to the convent at Pisa to work as a lecturer. He stayed for fifteen years before moving to Prato, where for a brief period he was placed in charge of the convent. He returned to Florence in 1288 to lecture at his home convent, but that same year he also made a far more drastic move. Pope Nicholas IV had recently issued the bull *Cum hora undecima*, which emphasized the need for missionary work in the Near East. The Master General of the Dominican Order, Munio da Zamora, suggested that Riccoldo take up this calling, and Riccoldo departed soon afterward.[4]

Riccoldo first made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land before traveling further east to carry out his mission. He reached as far as Tabriz, in modern-day Iran, before moving southwest toward Baghdad. He remained in this Muslim capital for a number of years and, according to his own account, met with Christian and Muslim leaders and scholars, learned Arabic, and even began a translation of the Qur'an into Latin. While there, Riccoldo experienced the waning power of western Christians in comparison to growing Muslim powers in the region. For instance, he was in Baghdad in 1291 when Acre fell – the last major crusader city in the Levant – as well as when the Il-Khanid Mongols converted to Islam in 1295. By 1301, Riccoldo had returned to Florence, never to return to the Near East. A papal inquiry into his writings may have

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[2] Rita George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq: Riccoldo da Montecroce's Encounter with Islam* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 2–3. The *popolo* class was more often affiliated with the Franciscans, suggesting that Riccoldo's choice to join the Dominican order was a significant one, possibly based on his value of education.
[3] George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, 3.
[4] Jean-Marie Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orient à la fin du XIII siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum' de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Domenicane* 17 (1986): 1–58, 15–16; L. Michael Spath, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce: Medieval Pilgrim and Traveler to the Heart of Islam," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies* 1 (1999): 65–102, 67.

been the reason for his return, but it was settled quickly.[5] Evidence suggests that Riccoldo grew a

beard around this time, in anticipation of returning to the Near East to continue his work.[6]

However, ill health prevented further travel. Instead, Riccoldo served as a prior and sub-prior at

the Santa Maria Novella Convent, and he was a very popular, even famous, preacher in his

community in these later years.[7] For a time, Riccoldo was exiled to Orvieto, about 170

kilometers south of Florence, due to a conflict at the convent.[8] Eventually, he returned, and he

died there on October 31, 1320.

Several sources give us these details about Riccoldo's life. The Santa Maria Novella

Convent's necrology includes entries for Riccoldo as well as his two brothers. Riccoldo's entry

is much longer than average and describes him as a priest, preacher, lector, and a well-read man

(*bene litteratus*).[9] Riccoldo's link to his brothers, his date of entry into the convent, his expenses

as a prior and sub-prior, the papal inquiry, and his date of death are all included in the necrology.

The entry also hints at Riccoldo's extensive language skills. We know that he was proficient in

Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic, in addition to Latin.[10] A second source for Riccoldo's life

comes from the records of provincial chapters of the Roman Province. These records show

Riccoldo's appointments as lecturer at Pisa, Prato, and Florence and give information on his

exile to Orvieto. Florentine notarial records indicate his presence in Florence in 1301 and in

1316, when he acted as a witness in an inheritance case. Finally, a manuscript at the Dominican

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[5] Kurt Villads Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini," Spring 1998, https://www2.historia.su.se/personal/villads-jensen/Riccoldo/0.introduction.pdf. Accessed November 6, 2018. This inquiry may have concerned Riccoldo's portrayals of Eastern Christians in his *Liber peregrinationis*.
[6] Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini."
[7] Spath, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce," 67; Iris Shagrir, "The Fall of Acre as a Spiritual Crisis: The Letters of Riccoldo of Monte Croce," in *Revue belge de philology et d'histoire* 90 (2012): 1107–1120, 1108–1111.
[8] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 17–18.
[9] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 14.
[10] Thomas Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 4 (1200–1350), ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 678.

convent in Assisi recorded a sermon that Riccoldo gave in Florence, as well as an *exemplum* in which Riccoldo described his life in Baghdad.[11]

All remaining information about Riccoldo's life comes from his written works. He wrote three tracts on the Near East and Islam in addition to *Contra legem Sarracenorum*: *Ad nationes orientales* (To the Oriental Nations), *Liber peregrinationis* (The Book of Pilgrimage), and *Epistolae ad ecclesiam triumphantem* (Letters to the Triumphant Church). Additionally, a copy of his *Scriptum super secundum librum Perihermenias Aristotelis* (Writing on the Second Book of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*) survives. Another text, entitled *Sermones dominicales* (Dominican Sermons) is now lost, although it is referenced in the Santa Maria Novella convent archival record.[12] While none of these works is autobiographical, each offers small details about Riccoldo's life and especially his time in the Near East.

Riccoldo's background as an Italian Dominican missionary and the contexts in which he lived shaped his writing. While he utilized a variety of genres, the Dominican emphasis on Scholasticism affected all of his writing, encouraging methodical, logic-based arguments. His work as a missionary lent the theme of conversion prominence in his texts. The influence of his regional worldview is less certain. Like several other Italian states, Florence had long-standing ties to the Near East, primarily through trading. An Italian familiarity with the East Mediterranean may explain why Riccoldo chose this region for his activities, while fellow religious from the Iberian Peninsula, such as Ramon Llull, focused on North Africa instead.

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[11] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 17–18.

[12] Recently, Daniel Pachurka has published an edition of a separate anti-Islamic polemic that comes from a manuscript which also contains Riccoldo's *Contra legem*. In the manuscript, the former text is also attributed to Riccoldo. Although Pachurka accepts this attribution and briefly discusses it, I would argue that this claim remains unsubstantiated and merits further study (Daniel Pachurka, *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum: Edition; Übersetzung; Kommentar* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2016)). For further discussion of the question, see Ulli Roth, "Review of Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum, Edition, Übersetzung, Kommentar* by *Daniel Pachurka*," *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East* 94 (2017): 583–586.

Two major events from Riccoldo's time in the Near East also influenced his writing. The fall of the last crusader stronghold Acre signaled the end of the Latin kingdoms in the Near East. This loss proved the weak position of Latin Christians in relation to Islamic powers in the eastern Mediterranean. The conversion of the Mongols to Islam in 1295 represented a different loss. To that point, the Mongol rulers of Iran had provided Latin Christians with a sense of hope. They made plans to convert the Mongols to Christianity, thereby creating a natural alliance against the Islamic powers that ruled the territories between Latin Europe and the Il-Khanid state. With the Mongol conversion to Islam, those hopes were dashed. Moreover, from the western Christian perspective, Islam had gained powerful new adherents. These significant set-backs to what Riccoldo considered the cause of Christianity colored his writing.

Riccoldo wrote *Epistolae ad ecclesiam* immediately following the 1291 fall of Acre.[13] Therein, he addressed a series of five letters to members of the heavenly church, including Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. In the letters, Riccoldo described his devastation at the news of Acre's fall and his personal struggle to understand and accept this defeat. He questioned whether God and the holy hosts favored the Muslims or else were punishing the sinful Christians. The letters all end with the phrase "given in the East" (*data in oriente*) or "written in the East" (*scripta in oriente*), making clear that Riccoldo composed the *Epistolae* while still living in the Near East.[14] Scholars have debated the extent to which Riccoldo experienced genuine religious

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[13] See an edition of the work in Reinhold Röhricht, "Lettres de Ricoldo de Monte-Croce," in *Archives de l'Orient Latin*, Vol. II: *Documents, II. Lettres* (Paris, 1884), 258–296.

[14] Röhricht, "Lettres de Ricoldo de Monte-Croce," 258–296. For an English translation, see George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, Appendix A. Scholars have been unable to understand why there is a variance in the final letter from *data* to *scripta*. Most argue that the raw emotion that Riccoldo appears to demonstrate in his writing shows that he wrote the *Letters* very soon after the fall of Acre in 1291 (see Spath, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce," 88–90 and Shagrir, "The Fall of Acre," 1112–1119). Emile Panella, however, suggests that if the *Letters* were indeed written in the East, they were still completed very close to the year 1300, along with Riccoldo's other three works (Panella, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, OP, *Libellus ad nationes orientales*," http://www.e-theca.net/emiliopanella/riccoldo2/adno.htm. Accessed November 6, 2018).

doubt. Many argue that Riccoldo had a profound crisis of faith after the fall of Acre.[15] Yet, more

recently, Davide Scotto has argued that the *Epistolae* displayed deep religious commitment and

belief rather than doubt.[16] He explained that Riccoldo's direct invocations of the plight of Job

are essential to understanding the *Epistolae*: the victories of the Muslims were a trial for

Riccoldo to prove his faith.[17] This argument is supported by Riccoldo's later works, which

demonstrate that Riccoldo's core aim of conversion never faltered.

    Since the *Epistolae* survives whole in only one manuscript, while a second manuscript

contains fragments, scholars have different suggestions for the *Epistolae*'s lack of popularity.[18]

Some argue that Riccoldo meant these letters to remain private, while others think that the

message of doubt was too uncomfortable for a broad audience.[19] Yet both manuscript copies of

Epistolae also contain *Contra legem*, immediately following the letters.[20] This suggests that the

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[15] See Spath, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce," 88–90; Shagrir, "The Fall of Acre," 1112–1119; and George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, 89–104. John Tolan asserted that Riccoldo's experience with the fall of Acre, as well as his other experiences in the Near East, disillusioned him from missionary work altogether (Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xiv). Others, such as Benjamin Kedar, have argued that Riccoldo was greatly shaken by the event but persisted in representing and advocating missionary work into the fourteenth century (Benjamin Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)).

[16] Davide Scotto, "'Aleph!': Islamic Prosperity and the Destruction of Christians in Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Letters to the Triumphant Church*," paper given at 51st International Congress of Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 14, 2016.

[17] While other scholars, such as Burman and George-Tvrtković, have hinted at this connection to the story of Job and the implications of this as a rhetorical device, they have also emphasized the crisis of faith perspective (George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, 89–104; Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 681–682; and Burman, "Polemic, Philology, and Ambivalence: Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, no. 2 (May 2004): 181–209, 208–209). Even when admitting that it was possible that Riccoldo's statements were rhetorical devices rather than genuine feeling, George-Tvrtković quickly quashed this possibility, noting that because the *Letters* did not come to a resolution at the end, they were not rhetorical.

[18] See Bibliography for a list of manuscripts. For citations, see also Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 682. Lorenza Tromboni has additionally cited a third manuscript containing an Italian translation of the *Letters* (Lorenza Tromboni, "Dominican Lectores in Florence during the 14th C," *Cendari: Collaborative European Digital Archive Infrastructure*, http://www.cendari.eu/sites/default/files/ARGDominicanLectores2.pdf). However, this study appears to be somewhat unreliable, and further study on this translation – as well as the other citations – should be done.

[19] On the former argument, see George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, 38; on the latter, see Shagrir, "The Fall of Acre," 1108.

[20] See appendix A for full descriptions of manuscripts and appendix B for a list of contents in each. The *Epistolae* are present in Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS H.II.33 and Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 7317.

letters circulated in some of the same places as the popular polemic. Moreover, at least some readers felt that the *Letters* fit into Riccoldo's broader teachings on Islam rather than being uncomfortable anomalies. Possibly, later readers did not recognize a comparable usefulness to the letters as they identified in *Contra legem*.

Riccoldo also wrote a more general work on his experiences in the Near East, the travel narrative *Liber peregrinationis*.[21] The first part of the text follows in the medieval pilgrimage-guide genre. As was common, he described the order in which he visited various cities in the Near East and described the sites therein, without much personal detail about his experiences. The second part, which is more unique, narrates Riccoldo's experiences missionizing in modern-day Iran and Iraq. In the latter, Riccoldo included an assessment of Islam, lauding the admirable aspects of Muslim praxis such as their dedication to prayer before denigrating the Qur'an in a section that appears as an outline for *Contra legem*.[22] Scholars have debated Riccoldo's ambivalent view of Muslims therein, noting a contrast between the unusually respectful tone that certain parts of his assessment took and the more common derogatory attitude that characterized other portions.[23] Rita George-Tvrtković, for instance, has suggested that Riccoldo's positive descriptions of Muslim praxis are so complimentary as to make one doubt their insincerity, despite Riccoldo's own positioning of these compliments as a shaming device for Christians.[24] George-Tvrtković argued that, possibly, Riccoldo thought that Christians would dismiss his writings without such a commonplace proviso.

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[21] For an edition, see René Kappler, *Riccold de Monte Croce: Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient: Texte latin et traduction* (Paris: Honoré Champion éditeur, 1997); for an English translation, see George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, Appendix B.

[22] Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 684.

[23] See, for example, George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, 44–50. George-Tvrtković notes that readers more commonly highlighted Riccoldo's descriptions of the foreign aspects of Muslim prayer and other arguments that were helpful to anti-Islamic polemic than they did the "positive" notes in his travelogue.

[24] George-Tvrtković, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq*, 44.

Evidence suggests that Riccoldo wrote an initial version of *Liber peregrinationis* while still abroad.[25] Yet further aspects of the text indicate that Riccoldo completed the final version upon his return to Florence, foremost because the same copyist worked with Riccoldo on his other two texts. *Peregrinationis* survives in Latin in at least six manuscripts.[26] In 1351, Jean le Long da Ypres made a French translation of the text, which is preserved in six additional manuscripts. The translation was printed c.1519 and again in 1877. A medieval Italian translation also survives in at least two manuscripts, and this translation was published at the end of the eighteenth century.[27] By comparison to the *Epistolae*'s reception, *Peregrinationis* received a much richer transmission. The genre and much of the content were more familiar to a European audience, which may have contributed to its relative success.

Finally, Riccoldo composed *Contra legem Saracenorum* and *Ad nationes orientales* in quick succession to one another. The former, as stated above, is Riccoldo's anti-Islamic polemic and the focus of my study, while the latter is a guide for Dominican missionaries in the Near East. Riccoldo may have compiled notes for both works while still abroad, but their reliance on other texts makes clear that Riccoldo composed the works in Florence.[28] Remigio da Girolami, the copyist responsible for *Peregrinationis*, also copied these works, which first appear together

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[25] As Kurt Jensen has noted, *Liber pereginationis* is less dependent on written sources than Riccoldo's other works, indicating that he was abroad without access to them. Jensen also pointed out that Riccoldo's treatment of eastern Christians in this work is harsher than his subsequent characterizations in *Ad nationes* (Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini"). This would make sense if Riccoldo wrote it before receiving the papal summons that brought him back to Italy – scholars suggest that it was his characterization of eastern Christians as heretics that caused the inquiry.

[26] For a list of manuscripts, editions, etc., see Kappler, *Riccold de Monte Croce*, 22; and Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 685. Tromboni lists an additional manuscript that is not mentioned by either Burman or Kappler (Tromboni, "Dominican Lectores in Florence during the 14th c.") but, again, it is unclear how reliable this information is. The original copy of *Liber peregrinationis* is preserved in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Lat. 4° 466. This manuscript copy is considered preeminent because it is the only copy that contains notes and additions in Riccoldo's hand (Kappler, *Riccold de Monte Croce*, 22).

[27] Emilio Panella, "Ricerche su Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 58 (1988): 5–85, 65–77.

[28] Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini;" Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 12–13.

in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173.[29] *Contra legem* precedes *Ad nationes*, and *Ad nationes* briefly references *Contra legem*.[30] Thus, it seems likely that Riccoldo composed the two works in quick succession and commissioned Remigio to transcribe them together. Still, in their reception, the two did not often remain connected. While *Contra legem* is extant in thirty additional manuscripts, the full text of *Ad nationes* survives in only one of these copies and one separate manuscript. However, the final chapter of *Ad nationes*, "Rules for Missionaries," was included in four of the thirty copies of *Contra legem*.[31]

    Ad nationes is perhaps the least studied of Riccoldo's four works on the Near East. There are eight chapters: a prologue, a tract on the Nestorians, on the Jacobites, on the Jews, on the Muslims, and on the Mongols, a summary, and a set of rules for missionaries. In a brief introduction, Riccoldo compares these various groups. He notes a level of equation between the first three – Eastern Christians, Jews, and Muslims – all of which hold some degree of Christian truth that has been muddled to different extents. Eastern Christians are closest to the truth and Muslims furthest. Within the main text, the section on Muslims contains only a single sentence, referring the reader to *Contra legem*. The two chapters on eastern Christians were highly dependent on Thomas Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles*.[32] By contrast, Riccoldo's writing on the Jews is somewhat unconventional. Latin Christian scholars during Riccoldo's time were

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[29] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 12–13. Like Berlin, MS Lat. 4° 466, Florence, MS Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173 is considered preeminent because Riccoldo added notes and additions to the text. This manuscript was originally housed at the library of the Santa Maria Novella convent in Florence. For information on the manuscript, its translation to the national archive, and its discovery, see Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 6–8.

[30] Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini."

[31] Lydia Walker has suggested that, in its reception, *Ad nationes*'s missionary aims were superseded by the polemical needs of its readers. She has also argued that the more selective audience and intentions for the missionary manual played a role in limiting its contemporary influence or popularity in reception (Lydia Marie Walker, *Riccoldo da Monte Croce's* Ad nations orientales*: A Study of a Fourteenth-Century Dominican Missionary Manual*, MA Thesis, Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, 2009), 11–12. Jensen, however, has suggested that it was less popular than *Contra legem* because it was less well-organized (Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini").

[32] Jensen argued that this decision may have been a move to avoid further censure, after the criticism Riccoldo faced from the papacy for portraying these groups as heretics in *Peregrinationis* (Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini").

growing far harsher toward the Jews and specifically Talmudic Judaism.[33] Yet Riccoldo opted,

instead, to maintain a more traditional, protective stance toward the Jews. Walker has argued that

this was likely because Riccoldo's circumstances left him less threatened by Jews than many of

his contemporaries.[34] Certainly, as *Contra legem* demonstrates, he focused much more on Islam.

 Contra legem was both Riccoldo's most popular work and his most substantial and

focused effort to address the "problem" of Islam. He wrote the treatise in the genre of religious

polemic, which was commonly used to attack religious "others" including Jews, Greek orthodox

Christians, and Christian heretics, and to reassert the preeminence of orthodox Roman Catholic

Christianity.[35] Writing polemics against enemies of the faith had a long history in the Christian

tradition. The works of Church Fathers against the first heresies that had threatened to divide the

early Church, for instance, became models for later efforts. When twelfth- and thirteenth-century

Christians sought to address the theological problems posed by Islam, they turned to this

tradition.[36] Riccoldo focused primarily on disputing the validity of the Qur'an, and he chose a

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[33] Jeremy Cohen, *Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,1982); Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

[34] Lydia Walker, "A Fourteenth-Century Augustinian Approach to the Jews in Riccoldo da Monte Croce's *Ad nationes orientales*," *Comparative Religion Publications* (2011): 33–42, 35–40.

[35] In my use of the word "polemic" I follow the definitions laid out by Ryan Szpiech concerning polemic and apology. Szpiech uses the term polemic to refer to works that primarily sought to denounce the ideas of another group or individual; apology was primarily used to defend one's own ideas. Yet, as Szpiech notes, "insofar as polemical discourse itself is inherently a form of apologetic, aimed at defining or reinforcing boundaries of group identity against a foil of heterodox difference – and apology always implies a comparative rejection of opposing views – the two terms form an almost indivisible pair" (Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 8). The idea that identity is relational seems to drive polemical writing – to create definitions of one's beliefs in terms of the ideas of the "other." On the study of medieval religious polemics, see also Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000–1150)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*; Harvey Hames, "Reason and Faith: Inter-religious Polemic and Christian Identity in the Thirteenth Century," in *Religious Apologetics – Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. Yossef Schwartz and Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 267–284; and Thomas Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

[36] See Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, esp. 332–337. Medieval scholars also used these tactics for confronting Judaism, and the same scholars often wrote polemics for both Judaism and Islam. Peter the Venerable and Ramon Martí are two examples. Riccoldo also wrote about the Jews in *Ad nationes orientales*.

title that highlighted this focal point. Riccoldo's predecessors had often emphasized Muhammad as the essential issue, making Riccoldo's choice a break from convention.[37]

Riccoldo divided *Contra legem* into a prologue and seventeen chapters. In the prologue, he situated Islam among the great trials of Christian history and then introduced himself and his goals for the text. The first two chapters overview the "principal errors" in the Qur'an and describe Riccoldo's method for disputing them in order to convert Muslims to Christianity. The following ten chapters each address a different reason why the Qur'an cannot be considered a divine text. Several argue for a lack of evidence to support the Qur'an's divinity, specifically a lack of scriptural witness or prophesy to testify to the coming of Muhammad and a lack of miracles to confirm his prophethood. Other chapters identify "ungodly" features of the text, such as that it contains lies and contradictions, is irrational, violent, and evil, and even that it is disorderly and has an unorthodox style. These chapters are structured as extended lists of examples to support each claim, often with quotations from the Qur'an for evidence. Chapters thirteen and fourteen describe Muhammad's history and the story of his night journey, while chapters fifteen and sixteen address remaining questions about the Qur'an, the Gospel, Muhammad, and Christ. These latter two chapters are the most apologetic, focusing on refuting Muslim claims against Christianity. Finally, chapter seventeen provides potential Muslim responses to the aforementioned arguments, along with suggested rejoinders.

In writing *Contra legem*, Riccoldo relied on a number of sources. He cited the Bible as a supreme authority over fifty times.[38] He also utilized the works of authoritative Church figures such as St Augustine, Paul the Deacon, St Jerome, St John Chrysostom, and St Denis, as well as

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[37] Ramon Martí, for example, wrote around the same time as Riccoldo and titled his polemic *De seta Machometi* (On the Sect of Muhammad).

[38] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 27–30.

classical poets and philosophers such as Horace and Aristotle.[39] Additionally, Riccoldo used

contemporary sources extensively. Thomas Burman has demonstrated Riccoldo's heavy reliance

on the anonymous *Liber denudationis*.[40] Jean-Marie Mérigoux suggested that Riccoldo also

relied on polemical treatises by Peter the Venerable, a twelfth-century abbot, as well as the work

of his fellow Dominicans, Thomas Aquinas and Ramon Martí.[41] Riccoldo paraphrased many of

these authors' arguments without explicit reference, as was common practice in the thirteenth

century.

Finally, Riccoldo also treated the Qur'an as a source as well as the subject of his

disputation. Prior to the end of the thirteenth century, western Christian polemicists had begun to

expand their authoritative sources to include the Qur'an. While these scholars could not accept

the divine inspiration of the Qur'an, traditionally a requisite for authoritative sources, they

nevertheless acknowledged its authenticity as a religious text – however flawed – containing a

measure of truth. Under these terms, some of Riccoldo's predecessors began to quote passages of

the Qur'an that corroborated Christian beliefs. Riccoldo engaged in these practices by presenting

the Qur'an as a legitimate source for upholding Christian tenets. However, he also expanded his

usage of the Qur'an to prove that it was not a divinely-inspired text. Other polemicists had used

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[39] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 27–30. Traditionally, in medieval Christian writing, a text that had authority had two defining qualities: "intrinsic worth and authenticity. To have intrinsic worth meant that what one wrote did not contradict Christian doctrine; to have authenticity linked an *auctor* with a true and ancient source" (Ryan Szpiech, "Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Ramon Martini, O.P.," in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Fresco and Charles Wright (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 171). For Christian intellectuals, these authorities traditionally comprised a well-established canon of Christian literature. Over time, this corpus expanded to include secular texts such as works of philosophy and eventually works such as the Qur'an. This change "initiated a shift to argument that was based…on reason and authoritative textual proof" rather than intrinsic worth (Szpiech, "Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration," 171).
[40] *Liber denudationis* is preserved in a single manuscript from the sixteenth century at the BNP. It is presented as testimony from a former Muslim convert. It was originally written in the eleventh or twelfth century in Spain and it is the medieval source upon which Riccoldo was most dependent, quoting it some fifty times. See Thomas Burman, "Two Dominicans, A Lost Manuscript, and Medieval Christian Thought on Islam," in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Ryan Szpiech (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 79–84. See also Burman, *Religious Polemic*, Appendix, 387–8.
[41] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 31–33.

passages from the Qur'an that negatively proved its human origin, for example in its condonement of lascivious behaviors. Riccoldo added more positive proofs that relied on the Qur'an's authority. For instance, he noted that the Qur'an claimed that divine texts could not be irrational, and therefore, by its own standards, it could not be divine. By employing the Muslims' own sacred text as a tool for disputing its sanctity, Riccoldo claimed that, "Goliath may be killed with his own sword."[42] In this way, Muslims would be forced to accept his conclusions. Burman has shown that Riccoldo relied both on the translated Qur'an available to him and on his translations of an Arabic copy of the Qur'an to write *Contra legem*.[43] Riccoldo frequently cited Surah titles in transliteration, and he both paraphrased and directly quoted a great number of passages, so that it became his most cited source.

Riccoldo intended for fellow Dominican missionaries to read *Contra legem*. In his prologue, he wrote, "Now, moreover, it is my intention, confident in the supreme truth, to refute the principal obscenities of this perfidious law, and to give other brothers the opportunity, by which method they can recall the followers of such perfidy to God more easily."[44] Thus, he wrote the treatise for other Christians to read and to use in their own efforts to convert Muslims. But because of this ultimate purpose, Riccoldo also constructed many of his arguments in *Contra legem* for the benefit of a hypothetical Muslim audience.[45] In other words, Riccoldo meant for

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[42] *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, in Mérigoux, ed. "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orient à la fin du XIII siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum' de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 60–114, 70. "…ut Golias proprio gladio iuguletur." When not otherwise cited, all quotations from *Contra legem* will be taken from this edition of the text.

[43] Thomas Burman, "How an Italian Friar Read His Arabic Qur'an," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 125 (2007): 93–109.

[44] *Contra legem*, 63. "Nunc autem est mea intentio de summa ueritate confisus, confutare principales obscenitates tam perfide legis, et dare occasionem aliis fratibus, per quem modum possunt facilius reuocare ad Deum sectatores tante perfidie."

[45] Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1960, repr. 1993), 71, 87, 143. Burman similarly noted that *Contra legem* seemed largely unaffected by whatever experiences Riccoldo had in the East. Instead, Riccoldo stuck to the traditional methods of citing authorities (Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 688–89). Mérigoux, by contrast, emphatically noted that Riccoldo's experiences had a strong impact on his arguments in *Contra legem* (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 27).

his arguments eventually to reach Muslims, although through an intermediary. Norman Daniel, echoed by George-Tvrtković, has argued that if Riccoldo (or his readers) had ever presented his arguments to Muslims in person, he would have encountered ridicule and criticism. This rejection would, they argue, have been enough for Riccoldo to refrain from including these arguments in *Contra legem*. Daniel concluded that the polemic could not be meant for Muslims. Yet Daniel assessed Riccoldo's argumentation from an ahistorical, modern perspective that does not adequately consider Riccoldo's belief in rational argument and reliance on authoritative texts. Riccoldo deployed the Qur'an explicitly as a source of proof to which Muslims, in particular, must and would attend. Thus, I argue that Muslims can be considered another critical audience when assessing the text and Riccoldo's argumentation.

In reality, *Contra legem*'s audience remained mostly, if not entirely, Christian. Yet the text spread on a scale far larger than what Riccoldo appears to have intended. In the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, Christian readers transmitted *Contra legem* more frequently than any other polemic on Islam.[46] In addition to the original Florence manuscript, thirty known copies of the work in Latin are extant throughout Europe in archives from Krakow to Seville. These manuscripts are dated from the last quarter of the fourteenth century to the first quarter of the sixteenth. In the mid-fourteenth century, a Greek convert to Latin Christianity translated the polemic for a Byzantine audience. Fourteen extant manuscripts preserve this Greek translation. An Old Russian translation is also extant in three manuscripts, although it is unclear whether the translation was made from the Latin original or the Greek translation.

Beginning at the turn of the sixteenth century, the text also found its way into print in a variety of languages. A Latin edition and a Spanish translation were both printed in Spain within

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[46] For more information and citations of all of the following manuscripts and editions mentioned herein, please see the appendices.

the first two years of the new century. An Italian translation was published two decades later.

Additionally, an Italian scholar who admired the Greek translation published a Latin translation

of that work, and the new Latin edition found great popularity. In addition to many reprints, this

text was also printed in a side-by-side edition with the Greek translation in the mid-sixteenth

century. At the same time, Martin Luther used the new Latin work as the basis for a German

translation. Reprints of several of these editions continued to be published throughout the

sixteenth and into the seventeenth century.

      Much of this transmission occurred in circumstances different from those in which

Riccoldo had written *Contra legem*. At the turn of the fourteenth century, Muslim powers had

resoundingly defeated Latin Christian ones both geopolitically – evicting the Crusader states

from the Holy Land – and religiously – by winning over the Mongols. Yet they also remained

fractured in smaller powers throughout western Asia. Over the course of the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire grew from being one of these small powers into an

empire that was expanding rapidly through northwest Asia and southeastern Europe.[47] In 1453,

the Ottoman army took Constantinople, effectively ending the Byzantine Empire and leaving

European Christians without any buffer against the militant, expansionist Islamic state. Fear of

further Ottoman expansion and discussions of a new crusade to free Constantinople dominated

European concerns about Islam as a result.[48] Thus, when Europeans studied Islam or sought to

gain information about Muslims during this period, they most often focused on the Ottomans.

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[47] On the rise of the Ottomans from a European viewpoint, see Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Enemy at the Gate: Habsburgs, Ottomans and the Battle for Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Paul Coles, *The Ottoman Impact on Europe; with 109 Illustrations, 16 in Colour* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968).

[48] See Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580: From Lyons to Alcazar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 81–83; Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, Vol. 2: The Fifteenth Century (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1978), chapter 4: "The Siege and Fall of Constantinople (1453)," 108–137; Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453–1517)* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967), chapter 5: "Chivalry in Action;" George Arabatzis, "Sailing away from

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The enthusiastic reception of Riccoldo's polemic against the Qur'an from c.1300 to c.1550 is the subject of this dissertation. Scholars of medieval religious polemics and Christian understanding of Islam have attested to the unique position that Riccoldo and *Contra legem* hold.[49] No other medieval anti-Islamic treatise was copied so frequently, published so often, or translated into so many languages.[50] Few other works can usefully compare in terms of quantifying the reception. *Contra legem* played a uniquely critical role in shaping Christian understanding of Islam during the late medieval and early modern periods.

In this dissertation, I focus primarily on the Latin manuscript tradition by considering how western Europeans read and utilized *Contra legem* in the "long" fifteenth century of its manuscript transmission, c.1375–1525. I have examined all but two of the thirty-one manuscript copies, which are held in twenty-six archives and one private collection across Europe. Mérigoux, while preparing a critical edition of *Contra legem*, identified twenty-eight of these copies in 1986, and Emilio Panella found an additional copy in 1989. Through my research, I ascertained the existence of two additional copies. By obtaining digital versions of all these codices, I have been able to make comparisons across the corpus and between the thirty individual copies and the "original" Florence manuscript. These comparisons demonstrate that the most pervasive commonality among the copies is difference. Each copy is unique and there

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Byzantium: Renaissance Crusade Literature and Peace Plans," in *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature, 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011); and James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusades: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111–207.

[49] For example: "*Contra legem Saracenorum* was probably the most influential Latin treatise against Islam in the later Middle Ages" (Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 689); "Riccoldo's work became one of the most influential in shaping Western attitude to Islam, and it was widely circulated in the whole of Western Europe" (Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini"); "Riccoldo's work is to become one of the most widely read anti-Islamic tracts from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth" (Tolan, *Saracens*, 254).

[50] For substantiations and discussion of this claim, see chapter 2.

are many differences in terms of structure, titles, marginalia, and companion works within the manuscripts. Nevertheless, critical points of similarity also exist within the corpus that, along with the differences, reveal the nature of *Contra legem*'s reception.

This study considers the manuscript corpus in two ways. First, I trace how the text is transmitted from one copy to another. Various questions guide this examination: What aspects of the text are preserved throughout the corpus and what changes are introduced? How much of the text is transmitted? How similar or different are the versions produced over time? These questions open a way toward understanding the logistics of how the text spread throughout Europe over time. Second, I address the contexts in which the text was transmitted during the long fifteenth century. Here again, I ask: Where were the manuscripts copied and when? What other texts accompany *Contra legem* in the manuscripts? What reading devices, including marginalia, exist, and how do they indicate the interests of the reader? These critical features – often missing from the printed editions – reveal the ways that Europeans utilized the text. Both these lines of inquiry make clearer how *Contra legem* represents European knowledge of Islam.[51] Thus, this dissertation uses the *Contra legem* manuscript corpus to reach conclusions about how and why information on Islam was transmitted in late medieval and early modern Europe.

My approach takes the manuscript tradition and the presentation of the text as the primary subjects for consideration. Therefore, my inquiry is less focused on Riccoldo's method of argumentation and his intentions for presenting certain information – aspects of the text that have received more scholarly attention – and more on those aspects of the text later readers highlighted, which arguments they found informative, and what uses they may have found for

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[51] Riccoldo's polemic, like many others during this period, contained both accurate information about and misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims. I characterize both as "knowledge" about Islam, which is not the same as facts or truths.

such information.[52] An author's influence on a reader and a reader's intentions are two highly

elusive subjects of inquiry in any time period. Yet these matters are somewhat more tangible

during the age of manuscripts. Late medieval and Renaissance readers made their thoughts

visible through the structuring, highlighting, and annotating of texts. Thus, the close study of a

manuscript copy of a work and the comparison across that work's corpus reveal critical aspects

of the transmission of knowledge. In the case of *Contra legem*, the text was transmitted and

appropriated in very different ways in a relatively short period. Riccoldo's intentions were not

necessarily those of his readers. By exploring how his information and argumentation were

received and redeployed over time, my study also casts some light on the nature of knowledge

production during this period and the persistence of polemical forms of knowledge over time.

Stepping back from this focused question, I also seek to set *Contra legem*'s reception in

context. In the fifteenth century, intellectuals' knowledge about Islam was not isolated from the

rest of society, nor was it considered as abstract or speculative. While church scholars and

humanists did comprise the majority of *Contra legem*'s readership, they read and transmitted the

text in specific socio-political circumstances that informed their understanding and use of the

text. In this dissertation, I have focused on the struggles of the institutional Latin Church as a site

for reception. During the 1400s, the Church – and the papacy in particular – faced challenges to

its authority that formed part of a long period of ecclesiastical change culminating in the

Protestant Reformation. For instance, conciliarists sought to replace papal rulership with the

supremacy of ecumenical councils. Meanwhile, the growth of centralized nation states in late

medieval Europe gave state rulers greater incentive to bypass papal authority. Thus, the pope

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[52] On Riccoldo's argumentation, see Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 22–23, 53–97, 143–155, 208–212, 260–266, 290–294; Tolan, *Saracens*, 233–281; and John Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 129–132.

increasingly had to compete with powerful rulers for leadership over activities, such as crusading, that the Church historically directed. Amidst these internal developments in Europe, the rise of the Ottoman Empire could appear as not only another threat, but also a potential solution. An external threat bolstered certain claims to authority inside a threatened community, in this case Latin Christendom. By claiming jurisdiction over the problem of the Ottomans, through knowledge about Islam and tactics to combat it, the papacy could attempt to reclaim its increasingly tenuous authority. Thus, this dissertation considers the relationship between knowledge and power within the context of European views of Islam.

In order to present the Ottoman Empire as a religious threat, papal supporters – as well as others seeking paths to authority – employed *Contra legem* as a stand-in for knowledge on the Ottomans. By characterizing the Ottomans foremost as Muslims and religious "others," these scholars could position the Church as the best candidate to face the threat of their growing power in southwestern Europe and the central Mediterranean. Thus, classifying the Ottomans as a Muslim enemy was useful. A much more complex view of the Ottomans certainly existed in Renaissance Europe. Trade, diplomacy, and a host of other relations between Europeans and Ottomans ensured that many Europeans thought of Ottomans as more than just a common religious enemy.[53] Nevertheless, I would argue that a distinction should be made between European scholars' intellectual relationship to Islam and the political and social relations of

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[53] For an overview of diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between the Ottomans and various European powers, see Herman G.B. Teule, "Introduction: Constantinople and Granada. Christian-Muslim Interaction, 1350–1516," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 5: 1350–1500, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1–16. For further studies, see Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchandes of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge, 2004); Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, *Hungarian-Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent* (Budapest: Loránd Eötvös University, Dept. of Turkish Studies: Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1994); Paula S. Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526–1850* (London: Reaktion, 2008); S. A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey 1578–1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); and Dorothy Margaret Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350–1700* (Liverpool: University Press, 1954).

European polities with Islamic states.[54] Often, intellectual evaluations, especially those forged in

the Church, appear to have operated according to binaries more often than such binaries served

in practical relations.[55] This binary approach allowed later scholars to turn to *Contra legem* for

information on the Ottomans as Muslims first and foremost.

Accordingly, this study often discusses the Ottoman Empire as the ideological equivalent

of "Islam" in the minds of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century scholars who read and utilized

Contra legem. I agree, here, with Nabil Matar's assessment of the impact of a sixteenth-century

publications on Islam that, not incidentally, included *Contra legem*. In 1543, the Protestant editor

Theodore Bibliander, who will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5 and the Afterword,

published a two-volume edition that contained a Latin translation of the Qur'an and a series of

anti-Qur'an refutations, including Riccoldo's polemic. Matar noted that "the second section in

the refutations was the 'Historia de Saracenorum sive Turcarum origine, moribus, neqitia,

religione, rebus gestis', the lasting impact of which was the establishment of interchangeability

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[54] Norman Housley has argued that the Crusades had a critical impact on western Christian attitudes toward Islam. He asserted that medieval canon lawyers, popes, preachers, and crusaders, while they had different perspectives, all "subscribed to a set of core beliefs about Islam that comprised three main tenets: a military perspective that centered on the threat posed by able and ambitious Islamic rulers, a religious characterization of the rival faith and its exponents, and an attempt to situate Islam in terms of Christian eschatology" (Norman Housley, "The Crusades and Islam," *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007): 189–208, 199). These tenets helped to create an *imago inimici* that was prevalent and persistent in medieval Europe – far more so than knowledge gained through interactions by traders or crusaders. Rickie Lette has explored examples of scholars, including Riccoldo da Montecroce, whose works do not fit neatly with these tenets in an effort to argue that a more complex image of Islam existed in this period (Rickie Lette, "The Influence of Inter-Cultural Engagement on the Perceptions of Mendicant Friars in the Thirteenth Century Concerning Islam and Muslims," *Medieval Encounters* 23 (2017): 479–507). While I agree that understandings and characterizations of Muslims and of Islamic powers were highly varied and complex, I would argue that Housley's argument about the bases for western Christians' core beliefs about Islam is critical to understanding why Christian writers often generalized their characterizations of all Muslims/Islamic powers and conflated one with another.
[55] David Blanks seems, to me, to suggest a similar sort of broad argument. While pushing for a better understanding and analysis of the wide variety of views on Islam that existed in medieval Europe, Blanks also notes that premodern perceptions did not always become more accurate as more information was gained. He argues that "Stereotypes are cognitive devices for coming to terms with the alien" (David R. Blanks, "Western Views of Islam in the Pre-Modern Period," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perceptions of Other*, ed. David Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 39). Thus, simplistic models for understanding Islam had a use within European society even where more complex knowledge existed.

between the terms 'Turk' and the 'religio' of Islam. Islam took the form of an Ottoman adversary moving from the European battlefields to an apocalyptic confrontation in the Christian soul."[56] I would argue that the association between Ottoman and Islam that Matar describes as being established by Bibliander was, in fact, cemented by the Protestant publisher but begun earlier, in the fifteenth century. Thus, while the more nuanced political, economic, and cultural relations between Europeans and Ottomans during this period are a critical part of this history, the ideological wedge that scholars employed ought not to be underemphasized. In this dissertation, I explore the use of this binary in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, as well as its consequent persistence from the medieval period into the modern one.

This dissertation is organized into two sections to first survey the transmission history of the text and then focus on specific sites of reception. The first chapter explains why Europeans had an interest in anti-Islamic polemic during this period by tracking the contexts of *Contra legem*'s circulation in manuscript, print, and translation. In this chapter, I chart the manuscript copies across time and space to establish a connection in Europe between increased awareness of the Ottoman Empire's potential threat, increased challenges within the Church, and instances of the polemic's transmission. Notably, there is not a strong correlation between geographic proximity to the Ottoman frontier in southeastern Europe and interest in anti-Islamic polemic. This disconnect suggests that some Europeans continued to hold a stake in the ideological boundaries of Christendom in addition to their national bounds that might be out of physical danger. The internal struggles within the Church over authority help to explain why this interest in external threats to Christianity was prevalent across such a wide geographic expanse. I end the

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[56] Nabil Matar, "The Qur'an in English Writings, 1543–1697," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Volume 6: Western Europe (1500–1600), ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 11–24, 12.

chapter by highlighting several such individual purposes with close studies of four sites of reception: translation, manuscript copying, publication, and readership.

The second chapter examines why *Contra legem*, in particular, became the source to which these European readers turned. *Contra legem* was unique among medieval polemics in its wide readership, and its unusual success demands an explanation. To understand why so many later readers found the text useful, I survey the manuscript corpus and analyze technical features like copyists' changes from the original and readers' marginal notations to discover what aspects of the text readers highlighted most often. These emphases point to the reader's implicit valuation of the text. A comparison across the corpus demonstrates that many readers attributed a high level of authority and accuracy to *Contra legem*'s arguments due to Riccoldo's direct knowledge and experience of Islam and Muslims.[57] In the preface, Riccoldo had established his credentials as a missionary in western Asia and a student of Arabic. His readers considered that this knowledge provided Riccoldo with an authoritative understanding of Islam. However, respect for Riccoldo's knowledge did not always translate to agreement with his priorities. While Riccoldo chose to polemicize the Qur'an in particular, many readers altered the text to emphasize the role of Muhammad instead. This common change represents the liberties that readers took in their reception of *Contra legem* both in terms of the text itself and its intentions.

In the second section of this study, I identify and explore three contexts in which *Contra legem* most commonly found use in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: internal church conflict and reform, crusading against the rising Ottoman Empire, and humanist studies. The third chapter addresses why so many copies of *Contra legem* are found in the context of the fifteenth-

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[57] More than half the manuscript copies highlight Riccoldo's knowledge and experience directly. Moreover, these manuscripts cannot be easily confined to a single context. They spanned the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, originated across a wide span of regions, and were read by a variety of peoples, from crusaders to church scholars to monks to humanists.

century church reform movement. From the late fourteenth through the fifteenth centuries, many Europeans called for reforms within the Church. The most severe criticisms were reserved for the papacy, which many increasingly regarded as corrupt. One group, the conciliarists, sought to replace the sovereign power of the pope with general councils of clergymen. *Contra legem* was circulated and copied frequently during ecumenical councils on this topic. These gatherings naturally provided scholars with a forum for sharing texts and exchanging knowledge. Yet, as I argue in this chapter, polemical works against Islam also had specific relevance in these contexts. Those seeking to control the institution of the Church highlighted the portions of *Contra legem* that portrayed Islam as a heresy, that is, as a distorted form of Christianity that fell under the purview of the Church. Clergymen could claim jurisdiction over this "heresy" for the Curia, thereby reasserting and growing papal authority.

In the fourth chapter, I discuss a different, though related fifteenth-century movement: crusading against the Ottomans. Although Byzantine envoys had informed Europeans of the Ottoman Empire's growing strength since the 1300s, only small and insignificant crusading campaigns were undertaken through the first half of the fifteenth century. However, awareness and fear rose sharply after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Kings, noblemen, and popes made plans for great crusading enterprises, and an army did find its way to Hungary to help break the Siege of Belgrade and halt the Ottoman advance. During this tumultuous period, *Contra legem* saw a spike in circulation as demand for information about Islam grew. Occasionally, readers appropriated *Contra legem* to encourage dialogue and debate with Muslims. Yet the majority of readers at this time emphasized those passages of *Contra legem* that they could use to depict Islam as a violent religion that could only be defeated through violence. In this context, the polemic found use as justification and fodder for encouraging crusading against the Ottomans.

Moreover, by characterizing Ottoman violence as a result of their Muslim identity, the papacy could further reassert authority over the crusading movement and reclaim political power.

The fifth chapter considers the reception of *Contra legem* within the humanist movement. While humanist studies during this period encompassed many different topics, humanists often emphasized morality, history, rhetoric, and classical scholarship. Previous studies have highlighted the humanist break with medieval knowledge, including on the subject of Islam. This historiography suggests that humanist interest in "secular" approaches to Islam created different portrayals of Muslims. For instance, humanists used terms such as barbaric that referenced Muslims' degree of civilization rather than their religion. In this chapter, I seek to expand this one-dimensioned characterization of humanist studies on the Ottomans. Many humanists worked for or were a part of the institutional Church, and they wrote crusade literature and other texts designed to paint the Ottomans in religious terms to further the goals of the Church as leader of this movement. Thus, many humanists engaged with *Contra legem* to understand the Ottomans through the lens of Islam. Humanist readers were able to find expressions of those topics they valued – philosophy, history, and morality – within *Contra legem*. Moreover, they modified Riccoldo's Latin to fit classical standards and emphasized their philological interests. As a result, these humanist scholars perpetuated medieval polemical traditions for future audiences in the guise of humanist scholarship.

By way of conclusion, the Afterword considers the reception of *Contra legem* from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century, including in America. In early 2002, soon after the 9/11 attacks, a Lutheran press in Missouri published an English translation of *Contra legem*. These editors found Martin Luther's German translation of Riccoldo's work, and they commissioned a translation of the text into English explicitly as a way to challenge what they saw as the

"dangerous" "politically correct" language being used to discuss Islam and American Muslims. In this Afterword, I discuss some of the continuities in contemporary Western approaches to and understandings of Islam. This overview of Riccoldo's continuing relevance from the sixteenth century through the modern moment highlights the persistence of polemical modes of thought and the ways that knowledge can find new lives and serve new purposes in many, varied contexts.

Altogether, this dissertation uses the reception history of a surprisingly influential medieval tract about Islam to trace the ways that this text shaped Christian-Muslim relations across several centuries. These contexts reveal a connection between a growing awareness in Europe of Ottoman power and an increasing struggle over authority in the Church. Historians have tended to treat pre-Protestant Church reform and early European reactions to Ottoman imperialism separately. Moreover, recent scholarship has conceived of European responses to Ottoman growth largely in geopolitical terms, without religious connotations or motivations. However, many early modern Christians linked Europe's ability to respond with the precipitous state of the Church. These internal and external conflicts required Europeans to define both the bounds of Christendom and the role of the Church within those bounds. Religious polemics like Riccoldo's helped Christians perceive more clearly the stakes for this demarcation. Thus, the reception of *Contra legem* is one site where we are able to see these developments as related to one another. I argue that readers appropriated Riccoldo's treatise to characterize the Ottoman threat in religious terms, thus positioning the papacy as the ideal bulwark against the perceived danger of Islam. In this way, medieval views of Islam and the internal religious uncertainties that characterized Europe leading up to the Protestant Reformation impacted one another.

Chapter 1. The Circulation of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* Part 1: Receiving, Reading, and Reproducing a Medieval Polemic

In the mid-fifteenth century, the Archbishop of Dyrrachium died at his seat in a port town of modern-day Albania controlled by Venice.[1] He bequeathed his possessions to his brother, who lived in the nearby town of Drivasto.[2] Among these belongings was a manuscript containing Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, and its subsequent history was documented by the archbishop's nephew, Paolo Angelo. At the time, Drivasto bordered the Ottoman Empire. As the Ottomans expanded further north, the safety of the region's people – and their possessions – grew precarious. Ottoman forces raided the town of Drivasto in 1477 and took the *Contra legem* manuscript captive. The Archbishop's brother pursued his captured belongings to Constantinople and ransomed the manuscript at great cost.

Years later, that man's son recounted this story in the preface of a new manuscript copy of *Contra legem* that he made.[3] He dedicated the copy to Pope Adrian VI and sent it to him in 1523. In the dedication, Paolo entreated Pope Adrian to commission translations of the polemic into vernacular languages to print and disseminate. He was confident that results would follow: "I do not doubt that as soon as it has become known by common Christians, all of Christianity

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[1] Medieval Dyrrachium exists today as Durrës. The Archbishop's name was Paul Angelus (his nephew, who tells this story, had the same name). J.M. Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum' de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Dominicane: Fede e Controversia nel '300 e '500* 17 (1986): 49. All quotations of *Contra legem* come from this edition, unless otherwise noted.

[2] This is modern-day Drisht, about seventy miles north of Durrës and also in Albania.

[3] Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 3026, fols. 1r–4v.

will be encouraged to rise up against the perfidious sect of the Saracens" to combat the rising

strength of the Ottoman Empire.[4] Pope Adrian must have responded to Paolo, because the latter

then published a translation of *Contra legem* in Italian, "made with the permission of Pope

Adrian VI."[5]

Paolo Angelo's efforts to circulate *Contra legem* were not unique during the fourteenth

through sixteenth centuries. In addition to Riccoldo's original version, at least thirty other

manuscripts with the Latin text survive in archives across Europe.[6] An additional fourteen

preserve an early Greek translation, and three more contain a Russian translation. In the sixteenth

century, new print technology supplemented and eventually replaced manuscript copying.

During that century, the text was printed in five editions in five different languages, and many of

these editions received multiple reprints. The translations included Spanish, Greek, Latin, and

German, in addition to Paolo's Italian.[7] The number of manuscript copies, translations, and

editions gives a window onto a much more expansive view of circulation. Early modern

Europeans purchased, read, marked, copied, lent, translated, published, sent, and discussed the

text. All of this constitutes the text's reception, which far outstripped the reception of any other

medieval polemic on Islam.[8]

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[4] "Et non dubito quod quam primum uulgo christianitas innotuerit, tota ipsa christianitas animabinar [sic] insurgere contra Saracenorum perfidam sectam…" Florence, MS 3026, fol. 4r. While this copy has been preserved in Florence, I do not know where or whether the original copy described in the story survived.

[5] Paolo Angelo, *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad Saracenos cum libello contra Alcoranum* (Venice: Alessandro Bindoni, c.1520). His translation is appended to his own composition, a rhetorical "Letter to the Saracens."

[6] To put that number in perspective, compare it to a similar polemic written by Ramon Martí. Martí was a contemporary Dominican from the Iberian Peninsula. He wrote an anti-Islamic polemic in the mid-thirteenth century entitled *De seta Machometi* in which he drew on Arabic sources (or, at the least, Latin sources that quoted Arabic ones – see chapter 2) to refute Islamic principles. Yet his work survives in only three manuscripts, all dating to the fourteenth century (Thomas Burman, "Ramon Martí," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 381–390).

[7] I use the word translation for one of these Latin editions consciously because, as I will explain below, one of the editors published a Latin translation of the text from the Greek version, rather than publishing the original Latin text.

[8] For a more detailed discussion of the text's popularity and comparisons to similar medieval works, see chapter 2.

Thus, Riccoldo's refutation of the Qur'an – perhaps more than any other medieval text – influenced centuries of Christian thought on Islam. Why did *Contra legem* become so popular in early modern Europe? Scholars have characterized Riccoldo's text as an unoriginal repetition of the earlier medieval tradition of anti-Islamic polemic.[9] Yet *Contra legem*'s positive reception demonstrates that early modern readers found Riccoldo's work unusually useful. The following two chapters will address the long legacy of this text to discover the reasons for its popularity. Here, I explore the specific histories of *Contra legem*'s reception to find who received the text and in what circumstances. These stories illustrate why early modern Christians read and used a medieval polemic about the Qur'an. The following chapter will demonstrate why these readers chose *Contra legem* to fufill their needs.

Contra legem became most popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Europe was negotiating the role of the Church in western Christendom. The text's reception is linked to a broader defense of the Church's position in society. In the century leading to the Protestant Reformation, church reformers challenged the hierocratic structure of the Church and the power of the papacy. Respect for the papal seat was in decline, and proponents of the papacy sought a means of defending it. Critically, they often looked outward for a way to rebuild the authority of the papacy within Europe. During this period, the growing Ottoman Empire began to threaten the bounds of southeastern Latin Christendom. The perception of an Islamic threat deepened in 1453, when the Ottomans conquered Constantinople and ended a millennium of Christian rule by the Byzantine Empire. Throughout the period, many churchmen emphasized the Church's role as

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[9] On characterizing *Contra legem* as traditional, see Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh, 1960), 87, 92, 212; John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 250–52. Thomas Burman does note that one chapter of *Contra legem* contains "innovative" arguments but explains that the majority of his work is building on well-established traditions (Thomas Burman, "How an Italian Friar Read his Arabic Qur'an," *Dante Studies* no. 125 (2007): 104).

a protector against heretical groups such as Islam and the position of the pope as a leader in this work. These scholars relied on anti-Islamic polemics such as *Contra legem* to position the Ottomans in these terms, as a heretical, religious threat to Christian Europe. A closer study of the temporal and geographic patterns of *Contra legem*'s transmission, as well as individual stories of the text's reception, reveal that key moments in the reform movement and in the expansion of the Ottoman Empire fueled the polemic's circulation. Thus, the relationship between these internal and external circumstances created the context for *Contra legem*'s success.

Medieval polemics in early modern contexts

Medieval churchmen had quickly identified anti-Islamic polemics as a useful aid for responding to the perceived threat posed by Islamic nations' growing power. Traditionally, the apologetic genre defended a religion's claims, while disputations contested the claims of another religion. Medieval Europeans often combined the two aims into a single polemic.[10] As Muslims conquered areas inhabited by Christians, both in the Near East and in the Iberian Peninsula, Christian writers began to produce anti-Islamic polemics.[11] In Europe, however, anti-Islamic writing did not begin in earnest until the twelfth century, when the First Crusade led to increased contact with Muslims and resulting questions about Islam.[12] Their works informed the reader about Islam – how it was founded, what Muslims believed, and how they practiced –to

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[10] Polemical writing in the Middle Ages was common among the adherents of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam toward the others' religions. See Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 8; Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000–1150)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Benjamin Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Harvey Hames, "Reason and Faith: Inter-religious Polemic and Christian Identity in the Thirteenth Century," in *Religious Apologetics – Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. Yossed Schwartz and Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 267–284; Thomas E. Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994); Mónica Colominas Aparicio, *The Religious Polemics of the Muslims of Late Medieval Christian Iberia*, Thesis (University of Amsterdam, 2016).

[11] For an overview of Eastern Christian and Iberian Christian responses to Islam, see Tolan, *Saracens*, especially chapters 1–4.

[12] R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 27; Tolan, *Saracens*, 69. See also, Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 7; Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, 86–90.

demonstrate the ways that Islam disagreed with Christianity. This comparison allowed writers to reaffirm orthodox Christian theology while disputing Islamic belief. Writers sought two related objectives for their works: "If henceforth erring ones [Muslims] are not able to be converted… [the treatise might still] advise and provide for the weak-minded ones of the church [Christians], who are accustomed to be tempted to evil."[13] Ideally, polemics could bring Muslims into the fold of orthodox belief and, at the very least, could keep Christians from going astray.

These two goals tallied with a particular medieval vision of Christianity as a universal religion. Christian tradition taught that the religion was meant to cover the entire earth. In the late antique and early medieval periods, this destiny was easy to conceive because Christianity was spreading rapidly. However, the rise of Islam and its successes brought universality into doubt. How could the entire world become Christian when so much of it – including many former Christians – was becoming Muslim? Christian scholars in Europe found it necessary to confront the threat that Islamic success posed to the Christian ideal. These endeavors became more urgent in the thirteenth century, as western Christendom lost its crusade-conquered lands in the Near East to new Muslim powers.[14] During this crisis, polemics became a means of reaffirming the ideal destiny of Christianity in the face of a more discouraging reality. Whatever changes occurred on the political map, the polemic was an instrument for defining Christianity by contrast to the "other" and protecting the universal Christian ideal from the threat it presented.

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[13] Peter the Venerable, "Letter to Bernard of Clairvaux," in *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, ed. James Kritzeck (Princeton, NJ: The University of Princeton Press, 1964), 213–214. "Quod si hinc errantes conuerti non possunt, saltem infirmis ecclesiae qui scandalizari uel occulte moueri leuibus etiam ex causis solent, consulere et prouidere, doctus uel doctor si zelum habet iusticiae, non debet negligere."

[14] On Christian dreams of an ideal, fully-Christianized world, see Robert Burns, "Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West: The Thirteenth-Century Dream of Conversion," *The American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 1386–1434. Burns argues that these dreams faltered as the practicality of the situation became irrepressibly apparent, to resurface only after the beginning of western expansion in the sixteenth century. However, I would suggest that the "dream," continued to exert ideological power especially over churchmen in western Christendom in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Over time, the dream of a universal Christendom fell into even greater jeopardy.[15] When

Riccoldo wrote his polemic at the beginning of the fourteenth century, western Christian

expansion in the Near East was stalled. The following two centuries saw the rise of the Ottoman

Empire.[16] By the fifteenth century, the Ottoman military had expanded deeply into Christian

lands. In 1453, the Ottomans took the Christian capital Constantinople and ended 1000 years of

Byzantine rule. This outcome was a devastating blow to both the physical bounds and the

intellectual idea of Christendom, and the next century saw even more territorial losses in eastern

Europe. The threat that Islam posed to a triumphal Christianity likely sat more uncomfortably in

the minds of Europeans as the Ottomans drew closer.

Meanwhile, the Church's instability within Europe grew. In the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries, the papacy had established and institutionalized its power.[17] To do so, the papacy

sought to define its sovereignty by establishing legal as well as moral jurisdiction over all of

Christendom.[18] As such, the parameters of Christendom became very important to the power of

the Church. However, as an institution, the papacy began to weaken in the fourteenth century.

First, the seat of the papacy moved from Rome to Avignon, and later, three different candidates

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[15] Of course, by the end of the fifteenth century, an entire "New World" was suddenly available for the expansion of Christendom, and so in many ways the dream shifted from east to west at this time rather than dying away, but these developments cannot be explored in this study.

[16] There are many works on the rise of the Ottoman Empire. For the purposes of this study, see for reference several that address the relationship between the Ottomans and Europe during the early modern period: Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Enemy at the Gate: Habsburgs, Ottomans and the Battle for Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Paul Coles, *The Ottoman Impact on Europe; with 109 Illustrations, 16 in Colour* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968); C. Max Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism during the Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1972).

[17] For reference, see Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power* (London: Methuen, 1955); Richard Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, Eng: Penguin Books, 1970); Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Keith Sisson, *Papal Hierocratic Theory in the High Middle Ages: From Roman Primacy to Universal Papal Monarchy* (Verlag, 2009).

[18] For reference, see Southern, *Western Society and the Church*; R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950–1250*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

asserted claims to the papal throne. Both events created deep political divides.[19] The instability

caused the institution of the papacy to lose power and respect. Finally, an ecumenical council

forced through the acceptance of a single pope in Rome in 1418.[20] While the council restored

order, it further diminished the power of the papacy by asserting its own rival claim to

sovereignty. Those called "conciliarists" met at the Council of Basel and called for the end of

papal supremacy in the Church.[21] They added their voices to many other ongoing calls for

reform. As a result, the institutional Church felt the pressing need to reestablish its sovereignty.

One option was to reaffirm and reestablish the parameters of Christendom and to protect and

even extend those bounds against threats such as Islam was thought to present.

In medieval Europe, polemic had often served as a tool for Christian expansion through

missionizing and crusading.[22] Yet in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, western Christians

had lost their land holdings in the Near East. As a result, missionaries could no longer rely on

support and safety in those regions. Moreover, new crusading efforts were less common than

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[19] For reference, see Norman Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305–1378* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *Avignon and its Papacy, 1309–1417: Popes, Institutions, and Society* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); John Holland Smith, *The Great Schism* (New York: Weybright and Tally, 1970); Thomas Izbicki and Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *A Companion to the Great Papal Schism (1378–1417)* (Boston: Brill, 2010).

[20] For reference, see Frank Welsh, *The Battle for Christendom: The Council of Constance, 1415, and The Struggle to Unite against Islam* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2008); Thomas Morrissey, *Conciliarism and Church Law in the Fifteenth Century: Studies on Franciscus Zabarella and the Council of Constance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Phillip Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance, 1414–1418* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).

[21] For reference, see Gerald Christianson, Christopher Bellitto, and Thomas Izbicki, eds. *The Church, the Councils, and Reform: The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008); Alexander Russell, *Conciliarism and Heresy in Fifteenth-Century England: Collective Authority in the Age of the General Councils* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); J. Burns, T. Izbicki, et al, eds. *Conciliarism and Papalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[22] See, for example, Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*. Missionary work to convert religious others was particularly popular in the thirteenth century, with the rise of the mendicant orders. These missionaries often sought to convert entire groups at a time or else to convert Islamic rulers, to expand Christendom's bounds peacefully but efficiently. Crusading was a different means, because it sought to expand Christendom's physical boundaries not primarily through conversion but through political leadership. Conversion, in this case, was a secondary or tertiary goal. More important was the expansion of Christian-ruled lands.

they had once been and successful ones even rarer.[23] While Christians had some successes against the Ottomans, they held their frontiers rather than expanding them. The ideological importance of polemic therefore offered fourteenth and fifteenth century Europeans a safer and more operable means of response to the perceived threat of the Ottomans. These texts reaffirmed the rightful power of Christianity and the Church by delegitimizing its rival. Polemics also gave ideological meaning to those other responses to Islam that continued.

Yet why did early modern Christians rely so heavily on medieval texts? Notions of textual authority undoubtedly played a role. Medieval polemics such as *Contra legem* held an inherent authority as texts passed down over time from learned churchmen. Their authors also held authenticity. During the medieval period, polemical scholars had several ways of gaining direct knowledge about Islam. For example, Petrus Alfonsi was a Spanish-Christian convert from Judaism whose information on Islam came from his proximity to Iberio-Muslim populations.[24] Peter the Venerable, a French abbot of Cluny, commissioned translations of the Qur'an and other texts on Islam from Arabic into Latin while in Spain, and he wrote his disputation based on his reading of these texts.[25] There is also evidence that Dominicans in the Iberian Peninsula established *studia* with the specific aim of teaching languages such as Arabic to the brethren.[26]

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[23] See chapter 4 for more details on this change. Crusading did continue to have an appeal for many. Ironically – for Christians had criticized Islam for centuries as a religion that could only spread through violence – many were convinced that more peaceable methods of conversion were impractical or even impossible.

[24] Petrus Alfonsi, *Dialogus contra Iudaeos (Dialogue Against the Jews)*, trans. Irven M. Resnick (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006); John Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993). For further reference, see John Tolan, "Petrus Alfonsi," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 356–362.

[25] James Kritzeck's *Peter the Venerable and Islam* includes editions of Peter the Venerable's works on Islam as well as several other related texts. These works have recently been translated: Peter the Venerable, *Writings against the Saracens by Peter the Venerable*, trans. Irven Resnick (Washthington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016). For further reference, see Dominque Iogna-Prat and John Tolan, "Peter the Venerable," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 3, 604–610.

[26] On the Dominican language *studia*, see Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 95–96, 104–115. Vose argues that evidence suggests the language *studia* were "temporary and relatively informal programs for the edification of a small intellectual elite" (Vose, 104; on Martí, see pp. 112–114).

Ramon Martí, for instance, was rumored to have attended one such *studia* and even to have visited North Africa as a missionary.[27] These resources may have helped him to write his polemic against Islam.[28] Thus, a context of intimacy between Christians and Muslims, especially in medieval Iberia, created opportunities for knowledge production about other religions.

During the early modern period, however, Europeans did not always have the same tools to develop the necessary knowledge. Iberia grew less diverse as Christian conquerors took over and, eventually, forced conversion to Christianity. Translation efforts in that region were likewise less common as fewer people spoke Arabic. The few Dominican language schools in existence had disappeared, and missionary travel had diminished in frequency. Medieval polemics, then, provided authoritative arguments against Islam based on more accurate knowledge developed at the time. More than any other medieval work, early modern Christians turned to Riccoldo's *Contra legem* to fulfill their needs. Riccoldo had lived among Muslims, and he learned Arabic directly. He also had the benefit of the texts that previous scholars had made

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[27] There is an ongoing debate regarding the extent of Ramon Martí's knowledge of Arabic and when and how he may have acquired it. Recently, Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld has contested the long-held argument that Martí had a sound knowledge of Arabic and was able to read and translate the Qur'an himself when he wrote *De seta*. He argues, instead, that Martí took much of his material for *De seta* from an Arabic source written by a Coptic scholar entitled *Al-Saif al-Murhaf fī al-Radd alâ al-Mushaf*. See Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld, *An Arabic Source of Ramon Martí: Al-Saif al-Murhaf fī al-Radd alâ al-Mushaf ("The Whetted Sword in Refutation of the Koran"). Introductory Study with Text and Translation of its Surviving Fragments* (Leiden: Aurora, 2018). This argument would critically challenge previous work on Martí as a distinguished linguist. It would also further set Riccoldo apart as a European scholar with knowledge of Arabic in this period. On Martí's knowledge of Arabic, see Ryan Szpiech, "Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Raymond Martini, O.P.," in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Charles D. Wright and Karen Fresco (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012); Thomas Burman, "Two Dominicans, a Lost Manuscript, and Medieval Christian Thought on Islam," in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Ryan Szpiech (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 71–86; Burman, "Inspicientes – et non inspicientes – eius legem: Thirteenth-Century Dominicans, the Qur'an, and Islam," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 20 (2018): 33–50. For a much fuller bibliography on Martí, see Burman, "Ramon Martí," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 381–390.

[28] Ramon Martí, "De seta Machometi o De origine, progressu, et fine Machometi et quadruplici reprobatione prophetiae eius," trans. Josep Hernando Delgado, *Acta historica et archaeologica medievalia* 4 (1983): 9–51. See also, Szpiech, "Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration." It is noteworthy that all three of these examples – Peter the Venerable, Petrus Alfonsi, and Ramon Martí – wrote polemics on Judaism as well as Islam, and in the latter two cases Judaism was more central to their work than Islam.

available. His arguments, based on this culmination of knowledge and experience, found a ready audience in the centuries to follow.

Mapping *Contra legem*'s circulation

When the archbishop of Dyrrachium bequeathed his copy of *Contra legem* to his brother, when that brother followed the manuscript to Constantinople to purchase it back, and when the nephew later sent a reproduction to the Pope and then printed a translated edition, they all participated in the circulation of the text. Their story offers a snapshot of the polemic's reception history and a substantial example of the actors, places, times, and motives involved. Before examining other such stories, I first will build a map – both chronological and geographical – of the text's reception. This map will be a reference for contextualizing the individual examples of *Contra legem*'s dissemination. The temporal patterns establish a correlation between Christendom's growing perceptions of threat from the Ottoman Empire and the polemic's transmission. The geographic patterns indicate that these perceptions spread well beyond southern Europe, where the Ottomans were closest, to encompass all of western Europe.

The timeline for *Contra legem*'s transmission ranges from its creation at the beginning of the fourteenth century through the eighteenth century. This study primarily concerns the Latin manuscript tradition, and this corpus comprises thirty-one known, extant copies. Yet, in the 1360s, a Greek translation was also made.[29] This translation is extant in fourteen manuscripts, copied regularly in each century from the fourteenth through the eighteenth. Additionally, a Russian translation is extant in three known manuscripts. It is unclear whether this translation derived from the Latin or the Greek version.[30] The Latin manuscripts that form the major

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[29] The origin of this translation is discussed below.
[30] Paul Bushkovitch, "Orthodoxy and Islam in Russia, 988–1725," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte: Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland: Konzepte und Praktiken und Grenzen* 76 (2010): 117–144, 130–132.

component of this study date between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Dating the

manuscript corpus is difficult because manuscripts were living and changing texts. Copyists

often added to or altered manuscripts for decades or even centuries after their initial creation.

Moreover, readers across generations physically interacted with the texts by marking them or

including commentary in the margins. A full reception history ideally includes all interactions

with the text over time; but identifying the precise moments when such interactions occurred is

challenging. Where no information exists in the manuscript, I have relied on the dating provided

by the archives or available catalogs.

After the creation of the original manuscript, five known copies were made in the

fourteenth century, twenty-two in the fifteenth century, and three in the sixteenth century. More

exact dating is available for fourteen of the fifteenth-century manuscripts and shows that seven

copies preceded the fall of Constantinople in 1453 (1423–1424; 1433; 1437; 1437–1439; 1439,

1439–1450, 1440–1454). These dates coincide with the renewed expansion of the Ottoman

empire after several decades of stagnation.[31] The Ottomans laid siege to Constantinople for the

first time in 1422. They captured Thessalonica, the second largest city in the Byzantine Empire,

in 1430 before moving as far north as Transylvania in 1438.[32] These advances appear to have

sparked increased awareness of Ottoman power among Europeans, because the dates for the

manuscript transmission show a strong correlation with this growing consciousness. Several of

these dates also coincide with the period of conciliarism in Europe, notably with the Council of

Basel and the Council of Florence, which ran from 1433–1439. The other seven manuscripts

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[31] For a brief overview of this period of Ottoman history, see Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580: From Lyons to Alcazar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 81–83.
[32] See Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 83.

originated after 1453 (1453–1459; 1455; 1458; 1463; 1463–1484; 1483; 1486).[33] This later

period saw a strong European response to the fall of Constantinople and many renewed calls for

crusading efforts. In 1454–1455, several councils were held in the Holy Roman Empire to plan a

new crusade, and in 1456, Christian forces successfully defended Belgrade from the Ottoman

army. Although they were quickly discouraged, Pope Pius II called for a new council at Mantua

in 1459 and earnestly made plans for a crusade until his death in 1464. Then, in 1480, the

Ottoman army attacked and captured the Italian city of Otranto, and fears of Ottoman expansion

into Europe redoubled. While Christian armies retook the city, plans for further crusading

continued into the following century.[34] These developments, which align with the production of

Contra legem manuscripts, were critical to increasing interest in that text during the fifteenth

century.

The number of new manuscript copies declined steeply in the sixteenth century only

because new printed versions, which could circulate more quickly and easily, were available by

the start of the century. In 1500, Antonio de la Peña edited the original Latin text and titled it

Improbatio Alcorani (Condemnation of the Qur'an). Two years later, Pierre Hagenbach, a

typographer, published an anonymous Spanish translation of the work, similarly titled

Reprobacion del Alcoran.[35] Only a few years later, an Italian, Barthelemy Picenus de

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[33] Dating can be very difficult, especially because the dates found in one part of the manuscript, and therefore often used in basic archival catalogs, do not guarantee to coordinate with *Contra legem*'s copying. Many manuscripts were written piece by piece or else the various works were put together after their composition. For instance, one of the manuscripts containing *Contra legem* has been dated to the fourteenth century by the archive, although it also contains an epigram for a man who lived and died at the beginning of the sixteenth century (Belluno, Biblioteca Lolliana, MS 30). See catalog entry, G. Mazzatinti, *Inventari dei manoscritte delle biblioteche d'Italia*, Vol. 2 (Forli: Casa Editrice Luigi Bordandini, 1892), 123.

[34] For details on these events, see Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 99–115.

[35] Mérigoux has noted that it is unclear whether the edition was translated from the Latin edition that had just been published in 1500 or else from the manuscript copy of the text that is in Seville. Mérigoux singled out this manuscript as a candidate not only for geographic reasons but because both the manuscript and the Spanish translation only contain the first thirteen chapters of the text. (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 46).

Montearduo, translated the fourteenth-century Greek version into Latin. He titled the work

Confutatio legis late Sarrhacenis a maledicto Mahometo (A broad refutation of the law of the

Saracens by the evil Muhammad) and published it in 1506.[36] This edition – rather than de la

Peña's original Latin version – was republished in 1509, 1511, 1514, and 1607. This adaptation

found further circulation when the theologian Theodore Bibliander published it alongside the

Greek translation in 1543; this edition was republished in 1550.[37] Moreover, Martin Luther

found this version and translated it anew in German. He published his text in 1542, and it was re-

issued in 1582, 1664, and 1684.[38] Finally, Paolo Angelo translated his manuscript copy into

Italian in the 1520s and printed it with his own small treatise, *Epistola ad Saracenos* (Letter to

the Saracens). The continued relevance of *Contra legem* in the sixteenth century was mirrored by

the ongoing conflicts between the Ottomans and western European powers such as the newly

expanding Hapsburg Empire. The siege of Vienna in 1529, the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, and

the defeat at Alcazar in 1578 marked a few critical moments in this history.[39]

    Much of this reception history appears to be a reaction to Ottoman expansion, even

beyond the borders of Ottoman lands. The Byzantine Empire, closest to the Ottomans on the

geographical map, did become one critical site for circulating the text. The Greek translator,

Demetrius Cydones, had traveled to western Europe prior to making the translation, and he may

have obtained his copy there.[40] More than a decade later, he sent his translation to the Byzantine

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[36] This edition has been digitized and is available online. Riccoldo de Monte Crucis and Bartolomeo Picerno, *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum* (Basilea, 1507), Bayerische StaatsBibliothek. Polem. 2506 m. http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/bsb00003304/images/.

[37] This publication contained a collection of documents concerning Islam, including Robert of Ketton's twelfth-century translation of the Qur'an that was commissioned by Peter the Venerable, a popular correspondence between Peter the Venerable and Bernard of Clairvaux discussing the translation, Nicholas of Cusa's *Cribratio Alkorani* that had been influenced by *Contra legem*, and Martin Luther's preface to his *Libellus de ritu et moribus Turcorum*, in addition to the two translations of *Contra legem*.

[38] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 56–57.

[39] See Housley, *The Later Crusades*.

[40] A more extended discussion of this transmission can be found below.

emperor in Thessalonica, furthering *Contra legem*'s transmission. Altogether, fourteen extant manuscripts attest to its continued circulation in the following centuries. These manuscripts have ended up in many different places, from Greece, modern-day Turkey, and the Aegean island Patmos, to Austria, France, Spain, and Vatican City. Some of these manuscripts likely found their current homes much later. Yet their geographical breadth and developments like the fall of Constantinople suggest that some were created or moved outside of Greek-speaking areas contemporarily.

Meanwhile, the Latin manuscripts circulated widely in western Europe. Many of these copies provide references to their places of origin. Notarial marks and signatures from eleven manuscripts show that they were copied in England (Ely priory and St. Albans), France (Avignon and Montpelier), Italy (Rome and Florence), modern-day Switzerland (Basel), and modern-day Belgium (Bruges). Other manuscripts contain texts in vernacular languages such as English, Italian, Castilian, and French that indicate they were likely copied in the corresponding regions. In other cases, archivists have identified the handwriting in the manuscripts as coming from specific regions – Italy, southern France, and northern Europe.

While some of these codices remained close to the site of their production, many others circulated more widely. Three manuscripts originally copied in Italy remain in nearby Italian archives today. The manuscript copied in Avignon also resides there, while the manuscript from Montpelier traveled only a short way to end up in Paris. The manuscript copied in Bruges is now archived in Munich although it is unclear when it moved. Meanwhile, one copy made in Basel as well as another one made in Italy were both archived in Vienna in the seventeenth century. We know that some manuscripts circulated quickly. Nicholas of Cusa, who commissioned a copy of the text in Rome, took his manuscript back to his library in Germany. Likewise, the Italian John

of Capistrano purchased the copy written in a northern European hand while traveling, and it was returned to his home convent in Italy after his death and now resides in Naples. A Dominican who had traveled from Toledo to Basel commissioned a copy there that now resides in northern Spain, and a related copy made at Basel is held in Toledo now. Another copy originated in Basel and remained there. In addition to those listed above, there are also manuscripts now residing in Poland and Switzerland, in addition to others that are in different parts of Italy, France, England, Spain, and Germany, whose origins are unknown. Meanwhile, the whereabouts of the copy that originally belonged to the Archbishop of Dyrrachium are unknown to me, although the copy that his nephew made and sent to Rome is now archived in Florence. The printed versions of the text also spanned a wide portion of Europe. They were printed in Rome, Venice, Seville, Paris, Basel, and Wittenberg, all before 1550.

Looking at this map over time shows that European interest in Islam was spread throughout Europe, well past Christendom's borders. Many Latin copies had ties to Italy, which is understandable in the contexts of Riccoldo's origins and the commercial, political, and cultural ties that Italian states maintained with the Near East. Others reached much further across western Europe. The known fourteenth-century manuscripts originated in Italy, France, England, and northern Europe; the first half of the fifteenth century produced codices in southern France, modern-day Switzerland, Spain, England, and Italy; and those completed later in the century were from modern-day Belgium and Italy. This breakdown demonstrates that Riccoldo's Latin-based readership spanned western Europe within the first century, rather than moving slowly through that region over time. Moreover, its circulation moved well beyond the regions that the physical threat of the Ottomans would predict. Those in England and northern Europe, for instance, had less to fear in the fifteenth century from the Ottomans than those in eastern Europe,

Germany, or Italy. Nevertheless, readers copied the text across all these regions, suggesting that the perceived threat of the Ottoman army extended far beyond the bounds of immediate possible aggression. Tales of Ottoman intentions to overtake Rome after felling Constantinople had particular traction. [41] These fears suggest that Europe was still tied together by an ideal perception of Christendom. Therefore, many Christians felt the wider stakes of Islamic expansion for the fate of this imagined community. In the remaining pages, I will tell a few stories of how these Christians turned to *Contra legem* to address this danger.

Magnifying the map: individual reception stories

Contra legem's reception in early modern Christendom involved a wide cast of characters. Individuals commissioned new copies of the text, did the work of copying it, owned the manuscript copies, sold, lent, or gave them to others, read the text, commented upon it in marginal notations, used it to compose their own works on Islam, translated the text into new languages, published it in its various forms, and distributed it to the public. These participants included Dominicans and Franciscans, cardinals and bishops, crusaders and humanists. On multiple occasions, the work was sent to kings and popes, and it reached an even wider audience with the development of print technology. By telling these contributors' stories, we can build a richer picture of the reasons why Europeans found a medieval polemic relevant to their own times and needs. Those who circulated *Contra legem* had many different objectives, including mission, inquisition, church reform, crusading, the integration of converts, and Orientalist study. Many of their stories indicate that they formed these goals in reaction to a perceived threat, believing that the information and argumentation that Riccoldo had offered could inspire a wider

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[41] Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 99–100. See also Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 44–45, 61; Kenneth Setton, *Western Hostility to Islam and Prophecies of Turkish Doom* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1992), "Bartholomaeus Georgievicz."

and stronger response to Islam. In what follows, I will dissect these stories chronologically, one

for each major type of reception: translation, manuscript copy, readership, and print.

a. A story of translation

The Byzantines proved quicker than the Europeans to recognize the utility and authority

of Riccoldo's polemic for responding to the threat that the Ottomans posed. Demetrius Cydones,

the first translator of *Contra legem*, was a scholar from the Byzantine Empire.[42] Cydones came

from a family that had served at the imperial court in Constantinople for generations. He was

also a converted Catholic and celebrated Latin scholar and translator. As such, Cydones was

well-qualified to act as a diplomat to the papacy, and he negotiated the relationship between the

Byzantines and the Catholic Church on several occasions in the 1340s through the 1360s.[43]

Cydones oscillated between the worlds of western and eastern Christendom, and he brought

together two central issues for these groups. The first was the historic split between the Orthodox

Church and the Catholic Church, and the second was the Ottoman threat to both.[44] Cydones

sought to solve these problems together by reconciling the eastern Church with Rome in

exchange for western aid against the Ottomans. Cydones argued that, due to their common

ancestry with the Byzantines, western Europe "under the Christian leadership of the pope…was

the most natural political ally for Byzantium in its struggle against the infidel Turks."[45] Cydones

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[42] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 51–53. See also Franz Tinnefeld, "Demetrius Cydones," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 239–244.

[43] See Frances Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy: The Role of Demetrius Cydones," *The International History Review* 7 (1985): 175–213.

[44] On the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, see Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: from apostolic times until the Council of Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Deno John Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

[45] Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy," 188.

was unsuccessful, but the same calls for internal unity against the Ottomans were made more than seventy years later at the Council of Florence.[46]

Cydones addressed his fears of the Ottoman Empire's expansion into Byzantium through scholarly efforts as well as diplomatic missions. It is in this context that he translated *Contra legem* in the 1360s.[47] It is unclear where Cydones first discovered Riccoldo's work. He would have traveled to France on his earlier diplomatic missions to the papacy, still seated in Avignon. A copy of *Contra legem*, possibly a copy of the original manuscript, was made at the Dominican monastery in Avignon sometime in the fourteenth century, and he may have consulted this copy.[48] Or the text itself may have travelled to Byzantium. Cydones had personal contacts among the Dominicans who had lived or visited there and who may have known about or even possessed a copy of Riccoldo's polemic through the channels of the order.[49]

Howsoever he originally found the text, Cydones recognized its value. In a short eulogy or *enkōmion* that Cydones attached to the end of his translation, he signified the importance of the polemic. Addressing Riccoldo directly, he wrote,

> Thank you for this nocturnal study of yours, oh man of God, whoever you are who wrote this; indeed, oh most skilled one, you clearly demonstrate even the mystery of Christ, and

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[46] See Deno Geanakoplos, "The Council of Florence (1438–1439) and the Problem of Union between the Greek and Latin Churches," *Church History* 24 (1955): 324–346; Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959); and other similar works by these two scholars. See also Martin Schmidt, "The Problem of Papal Primacy at the Council of Florence," *Church History* 30 (1961): 35–49; Ihor Sevcenko, "Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence," *Church History* 24 (1955): 291–323. This short period in the middle of the twentieth century has produced almost all the work we have on this Council, and, unfortunately, it has been little-studied since then.

[47] The translation was printed in a side-by-side edition with the later Latin translation of it in 1542 in Basel. This edition is reproduced by J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 154 (1866), 1032–1152. For more on this translation, see Harmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation: Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beirut: In Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 26–33; 89–141; and Tinnefeld, "Demetrius Cydones," 239–49.

[48] Mérigoux has argued that Cydones had access to an "excellent manuscript" of the text, because his translation included additions to the text that Riccoldo wrote into the margins of the original manuscript (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Sopp. C. 8. 1173) and which are not included in every subsequent copy – although at least seven of the extant manuscript copies do have one or more of these additions. See Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 52.

[49] On these contacts, see Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy," 181.

you are second to no one in the ability to explain it. Indeed, before one's eyes displaying an imitation of David, you slay the wicked Muhammad as another spurious Goliath with his own sword, and you refute the madness of that same inept one concerning the only begotten son of God: which is the greatest argument of the highest superiority in the art of thought. The translator a most wise man Demetrius Cydones sings this true encomium plainly to Ricardo [Riccoldo] the writer of this work…[50]

Cydones's invocation of David and Goliath references Riccoldo's own use of the metaphor in *Contra legem*. Riccoldo claimed to use the Qur'an's contents against itself, so that "Goliath will be slayed with his own sword."[51] In his context, Cydones saw the polemic as a metaphorical sword by which the Byzantines might defeat the Ottomans.[52] He envisioned a spiritual and physical battle. His translation would, he hoped, inspire eastern Christians to fight against the Ottoman invasion once they grasped the stakes for their religion. In 1385, after years with no success, Cydones sent a copy of his translation to the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaeologus, explaining that the work was an important aid for fighting the Turks.[53]

Cydones played a critical role in enriching the reception history of *Contra legem* by extending its influence into the Greek-speaking world. His translation had a notable influence at the Byzantine court. Emperor John VI Cantacuzinus used *Contra legem* as a source for his polemical works against Islam, collectively titled "Four Orations against Muhammad."[54] These

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[50] Mérigoux provided a Latin translation of the encomium done by Quétif-Echard from the manuscript Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Grec 1191. (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 52). My English translation is based on this citation. "Gratias tibi de hac tua lucubratione, o homo Dei, quisquis es qui eam scripsisti; te enim ostendis et mysterii Christi maxime peritum, et in disserendi facultate nemini secundum. Davidem enim tibi ob oculos proponens imitandum, scelestum Machometum ceu alterum Goliath spurium proprio suo ense confodis, eiusque de unigenito Dei filio ineptias ipsiusmet deliriis refellis: quod maximum summae in arte cogitandi praestantiae argumentum. Ricardo huius operis scriptori plane verum hoc encomium accinebat interpres vir sapientissimus Demetrius Cydonius, philtrum quo captus est perpetua ferie demonstrans."

[51] *Contra legem*, 70. "Hoc autem ostendere possumus per ipsum Alchoranum, ut Golias proprio gladio iuguletur."

[52] As we will see, these two related motives would greatly mirror those of Latin scholars reading, copying, translating, and publishing *Contra legem* in future decades and centuries.

[53] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 52–53. For information on the letter Cydones sent to Manuel II, see Raymond Loenertz, *Les Recueils de lettres de Démétrius Cydonès* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1947), 117.

[54] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 52; For more information, see Klaus-Peter Todt, "John VI Cantacuzenus," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 175; and Todt, *Kaiser Johannes VI. Kantakuzenos und der*

writings circulated prominently, surviving in forty-six manuscripts and thereby contributing to

the indirect reception of *Contra legem*. Cantacuzinus's grandson, Manuel II, also wrote about

Islam in a book called *Dialogue with a Persian*. Although he did not directly cite the translation

that Cydones sent him, he did reference his grandfather's influential writings as a key source,

and his interest in the subject suggests that he may have read the translation at some point.[55]

Another famous Byzantine, the humanist George of Trebizond, also utilized *Contra*

legem, repeating some of Riccoldo's interpretations of the Qur'an within his own works.[56]

Already in the fourteenth century, *Contra legem* was read by diplomats, humanists, and emperors

as they grappled, both intellectually and physically, with Islam and the Ottoman Empire.

Cydones's translation was inspired both by his individual identity as a Catholic-Byzantine

scholar and diplomat and by the looming threat of the Ottomans. Born of these complex

circumstances, his *Contra legem* translation helped shape anti-Islamic thought during the

Byzantine Empire's struggles against the Ottomans.[57]

b. A manuscript story

Manuscript copies of *Contra legem* usually hold the secrets of their origins tightly,

leaving historians with more questions than answers. However, scribes did occasionally leave

hints at these origins that allow us to glimpse the story behind the manuscript's creation. One

such manuscript, Oviedo 24, is kept in the archive of a large cathedral in northern Spain. A

single scribe copied the majority of this manuscript and left hints of its origin at the end of two

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Islam: politische Reälitat und theologische Polemik im palaiologenzeitlichen Byzanz (Würzburg: Echter, 1991), 298–305.

[55] For reference, see Todt, "Manuel II Palaeologus," *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 314–325; Erich Trapp, *Manuel II Palaiologos. Dialoge mit einem Perser* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1966).

[56] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 53.

[57] No detailed study of Cydones's translation have ever been published, so it is unclear how faithful this translation is to the original text. However, as noted above, Mérigoux noted that Cydones's translation preserved many features of the original (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 52).

texts.[58] The scribe dated one text Tuesday in the year 1437.[59] In the second text, the scribe noted that the work was done at Basel, "at the command of the reverend father Master Iohannis de Curroli, professor of sacred theology."[60] Jean-Marie Mérigoux provided a small addition about this figure in his brief description of the Oviedo manuscript. He wrote that the manuscript was commissioned by "Iohannes de Curali O.P. 'master of the sacred page,' of the convent of Toledo, who participated in 1426 in Bologna at the General Chapter of the Preachers."[61] Thus, the man who desired a copy of *Contra legem* was a Dominican; he was from the Iberian Peninsula; he had a degree in theology; and he had previously traveled a good distance to represent his Dominican brethren at an international meeting. [62]

The other pieces of information – Basel and 1437 – situate the reader at another, more prestigious international meeting: The Council of Basel. In 1437, Basel was the prominent site of an ecumenical council on issues relating to church reform. The Council convened in 1431, and churchmen debated the source of authority over the Church and split between proponents of papal supremacy and conciliar power. The "conciliarists" demanded papal reform measures and supported the supreme authority of general councils, while the papal supporters upheld the

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[58] Antoine Dondaine, who describes the manuscript, notes that it was copied by multiple hands. He indicates, however, that the manuscript was created at one time, likely due to the internal agreement. Antoine Dondaine, "Ricoldiana: notes sur les oeuvres de Ricoldo da Montecroce," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 37 (1967): 175. A single text at the end is in a second hand, with a third responsible for a short addition.

[59] Oviedo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS 24, fol. 113v.

[60] Oviedo, MS 24, fol. 66v. See Oviedo Cathedral Church, *Notas para un cátalogo de códices de la cathedral ovetense* (Madrid, 1963), 290.

[61] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 41.

[62] Juan de Corral was only one of many mendicants who contributed to the reception of *Contra legem* in the early modern period. Several manuscripts were certainly copied in mendicant convents or copied out by friars: Avignon, Musee Calvet, MS 58 (originated at the Dominican monastery of Avignon); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 3655 (written by a brother at a convent in Montpelier); Florence, Biblioteca Medic. Laurenziana, MS Acquisti e Doni, 431 (originated at the S. Maria de Clareto monastery in Florence and copied by brother Ieronimus Iohannes); and Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 2655 (copied at the convent S. Marcelli in Rome by brother Master Simon of Florence). Additionally, two of the manuscript copies of *Contra legem* are attributed to a Dominican friar named Matthew Remago rather than Riccoldo (Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 2655 and Göttingen, Universitatsbibliothek, MS Theology, 262). It is possible that this friar copied *Contra legem* and then others falsely attributed the work to him.

sovereignty of the pope. The "papalists" moved to Italy and reconvened as the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–39, where they met to discuss reuniting with the "Greek" church, as Cydones had wanted in the previous century. The union, while short-lived, was approved. Meanwhile, the conciliarists continued to meet in Basel and even appointed their own pope, but eventually Pope Nicholas V successfully dissolved the council.

The council explains the presence of a Castilian friar so far from home. Denise Kawasaki, who studied the Castilian presence at the Council of Basel, discussed this figure by his Spanish name, Juan de Corral.[63] Kawasaki confirmed that Juan de Corral, OP, studied theology at the University of Valladolid and joined the Council of Basel in 1434 with twenty-four other fathers in the Castilian embassy.[64] While at the Council, Juan voted for "Avignon, Savoy or Florence" as a site for the new council in a 1436 vote.[65] This vote suggests that Juan did not remain behind at the rump council after the Council of Florence had been established. However, Kawasaki noted that Juan was still interested in reforms of a more "modest" nature.[66] He had participated on a committee founded by the Church of Castile called *deputacione pro fide*. On this committee, he contributed to discussions about the conflict between the Council of Basel and Pope Eugenius IV and the critical reform issue of indulgences. The committee also included Juan de Segovia, another Council of Basel delegate who did remain at Basel following the split.[67] Juan de Segovia and Juan de Corral had another common interest: Islam. Juan de Segovia had discussed Islam with a German colleague named Nicholas of Cusa during the Council of Basel.[68] They studied

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[63] Denise Kawasaki, "The Castilian Fathers at the Council of Basel," *Dissertation* (University of Wisconsin, 2008).
[64] Ibid, 99, 124.
[65] Ibid, 165.
[66] Ibid, 105.
[67] Ibid, 105.
[68] See chapters 3 and 4 for more information on Nicholas of Cusa, who also owned a copy of *Contra legem* and was heavily influenced by Riccoldo's work in his writing.

the Qur'an together there, as well as other texts on Islam. After the Council, Juan de Segovia created a trilingual translation of the Qur'an to aid in developing a dialogue with Muslims.

This manuscript's history proves that *Contra legem* circulated in contexts that appear removed from discussions of the Ottoman Empire. While attending the Council of Basel to discuss church reform, Juan de Corral commissioned a manuscript containing *Contra legem* and several other texts. The remaining texts in the manuscript included two polemical treatises on Islam and two treatises on church reform.[69] This manuscript's creation indicates that Juan thought about these issues in tandem. Moreover, he was not the only scholar preoccupied by Islam at the Council. Four years earlier, another manuscript containing *Contra legem* was created at Basel in 1433.[70] This manuscript contains two texts on the Greek church – its schism with the Latin Church and its subsequent "errors" – that would become the subject of the Council of Florence. We know, therefore, that at least three copies of *Contra legem* circulated at the Council of Basel by 1437: the two known copies as well as at least one manuscript from which these copies were made. Because the copies differ significantly, moreover, it is likely that a fourth copy also circulated. Finally, scribes used Oviedo 24 to produce one full copy of *Contra legem* and one excerpt during the last years of the Council, as well as two additional copies of unclear origins.[71] These manuscripts also contain other works on conciliarism and church reform. Thus, as many as six – and possibly more – different copies of *Contra legem* were circulating in the context of church reform at the Council of Basel.

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[69] The treatises on church reform are the anonymous *De materia clericorum concubinariorum* and Raphael de Pornaxio's *De potestate pape et concilii generalis* (fols. 1–12v, 13r–52r). The remaining texts on Islam include the portion of Thomas Aquinas's *Tractatus de rationinbus fidei* on Islam and Riccoldo's own *Libellus ad nationes orientales*, a Dominican missionary handbook (fols. 57r–66v, 69r–85r). The manuscript also contains a brief rhetorical composition by Landulfus de Francia (fols. 114v–124r).

[70] Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, MS Theologische Sammelhandschrift 3141. See *Biblioteca Palatine Vindobonensi asservatorum*, Vol. 1 (Vienna, 1864), 213; online catalog entry available: http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AL00174504.

[71] See appendix A for more details on this relationship.

Other Council attendees including Juan de Segovia and Nicholas of Cusa – who later

commissioned his own copy of *Contra legem* in Rome – discussed Islam there as well. Although

the two churchmen fell on opposite sides of the debate over papal sovereignty, they bridged this

divide to learn more about the Qur'an. At least six other manuscripts in the *Contra legem* corpus

contain additional texts that relate to the matters at hand in the Councils of Basel and Florence.

One contained a copy of letters exchanged between the Council of Basel and the kings of France

and England.[72] The others included texts on papal authority and heresy that would have found

relevance at the Council of Basel and works on the Greek church and faith that resounded with

the agenda at the Council of Florence.[73] All these manuscripts, including Oviedo 24, illustrate a

strong connection between the internal crises facing the Church during this period and an interest

in Islam. Indeed, the stage for reform became an important site for the reception of *Contra legem*

because these issues were not separate in the minds of the clergymen.

c. A story about readership

Traces of *Contra legem*'s influence are not limited to the manuscript tradition, because

many of Riccoldo's readers were also scholars who authored their own works on Islam. The use

of *Contra legem* as a source in early modern texts further contextualizes the tract's reception.

One such author, Juan de Torquemada, held many commonalities with our previous reader, Juan

de Corral. Aside from their shared given name, Juan de Torquemada was also a Spaniard, a

Dominican, and a Master of Theology. Although Torquemada studied at Paris, he held benefices

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[72] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 6225.

[73] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 3655 (contains works on heresy, papal authority, and anti-Greek polemics); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 4230 (contains works on ecclesiastical power and the papacy); Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, MS 1381 (contains works on the heresy of Jan Hus, on schism in the church, and on the fall of Constantinople); Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 7317 (contains a bull published at the Council of Florence in 1439 by Pope Eugenius IV); Rome, Santa Sabina, Archivum Generale, O.P., MS XIV 28b; and Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20 (the latter two contain polemical writing on the Greek church). See chapter 3.

in Valladolid, where Corral had studied, and Toledo, which was Corral's home convent.[74] Juan

de Torquemada also participated in the Council of Basel, although he had joined the Council

earlier in 1432, and he, too, contributed to the Castilian committee *deputacione pro fide*.[75]

Yet unlike Juan de Corral, a relatively obscure figure, Juan de Torquemada is more well-

known. Born to a family with *converso* origins, Juan began his relationship with the institutional

Church at a very young age, spending most of his youth at the Dominican convent in Valladolid.

When he was twenty-nine, he joined the Castilian delegation to the Council of Constance in 1417

that ended the papal schism. There, he "was able to meet the most outstanding theologians of his

time and start his contacts in the Roman Curia."[76] In 1431, Pope Eugenius IV appointed him as a

papal theologian for the Council of Basel. This was the beginning of the work that would earn

Juan the nickname "Defender of the Faith."[77] He became a critical voice on behalf of the papacy

during this period of uncertainty. He wrote many treatises addressing diverse issues of the day

such as the Hussite heresy, the split between the Greek and Latin churches, and the Church

position on Mary's virginity.[78] His role as papal theologian soon expanded to include diplomat

and then cardinal. After the Council of Ferrara-Florence, Pope Eugenius IV gave Juan a new,

double commission. He needed to convince King Charles VII of France first to support Eugenius

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[74] See Ana Echevarría, "Juan de Torquemada," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 447–450. See also
Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitudes towards Muslims in Fifteenth Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1999),
41–47.
[75] Kawasaki, "The Castilian Fathers," 95, 106.
[76] Echevarría, "Juan de Torquemada," 447.
[77] Kawasaki, "The Castilian Fathers," 114.
[78] Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith*, 42–43. Notably, his position as a papal defender often placed him at odds with
his compatriot, the conciliarist Juan de Segovia. At the Council of Basel, the two scholars engaged in several
debates, most notably over the Immaculate Conception, a debate that took place at the council in 1436. (See
Kawasaki, "The Castilian Fathers," 114). It is notable that, while the two men did share an interest in Islam and the
threat of the Ottoman Empire, they also responded differently on this matter. Torquemada promoted a new crusade
while Segovia focused on dialogue and study of Islam and eschewed non-peaceful methods.

against the new "anti-pope" at Basel and second to make peace with the King of England so that they could engage together in a crusade against the Ottomans.[79]

Although Juan soon returned to Castile, he continued this work, attempting in vain to convince John II of Castile to join a new crusade. He also dealt with internal matters in the Iberian Peninsula, most notably the riots against the *conversos* that took place in Toledo and Ciudad Real. In this matter he was more successful, writing a polemic in favor of the *conversos* that resulted in a papal bull of 1449 protecting this group.[80] After the fall of Constantinople, he turned his attention eastward more fully. In 1459, Juan traveled with Pope Pius II to the Council of Mantua, which Pius had called to organize a new crusade against the Ottomans. As they waited for the legates to arrive, Pius instructed Juan to write about Islam for the council to have a reference during its sessions and, more abstractly, for the use of Christians who lived in Ottoman lands and were subject to their laws.[81] Juan wrote his *Contra errores perfidi Machometi* (Against the Errors of the Perfidious Muhammad), and Pius relied heavily on this text when he addressed the Council.

This text became one site of *Contra legem*'s continued reception. Evidence from *Contra errores perfidi Machometi* demonstrates that Juan was influenced by information he found in Riccoldo's polemic.[82] Juan could have found a copy of *Contra legem* in several ways. We have already discovered that many copies of the text circulated at the Council of Basel during the years of Juan's attendance. Juan also participated in the Council of Florence, which was held at the Dominican convent of Santa Maria Novella where the original manuscript containing *Contra*

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[79] Briefly, this effort was unsuccessful. See chapter 4 for further discussion of crusade participation.
[80] Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith*, 44.
[81] Ibid, 45.
[82] Marica Costigliolo, "Qur'anic Sources of Nicholas of Cusa," *Mediaevistik* 24 (2011): 223.

legem remained.[83] Juan wrote his *Contra errores perfidi Machometi* in a hurry at the Council of

Mantua, and he does not appear to have had direct access to reference works.[84] Yet evidence

suggests that he remembered the arguments he had found in *Contra legem*. For example, Juan

relied heavily on chapter fourteen, which contained the story of Muhammad's night journey to

heaven. Juan copied Riccoldo's interpretation of the event in his text.[85] Other examples of

influence are broader. The fundamental aim of Juan's treatise was to show that Islam was

essentially a collection of all historical heresies.[86] This characterization of Islam also dominated

Contra legem. Riccoldo organized his first chapter by describing which Islamic beliefs or ideas

matched to which specific Christian heresy from the past.[87] Similarly, Juan, like Riccoldo, spent

much less time discussing Muhammad and his biography than most polemical writers; he chose

instead to focus on refuting Islamic belief.[88]

Juan de Torquemada's use of *Contra legem* highlights a critical aspect of the polemic's

reception in early modern Europe. As the Ottoman Empire grew stronger in the fifteenth century,

western Christians recognized both the physical and spiritual stakes of Ottoman encroachment

into Europe. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 dramatically escalated these fears, and the 1450s

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[83] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 51.
[84] Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith*, 44.
[85] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 51.
[86] Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith*, 45.
[87] At the very beginning of chapter 1, Riccoldo states: "First therefore, it is necessary to know what are the principle errors, which the law of the Saracens establishes, in which errors [the Qur'an] is greatly contrary to the law of God. And it ought to be known that the dregs of all the ancient heresies, which the Devil had sown sparsely into other [heresies], he spewed simultaneously into Muhammad…" ("Primo igitur oportet scire qui sunt principales errores quos lex Saracenorum ponit, in quibus maxime legi Dei contrariatur. Et sciendum quod omnium antiquorum hereticorum feces, quas diabolus in aliis sparsim seminauerat, simul in Machometum reuomuit.") (*Contra legem*, 63). Here, Riccoldo was paraphrasing Peter the Venerable, who wrote, "Vomiting back almost all the dregs of ancient heresy, which [Muhammad] absorbed by the devil having given him instruction, with Sabellius he denied the trinity, with his Nestorius he rejected the deity of Christ, and with Manichias, he denies the death of God, although he does not deny his return to heaven." ("Inter ista, omnes pene antiquarum heresum feces, quas diabolo imbuente sorbuerat, reuomens, cum Sabellio trinitatem abnegate, cum suo Nestorio Christi deitatem abicit, cum Manicheo, mortem Domini diffitetur, licet regressum eius non neget ad caelos.") (Peter the Venerable, *Summa totius haeresis saracenorum*, ed. Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 207). Yet by the fifteenth century, Riccoldo's polemic circulated much more widely and frequently than Peter the Venerable's short twelfth-century treatise.
[88] Echevarría, "Juan de Torquemada," 449.

and 1460s experienced an upswing of interest in crusading activity. Like the Byzantines, who had faced these threats much earlier, Latin Christians sought better information on Islam. These scholars argued that such knowledge could be marshaled to convince wider audiences of the dangers of Ottoman conquest for Christianity. Moreover, they hoped that this knowledge would spur their audience to action against the enemy they described. Riccoldo's polemic had already been circulating widely by the fall of Constantinople, and the text could provide descriptions and explanations of Islamic belief as well as citations from the Qur'an to support arguments against those beliefs. As such, *Contra legem* was deployed as a source for convincing Christians at places like the Council of Mantua to join a crusade against the Ottomans.[89]

Juan de Torquemada was not alone in transmitting *Contra legem* indirectly through new works in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Identifying these texts offers insight into the many new lives that *Contra legem* experienced over time or, in other words, the contexts in which it found use. These applications varied greatly. The Dominican Petrus de Pennis, for instance, borrowed heavily from Riccoldo's work in his polemic *Tractatus contra Alchoranum et Machometum* (Tract against the Qur'an and Muhammad), in which he encouraged missionary work.[90] The Franciscan Alonso de Espina, confessor to Henry IV of Castile, used arguments from *Contra legem* in his inquisitorial manual *Fortalitium fidei* (Fortification of the Faith) to aid in policing orthodox Christian behavior in the Iberian Peninsula.[91] Espina also wrote crusading sermons in the 1450s, and he may have used *Contra legem* for this effort as well. In the sixteenth century, Guillaume Postel, whom scholars have described as the first Orientalist, commented on Riccoldo's work in his refutation of the Qur'an in *De orbis terrae concordia* (On the Harmony of

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[89] The use of *Contra legem* in fifteenth-century crusading efforts is the subject of chapter 4.
[90] See John Tolan, "Petrus de Pennis," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 609–611.
[91] See Ana Echevarría, "Alonso de Espina," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 451–55; Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith*, 47–55.

the World). According to Postel, Riccoldo's direct knowledge of Arabic allowed him to write about Islam with greater accuracy than other scholars who had relied on Latin translations.[92] Thus, these scholars utilized Riccoldo's work to aid in mission, inquisition, and scholarly research, each in their turn.

Riccoldo's influence can also be found among preachers in Italy. In the first decade of the fourteenth century, Giordano da Rivalto preached throughout Florence and at least one of his sermons quoted Riccoldo's works on the practices of Muslims. However, this influence appears to have come from Riccoldo's *Peregrinationis* – the travel narrative – rather than *Contra legem*.[93] The fifteenth-century Dominican Girolamo Savonarola was a very popular preacher who passionately sought reform in the Church and often prophesied the means by which God would effect such reforms. He also wrote a text, called *Triumphis crucis*, in which he drew on *Contra legem* for many arguments regarding Muhammad, his views of Christ, and his accusations that Christians had falsified their holy texts.[94] Mérigoux has mentioned the possibility of another Florentine falling under the influence of Riccoldo. He speculates that Riccoldo may have helped shape Dante's thoughts on Islam, if he had arrived back to Florence

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[92] See Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Guillaume Postel," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 712–725. Michael Servetus can also be mentioned in connection to this narrative. Servetus was a sixteenth-century Castilian who traveled widely, gained a degree in medicine, and eventually wrote a book entitled *Christianismi restitutio*, which was published in Vienna in 1553. Because of the beliefs he espoused in this book, Servetus was taken to court where John Calvin interrogated him on his beliefs. The Geneva city council sentenced him to death for heresy in the same year that the book was published, and he was burned at the stake alongside his book. In the book, Servetus discussed the Muslim view of the Trinity and called on the Qur'an to support his argument against the Trinitarian doctrine. In this section, he uses many references from *Contra legem*, likely from the version that was published by Bibliander in Basel ten years earlier. Karel Steenbrink has noted that both Nicholas of Cusa and Guillaume Postel likely influenced Servetus as well (Steenbrink, "Michael Servetus," in *Christian Muslims Relations*, Vol. 6, 645–653).

[93] Rita George-Tvrtković, "Riccoldo da Montecroce on *Bismillah* and *Salawat*," in *Ritus Indifelium: miradas interconfesionales sobre las prácticas religiosas en la Edad Media*, eds. José Martínez Gázquez and John Tolan (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013), 94.

[94] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 50–51; Kenneth Setton, *Western Hostility to Islam and Prophecies of Turkish Doom* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1992), 21. In the following century, Martín García, the Bishop of Barcelona, utilized Riccoldo's story of a converted caliph of Baghdad in two known sermons from 1520, and cited Riccoldo directly in one of these (Manuel Montoza Coca, *Los* Sermones *de Don Martín García, obispo de Barcelona. Edición y Estudio*, Tesis Doctoral (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 2018), 70, 273).

before Dante's exile in 1301. Dante was "a friend of the convent of Santa Maria Novella" and learned from their theological scholarship.[95] Scholars have pointed particularly to chapter fourteen of *Contra legem*, the same chapter that Torquemada used, which recounts the story of Muhammad's night journey.

 Contra legem widened its indirect reception further through vernacular works on Islam in the sixteenth century. For instance, Christopher Saint German was a legal scholar who "has been described as one of the main thinkers contributing to the English Reformation."[96] Saint German had a great interest in Islam and wrote a treatise entitled *Against Muhammad and his cursed sect*, which he published in London in 1530. Riccoldo's text was a critical source for this work, allowing *Contra legem* to reach an English-speaking audience.[97] Several years later, Lope de Obregón wrote a polemic called *Confutacion del alcoran y secta mahometana* (Refutation of the Qu'ran and the Muhammadean Sect) that was heavily influenced by *Contra legem*, which was available in printed editions in both Latin and Spanish by this time.[98] Obregón used his treatise to guide the converted Muslim population of Spain further toward orthodox Christianity.[99] His

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[95] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 47.

[96] See Clinton Bennett, "Christopher Saint German," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 6, 637.

[97] This is important to Riccoldo's reception in that area, because only two known manuscript versions were copied in England, and no English translation was ever published there. A similar story comes from Marsilio Ficino, a humanist scholar from fifteenth-century Florence who wrote *Della Cristiana religione*. He appears to have owned copies of *Contra legem*, *Liber Peregrinationis*, and even a Latin translation of the Qur'an. Ficino relied on Riccoldo's works as the main source for his own, and he quoted Riccoldo directly in his treatise. Writing in Italian before the Italian translation of *Contra legem* was published, Ficino made Riccoldo's arguments "available to a broader public and, perhaps for the first time, the Italian middle classes were able to discover a fairly broad discourse on the relationship between Christianity and Islam" (Teodoro Katinis, "Marsilio Ficino," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 6, 402).

[98] See Ryan Szpiech, "Lope Obregón," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 6, 169–175.

[99] Pedro Guerra de Lorca, who published his own work on Islam in 1586, also pulled heavily on two chapters of *Contra legem* to write a Spanish-language apology. Lorca addressed his work more directly to ecclesiastical authorities in the Iberian Peninsula, because he did not believe that these leaders "were properly equipped to receive the Muslims" that had been forcibly converted and moved north from Granada (See Jason Busic, "Pedro Guerra de Lorca," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 6, 250–258). Another writer interested in the Moriscos was Hernando de Talavera. This priest and scholar may have contributed critically to the creation of the Castilian translation of *Contra legem* at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Moreover, Hernando may have taken Riccoldo's characterizations of Islam to heart when directing a program for dealing with the new Moriscos after the fall of

work, published in 1555, spread Riccoldo's influence even father within the Spanish-speaking population. These authors furthered *Contra legem*'s indirect transmission and gave Riccoldo's knowledge new lives and new audiences in the early modern period.

d. A print story

While two Spaniards – Juan de Corral and Juan de Torquemada – have featured in these stories, they both interacted with the text outside their native lands. However, Spain became a prominent site of *Contra legem*'s transmission in the sixteenth century. This increasing interest in the polemic likely sprung from the Castilian capture of Granada in 1492. As Lope de Obregón's example demonstrated, some Iberian Christians turned their attention to the newly converted Muslim – or Morisco – population of Granada after its seizure. These Christians perceived the Moriscos as a threat to a pure, Christian society promised by the *Reconquista*, arguing that the Moriscos had not truly converted or did not understand Christian belief.[100] Moreover, the Ottoman Empire began to loom larger in Spanish interests at this time. The Hapsburg rulers of the Holy Roman Empire had intermarried with the Spanish rulers, and a single son named Charles I inherited both crowns in the early sixteenth century. The Hapsburgs and the Ottomans fought earnestly for power on both ends of the Mediterranean over the course of that century.

Contra legem was printed in three different editions within the first decade of the sixteenth century: two were printed in Spain, while the third was dedicated to Spanish rulers. The first editor of *Contra legem* was Antonio de la Peña. Antonio, like Riccoldo, was a Dominican

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Granada. See Isabella Iannuzzi, "Hernando de Talavera," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 6, 60–66. See Afterword.

[100] For reference, see Grace Magnier, *Pedro de Valencia and the Catholic Apologists of the Expulsion of the Moriscos. Visions of Christianity and Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Gerard Wiegers, "Moriscos and Arabic Studies in Europe," *Al-Qantara* 31.2 (2010): 587–610; Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith*; Anwar Chejne, *Islam and the West: The Moriscos, a Cultural and Social History* (Albany: SUNY, 1983); Louis Cardaillac, *Moriscos y cristianos: un enfrentamiento polémico, 1492–1640*, trans. M. García-Arenal (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004).

friar. In 1491, he was named Prior and Vicar General of the convents of Spain, a position that he

held until 1500.[101] Antonio was responsible for the reform of the convents. He also maintained

an interest in conversion and especially the conversion of Muslims still living in Spain. In the

preface to his translation, he explained,

> I know that no one can achieve true good, who lives outside the evangelical law and is
> alien to our lord Christ. Since therefore Muhammad is the most hostile enemy and
> ferocious persecutor of the Christian religion, in his own religion he is considered to have
> saved human[kind]…We truly feel against [his writings]: And we are certain that the
> Christian life is the only open way [to salvation] (if it is done well). And…we have
> thrown our thoughts to the Lord, in order that [he might] demonstrate the way by which
> we may be able more easily to bring back the multitude of Saracens to the flock of the
> Lord.[102]

Antonio displayed a missionary stance toward Islam in this passage. He proclaimed that

Christianity was the only path to salvation and that Muhammad and his religion were a

barrier to it. However, he recognized that Muslim followers believed in the saving power of

Islam. So, he called upon God to show him how to convince Muslims of their error and to

convert them to Christianity.[103]

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[101] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 43–44.

[102] Antonio de la Peña, "Preface," in *Improbatio Alcorani* (Sevilla, Stanislaus Polonus, 1500), 1v. Gestión del repositorio documental de la Universidad de Salamanca. https://gredos.usal.es/jspui/handle/10366/115795. Accessed October 1, 2017. The text is also available in digitized form on HathiTrust Digital Library, through an original from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, although it does not contain the frontispiece. "Scio uera bona neminem assequi posse, qui extra euangelicam legem degit et a Christo domino nostro est alienus. Cum igitur mahumettus Christiane religionis inimicissisimus hostis ac seuissimus persecutor, in sua quemque religione saluari hominem censeat, si alioquin caste iusteque viat, nisi mahumetica traditione relicta, ad aliam transierit. Et in ea scriptum sit (est enim sibi ipsi sepe contraria) nulli salute patere nisi in ea. Nos vero contra sentimus: Et certi sumus viam vite soli christiano (si bene agat) apertam esse. Nosque in lucem ambulantes, neque offendimus ad lapidem pedes nostros, et ne sarraceni offendant, magnopere cupientes, et vltra ne decipiantur, lumen offerre desiderantes, nostrum in domino iactauimus cogitatum, vt viam ostenderet, per quam facilius Sarracenorum multitudinem ad gregem dominicum reducere possemus; creature enim dei sunt et oues, sed errabunde extra caulas, in alienis pascuis procul ab ouili dominico letiferum carpentes cibum, pestifera aluntur herba, aperui os meum et dominus impleuit illud."

[103] It is notable that Antonio uses the word *reducere* when discussing potential Muslim conversion to Christianity. This verb, meaning "to return" suggests that Muslims had once belonged, in some way, to Christianity and must be returned to their rightful place. This may refer to the characterization of Islam as a Christian heresy that was common in medieval Europe (see chapter 3). Riccoldo himself uses this same verb when describing the aim of his missionary guide *Ad nationes orientales*, the original version of which is copied into the same manuscript as the original *Contra legem*. He says, "Ut autem fratres qui volunt ire ad nationes orientales facilius possint reducere ad viam veritatis errantes" (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, MS Conv. Sopp. C. 8. 1173, fol. 220).

As Antonio revealed at the end of the preface, *Contra legem* was the answer. The

two-hundred-year-old polemic lay waiting for his discovery, likely due to the rich reception it

had received throughout Europe. Antonio described the moment of unearthing: "I discovered

a little book lying under a bushel, and hidden under ancient dust, and handed down to

oblivion for a long time, edited by the venerable father Riccoldo the Florentine our most holy

professor of religion, and most worthy professor of sacred theology."[104] Immediately,

Antonio wrote, he took up the book and read eagerly until his candle burned out, and he was

left in darkness. But, he declared, "from darkness to light, from under the bushel to the

candlestick, just as with the light burning in the house of the Lord (so that whoever enters

may see the light), thus I have tried in every way to take [this book] out and put it in place

and to share it by the art of printing."[105] The book was printed in Seville on March 20, 1500

and titled *Improbatio Alcorani* (A Condemnation of the Qur'an). On the frontispiece is an

engraved image of a preacher behind a pulpit with an open book, speaking to several

Muslims identified by their beards, turbans, and swords.[106] This image clearly portrays the

goal of conversion that Antonio sought. He ended his preface by expressing his hopes for the

publication: "This work, therefore, [which is] so distinguished and so very agreeable, and not

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[104] de la Peña, *Improbatio Alcorani*, 1v. "Cumque stilli officio describere incepissem ea que meo ingeniolo se offerebant, diuina propinante clementia, labellum reperi sub modio positum, et sub puluere vetustissimo absconditum, obliuionique a magnis temporibus traditum, a venerabili patre pratre Ricolodo florentino nostre sacratissime religionis professo, ac sacre theologie dignissimo professore editum."

[105] de la Peña, *Improbatio Alcorani*, 1v. "Quem vt vidi, quicquid lucubraueram quamcitius ad nihilum redigere non dubitaui, sed de tenebris in lucem, de sub modio super candelabrum tamquam lucernam ardentem in domo Domini vt qui ingrederentur lumen viderent educere et ponere, ac arte impressoria communicare modis omnibus elaboraui."

[106] Interestingly, this woodcut was also used in Pedro de Feria's *Catecismo de la doctrina Cristiana*, which was written in the sixteenth century for the evangelization of the "Indians" across the Atlantic. See Candida Ferrero Hernández, "De la *Improbatio Alcorani* a la *Reprobacion del Alcoran* de Riccoldo da Montecroce, o la fortuna hispana de un texto apologético," in *Miscellanea Latina*, ed. M. Teresa Muñoz García de Iturrospe and Leticia Carrosco Reija (Sociedad de Estudios Latinos, 2015), 540. Ferrero Hernández cites Luis Resines on this woodcut.

least so very useful, accepts your [the reader's] charity. We believe that it is not only for your restoration, but truly for the salvation of every soul exceedingly for the future."[107]

Antonio de la Peña edited Riccoldo's work hoping that it would provide others with the means to christianize the entire Iberian Peninsula. Yet in comparison to later publications, Antonio's vision for *Contra legem* was limited. The second Latin edition of *Contra legem*, published five years later, had grander aims. Barthelemy Picenus de Montearduo, who translated the Greek version of *Contra legem* into Latin, was an Italian. Still, he looked to the Iberian Peninsula for inspiration. Picenus dedicated the translation to King Ferdinand of Aragon in recognition of Ferdinand's successful completion of the *Reconquista*.[108] Picenus saw this as a beginning, rather than an end, hoping that the same efforts could push Christian rulership back through North Africa and into the Near East.[109] He wrote to the King, "Proceed, then, in entering warfare, and move all your men into Africa. Then easily it will be brought under the rule of God, and indeed those [places] having been subdued, and reduced to Christians rulers, then you easily will recover Jerusalem, the most ample, fertile, and holy land which is subject to the sultan of Babylon [the Ottoman sultan] at this time."[110] Picenus offered *Contra legem* as a contribution to a great new crusade, and throughout his dedication he emphasized the need for warfare against

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[107] de la Peña, *Improbatio Alcorani*, 1v. "Suscipiat igitur charitas vestra tam insigne, tamque delectabilissimum, et non minus vtilissimum opus. Quod non modo recreationi vestre, verum et animarum cunctarum saluti summopere pro futurum credimus. Ualete in Christo Iesu, qui est benedictus in secula. Amen."

[108] Barthelemy Picenus de Montearduo, *Richardi ex ordine fratrum, qui apud Latinos praedicatores appellantur, Confutatio legis late Sarrhacenis a maledicto Mahometo* (Rome: Ioannes Besicken Alemanus, 1506).

[109] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 53–54.

[110] Barthelemy Picenus de Montearduo, *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum* (Basilea, 1507). Bayerische StaatsBibliothek digital. http://www.mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn/resolver.pl?urn=urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10992569-6. Accessed September 2016. "Prosequere igitur inchoatum bellum, et omnes vires tuas in Aphricam transferre. Quam facile deo duce subiugabis, et ea quidem subacta, et in Christianorum potestatem redacta, facile deinde Hierosolymam recuperabis, quae tam ampla, tam fertilis, tam sancta terra Sultano Babylonis hoc tempore paret."

Muslim forces.[111] The translation was published in Rome in 1506, but its great popularity led to three reprints in Paris within a decade, as well as a later edition made in Venice in 1607.

Through these publications, *Contra legem* found a much wider audience in the sixteenth century. This readership may well have included King Louis XII of France. His confessor, Guillaume Parvy, offered him a well-decorated copy of the Paris edition in 1510, perhaps because of the King's interest in crusading.[112] *Contra legem*'s publication history demonstrates that western Christian concern with Islam did not diminish in the sixteenth century. New contexts for the text – such as the conversion of Iberian Muslims – developed alongside older concerns such as the growth of the Ottoman Empire, Church reform, inquisition, and crusading.

Conclusion

Each time *Contra legem* was read, transcribed, or translated, a particular kind of knowledge about Islam spread. Every new bequeathal, dedication, and publication transported these ideas into new hands. As a result, Riccoldo informed and influenced many fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europeans on the tenets and character of Islam. These readers, in turn, put Riccoldo's knowledge to different uses. Nevertheless, a study of *Contra legem*'s reception history demonstrates critical patterns in the text's appropriation. Scholars transmitted the text widely throughout Europe and into the Byzantine Empire, demonstrating that interest in Islam spanned the bounds of Christendom. Critically, however, the treatise does not appear to have been popular in Europe right away. Two related circumstances led to the text's increased success in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. First, the text circulated more frequently during periods

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[111] The Spanish translation of *Contra legem*, produced in Seville a year after de la Peña's version, concludes with "an engraving with the shield of the Catholic Kings, with the motto 'Tanto monta,' which makes this text a clear allusion to the politics of the monarchs" (Ferrero Hernández, "De la *Improbatio Alcorani* a la *Reprobacion del Alcoran* de Riccoldo da Montecroce," 540). It is unclear whether the producers of this version intended only what de la Peña had, to help uphold the work of Ferninand and Isabella by christianizing the Peninsula, or if they had, like Picenus, sought an even grander destiny for Christianity by means of this polemic.
[112] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 54.

when the expansion of the Ottoman Empire created a stronger perception of threat to Christian society. The text's transmission also correlated strongly to calls for reform within the Church, during which churchmen alternately attacked or defended the sovereignty of the papacy. Thus, while a desire to understand the Ottoman threat gave *Contra legem* relevance, tensions within Europe shaped the way in which many chose to understand that threat. This confluence created the opportunity for a medieval polemic to experience a sizable transmission. In the following chapter, I will explore the reasons for the popularity of Riccoldo's treatise in particular: why did *Contra legem* become the "go-to" text on Islam in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries?

Chapter 2. The Circulation of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* – Part 2: Authority and Authenticity in the Making of a Popular Polemic

At first glance, Basel A.X.41 hardly seems to deserve inclusion in the corpus of *Contra legem* copies.[1] The manuscript contains 281 folios, yet *Contra legem* could fit on a single one.[2] A closer look shows that this copy only contains the preface to the text, without even the list of chapters that usually concludes the prefatory material. By contrast, no more than four chapters are missing from any other copy of *Contra legem*.[3] While the preface contextualizes the polemic, it does not present the core arguments. Thus, it cannot be considered a useful abridgement of the material. Moreover, the text itself is highly inconspicuous in this manuscript. It begins almost immediately below the end of the previous text, without any title, rubric, or even initial to signal the beginning of a new work. The preface ends in the same way, and there are no marginal notations to indicate how this text was read.

Despite this lackluster presentation, even this short excerpt of *Contra legem* can contribute to understanding of the popularity of this text in late medieval and early modern Europe. First, although this copy only contains the preface, the text is unusually close to the wording of Riccoldo's original copy.[4] Two small features suggest that this copy was made directly from either Oviedo 24 or Toledo 5-35, which was copied directly Oviedo 24. Their close

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[1] Basel, Universitatsbibliothek, MS A.X.41.
[2] Basel, MS A.X.41, fols. 184v–185r.
[3] For more specific information on these gaps/missing chapters, see appendix A.
[4] The original copy, with Riccoldo's handwriting in the margins, is Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173. Jean-Marie Mérigoux has published a critical edition of this text, along with a brief study of the manuscript. J-M. Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Dominicane: Fede e Controversia nel '300 e '500* 17 (1986): 1–58; 59–144. My Latin quotations from *Contra legem* come from this edition where not otherwise noted.

relationship makes it difficult to discover which bore Basel A.X.41.[5] The first identifying feature

is the inclusion of the phrase "Jews and [pagans]," which is excluded from all but these three

copies.[6] A second indicator is the change from the word "veritas" to "equitas."[7] The Oviedo 24

copyist made this change, which appears likely to have been a simple error, and the Toledo 5-35

and Basel A.X.41 copyists maintained the change. Oviedo 24 was copied at the Council of Basel

in 1437, and there is strong evidence that Toledo 5-35 was also copied there.[8] Basel A.X.41

includes a brief "articles on the authority of the council and the catholic faith concluded April 24,

1439," the closing date for the Council of Florence.[9] Therefore, a reasonable guess can be made

that Basel A.X.41 was copied there as well and remained close to its origin thereafter.[10]

Several important conclusions can be drawn from this hypothesis. First, gathering places

for churchmen and scholars, such as the Council of Basel, offered excellent opportunities for

manuscript sharing – and, more broadly, knowledge production. Second, *Contra legem*'s

popularity appears to have had particular moments of vogue that are difficult to hypothesize. The

ecumenical councils of the fifteenth century, focused primarily on the place of the papacy and

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[5] Oviedo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS 24; Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, BCT 5-35. For more on Oviedo 24, see chapter 1, pp. 45–48.

[6] Basel, MS A.X.41, fol. 184v. "Primo namque passa est rabiem manifeste persecutionis a *Iudeis et* tyrannis paganis et hoc precipue a passione Christi usque ad tempora Constantini…" See *Contra legem*, 60; Oviedo, MS 24, fol. 91r; and Toledo, MS 5-35, fol. 141r.

[7] Original text: "Omnia mandata tua *veritas*, iniqui persecuti sunt me" (*Contra legem*, 60). Basel: "Omnia mandata tua *equitas*, iniqui persecuti sunt me" (Basel, MS A.X.41, fol. 184v). See also Oviedo, MS 24, fol. 91r; and Toledo, MS 5-35, fol. 141r.

[8] Another manuscript copy of *Contra legem* also originated at the Council of Basel, in 1433: Vienna, Universitatsbibliothek, Theologische Sammelhandschrift, MS 3141. However, this copy differs greatly from the original text and was, therefore, likely made from a different copy than Oviedo 24. In either case, Oviedo 24 (1437) could not have been copied from Vienna 3141. See chapter 3 for more on these manuscripts and the Council of Basel.

[9] Basel, MS A.X.41, fols. 267v–268r. "Articuli de auctoritate conciliorum et fide catholica 1439 Apr. 24." The Council of Florence was the progeny of the Council of Basel – see chapter 3.

[10] Neither Mérigoux nor the catalog gives any indication of the manuscript's origins, except that it was the product of the mid-fifteenth century. See Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 37. Catalog pages for this manuscript have been digitized. See HAN data system, Verbundkatalog, "Titelvollanzeige; Signatur: Standort: Basel UB, Handschriften. SIGN: A X 41," https://aleph.unibas.ch/F/B5S3CXB1F6H9GHQ8ID8KE21PY11XYXIQG815KDN2QV6TK8RPBL-04389?func=direct&doc_number=000108917. Accessed September 28, 2018.

reform issues, also provided a space for discussing Islam. Finally, medieval polemics such as *Contra legem* satisfied later readers' desire for information on Islam. After all, none of the three manuscript contains any contemporary works on the subject, although they all contain contemporary works on other topics.[11] These inferences derived from Basel A.X.41 and its predecessors confirm some of the findings of the previous chapter on the contexts and culture in which an anti-Islamic polemic circulated.

Other pieces of information from Basel A.X.41 can help to consider why readers chose Riccoldo's polemic, specifically. In particular, the other contents of this manuscript offer a glimpse into the scribe's interests and priorities. There is, among many excerpts on religious life and theology, a second excerpt from Riccoldo titled *Ad nationes orientales* (To the Oriental Nations).[12] In this missionary handbook, Riccoldo instructed his fellow Dominicans on the Near Eastern peoples that they should target for conversion. The final chapter of the text is a series of rules (*regulae*) for all missionaries to follow. This treatise, which immediately follows *Contra legem* in the original manuscript, was far less popular than *Contra legem*. Yet, the Oviedo 24 copyist included the entire work, positioning *Contra legem* before the final chapter on *regulae*.[13] The Toledo 5-35 and Basel A.X.41 copyists, in turn, only included the *regulae*.[14] *Contra legem*'s preface contained a brief description of Riccoldo's journey to Baghdad and his training in Arabic, while his "rulebook" encouraged missionaries to travel and learn languages in his footsteps. The inclusion of only these two excerpts in Basel A.X.41 suggests that the scribe was primarily interested in Riccoldo's first-hand knowledge of Islam and the Near East.

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[11] All three, for instance, contain at least one treatise concerning the Council of Basel.
[12] Basel, MS A.X.41, fols. 196v–197v.
[13] See Florence, MS C.8.1173, fols. 219r–244r; Oviedo, MS 24, fols. 69r–85r, 113v–114v.
[14] Toledo, MS 5-35, fols. 170r–171r.

A survey of the remaining twenty-nine copies of *Contra legem* demonstrates that Basel A.X.41 was not alone in this regard.[15] Riccoldo claimed his own authority by describing his travels through the Near East and his time spent learning Arabic in Baghdad. Readers accordingly highlighted the passages that best exemplified Riccoldo's first-hand knowledge. Specifically, a survey of the manuscript corpus reveals that copyists and readers found myriad ways to emphasize Riccoldo's authoritative quotations from the Qur'an, demonstrating that they prized Riccoldo's direct knowledge of Arabic. Copyists also stressed Riccoldo's authentic personal experiences with Muslims in the Near East, highlighting that he gained his information directly from the source. This combination of direct knowledge of Arabic sources and first-hand experience appears to have been critical to *Contra legem*'s success. Nevertheless, copyists and readers made changes to *Contra legem* that broke with the author's objective, particularly by polemicizing Muhmmad rather than the Qur'an. Thus, while Riccoldo found fame for his credential-generating experiences, his text also found a life of its own that largely ignored the insights gained by those experiences.

The allure of Riccoldo's authority

Although anti-Islamic polemics were not abundant in medieval and early modern Europe, they were common enough for competition to be plausible. Other treatises circulated, including some by fellow Dominicans who would have had access to the same networks as *Contra legem*. Still, the success of Riccoldo's text – as measured by the number of known manuscript copies, translations, and editions – was unrivaled for a polemic against Islam.[16] Notably, unique levels of

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[15] This survey looks at patterns demonstrated across the entire available corpus, except for Riccoldo's original copy, using specific manuscripts for descriptive evidence.

[16] I say anti-Islamic polemics specifically because there are other medieval religious polemics that met or surpassed Riccoldo's "popularity" in terms of number of extant copies, particularly anti-Judaic works. For example, Petrus Alfonsi, a twelfth-century convert to Christianity, wrote *Dialogi contra Iudeos* after his conversion, and it became very popular: 63 manuscripts are known, with an additional sixteen "variant or abridged versions" (John Tolan, "Petrus Alfonsi," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 3, ed. David Thomas and Alex

reception were not solely inspired by unique contents. The text itself is highly derivative in places and does not provide many new arguments.[17] As such, the massive impact of Riccoldo's work, still not fully discovered or analyzed, requires an explanation. Why did later readers turn to Riccoldo for information on Islam? Features of the manuscript corpus can suggest the uses to which readers put the text. For instance, texts that accompany *Contra legem* in the manuscripts can illuminate the contexts in which copyists thought about Islam. Other clues are in the text itself, in marginal notes, introductions and conclusions that describe it, and other reading apparatuses that highlight specific sections.[18] This evidence suggests that Riccoldo's direct knowledge of the Qur'an may have been the reason for *Contra legem*'s unique popularity.

"I learned the Arabic language"

Riccoldo established his language credentials in the preface of *Contra legem*, ensuring that future readers would know of them. He explained that in Baghdad, "where their traditional

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Mallet (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 360). Petrus actually included a chapter on Islam in his work, which Riccoldo likely consulted (Thomas Burman, "Two Dominicans, a Lost Manuscript, and Medieval Christian Thought on Islam," in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Ryan Szpiech (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 72). Yet, while the chapter on Islam proved influential, it does not appear to have been as popular, relatively speaking, as the rest of the polemic on Judaism (see Tolan's discussion in "Petrus Alfonsi," 358–360 and Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993). Another example to consider is the works of Alfonso Buenhombre. This Dominican scholar wrote (purportedly translated) the *Epistola Samuelis*, a disputation between two Jews in Arabic, as well as *Disputatio Abutalib*, a disputation between a Jewish rabbi and a Muslim *faqīh*. While the *Epistola Samuelis* was enormously popular, "disseminated in hundreds of manuscripts" (including several from the *Contra legem* corpus), *Disputatio Abutalib* was comparatively unsuccessful. It is extant in only ten manuscripts and only two vernacular translations. See Antoni Biosca i Bas, "Alfonso Buenhombre," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 5, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallet (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 67–70; and "The Anti-Muslim Discourse of Alfonso Buenhombre," in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference*, 89.

[17] Thomas Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 4, ed. Thomas and Mallet (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 688–690; and Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 27–33.

[18] I have surveyed the number of marginal notes and notations across the preface and seventeen chapters of all available manuscripts in the corpus, in order to discover whether there are any discernable patterns – in other words, are there certain chapters that generally appear to have been more useful or popular among readers, as evidenced by glossing or commentary in the margins? Generally, however, there are not many patterns to discuss. The marginalia is dispersed relatively evenly across the chapters when looking at the corpus as a whole. While some chapters, such as chapters eight and nine, have many more average notations than others, these are the chapters that are longest. Indeed, when ordering the chapters according the length and according to average number of notations, the lists look very similar. One exception is chapter 1, which has significantly more marginalia for its length than the other chapters. This is understandable, as Riccoldo presents this chapter as containing "the principle errors of the Qur'an," and so it could be seen as an overview of the entire work.

studium generale is held, there I learned both the Arabic language and letters. And most

diligently rereading their law [the Qur'an], and earnestly debating with their teachers in the

schools frequently, more and more, I learned through experience about the perversity of the

aforementioned law. And I began to translate it into Latin."[19] This translation remains unknown,

and it is unclear if he ever finished it. However, his annotated copy of the Arabic Qur'an

survives to testify to his claims of advanced Arabic knowledge.[20] Riccoldo read the Qur'an

alongside a medieval Latin translation by Mark of Toledo, and he made corrections and notes

based on his comparison of the two.[21] *Contra legem*, in turn, is filled with Qur'anic passages,

most translated by Riccoldo and some taken from Mark's translation. The former inclusions are

exceptional, because most medieval polemicists relied entirely on one of two Latin versions of

the Qur'an available at this time.[22] Riccoldo's use of his own translations made new variations

on some passages available to Latin readers. The vast majority of these readers did not have

Riccoldo's ability to compare the translated passages that he provided in *Contra legem* to the

original Arabic. Thus, it is notable that many appear to have accepted Riccoldo's claims,

privileging his rendering of the Qur'an.

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[19] *Contra legem*, 63. "Peruenissem ad famosissimam ciuitatem Saracenorum Baldaccum, ubi generale ipsorum solemne habetur studium, ibi pariter linguam et litteram arabicam didici. Et legem eorum diligentissime relegens, et studiose in scolis et cum magistris ipsorum frequenter conferens, magis ac magis, per experientiam apprehendi peruersitatem predicte legis. Et cum inceperim eam in latinum transferre…" The *studium generale* was a common phrase used by Dominicans, among others, for places of learning, especially when universities were too sparsely available. Riccoldo appears to have used the phrase to refer to a madrasah where he studied in Baghdad. Possibly he used this phrase for the benefit of his audience – primarily Dominicans and potential missionaries – to allow them an understanding of this place of study.

[20] Thomas Burman, "How an Italian Friar Read His Arabic Qur'an," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, (2007): 93–109. See also Burman, "Two Dominicans," 79–80.

[21] See Burman, "Two Dominicans," 79–80.

[22] See Burman, "Two Dominicans," 79–80. Burman has calculated that about twenty-six percent of the Qur'an quotations in *Contra legem* derive from Mark of Toledo's translation, as opposed to Riccoldo's own Arabic Qur'an. The other Latin translation available at this time was Robert of Ketton's Qur'an. On these versions, see Thomas Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

One reader, the German cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, provided a glimpse of this privileging through his marginalia in two manuscripts he owned. Nicholas had commissioned a scribe to copy Dionysius the Carthusian's *Contra perfidiam Mahumeti* (Against the Perfidy of Muhammad) into the manuscript Kues 107, along with *Contra legem*.[23] Nicholas also owned a copy of the Latin Qur'an in a separate manuscript, Kues 108.[24] In *Contra perfidiam*, Dionysius quoted the Qur'an frequently. Yet, unlike Riccoldo, he relied entirely on a Latin translation. Evidence that Nicholas privileged Riccoldo's direct translation from Arabic can be seen in a passage from the Qur'an that appears in all three texts mentioned above: Riccoldo's work, Dionysius's work, and the Latin translation. In both Dionysius's work and in the Latin translation, Nicholas added a marginal note correcting the text.[25] Nicholas discovered the error in this passage of the Qur'an through chapter nine of *Contra legem*, where Riccoldo gave a different translation of the same passage.[26] James Biechler suggested that this finding may have contributed to Nicholas's "lack of confidence in the accuracy of his own Latin Qur'an."[27] Rather than questioning Riccoldo's knowledge in the face of this discrepancy, Nicholas relied on him and rejected the widely-read translation and the polemicist who had relied on it.[28]

Other readers of *Contra legem* demonstrated an appreciation of Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic with their copies. The original manuscript, Florence C.8.1173, marks out passages that

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[23] Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 107, fols. 1r–193v (*Contra perfidiam Mahumeti*); fols. 194r–232r (*Contra legem*). Dionysius had accompanied Nicholas on a tour to preach the crusades in 1452, and Nicholas requested that Dionysius compose a polemic for the occasion, before Nicholas discovered *Contra legem*. See Alex Mallett, "Dionysius the Carthusian," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 524. See also chapter 4.

[24] Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 108.

[25] Kues, MS 107, fol. 4r; Kues, MS 108, fol. 27r. See James Biechler, "Three Manuscripts on Islam from the Library of Nicholas of Cusa," *Manuscripta* 27 (1983): 97.

[26] Biechler, "Three Manuscripts on Islam," 97.

[27] Ibid.

[28] On Nicholas's reliance on *Contra legem*, see Waggoner Karchner, "Deciphering the Qur'an in Late Medieval Europe: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Nicholas of Cusa, and the Text-Centered Development of Interreligious Dialogue," *Journal of Medieval History*, forthcoming.

either quote directly from the Qur'an or that paraphrase Muslim arguments. It is unclear whether

the copyist or a later reader marked these passages. In chapter one, a reader added a short

explanatory note: "Observe that where [the text] below is marked with a red line, it is the text of

the Qur'an."[29] However, paraphrases of Muslim positions are also underlined, suggesting that the

reader could not distinguish between these and Qur'anic quotations. In two manuscript copies,

Avignon 58 and Cambridge 335, this marginal note and the use of red underlining are preserved.

In Avignon 58, the copyist added the note in red ink to the bottom margin, while in Cambridge

335, the copyist wrote the note into the main text although it is also in red ink and stands out

accordingly.[30] Both copies' underlined passages frequently match one another as well as

Florence C.8.1173. None of the three, however, mirror either of the others perfectly. All three

commonly underline the name of the transliterated Surah as well as the full quotation. However,

the consistency varies. For instance, the Avignon 58 copyist underlined the Surah title "elnahel"

(Sūrat an-Naḥl) in chapter six without underlining the corresponding quotation.[31] The practice of

underlining quotations in red ink works to identify these passages clearly, so that readers can find

them easily. Therefore, one could skim *Contra legem* to find and use these quotations alone,

without reading Riccoldo's analysis of the text. This reading apparatus privileges Riccoldo's

knowledge of Arabic, even above his argumentation.

Other copies of *Contra legem* use the same means of highlighting Riccoldo's knowledge

of Arabic, including copies that greatly differed from the original. For example, Bergamo 172,

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[29] Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 186v. "Nota quod ubi est inferius signatum cum uirgula de rubio est textus Alchorani." In his edition, Mérigoux noted that this note was not in the copyist's hand and also that the underlining did not always correspond to texts of the Qur'an; rather, several passages expressed a "position musulmane" rather than a verse from the Qur'an (Mérigoux, *Contra legem*, 64, note b). This note is from a reader rather than either the copyist or Riccoldo, although both hands appear frequently in the margins.

[30] Avignon, Musee Calvet, MS 58, fol. 205r. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library, MS 335, fol. 75v.

[31] Avignon, MS 58, fol. 210r. Transliterated Surah "titles" were frequently used in Latin anti-Islamic polemics. See Burman, "Two Dominicans," 75.

which matches the original text closely, contains underlining throughout in a light, faded black ink.[32] Although the text is underlined less frequently than in Avignon 58 or Cambridge 335, similar passages are highlighted. In chapter one, three sections are underlined: Muhammad's characterizations of Christ, the Surah title "vacca" (Sūrah al-Baqarah), and a short quote from the Qur'an on Muhammad's prophesying.[33] Throughout the remainder of the text, the names of Surah titles and quotations from the Qur'an continue to be highlighted most commonly. In contrast to Bergamo 172, Paris 3655 differs drastically from the original text.[34] While this copy is only missing one chapter, all the others are highly abridged, and the entire text is only six folios in length.[35] Despite these changes, the copyist still highlighted examples of Arabic knowledge. The scribe could not frequently underline entire quotations due to the abbreviated nature of the text. However, Surah titles are frequently underscored in red ink. In chapter fifteen, for instance, eight different Surahs are mentioned, and all are underlined for easy identification.[36]

Copyists found other ways of highlighting Riccoldo's mastery of the Qur'an as well. In Naples VII.C.20, the copyist emphasized these passages through the script: Qur'anic quotations are in an enlarged, slightly bolded text.[37] As such, the quotations jump off the page at the reader, who may easily skim through the text to find them. The only other portions consistently highlighted in this way are the headers that signal the subject of each new chapter. The text is also occasionally underlined, although it is difficult to tell whether by the copyist or a reader. For instance, in chapter eight, the Surah titles "formica" and "fumo" are underlined before a lengthy quote that the scribe wrote in large, bold script. Likewise, in chapter fifteen, Surah titles such as

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[32] Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Locatelli, MS 172, fols. 1r–27r.
[33] Bergamo, MS 172, fols. 2r–3r.
[34] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 3655, fols. 114r–119r.
[35] Bergamo, by comparison, is more than twenty-six folios long, while the original is more than 33 folios.
[36] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 118r–v.
[37] Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20.

"Elnesa," "Elbachera," and "helmelanche" are underlined.[38] Entire quotations are also sometimes underlined in addition to having enlarged script.

In a manuscript from Salamanca, the copyist glossed the Surah titles along the margins of the text for quick reference.[39] Because the introduction of Surah titles most commonly preceded quotations from the Qur'an, these glosses also allowed the reader to find Qur'anic passages quickly. Although the Salamanca copyist occasionally added other glosses, Surah-mentions dominate the margins of *Contra legem*. There are seventy-two notes in the copyist's hand. Approximately ninety percent of these list the Surah title next to the passage that cites it. Moreover, half of the remaining notes simply say "observe" next to passages that quote the Qur'an without citing the Surah. The editor of the Italian translation of *Contra legem*, Paolo Angelo, utilized the same method for highlighting material from the Qur'an. For instance, the margins in chapter three include printed glosses for all six surah titles mentioned therein: "capitolo de Iona," "Capitolo Elhagar," "Capitolo Elmeyde," "Capitolo Elmayde," "Capitolo Elmesan," and "Capitolo lcz."[40] While Paolo also heavily glossed the names of Christian heretics in chapter one, he included very few other, non-Surah-related glosses in this edition. This emphasis suggests that a vernacular audience would also appreciate the fruits of Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic.

Copyists and readers also found other small ways to highlight Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic. In many copies, including Avignon 58 and Bergamo 172, the first mention of the Qur'an – "alchoranum" – is underlined.[41] Riccoldo also occasionally included transliterations of Arabic

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[38] Naples, MS VII C 20, fol. 103v.

[39] Privately held manuscript, Salamanca, Spain.

[40] Paolo Angelo, "Epistola Pauli Angeli ad Saracenos cum libello contra Alcoranu," (Venice, ca.1520), fols. 23r–25r. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/ucm.5325014732. The last two of these are different from what is rendered in the original, but they match what is copied in the manuscript. However, "elmaide" in the manuscript is returned back to the original "elmayde" in the printed text. The reason for this inconsistency is unclear.

[41] Avignon, MS 58, fol. 205r; Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 1v.

words. For instance, in chapter fifteen Riccoldo argued that God frequently referred to himself in the plural in the Qur'an: "Hence it is not possible even to say that God speaks of himself in the plural because of the diverse qualities that are within him…which the Arabs call 'saffat' [ṣifāt]," an Arabic word meaning qualities or features.[42] In Naples VII.C.20, the Arabic word "saffat" is enlarged and underlined.[43] Likewise, a reader of Dresden A.120.B glossed Riccoldo's rendering of "Muslim," *messelamni*, in the margins of chapter seven.[44] Riccoldo also included transliterations of Arabic names. For instance, in the Salamanca manuscript, the copyist glossed the name of the winged beast, "Elborach" [Al-Burāq] whom, as Riccoldo explained, Muhammad had ridden on his night journey to heaven.

This practice of highlighting sources, and especially quotations, was common among late medieval scribes. The custom was especially frequent for biblical quotations. Because the Bible was considered a supremely authoritative text, the use of this same method for the Qur'an is especially significant. As discussed in the Introduction, thirteenth-century scholars began to expand their canon of authoritative sources to include texts such as the Qur'an.[45] Scribes who emphasized Qur'anic quotations within these copies of *Contra legem*, not just those described here, accepted such texts as authoritative. It is notable that most copies of *Contra legem* underscored the presence of Qur'anic material in some way and to some extent.[46] Moreover, while other sources including biblical quotations are occasionally underlined, Qur'anic material

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[42] *Contra legem*, 126. "Preterea non potest etiam dici quod Deus pluraliter de se loquatur propter diuersas qualitates que sunt in eo sicut est potentia, sapientia, iustitia et huiusmodi quas Arabes appellant *saffat*."

[43] Naples, MS VII C 20, fol. 103v.

[44] Dresden, Sachsische Landesbibliothek, MS A.120.B, fol. 216r. "Messelamni"

[45] See Introduction, pp. 11–12 and note 38.

[46] Others not yet mentioned include Munich, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, MS Clm. 449; Kues, MS 107; Oviedo, MS 24; Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Theology 262; Krakow, National Museum of Krakow, MS MNK-Rkps-1401; and Toledo, MS 5-35.

is the most consistently highlighted across the manuscript corpus. Thus, readers appear to have turned to Riccoldo's text primarily for its conveyance of Qur'anic source material.

Additionally, readers attributed to Riccoldo his own authority due to his ability to read the text in Arabic. This direct knowledge, prized by the Dominican order, was a marker of authenticity, which was a critical component for establishing authority.[47] The measure of authenticity traditionally had its roots in a close relationship with the early Church, thereby limiting the corpus to ancient and late antique texts. Yet, authenticity increasingly became associated with direct knowledge and experiences, especially after the rise of the mendicants in the thirteenth century. Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic, gained in the Near East at the turn of the fourteenth century, won him the status of a respected *auctor* in later centuries.[48]

As well as a marker of authenticity, Riccoldo's frequent use of the Qur'an was practically useful for his audience. *Contra legem* could act as a compendium of quotations from the Qur'an for an academic reader, especially in the ways it was often presented. Moreover, it was a curated version that readers who wanted to polemicize Islam could use without having to sift through a Latin translation of the entire text themselves. Thus, Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic and his

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[47] On "authority," I am generally following Szpiech and Minnis: "According to A.J. Minnis, *auctoritas* required two things: intrinsic worth and authenticity. To have intrinsic worth meant that what one wrote did not contradict Christian doctrine; to have authenticity linked an *auctor* with a true and ancient source" (Ryan Szpiech, "Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Ramon Martini, O.P.," in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Fresco and Charles Wright (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 171; A.J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship* (London: Scolar Press, 1984)). During the late medieval period, sources of authencitiy expanded to include first-person experiences. See also Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), chapters 2 and 4; Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ralph Hanna, Tony Hunt, R.G. Keightley, Alastair Minnis, and Nigel Palmer, eds. "Latin Commentary Tradition and Vernacular Literature," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2: The Middle Ages (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Szpiech, "Latin as a Language of Authoritative Tradition," in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, ed. Ralph Hexter and David Townsend (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 63–85.

[48] Szpiech has given a useful definition of an *auctor*: "a written authority, distinguished from a mere author, is not only one who is responsible for a work but, more often, someone who is to be believed and quoted. The *auctor* possesses *auctoritas*, the authority to speak truly, the wisdom to speak well, and the credibility to be trusted as a source." Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*, 63.

frequent citations of the Qur'an positioned *Contra legem* to be valuable to future audiences who could appropriate these citations for myriad uses, confident in their source.

Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic was unusual for the medieval period. In the mid-twelfth century, for instance, the French abbot Peter the Venerable desired to refute Islam. Yet he did not have any textual evidence on which to base his disputation. Rather than learn Arabic, Peter commissioned a small team of scholars in Spain to translate a corpus of texts on Islam from Arabic into Latin. Among these texts was the Qur'an, which Robert of Ketton translated. Peter used these translations to write two polemical treatises on Islam, and he expressed the wish that one of those works be translated into Arabic for the direct benefit of Muslims. Later polemicists benefitted from Peter's model, using Latin translations of the Qur'an to access that text. However, even Robert of Ketton's translated Qur'an survives in fewer copies than *Contra legem*. The former is extant in twenty-four manuscripts and the latter in thirty-one. Later translations of the Qur'an into Latin survive in even fewer copies.[49] The fact that Riccoldo's curated discussion of the Qur'an was, possibly, more popular than the source further confirms that readers found Riccoldo's text dependable as well as useful.

A few other medieval polemicists may have also had knowledge of Arabic, and they quoted the Qur'an frequently in their works. Ramon Martí, for example, wrote a disputation on Islam titled *De seta Machometi* (On the Sect of Muhammad) and another work titled *Explanatio simboli apostolorum* (An Explanation of the Symbol of the Apostles), and he quoted the Qur'an in both.[50] Yet, *De seta* is extant in "no more than five manuscripts," while *Explanatio* survives in

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[49] Burman, *Reading the Qur'an*, 122.

[50] On Martí, chapter 1, note 27 is restated here: There is an ongoing debate regarding the extent of Ramon Martí's knowledge of Arabic and when and how he may have acquired it. Recently, Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld has contested the long-held argument that Martí had a sound knowledge of Arabic and was able to read and translate the Qur'an himself when he wrote *De seta*. He argues, instead, that Martí took much of his material for *De seta* from an Arabic source written by a Coptic scholar entitled *Al-Saif al-Murhaf fî al-Radd alâ al-Mushaf*. See Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld, *An Arabic Source of Ramon Martí: Al-Saif al-Murhaf fî al-Radd alâ al-Mushaf ("The Whetted Sword*

a single codex. William of Tripoli, another Dominican friar, lived in North Africa and learned

Arabic "at least to some degree."[51] He also wrote a treatise on Islam titled *Notitia de Machometo*

(Notice concerning Muhammad, c.1271), and he quoted the Qur'an in this work. There are only

three known copies of this treatise, however. Another work, *De statu Sarracenorum* (Concerning

the Situation of the Muslims), was heavily based on William's *Notitia*, and this work had greater

success: it survives in twelve known manuscripts. Finally, Riccoldo himself utilized a text

composed by an Arabic speaker when constructing *Contra legem*. The anonymous author

originally wrote the treatise in Arabic in the eleventh or twelfth century, and it was later

translated into Latin.[52] Riccoldo quoted or paraphrased this work, titled *Liber denudationis siue*

ostensionis aut patefaciens (also known as *Contrarietas alfolica*) "some fifty times."[53]

Nevertheless, the text only survives in a single manuscript in Latin, while the Arabic version is

lost. Like the other works, *Liber denudationis* quoted directly from the Qur'an frequently,

offering readers the same type of evidence that they found in *Contra legem*.[54] And yet Riccoldo's

polemic can be found today in more extant manuscript copies than all the above mentioned

works, by authors who knew Arabic directly, combined. This discrepancy suggests that another

of Riccoldo's traits may have contributed to his popularity.

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in Refutation of the Koran"). Introductory Study with Text and Translation of its Surviving Fragments (Leiden: Aurora, 2018). This argument would critically challenge previous work on Martí as a distinguished linguist. It would also further set Riccoldo apart as a European scholar with knowledge of Arabic in this period. On Martí's knowledge of Arabic, see Ryan Szpiech, "Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Raymond Martini, O.P.," in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Charles D. Wright and Karen Fresco (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012); Thomas Burman, "Two Dominicans, a Lost Manuscript, and Medieval Christian Thought on Islam," in *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Ryan Szpiech (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 71–86; Burman, "Inspicientes – et non inspicientes – eius legem: Thirteenth-Century Dominicans, the Qur'an, and Islam," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 20 (2018): 33–50. For a much fuller bibliography on Martí, see Burman, "Ramon Martí," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 381–390.

[51] Thomas Burman, "William of Tripoli," *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 3, 515.

[52] Thomas Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c.1050–1200* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 37–62.

[53] Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 689.

[54] Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 45.

"I crossed the sea and the desert"

The manuscript corpus reveals that late medieval and early modern readers also privileged Riccoldo's first-hand knowledge of Islam. Riccoldo had gained rare experience as a missionary in the Near East, where he lived for more than a decade, and he made sure that future readers would know about these experiences.[55] In the preface of *Contra legem*, he described how he "crossed the sea and the desert and arrived at the most famous city of the Saracens, Baghdad."[56] He lived there from approximately 1290 until the turn of the century. We know from Riccoldo's travel narrative, *Peregrinationis*, that Riccoldo also traveled more widely, preaching for a year or so before he arrived in Baghdad. Evidence of the knowledge he gained in Baghdad is subtly evident in *Contra legem*. He was able to describe, for instance, the Sunni-Shīʿa divide, pillars of Islam such as the *shahadah*, and some Muslim praxis, including ablutions before prayer. Riccoldo's unusual level of experience with his subject matter afforded his text a high level of authenticity.

In copies of *Contra legem*, readers indicated that they valued this source of Riccoldo's authority by highlighting his first-hand experiences in the Near East in introductions or conclusions – *incipits* and *explicits* – appended to the text. In Pesaro 1381, for instance, the copyist introduced the text as: "From the book of brother Ricaldi of the Order of Preachers who

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[55] As Camille Rouxpetel has noted, Riccoldo was not the only writer during his time to emphasize the power of experience. Discussing two of Riccoldo's other works, his *Peregrinationis* and the *Ad nationes*, she notes that: "Emphasis on the value and on the power of authority derived from experience is not unique to this Florentine missionary, but can be found in the writings of several Latin travelers to the East, such as in those of Oliver of Paderborn or of another Dominican and contemporary of Riccoldo, Burchard of Mount Sion" (Camille Rouxpetel, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce's Mission towards the Nestorians and the Jacobites (1288–c.1300): Defining Heresy and Inventing the Relationship with the Other. From Theory to Missionary Experience," *Medieval Encounters* 21 (2015): 250–268, 259.

[56] *Contra legem*, 62. "Unde cum transissem maria et deserta et peruenissem ad famosissimam ciuitatem Saracenorum Baldaccum." Interestingly, Naples VII.C.20, which contains very few marginal notes that are not corrections to the text, does contain one is a small hand, drawn in red ink, with a finger pointing inward to the text and a thin line extending from the tip of the finger to the edge of the text. This hand, the only one in this copy of *Contra legem*, points to this specific passage of the text (Naples, MS VII.C.20, fol. 94r).

was in the *studium* of the Muslims and learned their letters and the law of their pseudo-prophet Muhammad, which they call *Alchoranum*."[57] This description affirmed not only that Riccoldo learned Arabic but also that he obtained his knowledge in a Muslim place of learning. The sixteenth-century manuscript Dresden A.120.B contains a similar description of Riccoldo in the upper margin of the text's first folio. There, a reader noted that Riccoldo "preached in oriental lands…in the year 1309."[58] By underscoring both Riccoldo's presence in the Near East and his position as a preacher, readers positioned Riccoldo's treatise as a source of accurate and trustworthy knowledge.

Readers also reinforced their impressions of Riccoldo's expertise in their conclusions to *Contra legem*. For instance, a reader included a lengthy description of Riccoldo in the *explicit* of Munich 449:

> This doctor, brother Riculdus of the order of preachers, as he put in the preface, remained in Arabia for fourteen years in which time he labored over his study of the law of Muhammad in their *studium generalis* in the city of Baghdad in order to prevail in condemning it fully.[59]

This reader described Riccoldo's achievements in their own words. Moreover, the reader noted that Riccoldo spent fourteen years in the Near East, which Riccoldo never said himself.

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[57] Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, MS 1381, fol. 11r. "Ex libello fratris Ricaldi ordinis predicatorum qui fuit in studio saracenorum et nouit litteram eorum et legem machometi eorum pseudoprophetam quam legem ipsi oucant alchoranum."

[58] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 206r. "pontificis in terra orientales…anno 1309." It is unclear to me where the reader learned of the date 1309, which is inaccurate but not unreasonably so. See below note 60.

[59] Munich, MS Clm 449, fol. 148r. This postscript is transliterated in Antoine Dondaine, "Ricoldiana. Notes sur les oeuvres de Riccoldo da Montecroce," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 37 (1967): 135, n.44. "Iste doctor frater riculdus ordinis predicatorium sicut ponit in prohemio quatuordecim annis mansit in arabia quo in tempore studio legis machometi insudavit in eorum generali studio in baldaco ciutate ut illam ad plenum reprobare valeret. [the paragraph continues:] cuius lectura attediatus vix dignatus est illi insultare racione fatuitatum fabularum impossibilitatis absurditatis sed hanc ad pauca reduxit puncta et illam reprobavit. Quem tractatum scribi fecit per tres scriptores brugis anno domini 1455 infra ebdomadam tercie dominice post pascha frater guido de donziao sacre theologie indignus professor scolaris parisiensis domini ducis burgundionum et brabantinorum etc. philippi. et compleuit eius correctionem cum tedio vicesimal tercia aprilis post pascha anno domini 1456 quia exemplari caruit et scriptores pictores fuere et hoc hagis in hollandia. quo in tempore fiebat dispensation pro capitulo dominorum velleris aurei dominica sequenti quarta post octavam pasche celebrando."

This number is very close to our best estimates of eleven or twelve years, although it is difficult to know why the reader said fourteen.[60] Nevertheless, the reader's outside knowledge of Riccoldo and his experiences in the Near East suggest some independent level of awareness of Riccoldo as an *auctor*.

Notably, even manuscript copies of *Contra legem* not attributed to Riccoldo still highlighted the experiences of the author. Both Göttingen 262 and Bologna 2655 attribute *Contra legem* to a Dominican called Matthew de Remago, an unidentified figure.[61] It is unclear how Matthew de Remago assumed Riccoldo's identity, but it is clear that the name does not represent a new, different person. Rather, the copyists took Matthew's credentials directly from Riccoldo's autobiographical account, set out in *Contra legem*'s preface, and quoted this material in their introductory texts:

> The venerable and religious man, brother Matthew de Remago OP, [quoting from *Contra legem*] feeling so much damnation, changed his ways and turned his feet in testimony to God [and] he crossed the sea and the desert and arrived at the most famous city of the Saracens, Baghdad, where he learned the language and letters of Arabic at the *studium generale* of the infidels and saw the perfidy of the sect [end quote]. This work was compiled for the manifestation of the errors of those inimical ones.[62]

In both versions, the copyist added this description immediately above the text; in Göttingen 262, the introduction is in the top margin, while, in Bologna 2655, it is the first paragraph of the text. These headers suggest that Riccoldo's specific identity was not as important as the fact that the author – whoever he was – had gained authority derived from direct experience.

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[60] The copyist's ability to produce an exact number does suggest that, however they came across it, this type of knowledge about Riccoldo was circulating in the fifteenth century along with, but not only within the text.

[61] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 37–39; Emilio Panella, "Ricerche: Un altro manoscritto del *Contra legem Sarracenorum*." http://www.e-theca.net/emiliopanella/riccoldo/ricerc.htm. Accessed September 29, 2018.

[62] The text is nearly identical in each manuscript. Göttingen, MS 262, fol. 25r; Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 2655, fol. 103r. "Venerabilis et religiousus vir frater Matheus de Remagi ordinis praedicatorum de tanta dampnationis dolens cogitauit uias suas et conuerti pedes suos in testimonia dei transuit maria et deserta et peruenisset ad famosissima ciutatem Sarracenorum Baldachum ubi [G: quod] [B: est] generale stadium infidelum ubi linguam et litteram addidicit arabicum et uides peruerficatem secte. hoc opusculum compilavit ad manifestandum errores ipsorum [B: Christi] inimicorum, etc."

Another, apocryphal description of the origins of *Contra legem* demonstrates that even Riccoldo's missionary story, while important, was not as critical to the text's transmission as the presence of some sort of direct experience. In Paris 3655, the copyist identified himself as a monastic student named Amedee Bovier living in a monastery in Montpelier, France in the 1420s.[63] Despite this, Amedee's version of *Contra legem* is situated as a product of a crusader living in Mount Sion.[64] The end of the text reads, "The writer of this *caterni* would have written more concerning this material. But all are anticipating the day of incarceration or death with fear because there was a rumor among the Saracens concerning the passage [sea-crossing] of Christians, and they said that the Christians were then in port. Written in Mount Sion."[65] It is unclear whether Amedee referred to himself as the "writer" of the text, and had thus invented the framing, or whether he had copied this contextual piece from a parent text. In either case, this ending situates *Contra legem* as a product of the Near East (Mount Sion), and likely of a crusader, worrying about the fate of his fellow Christians at Muslim hands. Such an origin could give *Contra legem* the authenticity of direct experience with Muslims. This framing also, implicitly, gave the text the authority of age, because western Christians had not lived in Mount Sion in the type of circumstances described for more than two centuries. Thus, although apocryphal, this

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[63] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 45v, 47v. "Scriptum in Montepessulano per me, fratrem Amedeum Bouerii, conuentus Brian., anno mccccxxiii et die viii madii" and "Explicit questio…quam scripssi in Montepessulano tempore quo fui balchalerius anno Domini Mccccxxiiii et die xviii ianuarii, A. Bouerii."

[64] Notably, the preface of this copy of *Contra legem* ends directly before Riccoldo's description of his travels, the source of his knowledge. The text includes the first sentence of this section, introducing the author as an "unworthy" friar, as well as the following portion which quotes from the Bible: "cogitaui uias meas et conuerti pedes meos in testimonia" (Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 114r). It ends there, without describing Riccoldo's journey to the Near East or his study of Arabic in Baghdad. The text also omits Riccoldo's status as an OP, including only "friar." Thus, nothing in the text itself contradicts this alternative framing for the treatise.

[65] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 119r. "Plura scriptor huius caterni de hac materia scripsisset. Sed omni die incarcerationem vel mortem timore expectant eo quod rumor fuit inter Sarracenos de passagio per christianos et dixerunt quod tunc christiani fuerunt in portu Scriptum in Monte Syon."

description of *Contra legem*'s origins gave the text a similar type of authority as that earned by Riccoldo's travels.

Readers' interest in Riccoldo's experiences affirm that it was not only Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic that established *Contra legem*'s authenticity but also the derivation of that knowledge. For instance, Nicholas of Cusa, the German cardinal who commissioned a copy of *Contra legem*, offered a description of Riccoldo's authority. He had relied heavily on this text to write his own treatise on the Qur'an, *Cribratio Alkorani* (Sifting the Qur'an). In *Cribratio*, Nicholas described his pleasure at finding *Contra legem*. He wrote that the author was "a certain devout man, skilled in the Arabic language, who studied the work of the Qur'an in Baghdad."[66] Nicholas bestowed authority on Riccoldo foremost because of Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic, which Nicholas lacked. Nicholas had consulted the Qur'an in Arabic, but only through mediators, and he had to rely on Ketton's translation for *Cribratio*.[67] Having read the Qur'an in its original language, Riccoldo proved a reliable source.[68] Yet it was not only that Riccoldo had learned Arabic, but that he had done so in Baghdad. Studying Arabic "from the source" gave his knowledge authenticity.

For this reason, many readers emphasized the location of Baghdad, as well as indications of the knowledge Riccoldo gained there. The copyist of Pistoia A.1 Girolamo Zenoni glossed the first introduction to the city of Baghdad, writing "city of Baghdad" in the margin next to the

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[66] Nicholas of Cusa, *Cribatio Alkorani*, in Nicolai de Cusa, *Opera Omnia: Iussu et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Heidelbergensis*, Vol. 8, ed. Ludovicus Hagemann (Hamburgi: In Aedibus Felicis Meiner, 1986), 29, 35, 37. "quidam devotus et Arabicae linguae peritus, qui in Baldach studio Alkorani operam dedit…"

[67] Nicholas told the reader so in the prologue (Hagemann, ed., *Cribratio*, 6).

[68] One example of Nicholas's reliance on Riccoldo over other sources can be found in Kues, MS 107. See p. 67, above. Biechler suggested that this instance may have contributed to Nicholas's "lack of confidence in the accuracy of his own Latin Qur'an" (Biechler, "Three Manuscripts on Islam," 97). Biechler also mentioned that Nicholas appears to have used a different copy of the Latin Qur'an than Kues 108 to write *Cribratio* (Biechler, 96). José Martínez Gázquez has since found and studied this second copy of the Latin Qur'an annotated by Nicholas: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 4071. See José Martínez Gázquez, "A New Set of Glosses to the Latin Qur'an Made by Nicholas of Cusa (Ms. Vat. Lat. 4071)," *Medieval Encounters* 21 (2015): 295–309.

passage.[69] Zenoni also highlighted Riccoldo's story about how a famous Muslim caliph was found, upon his death, with a crucifix around his neck – a sign that he had secretly converted to Christianity. Although Riccoldo did not present himself as an eyewitness to this occasion, the story still reads as an indication of Riccoldo's familiarity with Baghdad and its central actors. Similiarly, Zenoni annotated a passage in which Riccoldo discussed the caliph of Baghdad who built the famous *studia*, likely the same ones where Riccoldo studied Arabic.[70]

A reader of Dresden A.120.B also highlighted the first mention of the city of Baghdad, underlining the word *baldacho* (Baghdad) in the text and explaining "Baghdad [is] the premier city of the Saracens" in the margins.[71] The Dresden reader also marked the same passage about the building of the Muslim *studia* in Baghdad that Zenoni had annotated. This reader went further, highlighting instances of Riccoldo's unique knowledge of Islam – likely gained in the Near East. Riccoldo's rendering of "Muslim," *messelamni*, is glossed in the margins, as is his description of the Sunni-Shī'a division. Riccoldo noted, "Some [Saracens] in fact follow Muhammad and they are many, and some follow Ali and they are few and less evil, and they say that Muhammad usurped for himself the tyrannical power that was Ali's."[72] In the margins, the reader wrote "division of the sects of the Arabs," followed by "sect of Muhammad" and "sect of Ali."[73] This information is not directly tied to Riccoldo's personal experience in the Near East. Nevertheless, a reader may presume that Riccoldo gained intimate knowledge of Muslims, such as what they called themselves and how they were not all unified, while living among them. Readers read and disseminated *Contra legem* to such an uncommon extent precisely because of

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[69] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 56r. "Baldach ciuitate"
[70] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 77v. "calipha"
[71] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 206v. "Baldacum ciuitas saracenorum primaria"
[72] *Contra legem*, 121. "Quidam enim secuntur Mahometum et isti sunt plures, et quidam secuntur Haali, et isti sunt pauciores et minus mali, et dicunt quod Machometus usurpauit sibi per tirampnicam potentiam quod erat Haali."
[73] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 230v. "diuisio sectarum arabum" "secta Mahumetus" "secta haali"

Riccoldo's direct experiences and knowledge, which lent the polemic a rare and desirable level of authenticity.

As with Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic, his experiences among Muslims were unusual but not unique. Scholars have suggested that Ramon Martí, mentioned above, participated in a Dominican language *studia*, although evidence is lacking.[74] Stories from the period suggests that he was in Tunis in 1269, studying Arabic, when he reportedly attempted to convert the King of Tunis.[75] Even if only believed so by later readers, Ramon gained a reputation for interacting with Muslims. Yet his work on Islam remained relatively unknown. Possibly location played a role in Riccoldo's greater comparative success. Riccoldo traveled through the Near East into Baghdad rather than through Spain to North Africa. Europeans outside the Iberian Peninsula may have associated Muslims more commonly with the Holy Land than North Africa, especially as the Ottoman Empire grew. Thus, Riccoldo's placement there may have been perceived as more authoritative, leading to his greater popularity.

Disregarding Riccoldo

When studied as a whole, the manuscript corpus points toward Riccoldo's knowledge of Arabic and experience in the Near East as the twin rationales for his authority as a polemicist. Yet the corpus also reveals that readers may have respected the authority of the text more than its contents. Late medieval and early modern readers often appropriated the fruits of Riccoldo's labor for their own purposes. One of the most common examples is that many disregarded Riccoldo's central emphasis on the Qur'an in favor of Muhammad.

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[74] See note 50 on the debate over Martí's knowledge of Arabic. On the Dominican language *studia*, see Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 95–96, 104–115. Vose argues that evidence suggests the language *studia* were "temporary and relatively informal programs for the edification of a small intellectual elite" (Vose, 104).
[75] John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xxii, 239.

Riccoldo positioned the Qur'an as the central focus of his treatise because he saw this

text as the entry point for creating a dialogue with Muslims. He wrote *Contra legem* as a

guidebook for fellow Dominican missionaries on engaging in this type of Qur'an-centric

dialogue, offering them critiques of the text and supporting passages to use in such dialogues.

The title he chose, *Contra legem Saracenorum*, announced this focus immediately. Then,

Riccoldo dedicated the first thirteen out of seventeen chapters to aspects of the Qur'an. The first

chapter, for instance, was entitled: "Which are the principle errors of the Qur'an."[76] Other

chapters discussed concerns such as "That the Qur'an contains clear falsehoods," and "That the

Qur'an is a violent law and a law of death."[77] This structure further emphasized Riccoldo's

primary focus. Moreover, Riccoldo primarily referenced Muhammad in terms of his relationship

to the Qur'an, as its author (*auctor*).

Riccoldo's choice differed markedly from the that of his predecessors, who had instead

emphasized Muhammad and his role as a pseudo-prophet and progenitor of Islam.[78] For

example, one of Riccoldo's sources, Ramon Martí, entitled his polemic *On the Sect of

Muhammad*. This treatise "focused almost exclusively on the life and deeds of Muhammad."[79]

Meanwhile, another of Riccoldo's sources, *Liber denudationis* also centered its focus on

Muhammad's life and personage. Of the twelve chapters comprising *Liber denudationis*, seven

took Muhammad as their primary subject, while only one addressed the Qur'an directly. This

emphasis on Muhammad featured prominently throughout twelfth- and thirteenth-century

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[76] *Contra legem*, 63.
[77] *Contra legem*, 100, 109.
[78] See Michelina di Cesare, *The Pseudo-historical Image of the Prophet Muhammad in Medieval Latin Literature: A Repertory* (Walter de Gruyter, 2011); Avinoam Shalem, *Constructing the Image of Muhammad in Europe* (Walter de Gruyter, 2013); and Cándida Ferrero Hernández and Óscar de la Cruz Palma, eds., *Vitae Mahometi: Reescritura e invención en la literature Cristiana de controversia* (Madrid, 2014). Both attacks on Muhammad and on the Qur'an served a similar purpose. Each attempted to dispute Islam's source of authority, whether by delegitimizing Muhammad as a pseudo-prophet or by attacking the Qur'an as a human-made text promulgating a false doctrine.
[79] Tolan, *Saracens*, 236.

polemics. Moreover, readers of *Contra legem* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries proved to prefer this focus to Riccoldo's. As a result, they altered *Contra legem* to highlight Muhammad's role.[80] This dissonance between Riccoldo's original focus and the readers' makes the popularity of *Contra legem* all the more impressive. Although other medieval polemics presented a more desirable subject, late medieval and early modern readers still preferred Riccoldo's knowledge and experience.[81]

Two brief case studies can exemplify the array of changes that readers made to the text to alter its focus. Amedee, the Montpelier monk who copied Paris 3655 as a crusading exemplar, positioned the text as a treatise about Muhammad. This new focus is immediately evident. In the upper margin of the text's first folio, Amedee added a brief *incipit* in black ink with an even shorter title in red ink surrounding the *incipit*. The title reads *Contra Machometum* (Against Muhammad) rather than *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, and the *incipit* say, "here begins the book on the topic of Muhammad and against the law of the Saracens."[82] This introduction suggests that Amedee knew Riccoldo's title because he used the same wording in the second half. Yet, the "topic of Muhammad" is placed, literally, ahead of this concern.

Amedee also found more subtle ways to shift focus from the Qur'an to Muhammad. For instance, when Riccoldo quoted or paraphrased the Qur'an, he often left the subject implied in

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[80] Thomas Burman has suggested that one reason *Contra legem* was more popular than Ramon Martí's polemic, which does focus on Muhammad, was because of *Contra legem*'s sole use (or demonstrated use) of the Qur'an as a source (Burman, "Two Dominicans," 85–86). Martí cited a whole complex of Muslim texts and traditions in his work in addition to the Qur'an. This may suggest that early modern readers, while they found Muhammad a more desirable topic than the Qur'an for polemic, also desired their evidence to come directly from the Qur'an.

[81] This difference of viewpoint was clearest when Riccoldo and *Liber denudationis* discussed similar themes. For instance, both gave detailed examples of places in which Islam appears to promulgate contradictory beliefs. The *Liber denudationis* focused on these contradictions in a chapter entitled "On the Many Things in Which [Muhammad] Contradicts Himself" (Thomas Burman, trans. *Liber Denudationis*, in *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs*, 240–385). Riccoldo, however, titled his chapter "That the law of the Saracens is contrary to itself" (*Contra legem*, 82).

[82] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 114r. "Incipit libellus de materia Machometi et contra legem Sarracenorum."

his writings. In Paris 3655, Amedee often explicitly made the subject Muhammad. Thus, where the original might only say "dicit" ("it [the Qur'an] says"), Amedee wrote "machometus dicit" ("Muhammad says").[83] In other cases, Amedee went further by substituting Muhammad for the Qur'an where Riccoldo had explicitly named it. For example, he often wrote "lex machometi" where Riccoldo had used "lex alchoranus."[84] Finally, Amedee further emphasized Muhammad as a figure worthy of polemic by frequently adding the appellation "maledicta" to Muhammad's name.[85] In these subtle ways, Amedee shifted *Contra legem*'s focus on the Qur'an toward a polemical figure of Muhammad.

A second manuscript, Munich 449, employed some of the same tactics while also adding new ones to re-brand *Contra legem* as an attack on Muhammad. Like Amedee, the Munich 449 copyist added a title to the upper margin. This one simply read, "Against the law of Muhammad."[86] As with the previous copy, this was a simple, yet significant change of focus. The conclusion of the text also reinforces the copyist's new emphasis: "Here ends the most useful work of Riccoldo on the errors of Muhammad."[87] In addition to these changes, the copyist also highlighted discussions of Muhammad where they occurred. Muhammad's name is frequently underlined in the text, to draw the attention of the reader. His name is often either the sole underlined word or part of an introduction to a quotation from the Qur'an that starts: "as Muhammad says..."[88] This reading apparatus focuses the reader's attention on information that *Contra legem* could provide on Muhammad and his role in the Qur'an.

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[83] Paris, MS lat. 3655. See, for example, fol. 114v, chapter 1.
[84] Ibid. See, for example, fol. 116v, chapter 6.
[85] Ibid. See, for example, fol. 114v, chapter 1.
[86] Munich, MS 449, fol. 120r. "Contra legem Machometi"
[87] Munich, MS 449, fol. 148r. "Expliciunt dicta utilissima riculdi super errores machometi."
[88] For examples, see Munich, MS 449, fols. 125v, 133v, 142r.

Additionally, the Munich 449 copyist added marginal glosses to the text to guide the reader toward these Muhammad-centric passages. *Contra legem* is heavily glossed throughout, and these glosses commonly contain information linked to Muhammad as both the author of the Qur'an and the leader of Islam. For example, Riccoldo often cited a critique of the Qur'an and then offered a short compendium of examples as evidence to support his claim. In Munich 449, the glosser highlighted the examples connected to Muhammad, such as when Riccoldo specifically cited Muhammad speaking in a Qur'anic quote. The reader also added several marginal notes that remarked on the usefulness of Muhammad-centric passages. Examples include the claims that Muhammad had absorbed the teachings of many heretics and that he had said Islam would endure as long as it remained militarily powerful.[89]

This reader demonstrated the same interest in Muhammad when glossing the other texts in Munich 449. William of Auvergne's *De fide et legibus* (Concerning Faith and the Law, c.1220–1240), one piece of his seven-part treatise on faith and wisdom, preceeds *Contra legem*.[90] In this work, the glosser added short headers on the first few folios to indicate the subject, but they quickly disappear. Yet, at the beginning of the tract's discussion of Islam, they swiftly reappear, and every folio page of this section is labeled, simply: "machometi."[91] Humbert of Romans's *Sermones de crucis contra Saracenos* (Sermons on the Crusade against the Saracens, c.1266–68), a manual to help crusade preachers, follows *Contra legem*.[92] In this work, there is a section on Muhammad, and the same glosser notated the entirety of these folios with an abbreviated form of *machometus*. These passages are also heavily underlined.[93] Thus, the

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[89] Munich, MS 449, fols. 121r, 135r.
[90] Munich, MS 449, fols. 1r–119r. See Sean Murphy, "William of Auvergne," in *Christian-Muslims Relations*, Vol. 4, 288–294.
[91] Munich, MS 449, fols. 58v–64r.
[92] Munich, MS 449, fols. 149r–186v. Interestingly, here Muhammad is rendered *mathatmas* rather than *machometus*, as it had been spelled in the previous two works of the manuscript.
[93] Munich, MS 449, fols. 174v–178v.

copyists and readers of Munich 449 demonstrated a Muhammad-centric focus throughout their study of Islam.

Many other copies positioned *Contra legem* as an anti-Muhammad polemic using at least one of these methods. London 13 E IX, a relatively early, fourteenth-century copy, is titled "Anti alcoron Machometi." This title mentions both the Qur'an and Muhammad's responsibility for it. Vienna 3141 is similarly titled "Contra legem Machometi."[94] Oviedo 24, likely a direct descendant of the original copy, did not title the text. However, the copyist included a conclusion that read, "Here ends the very useful work of Riccoldo concerning the errors of Muhammad."[95] Each of the copies produced (directly or indirectly) from Oviedo 24, including Munich 449, Paris 6225, and Toledo 5-35, preserve this *explicit*. Bergamo 172's copyist underlined Muhammad's name multiple times in the text to highlight his role, like Munich 449's scribe had done. In Florence 431, the copyist inserted Muhammad's name throughout the text, as Amedee had in Paris 3655, to demonstrate his agency explicitly.[96] Cambridge 335 also included small, yet significant changes. For example, in the first chapter heading, Riccoldo had written, "Qui sunt principales errores Alcorani" (These are the principal errors of the Qur'an).[97] In Cambridge 335, the copyist wrote, "qui sunt principales errores *machometi*."[98] Additionally, readers notated their interest in Muhammad in the copies' margins. Bergamo 172, Vienna 3141, Kues 107, Pistoia, A.1, and Dresden A.120.B all frequently emphasize Muhammad in the margins, through glosses that mention his name or otherwise highlight passages pertaining to him. Clearly, the inclination to manipulate *Contra legem* for this means was spread almost as widely as the text itself.

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[94] Vienna, Universitätsbibliothek, Theologische Sammelhandschrift, MS 3141, fol. 272v.
[95] Oviedo, MS 24, fol. 114v. "Explicunt dicta Ricaldi super machometi errorem bene utilia."
[96] Florence, Biblioteca Medici Laurenziana, MS Acquisti e Doni 431, fols. 1r–22v.
[97] Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 186r.
[98] Cambridge, MS 335, fol. 75r. My emphasis.

A single mention of Muhammad subtly embodies this alteration in Riccoldo's focus. In Florence 431, Muhammad's name has a slightly odd form in its first appearance in the text. On closer inspection, it is possible to see that that the "M" in "Muhammad" is adorned with a set of horns, as though to indicate his true nature or origin. Riccoldo had described Muhammad as the spawn that Satan sent to persecute the Church. Yet, Riccoldo also focused the brunt of his scholarly efforts on evaluating the Qur'an rather than its "author." Clearly, many of Riccoldo's readers had a greater interest in polemicizing Muhammad. Thus, their decision to disseminate *Contra legem*, rather than polemics centered on Muhammad, testifies to their respect for Riccoldo's authority.

Conclusion

Thomas Burman concluded that "*Contra legem Saracenorum* was probably the most influential Latin treatise against Islam in the later Middle Ages."[99] Indeed, the influence of Riccoldo's polemic only grew and spread, impacting not just the Latin-speaking community of the later Middle Ages but also Greek-speaking Christendom and many vernacular communities in Europe throughout the early modern period. Why was this treatise so uniquely popular? A survey of the manuscript corpus reveals that late medieval and early modern Europeans privileged Riccoldo's polemic because of his knowledge of Arabic and his time in the Near East. The readers' preference for an experienced guide to understanding Islam and the Qur'an is unsurprising to modern readers. "Eye-witnesses" have a privileged place in knowledge production to this day.

Changes to medieval understanding of authority and authenticity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries not only shaped Riccoldo's impetus to learn Arabic in Baghdad but also

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[99] Burman, "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 689.

created the space for his later status as an *auctor*. Riccoldo's experience, as relayed in the preface of *Contra legem*, became a claim to authenticity as well as an explanation for his knowledge base. He learned Arabic from the source, not in a Dominican *studium generale*, but in a Muslim one. He read the Muslim holy text among Muslims, and he learned how to argue against it by arguing with them. And as readers copied and highlighted Riccoldo's work, they emphasized those facets of the text that reinforced the source of Riccoldo's authority.

The very experiences and knowledge that Riccoldo gained in the Near East led him to focus on the Qur'an as the subject of his polemic. As a missionary, he had gone to Baghdad in order to enter into a dialogue with Muslims and to effect their conversion. It was likely Riccoldo's experience there that reinforced for him the critical role of the Qur'an in Islam. In any case, he seems to have realized that a direct knowledge of the Qur'an was the best way to prepare for discussions with Muslims on religion, and he wrote *Contra legem* to equip future Dominicans with this knowledge.

Riccoldo's focus on the Qur'an as the primary target of his polemic was unusual at the time. Many scholars preferred to attack Muhammad as a pseudo-prophet, a method that fit easily into the wider tradition of Christian polemic against heresy. Designating a progenitor allowed the polemicist to disparage that single person for corrupting the truth and leading others astray. Such a strategy allowed the polemicist to bring the misled but blameless heretics back into the fold.[100] Riccoldo did utilize this method and positioned Muhammad as the source of all that was false or worldly within the Qur'an. Yet he also recognized the need to go further in his disputation of Islam. Riccoldo likely believed that he could use the presence of Christian truths in the Qur'an to

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[100] For some discussion of this approach to heresy, see Rouxpetel, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce's Mission," 252–256.

persuade Muslims to accept those truths. His experiences had taught him to rely on the Qur'an – rather than the Bible – to do this work.[101]

The same readers who prized the source of Riccoldo's knowledge, however, did not heed the resulting insight. One of the most common cases of this disregard is the shift of emphasis from the Qur'an to Muhammad. Muhammad is an important figure in *Contra legem*. Riccoldo portrayed Muhammad as the "author" of the Qur'an and his failing moral character as the critical reason for the Qur'an's corrupt, false, and contradictory passages. Readers highlighted Muhammad's role even further, altering the text to further emphasize his position. These choices suggest that readers valued Riccoldo's authority enough to look for the arguments that they sought within his text rather than reading treatises that placed such material at the fore. The changes they made, however, reflect *Contra legem*'s adaptability to the needs of the audience. Rather than using the text as Riccoldo intended it, readers appropriated specific aspects of the text that accorded with the contexts in which they hoped to use the information and argumentation. In the remaining chapters, I will explore some of the most common of these contexts: church reform, crusading, and humanist scholarship. The use of *Contra legem* in all these circumstances demonstrates the strong relationship between the Church's internal struggles over authority and their responses to the growth of the Ottoman Empire during the long fifteenth century.

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[101] See Waggoner Karchner, "Deciphering the Qur'an in Late Medieval Europe," forthcoming.

Chapter 3. Islam, the Papacy, and the *Ecclesia Catholica*: Challenges in the Church during the Fifteenth Century

The extraordinary reception history of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* is characterized in part by the unprecedented number of languages in which it became available. Riccoldo's polemic was translated for the first time in the mid-fourteenth century. Demetrius Cydones rendered the text into Greek and circulated it throughout the Byzantine Empire. Demetrius was a Byzantine courtier who served several emperors in both advisory and diplomatic capacities during his lifetime.[1] As a celebrated Latin scholar who converted to Catholicism, Demetrius was well-positioned to act as diplomat to the Papacy, as he did on several occasions between 1340 and the 1360s. His position in both Latin and Byzantine worlds facilitated his discovery of Riccoldo's polemic. Copies of *Contra legem* were circulating in Italy and France at this time, and Demetrius may have encountered the text during his travels to the papal court.[2] His scholarly interests put him in contact with Dominicans in Constantinople, and alternatively a copy may have come to him through that channel instead.[3] All the same, Demetrius made his reasons for translating the

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[1] Frances Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy: The Role of Demetrius Cydones" *The International History Review* 7 (1985): 175–213. See more on Cydones in chapter 1.

[2] In addition to the original manuscript copy of *Contra legem* (see introduction) which remained in Florence, Italy, at least four other extant manuscript copies circulated in the fourteenth century. One originated in a Dominican convent in Avignon, France and a second may have had its origins in Avignon as well. Another was copied somewhere in northern Europe, the fourth's origins are unknown, although today it is in northern Italy. Mérigoux has argued that Cydones had access to an "excellent manuscript" of the text, because his translation included additions to the text that Riccoldo wrote into the margins of the original manuscript (Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, MS Conv. Sopp. C. 8. 1173) and which are not included in every subsequent copy – although at least seven of the manuscript copies do have some of these additions (See appendix A). See J.M. Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum' de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Dominicane: Fede e Controversia nel '300 e '500* 17 (1986): 1–144, 52.

[3] On these contacts, see Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy," 181.

text clear: to alert Greek readers to the spiritual dangers posed by the encroaching Ottoman Empire and to encourage Byzantine action against them.

Demetrius explicitly connected the Ottoman threat to issues internal to Christendom. He described the historic schism between the Byzantine Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church as an intra-faith issue. Mending this break, he argued, could provide a solution to the external threat of Ottoman expansion into Christian lands. Demetrius advised the Byzantine emperor John V Palaeologus to seek a reconciliation with Rome – Constantinople's most natural ally – in exchange for Western aid against the Ottomans.[4] Gaining Western military aid required a call for crusade, and since such a call had to come from the pope, John recognized that a reconciliation was necessary.[5] Demetrius accompanied John to Italy and returned a decade later to meet with Pope Gregory XI to continue negotiations.[6] Yet, these efforts came to very little, because Demetrius had overestimated the power of the papacy.[7] Indeed, during his lifetime, the pope's authority in western Europe was arguably at its pre-Reformation nadir.

The Ottomans began expanding throughout Byzantine lands in the fourteenth century, the same period that saw a decline in and challenge to papal supremacy in Europe. Throughout the fourteenth century, the papacy was either dislocated or in schism, and complaints against corruption accompanied this instability. As a result, just as Demetrius made his plan, the papacy was forfeiting much of the power and respect that it had built up in the preceding centuries. While the ecumenical Council of Constance convened to end the papal schisms in 1414, the Council simultaneously asserted its own claim to sovereignty, including over the pope. Fifteen

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[4] Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy," 188. See also James Likoudis, *Ending the Byzantine Greek Schism; containing the fourteenth-century apologia of Demetrios Kydones for Unity with Rome* (New York: Catholics United for the Faith, 1983); and Frances Kianka, "The *Apology* of Demetrius Cydones: A Fourteenth-Century Autobiographical Source," *Byzantine Studies* vii (1980): 57–71.
[5] Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy," 189.
[6] Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy," 190.
[7] Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal Diplomacy," 213.

years later, the Council of Basel built on that declaration. It was at this same moment that the Byzantines renewed their attempts to find Western aid against the Ottomans. Thus, in Europe, the possibility of reconciliation with the Eastern Church became enmeshed within the papal struggle for supremacy in the Western Church.[8] The Council of Basel (1431–1439) vied with Pope Eugenius IV to effect a reunion between the Churches, and Eugenius won. A formal reunion took place at Florence in 1439, where the Byzantines acknowledged papal supremacy. Despite this victory within the Church, the pope's authority still was not great enough to be of use to the Byzantines, and their capital city Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453.[9]

Discussions of the Ottomans have hardly featured in studies of late medieval church reform in Europe.[10] Yet the Councils of Basel and Florence in the 1430s clearly intertwined concern for reforming the Church and establishing its hierarchy with more external concerns, such as fighting heresy, reuniting with the Greek Orthodox Church, and uniting the Christian Church against the threat of Islam, now in the guise of the expanding Ottoman Empire.[11] The

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[8] On the history of the schism, see Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church: from Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. 83–94 on *filioque* and 206–218 on the "official" split; Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the Eleventh and the Twelfth Centuries* (Clarendon Press, 1955); Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: the church, AD 681–1071* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007).

[9] Fifteenth-century calls for crusade and their potency or lack thereof will be discussed further in chapter 4.

[10] In the past, these studies have focused much more commonly on the internal reforms that the Church sought to address, such as papal corruption, simony, and indulgences, as well as on the progression of conciliarism, or in the case of Florence on the theological issues at stake in the schism or the historical divide between the two cultures (references for studies of specific councils given below). Scholars have also discussed the political situation within Europe and the role of secular rulers in these developments. The only study I have found that situates these reforms in the context of Christian-Muslim relations is Frank Welsh, *The battle for Christendom: the Council of Constance, 1415, and the struggle to unite against Islam* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2008). Welsh takes an important step in recognizing the broader context and the reasons that contemporaries sought to unite and strengthen the Church. Yet, in practice, Welsh often discusses the narratives of the Council of Constance and Ottoman expansion separately, one at a time, rather than integrating them or analyzing their connection. Additionally, in one short article, Michael Ryan argued that the Byzantines knew that their survival rested in the resolution of the Great Western Schism and that Europeans also knew that the Schism was affecting Christendom vis-à-vis the Ottomans (Michael Ryan, "Byzantium, Islam, and the Great Western Schism," in *A Companion to the Great Papal Schism (1378–1417)*, eds. Thomas Izbicki and Joelle Rollo-Koster (Boston: Brill, 2010)).

[11] Although contemporaries combined these issues, scholars have most often analyzed only one at a time – for instance conciliarism is not discussed in the same historiographic context as heresy or as the Latin-Greek schism.

Latin Church, acutely aware of its own fragility, greatly feared any schism or heresy that would threaten its stability. By addressing and controlling these challenges, the papacy could reassert its supremacy while also strengthening the Church.

Copies of *Contra legem* from the fifteenth century demonstrate that – like Demetrius – Europeans made the connection between the contemporary state of the Church and the growing threat of an Islamic power. At least four copies of *Contra legem* were created in the middle of proceedings at the Council of Basel. Thus, even while primarily discussing the internal challenges to the Church, churchmen felt impelled by Ottoman success to study and discuss a threat that they characterized in terms of Islamic expansion. These copies of *Contra legem*, along with other contemporary copies, are not isolated in manuscripts devoted solely to Islam or even religious "others." Instead, texts on a wide variety of internal church reforms, including several works generated at the councils, are collated with *Contra legem*. The paratextual material for these manuscripts reveals that fifteenth-century churchmen considered Islam one problem, among several, that faced the Church but that might also strengthen the papacy.

In this chapter, I will first connect the narrative of late medieval church reform to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the corresponding Islamic threat to Europe. Then, I will analyze the historical and textual contexts in which *Contra legem* was copied using nine fifteenth-century manuscript exemplars to understand how scribes and scholars situated Islam and Ottoman power in relation to the other threats facing the Church. Finally, I will compare the readings of *Contra legem* across these copies through marginalia to support these findings. Ultimately, this chapter argues that fifteenth-century scholars used *Contra legem* to depict Islam as a heretical group that threatened the Church. This characterization of Islam allowed

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For a detailed discussion of the conflation of the Ottoman military threat with a broader "Islamic threat," see the following section of this chapter.

churchmen to contextualize problems with the Ottomans – and by extension the needs of the Byzantines – as problems for the papacy, as head of the Church, to resolve. This textual reception demonstrates that medieval polemics about Islam were used in efforts to stabilize the institutional Church in the century prior to the Reformation.

Church reform, Islam, and papal power in the fifteenth century

The traditional story of pre-Protestant church reform and conciliarism can be – and most often has been – told without much mention of Islam. The story goes as follows. The fourteenth-century papacy was characterized by instability and schism.[12] Accusations of corruption damaged the papacy's reputation greatly. Moreover, the seat of the papacy moved from Rome to Avignon for more than seventy years before a schism created two, and later three, different popes, further eroding respect for papal leadership in European society.[13] The Council of Constance convened in 1414 to rectify what became known as the Great Western Schism.[14] While the Council's primary objective was to end the tripartite schism and elect a single pope, those gathered expanded on this goal to discuss the role of the papacy more broadly. A group of clergymen, who became known as conciliarists, declared the sovereignty of general ecclesiastical

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[12] See Richard Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Penguin Books, 1990), 143–150; Keith Sisson, *Papal Hierocratic Theory in the High Middle Ages: From Roman Primacy to Universal Papal Monarchy* (VDM Publishing, 2009); Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, 180–185; Norman Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305–1378* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Joelle Rollo-Koster, *Avignon and its Papacy, 1309–1417: Popes, Institutions, and Society* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Thomas Izbicki and Joelle Rollo-Koster, *A Companion to the Great Papal Schism (1378–1417)* (Boston: Brill, 2010).

[13] These three popes were seated at Rome (Gregory XII), Avignon (Benedict XIII), and Pisa (John XXIII).

[14] For reference, see Welsh, *The Battle for Christendom*; Thomas Morrissey, *Conciliarism and Church Law in the Fifteenth Century: studies on Franciscus Zabarella and the Council of Constance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Phillip Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance, 1414–1418* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994).

councils in the Western Church over the primacy of the pope.[15] The conciliarists still

acknowledged a position for the papacy within the Church, but not as its supreme head.[16]

The Council of Constance attended to other matters of the Church as well. Foremost

among these was the Hussite heresy. The founder of the sect was Jan Hus, a late fourteenth-

century Czech reformer from the Kingdom of Bohemia.[17] Hus attacked the failing moral

standards of the Church, especially of the clergy and the papacy. In 1414, Hus was summoned to

the Council of Constance, and in 1415, he was tried as a heretic and burned at the stake.[18] His

death spurred the fifteen-year-long Hussite Wars.[19] Throughout the period, the newly-elected

Pope Martin V declared five unsuccessful crusades against the Hussites. The Council of

Constance thus left two major issues unresolved: dissidence within the Church and papal

supremacy over it. But since the conciliarists had issued a bull at Constance calling for a new

council every ten years, they ensured that these issues received further attention.

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[15] For both the edited text and an English translation, see Norman Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Volume 1: Nicaea I to Lateran V (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 408–410. On this decree, see Michiel Decaluwe, "Three Ways to Read the Constance Decree *Haec Sancta* (1415): Francis Zabarella, Jean Gerson, and the Traditional Papal View of General Councils," in *The Church, the Councils, and Reform: The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century*, eds. Gerald Christianson, Thomas Izbicki, and Christopher Bellitto (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 122–139. See also Thomas M. Izbicki, "Papalist Reaction to the Council of Constance: Juan de Torquemada to the Present," *Church History* 55, no. 1 (1986): 7–20.

[16] Belief in papal sovereignty – that the Roman pope held primacy in the Church, had supreme authority over it, and was beholden only to God, had been powerful during the High Middle Ages, and a marker of the end of this period was the crumbling of respect for papal authority in the fourteenth century. See Sisson, *Papal Hierocratic Theory*; Southern, *Western Society and the Church*; Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A study in the ideological relation of clerical to lay power* (London: Methuen, 1955).

[17] Perhaps the most prolific recent scholar on the Hussites in English is Thomas Fudge, who has produced several key works on the movement, including *Heresy and Hussites in Late Medieval Europe*, 2nd ed. (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2014); *The Crusade against Heretics in Bohemia, 1418–1437: Sources and documents for the Hussites Crusades* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2002); and *Jerome of Prague and the Foundations of the Hussites Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). See also František Šmahel, "The Hussite Critique of the Clergy's Civil Dominion," in *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Peter Dykema and Heiko Oberman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 83–90; William Cook, "John Wyclif and Hussite Theology 1415–1436," *Church History* 42 (1973): 335–349; Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Josef Macek, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia* (Prague: Orbis, 1958).

[18] For edited and translated versions of the Council's condemnation, see Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 426–431.

[19] See Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*; Fudge, *The Crusade against Heretics*; Welsh, *The Battle for Christendom*, chps. 5 and 6.

Accordingly, Martin convoked the Council of Basel in 1431, just before his death.[20] His successor Pope Eugenius IV reluctantly confirmed the Council, and it was inaugurated. The Council of Basel, following in the wake of Constance, placed papal supremacy and the Hussites at the center of its agenda, which also included other topics central to the well-being of the Church and Christendom, such as clerical reform and reunion with the Eastern Church.[21] Many clerics at the Council of Basel hoped to follow in the footsteps of Constance by asserting their collective primacy over the pope, and Eugenius IV accordingly attempted to dissolve the Council within its first year.[22] Three years later, Eugenius recognized the council formally. Yet papal proponents and conciliarists continued their conflict.

Here, Islam enters the common narrative, if only marginally. One issue over which the two factions at Basel fought was the possibility of reunification with the Eastern Church. The Byzantines had reached out to the Latin Church for aid against the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans slowly rose to power in the fourteenth century in Anatolia, on the outskirts of the Byzantine Empire.[23] By the time Demetrius made his translation of *Contra legem* in the 1360s, the Ottomans had conquered most of Byzantine Asia Minor. Over the following century, they

[20] For reference, see Gerald Christianson, Christopher Bellitto, and Thomas Izbicki, eds. *The Church, the Councils, and Reform: The Legacy of the Fifteenth Century* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008); Michiel Decaluwe, Thomas Izbicki, and Gerald Christianson, eds. *A Companion to the Council of Basel* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[21] See Michiel Decaluwé and Gerald Christianson, "Historical Survey," in *A Companion to the Council of Basel*, 13–27; Birgit Studt, "The Reforms of the Council," in *A Companion to the Council of Basel*, 282–309. The leader of the Council was Cesarini. Cesarini placed himself against Eugenius at the start of the Council and championed the conciliarist agenda. However, he eventually gave support to Pope Eugenius at the Council of Florence. Interestingly for our topic of Islam at the Council of Basel, Cesarini died on crusade at the Battle of Varna in 1444. While his dedication to the threat of Islam, then, was clear, it is unclear whether or not he studied the subject like other councilmen at Basel. See Gerald Christianson, *Cesarini: The Conciliar Cardinal: The Basel Years, 1431–1438* (St. Ottilien: EOS–Verlag, 1979); Christianson, "Cardinal Cesarini and Cusa's *Concodantia*," *Church History* 54 (1985): 7–19; Thomas Izbicki, "Papalist Reaction to the Council of Constance: Juan de Torquemada to the Present," *Church History* 55 (1986): 7–20.

[22] For a brief history of Eugenius's relationship with the Council, see Joseph Gill, *Personalities of the Council of Florence, and other essays* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), 35–44. See also Chadwick, *East and West*, 262.

[23] For a history of the early Ottomans, see Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); see also Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, 13th through 15th Centuries* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

moved northwards through the Balkans, surrounding the Byzantine capital, Constantinople.

Byzantine leaders hoped to gain an ally against the Ottomans, as Demetrius had urged in the

previous century, and they were willing to discuss reuniting with the Latin Church in exchange

for aid.[24] Eugenius and the conciliarists each sought to govern the reunification council, but the

Patriarch of Constantinople and the Byzantine Emperor only agreed to a synod that would

include the Pope.[25]

The Byzantine decision to choose Eugenius instead of the conciliarists at Basel was

unusual considering their traditional perspective on Church authority. The Byzantines had

deferred only to conciliar power and refused to acknowledge Roman papal supremacy for many

centuries.[26] Nevertheless, the Byzantines were more familiar with the papacy and may have

preferred to negotiate terms with a single authority.[27] More importantly, the Byzantines

perceived papal power as the solution to the threat they faced from the Ottomans. As a historical

leader of crusades, the pope appeared to be the Byzantine Emperor's best possible ally. The

Byzantines may have still believed, as Demetrius Cydones had, that only the pope had the power

to successfully organize a crusade.

In 1438, Eugenius convoked a council at Ferrara – soon thereafter transferred to Florence

due to plague – to effect reunion with the Byzantines and consequently reestablish his primacy.[28]

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[24] See Chadwick, *East and West*, 268; Ihor Ševčenko, "Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence,"
Church History 24, no. 4 (1955): 291–323, 293–296; Deno Geanakoplos, "The Council of Florence (1438–1439)
and the Problem of Union between the Greek and Latin Churches," *Church History* 24, no. 4 (1955): 324–346, 324–
329.

[25] See Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 46–84; Ivan Mariano,
"The Council and Negotiations with the Greeks," in *A Companion to the Council of Basel*, 310–339. Chadwick, *East
and West*, 261; Joachim Stieber, *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel, and the Secular and Ecclesiastical
Authorities in the Empire: The Conflict over Supreme Authority and Power in the Church* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978),
35–40. Deno Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine and Italian Renaissances
and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 232–234.

[26] See Mariano, "The Council and Negotiations with the Greeks," 310–339.

[27] Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West*, 233–234.

[28] This Council is considered by the Catholic Church as the continuation of Basel. Most of the scholarship on the
Council of Florence took place in the mid-twentieth century without many advances since that time. See Gill, *The*

Representatives of the Latin and Byzantine Churches debated several points of theological difference as well as the primacy of the Roman Pontiff. Due to the urgent military threat posed by the Ottoman Empire, the Byzantine representatives agreed to most of the demands of the Latin Church, and union was proclaimed in 1439. Following this reunion, several other Christian churches, such as the Armenians and the Copts, also communed with Rome and accepted the primacy of the pope.[29] Eugenius's ecumenical success at Florence strengthened his position against the conciliarists. As Henry Chadwick has argued, "for Eugenius, Greek admission of his primacy, especially his universal jurisdiction, was more important than the theological questions under dispute."[30] By effecting Byzantine submission to papal primacy, Pope Eugenius took a step toward vindicating his claims to supremacy over one, united Church.[31] Moreover, he owed this success to the Byzantine perception of the papacy as a leader against Muslim forces.[32]

Islam, while not a part of this traditional narrative in historiographic scholarship, was an integrated part of contemporary thought on the crises of the Church that characterized the first half of the fifteenth century. As I will demonstrate through a study of *Contra legem* manuscripts, clerics considered threats to the Church in the context of one another. More specifically, they

Council of Florence; Geanakopolos "The Council of Florence," 324–346; Martin Anton, "The Problem of Papal Primacy at the Council of Florence," *Church History* 30, no. 1 (1961): 35–49; Ševčenko, "Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence," 291–323.

[29] For the edited Latin and English translations of the reconciliation bulls, see Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 534–559, 567–583, 586–591. See also Gill, *The Council of Florence*, 305–338; Chadwick, *East and West*, 271 and Ševčenko, "Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence," 301. As was the case in Byzantium, union was not necessarily popular at home. For example, while Muscovite Christians were represented at the Council of Florence during negotiations with the Byzantines, the Muscovites did not receive the news well. The "Greek betrayal" became the foundation for new claims that Moscow was "the Third and last Rome," a new center for Orthodoxy (Ševčenko, 309).

[30] Chadwick, *East and West*, 263.

[31] See Carol Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 59. Richarson notes that, "In the end the agreement did more for the reputation of the popes in Rome than for the safety of the Byzantine Empire as Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453."

[32] On the subject of conciliar and papal authority in the context of crusading, see Norman Housley, "Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Nicholas of Cusa, and the Crusade: Conciliar, Imperial, and Papal Authority," *Church History* 86 (2017): 643–667. Housley argues that, "On the face of it, papal authority over the crusade had emerged as the decisive victor in the three-cornered context of papacy, empire, and council," although that authority remained circumscribed and vulnerable to conciliarist ideas in the future (666–667).

marshalled these threats as potential solutions to challenges against papal sovereignty. Issues

such as schism and heresy, as described above, became problems that the papacy could solve

and, in so doing, rebuild its authority. Thus, churchmen addressed challenges to papal power in

relation to – rather than in isolation from – the other problems facing the Church. The perceived

threat of Islam in European minds served as another such problem-turned-solution during this

period of church reform.

Islam had long been an issue for the Church.[33] Western Christians envisioned their

religion as an evangelical doctrine with a grand destiny, capable of reaching all people. Islam's

rapid spread, engulfing Christian-ruled lands and especially the crusader states, challenged this

Christian triumphalist ideology. As the Ottoman Empire expanded, this ideological threat was

compounded by a military one, as Europeans began to express fear that the Ottomans might

overtake Europe.[34] In this context, the Ottomans were perceived as the most powerful in a long

line of Islamic threats to Christianity.[35] As such, clerical rhetoric often reduced characterizations

of the Ottomans to a broader Islamic enemy. Thus, the success of the Ottoman Empire

represented the threat of Islam, writ large.[36] Critically, this binary approach allowed papal

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[33] See chapter 1, pp. 29–33.

[34] The Ottomans, in practice, did not force conversion, meaning that the growth of the Ottoman Empire did not ipso facto mean the growth of Islam or the threat of Europe's conversion to Islam should the Ottomans conquer it. Nevertheless, it is unclear and, I believe, unlikely, that a majority of Europeans knew this.

[35] Palmira Brummett argues that authors such as those of pilgrimage narratives "linked the Turco-Mongol invasions of the tenth through thirteenth centuries to the Ottoman conquests of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria standing in, as hegemons of Jerusalem, between one plague of 'Turks' and the other" (Palmira Brummett, "Introduction: Genre, Witness and Time in the 'Book' of Travels," in *The 'Book' of Travels: Genre, Ethnology, and Pilgrimage, 1250–1700* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 19). This narrative of Islamic enemies as being blurred into a single enemy was a way of characterizing each group in terms that were historically understandable and polemically useful.

[36] As scholars of Christian-Muslim relations for this period have demonstrated, the relationship between Europe and the Ottomans was far more complex than this simplistic Ottoman = Islam formulation would suggest. Yet these more complex interactions – often economic and political in nature – often only occurred in small circles of politicians, diplomats, and merchants. The simplistic characterization of Islam vs. Christianity was more common. Although I am discussing polemical understandings of Islam made in the context of struggles over Church authority, Richmond Barbour's argument about characterizations of the Ottomans in theater is a useful comparison here. Barbour argues, "It is crucial, therefore, to distinguish early modern Europe's strategic and economic relations with, from its domestic constructions of, Asia. Agents committed to sustained negotiations in Asia typically learned more

supporters to frame Ottoman expansion as an Islamic threat to Christianity. Such a framework

made the pope the best authority to address an extistential threat to all Christians.

Those who sought to reassert papal authority this way had two stratagems available to

them. One, which will be the subject of the following chapter, was to emphasize the pope's role

as leader of the crusades. The second was to characterize Islam as a heresy, thereby placing it

under papal jurisdiction. At the height of papal power in the thirteenth century, the papacy

utilized threats of heresy to define and strengthen its authority in society.[37] While Islam had

many characterizations in medieval Europe, heresy was one of the most popular and useful.[38]

Framing Islam as a Christian heresy both situated the religion within accepted Christian history

and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Church. Fifteenth-century proponents of the papacy

could situate the threat of the Ottoman Empire – perceived as a militant Islamic power – under

papal authority by relying on this framework. In such a context, churchmen read and

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pliant, polyvalent attitudes toward various 'others' – including those Europeans who 'turned Turk' – than did the consumers of their adventures at home in England. From the 1580s onward, the Levant Company cultivated relations of mutual respect and profit with Islam; yet their initiative had limited impact on domestic publications… Moreover, for both demographic and formal reasons, public theatres – novel, increasingly important institutions of popular fantasy – encouraged binaristic thinking. They exploited foreign stereotypes and nationalistic enthusiasms…On the London stage, Turks were represented as the demonic antagonists of Christians, and converts to Islam were ridiculed and punished; at the same time, the London merchants and Queen Elizabeth pursued alliances with Islam against Catholic and other European rivals" (Richmond Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5). See also Daniel Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays From Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 3. I would argue that a similar argument can be made for fifteenth-century clerical discussions of the Ottomans. Moreover, Europe had fewer economic and political relationships with the Ottomans in the fifteenth century than they did in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus, characterizations of the Ottomans as an Islamic "bogeyman" had fewer viewpoints with which to compete.

[37] See R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (New York, 1987), 9–19; Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 2; Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam, 1000–1150* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1–4. For an interesting study that seeks to build of Moore's thesis in the context of the crusades, see Sophia Menache, "Papal Attempts at a Commercial Boycott of the Muslims in the Crusader Period," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63 (2012): 236–259. Menache analyzes the papal ideology at play in commercial boycotts of Muslims during this period as well as the ramifications of the lack of force and effect these boycotts had.

[38] See John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 135–169.

appropriated Riccoldo's polemic against Islam, which frequently characterized Islam as a heresy. Although the history of fifteenth-century church reform often neglects clerical interest in Islam, contemporary manuscripts demonstrate that churchmen integrated this interest into their broader concerns about Church hierarch and papal power.

Contra legem at the Councils of Constance, Basel, and Florence

The reception history of *Contra legem* offers concrete evidence that some clergymen used their time at ecumenical councils to study and discuss Islam.[39] An astonishing nine of the thirty-one known manuscript copies of *Contra legem* were created in the context of the three councils discussed above (1415–1439). Four (or more) of these were copied at least partially at the Council of Basel, and three others contain other texts that originated at the Councils. The four copies of *Contra legem* made at Basel demonstrate the interest that Islam held for clergymen attending the ecumenical council. More critically, the nine manuscripts discussed here offer an overwhelming pattern of scholars treating Islam as a related concern for the Church in the context of reform challenges.

Scholars have highlighted only one major example of scholarship on Islam at the Council of Basel.[40] There, the future German cardinal Nicholas of Cusa met the Spanish theologian Juan

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[39] Interestingly, the Council of Florence took place in the same space where Riccoldo's original manuscript was kept, and so it is quite possible that conciliar attendees had access to the text. Mérigoux has suggested that Juan de Torquemada may have read the text there (Mérigoux, L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur, 50).

[40] This lack of scholarship on the subject is likely because there is not, in fact, any concrete mention of Islam within the conciliar records from the Council of Basel and very little from the Council of Ferrara/Florence. Looking back at previous ecumenical councils, Ryan Szpiech has shown that a historical lack of attention to Islam in councils "up to and including Lateran IV…changed over the course of the thirteenth century, as Christian polemical literature against Islam slowly percolated into normative ecclesiastical rhetoric and legislation, and the Christian-Muslim contact brought about by the Crusades began to necessitate more sophisticated legislation on Muslims by the Church" (Ryan Szpiech, "Saracens and Church Councils, from Nablus (1120) to Vienne (1313–14)," in *Jews and Muslims under the Fourth Lateran Council*, ed. Marie Therese and Irven M. Resnick (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019). Yet with the exception of a few councils of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, most ecclesiastical language on Islam was framed by military rather than polemical concerns. It is all the more interesting, then, that polemical literature on Islam had such popularity at the Council of Basel, behind the scenes.

de Segovia.[41] Both men had an interest in Islam, and both went on to produce scholarship on the

Qur'an: Nicholas wrote a polemic titled *Cribratio Alcorani* (Sifting the Qur'an, c.1461) and Juan

put together a trilingual edition of the Qur'an in Arabic, Latin, and Spanish.[42] But first, they

studied the Islamic text together at the Council of Basel. Nicholas had acquired a Latin

translation, which he shared with Juan.[43] After the fall of Constantinople, they corresponded to

discuss approaches to addressing Islam's growing threat to western Christian society.[44]

This relationship, begun at the Council of Basel, is often portrayed as an unusual side-

interest between two unusual men. However, the evidence of *Contra legem*'s reception during

this period shows that interest in Islam at the Council of Basel was not an exception. In fact, at

least four new copies of *Contra legem* appear to have originated at the Council of Basel. Thus,

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[41] On Nicholas of Cusa and Islam, see James Biechler, "Nicholas of Cusa and Muhammad: a fifteenth-century encounter," *The Downside Review* 101 (1983): 50–59; Biechler, "Christian Humanism Confronts Islam: The Sifting of the Qur'an with Nicholas of Cusa," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 13 (1978): 1–14; Marcia Costigliolo, *Western Perceptions of Islam between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: the works of Nicholas of Cusa* (S.I.: Pickwick Publications, 2017); Costigliolo, "Qur'anic Sources of Nicholas of Cusa," *Mediaevistik* 24 (2011): 219–38; Donald F. Duclow, Ian Christopher Levy, Rita George-Tvrtkovic, eds. *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam: Polemic and Dialogue in the late Middle Ages* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014). On Juan de Segovia and his interest in Islam, see Darío Cabanelas Rodríguez *Juan de Segovia y el problema Islámico* (Madrid, 1952); and Anne Marie Wolf, *Juan de Segovia and the Fight for Peace: Christians and Muslims in the Fifteenth Century* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014). See also James Biechler, "A New Face toward Islam: Nicholas of Cusa and John of Segovia," in *Nicholas of Cusa in Search of God and Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Morimichi Watanabe by the American Cusanus Society*, eds. Gerald Christianson and Thomas M. Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 185–202.

[42] Nicholas of Cusa, *Cribatio Alkorani*, in Nicolai de Cusa, *Opera Omnia: Iussu et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Heidelbergensis*, Vol. 8, ed. Ludovicus Hagemann (Hamburgi: In Aedibus Felicis Meiner, 1986). Unfortunately, the latter work has not survived, although Juan's preface to the work is extant and has been edited: Juan de Segovia, *Prefacio in translationem noviter editam ex Arabico in Latinum vulgareque Hyspanum libri Alchorani* in "El Prologo de Juan de Segobia al Coran (Qur'an) trilingue (1456)," ed. José Martínez Gázquez. *Mittellateinisches* (2003).

[43] There are two Latin copies of the Qur'an attributed to Nicholas of Cusa's collection and with his handwriting in the margins: Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 108 and Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 4071. See José Martínez Gázquez, "A New Set of Glosses to the Latin Qur'an Made by Nicholas of Cusa (Ms. Vat. Lat. 4071)," *Medieval Encounters* 21 (2015): 295–309 and James Biechler, "Three Manuscripts on Islam from the Library of Nicholas of Cusa," *Manuscripta* 27 (1983): 91–100.

[44] In his letter, Juan exclusively uses the medieval term "Saracens" and "secta sarracenorum" to describe the Ottomans and juxtaposes Christians and Saracens in a traditional way. Although Nicholas of Cusa begins by discussing the "Turks" ("Turko") in regard to crusade, he then declares that crusading is not the best option and discusses means of effecting conversion instead. In these later discussions, Nicholas uses the term Saracen rather than Turk, evoking a more general sense of Muslims. See Cabanelas Rodríguez *Juan de Segovia y el problema Islámico*, 303–318. See also Wolf, "Appendix 3: Excerpt from Juan de Segovia, Letter to Nicholas of Cusa, December 2, 1454," in *Juan de Segovia*.

other Council attendees joined Nicholas and Juan (in spirit) in their concern about Islam and their desire to learn more, and they took advantage of the gathering to share and reproduce Riccoldo's well-informed work on the subject. At least three primary copies of the polemic circulated at the conference: the original manuscript(s) as well as two main copies. Other scribes then appear to have made further copies from one of the latter.

The first manuscript, Vienna 3141, has ancillary notes saying that it was produced in Basel in 1433.[45] This manuscript contains seven texts, which I will discuss in more detail below. Of the seven, the first two compose the vast majority of the manuscript, while the final five – including *Contra legem* – are excerpts and abbreviated versions of full works that were added to supplement the first two. The first two texts were copied in four hands – two hands per text – all of which are similar in style. The final five works were all copied in one of the hands responsible for the second text. These relationships suggest that the manuscript was copied as a collaborative effort, fitting for a lengthy council gathering of theologians and legates.

The second manuscript, Oviedo 24, was copied at the Council four years later, in 1437.[46] As discussed in chapter 1, the Spanish Dominican legate Juan de Corral commissioned a copy of *Contra legem* at the Council of Basel.[47] Oviedo 24 contains several other works that will be discussed below, all of which were copied in a single hand with the exception of one later addition. Yet the companion texts are different in Oviedo 24 and Vienna 3141, making it clear that the entire manuscript was not copied from one to the other. Moreover, while the Vienna

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[45] Vienna, Nationalbibliothek. Universitätsbibliothek, Theologische Sammelhandschrift, MS 3141.
[46] Oviedo, Spain, Biblioteca del Cabildo, Catedral de San Salvador de Oviedo, MS 24.
[47] See chapter 1, pp. 45–48.

3141 copy of *Contra legem* is highly abridged, the Oviedo 24 copy is very close to the original text composed by Riccoldo.[48]

These differences suggests one of two possibilities. Possibly, the Vienna 3141 copyist chose to make an abridgement of a complete version of the text that was present at Basel, and then the Oviedo 24 copyist later reproduced the same source much more carefully and thoroughly. A second possibility is that the Vienna 3141 copyist found an abbreviated version at Basel and the Oviedo 24 copyist used a separate, more complete and faithful copy. These various copies may have arrived and departed at different times. Conciliar participants commonly came and left the Council rather than remaining for seven or eight years, and they brought a variety of manuscripts with them, as Nicholas's Qur'an demonstrates. Whether the first scenario or the second is more accurate, *Contra legem* clearly had popularity at the Council of Basel as it circulated widely.

Moreover, a small family of *Contra legem* copies was generated from Oviedo 24, and there is strong evidence that at least two of these copies were made directly from Oviedo 24 at the Council of Basel. The first of these, Toledo 5-35, was copied over several decades in the fifteenth century.[49] The initial series of texts suggests that the first copyist attended the Council of Constance (1414–1418) and the Council of Basel (1431–1438), because most originated at these councils and one is dated during the Council of Constance.[50] *Contra legem*, although in a new hand, was clearly copied directly from Oviedo 24.[51] Knowing that Oviedo 24 originated at

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[48] Oviedo 24 also includes Riccoldo's missionary manual for fellow Dominicans, entitled *Ad nationes orientales* (To the Oriental Nations), a text that accompanied *Contra legem* in the original manuscript, further suggesting that this manuscript had a close relationship to the original copy of *Contra legem*. See Chapter 2, p. 64.

[49] Toledo, Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares de Toledo, MS BCT 5-35.

[50] See below for information on these contents. It was not uncommon for legates and secretaries to attend both Councils—Poggio Bracciolini is one well-known example—and the Toledo 5-35 copyist appears to have added to the manuscript at each.

[51] See appendix A for more information on the relationship between these manuscripts.

the Council of Basel and that Toledo 5-35 was almost certainly present there, it follows that Toledo 5-35's copy of *Contra legem* must have been added at Basel. Additionally, Basel A.X.41, as discussed in chapter 2, was almost certainly copied directly from either Oviedo 24 or Toledo 5-35.[52] Since this manuscript also includes "articles on the authority of the council and the catholic faith concluded April 24, 1439," the closing date for the Council of Basel, a reasonable guess can be made that Basel A.X.41 was copied there as well and remained close to home thereafter.[53] Two other copies of *Contra legem*, Paris 6225 and Munich 449, are from the same family. While Munich is dated 1458, making it impossible that it was created during the ecumenical councils discussed here, Paris 6225 appears to have been generated over a longer period of time, and it is not inconceivable that its version of *Contra legem* was copied at Basel.[54]

These manuscripts demonstrate the interest in Islam and the Qur'an that pervaded the Council of Basel among a much wider circle than Nicholas of Cusa and Juan de Segovia alone. Notably, although Nicholas of Cusa was studying the Qur'an and had a demonstrated interest in manuscripts and manuscript collection at the Council of Basel, he did not discover *Contra legem* there despite its circulation. He learned of the text several decades later, as he was researching the Qur'an more thoroughly to write his own polemic.[55] Moreover, it seems likely that Juan de Segovia would have shared the work with Nicholas if he had read it. Thus, we can assume he had not, even though his Spanish colleague Juan de Corral owned a copy. The network of those interested in the Qur'an and Islam, then, could not have been very tightly-knit.

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[52] Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS A.X.41.

[53] Basel, MS A.X.41, fols. 267v–268r. "Articuli de auctoritate conciliorum et fide catholica 1439 Apr. 24."

[54] Paris 6225 and Munich 449 are both discussed in much more detail in chapter 4 (Paris 6225 also receives further mention below).

[55] Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 107. It is difficult to say why information and texts were not circulating more freely at the Council of Basel. The easiest explanation – that conciliarists and papalists did not collaborate – can be dismissed because Juan de Segovia and Nicholas of Cusa were, in fact, on opposite sides of the conflict. For a more in depth study of Nicholas's reading and use of *Contra legem*, see chapter 4.

Islam in the context of church reform

The nine *Contra legem* manuscripts with connections to church reform reveal that these

clergymen not only had an interest in Islam, but that they made an association between the

theological threat of Islam – a threat heightened by the expanding Ottoman Empire – and other

challenges facing the Church. As mentioned above, the chief topics for discussion at the reform

councils included papal supremacy, the Hussite heresy, clerical reforms, and the reunification of

the Eastern and Western Churches. In these manuscript copies of *Contra legem*, the creators both

literally and figuratively bound these topics to the subject of Islam. For instance, *Contra legem*

manuscripts include works on such reforming topics as the Virgin Birth and clerical

marriage/concubinage, both of which were debated at the Council of Basel.[56] More specifically,

these churchmen incorporated Islam among the problems that the papacy could fix, thereby

reasserting papal sovereignty.

One of the most critical topics addressed in these manuscript copies of *Contra legem* is

the issue of papal power. For instance, Oviedo 24 contains a text titled *Tractatus de potestate*

pape et concilii generalis (Treatise on Papal Power and the General Council).[57] The Dominican

Juan de Torquemada wrote this treatise while at the Council of Basel.[58] Torquemada, from the

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[56] For instance, Paris 3655 (see below) includes *De conceptione Virginis Mariae* (On the Conception of the Virgin Mary), edited by Francis de Mayrone (Paris, 3655, fols. 48r–63v). There was debate about the Immaculate Conception at the Council of Basel, and both Juan de Segovia and Juan de Torquemada produced treatises on the subject (See Kawasaki, *The Castilian Fathers at the Council of Basel*, 114–115). Oviedo 24 contains a treatise titled *De matrimonio clericorum concubinariorum* (On the Marriage of Clerical Concubines) (Oviedo, 24, fols. 1r–12r.). Strengthening clerical discipline was one of the central reforms discussed at the Council, and concubinage had become a popular critique of the clerical status quo (Joachim W. Stieber, "The 'Hercules of the Eugenians' at the Crossroads: Nicholas of Cusa's Decision for the Pope and against the Council in 1436/1437 – Theological, Political, and Social Aspects," in *Nicholas of Cusa in Search of God and Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Morimichi Watanabe by the American Cusanus Society*, ed. Gerald Christianson and Thomas M. Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 222–223). Thus, the Council issued *Decretum de concubinariis* in 1435 to establish penalties for those clergy caught in concubinage (For an edited and a translated version, see Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 485–486. See also Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer, *From Priest's Whore to Pastor's Wife: Clerical Marriage and the Process of Reform in the Early German Reformation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 18).

[57] Oviedo, MS 24, fols. 13r–52r.

[58] This work was published in 1871 and has been digitized. See Juan de Torquemada, *De potestate papae et concilii generalis: tractatus notabilis* (Oeniponti: Liraria Academica Wagneriana, 1871),

same Castilian delegation as Juan de Corral, became a staunch defender of the papacy at the Council of Basel.[59] He continued to represent Pope Eugenius at the Council of Florence, and he was rewarded with a nomination to Cardinal. Juan addressed three related topics in his treatise:

> I. The question concerning the power of the pope and of the general council is addressed and solved; II. Those sentiments therein of the decrees of the councils of Constance and Basel, preferring the power of the general council to the power of the pope, with their foundations, are rejected and the contrary sentiment is declared and settled; III. A certain response given by the representative of Pope Eugenius IV from the faction of the Council of Basel is attacked and refuted.[60]

Juan de Corral preserved this defense of the papacy, likely a direct copy from the original in these circumstances, in his manuscript. Juan de Corral then placed a short excerpt from Thomas Aquinas's work on Islam, given the title "Contra sarracenos," and Riccoldo's *Contra legem* next to this defense of papal sovereignty.[61] While a few blank folios separate *Contra legem* from the former two, the same handwriting is found throughout, and the works appear to have been copied all at once. Moreover, a separate hand – whether Juan's or another reader's – is found in the margins of both sets of treatises. Thus, those involved in the manuscript's creation and reception linked the need to reestablish papal power with other issues facing the Church such as the need to dispute Islam's religious legitimacy.

Another example is found in Paris 4230, which contains a text by Alexander de Sancto Elpidio, OESA, entitled *Tractatus de ecclesiastica potestate* (Treatise Concerning Ecclesiastical

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https://archive.org/details/a609733400torquoft. Accessed May 17, 2018. On Juan de Torquemada and his defense of the Church, see Thomas Izbicki, *Protector of the Faith: Cardinal Johannes de Turrecremata and the Defense of the Institutional Church* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1981).

[59] Note that Juan de Torquemada also appears to have read *Contra legem*, which influenced his own polemic on Islam, *Contra principales errores perfidi Machometi* (see chapter 4).

[60] Oviedo, MS 24, fol. 13r. "I. de potestate papae et concilii generalis quaestio movetur et solvitur, II. Quorundam decretorum conciliorum Constantiensis et Basileensis sententia, postestatem concilii generalis papae potestati praeferens, cum suis fundamentis improbatur contrariaque sententia declarator et ponitur, III. Quaedam responsio facta ambasciatoribus Eugenii IV ex parte Basileensis concilii impugnatur ac refellitur."

[61] Oviedo, MS 24, fols. 57r–66v.

Power).[62] Alexander (ca.1269–ca.1328) dedicated his treatise to the *summum pontificem* (supreme pontiff). Within, he addressed papal jurisdiction in both spiritual and practical realms.[63] Alexander declared that he, "was presenting the most mild little work concerning ecclesiastical power: collected from the sayings of the Catholic doctors who most vigorously established with devoted explanation: to the one holy and Catholic church."[64] While Paris 4320 was copied at the end of the fourteenth century, this treatise was also printed in multiple editions in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, papal proponents over several centuries utilized the text to propagate the pope's sovereignty.[65] In Paris 4230, the text is accompanied by a copy of the Donation of Constantine. Clergy had used this supposedly ancient decree – whereby Emperor Constantine transferred authority over the western half of the Roman Empire to the papacy – to support papal claims for centuries. While humanists discovered the Donation to be a forgery in the mid-fifteenth century, Paris 4320 was copied before this revelation.[66] Thus, the copyist likely meant to provide further support for papal sovereignty. Almost all the texts contained in Paris 4230 were copied in a single hand as one unit, including both Alexander's papal treatise and Riccoldo's anti-Islamic polemic. Like Juan de Corral, the commissioner or scribe of this manuscript connected the issues of papal power and Islam even before the Council of Basel.

Other manuscripts containing *Contra legem* similarly paired this polemic with the topic of papal primacy before the Council of Basel. Because European monarchs had provided the

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[62] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 4230, fols. 1r–37r. Four authors represented in this manuscript were members of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine; possibly, the commissioner or copyist was as well.
[63] Paris, MS lat. 4230, fol. 1r.
[64] Ibid. "Presens opusculum clementissime per de ecclesiastica potestate: ex dictis catholicorum doctorum collectum quod aggredissime indurit deuota subiectio: ad unam sanctam: et catholicam ecclesiam."
[65] For example, the Italian jurist Angelo da Vallombrosa cited Alexander's work when defending papal supremacy in the late fifteenth century (J.H. Burns, "Angelo da Vallombrosa and the Pisan Schism," in *The Church, the Councils, and Reform*, 207).
[66] See Robert Black, "The Donation of Constantine: A New Source for the Concept of the Renaissance?" in *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Alison Brown (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1995), 51–85.

greatest threat to papal sovereignty in the fourteenth century – opening the door for conciliarists

– the topic of authority was often framed as a contest between papal and "temporal" power. Paris

3655 was copied in 1423–1424, between the Councils of Constance and Basel. The single

copyist identified himself as Amedee Bovier, a brother at a convent in "Montepessulano"

(Montpellier, France).[67] Bovier included an anonymous work called *Quaestio de papae*

auctoritate (Inquiry Concerning the Authority of the Pope).[68] This treatise addresses papal power

in relation to secular princes, rather than general councils. And it, too, places the papacy firmly

above its rival. Bovier also copied the work of the thirteenth-century French philosopher Francis

de Mayrone, entitled *Tractatu de principatu temporali* (Treatise on Temporal Leadership).[69] In

this treatise, Francis developed an argument in favor of papal supremacy over the temporal

monarchy.[70] There are marginal notes throughout Paris 3655 in a second hand, indicating that not

only Bovier, but also his readers saw the relevance of an anti-Islamic polemic in the context of a

defense of the Pope's position within Christendom.[71]

     While most of the manuscript copies of *Contra legem* containing treatises on authority

take a pro-papal position, Toledo 5-35 offers an example from a conciliarist point of view.[72] This

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[67] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 3655, fols. 45v, 47v.

[68] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 74r–89v.

[69] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 40r–45v.

[70] For Francis de Mayrone's corpus of works, see Lucas Wadding, ed. *Supplementum et Castigatio ad Scriptores Trium Ordinum S. Francisci*, Vol. 2 (Rome, 1806), 267–272; and Henrik Lagerlund, ed. *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (New York: Springer, 2011), 364–366. See also David Luscombe, "Francois de Meyronnes and Hierarchy," *Studies in Church History Subsidia* 9 (1991): 225–231.

[71] A similar model can be found in Naples VII C 20. This manuscript contains a treatise entitled *De eruditione principum* (On the Instruction of Princes, c.1265), attributed to the French Dominican Guillelmus Peraldus (Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20, fols. 1r–59v). See Guillelmi Peraldi, *De eruditione principum* (Parmae, 1864), ed. Fundación Tomás de Aquino. Accessed May 22, 2018. http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/xre0.html. *De eruditione principum* was a series of sermons and treatises on the education of princes, written for a prince. Yet, according to Michiel Verweij, the entire work claims "a superior position for the Church and the clergy vis-à-vis secular politics" (Michiel Verweij, "Princely Virtues or Virtues for Princes? William Peraldus and his De eruditione principum," in *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages*, ed. Istvan Pieter Bejczy and Cary Nederman (Brepols Publishers, 2007), 51). Verweij mentioned that this work has previously been attributed to Thomas Aquinas but that Antoine Dondaine offered a "decisive argument" in favor of Peraldus (Verweij, 52, 70).

[72] Basel, MS A.X.41, likely copied from either Oviedo 24 or Toledo 5-35, also contains a pro-conciliarist viewpoint, in the text mentioned above, "Articuli de auctoritate conciliorum et fide catholica 1439 Apr. 24."

manuscript contains many works on the ecumenical Councils of Constance and Basel.[73] One is

Jean Gerson's *Tractatus de potestate ecclesiastica et de origine juris et legum* (Treatise on

Ecclesiastical Power and the Origin of Rights and Laws).[74] Gerson was a French theologian at

the University of Paris, and he became one of the driving forces behind the Council of

Constance.[75] He was also a critical link between the conciliarist movement and the University of

Paris that remained through the Council of Basel.[76] His *Tractatus* positions the pope as a

constitutional monarch who could be removed by an ecclesiastical council.[77] In the same hand,

the manuscript also contains an oration given at the Council of Basel.[78] The orator, identified in

the text as Nicholas, the provost of Krakow, was likely Nicholas Lasocki, the king of Poland's

advisor who came to the Council of Basel with a conciliarist viewpoint but eventually split from

that faction.[79] The copyist of these texts, therefore, demonstrated a strong conciliarist viewpoint.

Although *Contra legem* follows this grouping in a different hand, marginal notations

demonstrate that readers read them together and saw them as related.

Thus, papalists were not the only clergymen who responded to the growing Ottoman

Empire in terms of a Christianity-Islam binary. In addition to *Contra legem* manuscripts, we

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[73] Toledo, BCT 5-35.

[74] Toledo, BCT 5-35, fols. 56v–97v. The manuscript also contains a series of letters edited by an "Alan Anoige" to notables such as the King of France, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the University of Paris. These precede Gerson's treatise in the same handwriting, suggesting that they were copied together. Thus, the letters may have been sent in service of the Council (Toledo, BCT 5-35, fols. 101v–126v).

[75] See Francis Oakley, "Gerson as Conciliarist," in *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[76] See Anthony Black, "The Universities and the Council of Basle: Collegium and Concilium," in *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Jozef Ijsewijn and Jacques Paquet (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1978), 511–523.

[77] The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Jean de Gerson," *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed May 18, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-de-Gerson.

[78] Toledo, BCT 5-35, fols. 127r–140v.

[79] See Paul Knoll, *"A Pearl of Powerful Learning": The University of Cracow in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 257; and John Jefferson, *The Holy Wars of King Wladislas and Sultan Murad: The Ottoman-Christian Conflict from 1444* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 277; W.F. Reddaway, J.H. Penson et al., "Jagiello's Successors: The Thirteen Years' War with the Knights, 1434–1466," in *The Cambridge History of Poland*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 239.

have the example of Juan de Segovia, the cleric studied the Qur'an with Nicholas of Cusa at

Basel. Juan was an ardent conciliarist who discussed the need for a dialogic, theologically-based

response to the fall of Constantinople. While the Latin clergy disagreed over authority, then,

Islam represented a common concern. Both camps identified Islam as a critical issue within the

context of church reform and renewal. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the Council of Florence,

the threat of Islam did not have enough strength to unite the papalists and conciliarists.[80] Indeed,

the two groups vied with one another to organize and carry out reunion with the Eastern Church

in exchange for aid against the Ottomans. Conciliarists and papalists each sought to control the

Christian response to the recent advances of Ottoman armies, because both groups saw this issue

as a potential site of power. While one specific way that the Church sought to establish power

over Islam is explored in the next section, here it is important to note that clergymen of divergent

orientations integrated the topic of Islam into their discussions of authority. If they had not taken

this approach, the issue may have united rather than divided them.

While the conciliarists and papalists could not unite over how to deal with Islam, the

growing Ottoman Empire did provide a common enemy for the Eastern and Western Churches.

This threat led to a nominal reconciliation at the Council of Florence. It is unsurprising, then, that

a number of *Contra legem* manuscripts integrate anti-Islamic polemics with documents from the

Council of Florence, works on the Byzantine Church, and other related texts. Vatican 7317, for

instance, contains a text that originated at the Council of Florence in the same hand as *Contra

legem*.[81] After the union with the Byzantines was announced on July 6, 1439, other, smaller

Eastern Christian sects joined ranks. Indeed, even "before all the Greeks had left, the Armenians

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[80] On an individual level, of course, clerics such as Nicholas of Cusa and Juan de Segovia could study the issue together despite their different stances – although it is also notable that both men changed their stances while at the Council of Basel. Yet, such cooperation did not have the force to push the two groups closer together on their issues.
[81] Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 7317.

had arrived."[82] Eugenius IV published a bull on the occasion of this latter reunion on November 22, 1439, and it is copied into Vatican 7317.[83] Eugenius IV had already asserted papal power by effecting an agreement with the Byzantines. Achieving subsequent reunions allowed him to solidify his authority as sovereign head of the Church, and the bull represented that position.

Interestingly, Vatican 7317 was not copied until almost two decades after the Council of Florence. Cardinal Domenico Capranica commissioned a man named Arnold Melxter to copy the manuscript, which was completed in 1458.[84] Capranica, at the behest of Pope Eugenius IV, had participated in the Council of Florence and had helped work with the Byzantine delegation. After 1453, he also actively worked to promote and organize a crusade to retake Constantinople.[85] Capranica's background and his commissioning of these contents suggest that he had a specific vision of the Catholic Church's role in the fight against Islamic enemies. In this context, *Contra legem* could be used as a means of defining and assessing the threat that the Ottomans presented to the now-conquered eastern Christians as well as to Europe.

In addition to texts derived from the reform councils, many *Contra legem* manuscripts also contained treatises on the Byzantines and the Orthodox faith more broadly. For instance, in Vienna 3141, the hand that copied *Contra legem* was also responsible for two works on "the

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[82] Gill, *The Council of Florence*, 305. Reconciliations with the Maronites and the Chaldeans would follow, even if – like the Greeks – it would not last. St. John of Capistrano, a Franciscan who had been sent to oversee the Oriental Province of the Friars Minor, worked on the negotiations with the Armenians. Capistrano was a reader of *Contra legem* who will be discussed in chapter 4.

[83] Vatican, MS Vat. Lat. 7317, fols. 378v–382v. For the edited text, see Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 534–556. A brief overview of the contents of the bull can be found in Gill, *The Council of Florence*, 307.

[84] Capranica is oft-mentioned but seldom studied in the English historiography of the period. For an overview of Capranica's life, see Thomas Shahan, "Domenico Capranica," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 3 (1913). His manuscript may have been copied from Nicholas of Cusa's copy (Kues, MS 107). Nicholas had an acquaintance with the Cardinal Capranica, whom he had taught previously at the university of Padua and who had been at the Council of Basel, and the two copies are very similar. On their relationship, see Stieber, "The 'Hercules of the Eugenians' at the Crossroads," 234–234. On his involvement in the Council of Basel, see Emilie Rosenblieh, "Lawyers and Legal Proceedings in the Council," in *A Companion to the Council of Basel*, 249–251.

[85] Shahan, "Domenico Capranica."

Greeks." The first was a letter from Pope Nicholas I (r. 858–867).[86] In 863 CE, Nicholas

involved himself in a dispute between an ousted Patriarch of Constantinople Ignatius and his

successor, Photius. Nicholas declared in favor of the deposed Ignatius and excommunicated

Photius.[87] The letter appears to be one in a series that Nicholas sent on this subject. Nicholas's

decision contributed to the much later (1059) schism between the Roman and Byzantine

Churches, and the letter was likely read in this context in the fifteenth century. It is followed by

an anonymous treatise that describes eastern heresies, in which the section on "Greek" errors is

the longest by far. These two texts thus emphasize both the historical and the theological nature

of the East-West schism.[88]

Similarly, Paris 3655 contains two polemical treatises on the "Greek" faith that provided

a theological perspective on the schism. As mentioned above, Paris 3655 was created in 1423–

1424, between the Councils of Constance and Basel. The first polemic is titled *Contra errores

Graecorum* (Against the Errors of the Greeks).[89] This work is twenty folios long, and it is

followed immediately by a second, shorter text introduced as "a few notes against the

aforementioned errors of the Greeks."[90] The inclusion of polemical treatises on the Greeks offers

a common example for how European clerics viewed the Byzantines during the lead up to the

Council of Basel. Alternatively labeled heretics or schismatics, the Byzantines were

characterized as a group that had left the fold. Thus, they could and should be brought back.

When the Latin clergy began discussing aid for the Byzantines at the Council of Basel, they

approached the Byzantines from this perspective and demanded reunion with the Latin Church in

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[86] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 270r. The online catalog incorrectly dates this letter to 1103. Catalog. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Accessed May 22, 2018. http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC13958031.
[87] On this history, see Chadwick, *East and West*, 119–192, esp. 139–146.
[88] Vienna, MS 3141, fols. 270r–272v.
[89] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 151v–161r.
[90] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 161r–163r. "Incipit aliqua notabilia contra prefatos errores Grecorum."

exchange for aid. In this way, the threat of Islam created a solution for the ongoing problem of "Greek" heresy.[91]

Finally, Pesaro 1381 provides evidence of a post-Council framework for Riccoldo's reception. This manuscript, which was composed in the second half of the fifteenth century, includes a commentary on the fall of Constantinople called *De Constantinopolis expugnatione* (On the Conquest of Constantinople).[92] This later perspective may reveal anxiety about the failure of Latin Christians to help the Byzantines. As described above, quid-pro-quo had been the driving impetus behind the Byzantines' acceptance of reunion in 1439. Back in the Byzantine Empire, the reunion was heavily criticized and never fully ratified, and after 1453 many argued that their defeat by the Ottomans was punishment for accepting the supremacy of the pope and the other conditions at Florence.[93] In Europe, meanwhile, clerics expressed dismay that no Latin response had been forthcoming, nothing done to save the Eastern Church. This manuscript addresses the Byzantines from a contemporary perspective, expressing the crisis of Ottoman expansion in practical terms of loss. Each of these manuscripts takes a different perspective on the relationship between Europe and the Byzantine Empire. Yet all three demonstrate that fifteenth-century Latin scholars connected the issues raised by the Byzantines and the Ottomans. These associations are manifest in the contents of many *Contra legem* manuscripts.

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[91] Several other manuscript copies of *Contra legem* also contain polemical treaties against the Greeks. Some are discussed below, but two additional mss are Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20 and Rome, Santa Sabina, Archivum Generale, O.P. XIV 28b.

[92] Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, MS 1381, fols. 1r–6v. There is no title within the manuscript for this text, but the catalog has given it this title. The work was, according to the catalog, copied by Pietro Pierleoni Rimini (d.1463). Mirabile Digital Archives for Medieval Culture, "Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana 1381," http://www.mirabileweb.it/manuscript/pesaro-(pesaro-urbino)-biblioteca-oliveriana-1381-manoscript/123027. Accessed May 22, 2018.

[93] Stieber, *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel, and the Secular and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the Empire*, 42; Chadwick, *East and West*, 269; Ševčenko, "Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence," 291–323.

The broader context of debates on papal authority and the perceived threat from the Ottoman Empire also informs the seemingly disparate contents of several *Contra legem* manuscripts. For instance, Paris 6225 contains many works without an immediately clear theme.[94] In addition to *Contra legem*, this manuscript has a series of other anti-Islamic polemics, letters written about the Hussites, the Hundred Year's War, and the Near East, and texts produced at a post-1453 crusade council. Moreover, the manuscript's texts are not chronological in origin; they begin in the contemporary fifteenth century and end in the early twelfth century. Yet, on closer examination, the texts all concern Christendom's unity and strength.

For example, Paris 6225 contains a series of letters from the Council of Basel to the Kings of England and France.[95] The Council initiated this correspondence with the aim of reconciling the two nations, which by the 1430s had been engaged in the Hundred Years War for as long as the name suggests. In the letter from Basel to the King of England, the Council called "for the peace of the Christian faith" suggesting that the Kings must consider the needs of Christendom above those of their own nations.[96] The Church had a history of these attempts at reconciliation. Previous popes had written letters to the two Kings, urging them to unite on a crusade rather than fighting one another.[97] Such an alliance was commonly seen as the only way to initiate a successful crusade. At the Council of Basel, reestablishing peace among the Latin Christian princes was an explicit goal.[98] The Hundred Years War was a hindrance to either nation pursuing a crusade on a large-enough scale to be effective. Yet these two nations had the

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[94] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 6225. Microfilm 7614.

[95] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fols. 179r–181v.

[96] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol. 181r.

[97] In 1345, Pope Clement VI wrote to both Kings to ask them to stop their infighting and unite on a crusade. Pope Urban V repeated this entreaty in 1370, Pope Nicholas V did so in 1451, and Pope Pius II did so in 1459 (Kelly Devries, "The Lack of a Western European Military Response to the Ottoman Invasions of Eastern Europe from Nicopolis (1396) to Mohacs (1526)," *The Journal of Military History* 63, no. 3 (1999), 545–46).

[98] Stieber, "The 'Hercules of the Eugenians' at the Crossroads," 221–255, 222.

best resources in Christendom for waging a successful crusade. Ending the conflict was the only means by which many churchmen believed a crusade could be feasible.

Paris 6225 also contains a letter from Poggio Bracciolini to Leonardo Bruni (i.e. Leonardo Aretino).[99] Poggio was a lay secretary to many popes throughout the first half of the fifteenth century, and he attended the Council of Constance on behalf of (anti-)Pope John XXIII. There, he often wrote to his friend and fellow humanist Leonardo.[100] This letter discussed the fate of condemned heretic Jerome of Prague, one of Jan Hus's chief followers. Poggio described the circumstances in which Jerome, like Jan, was burned at the stake for heresy.[101] At first glance, this letter seems similarly out of place in a manuscript largely concerned with Islam and crusading. Yet many readers would have seen the Hussites as another obstacle to crusade. The Hussites both challenged the authority of the Church and, after Constance, distracted it by provoking "internal" crusades in Bohemia. By quelling the rebellious Hussites quickly, more manpower and wealth could be directed to a crusade against the Ottomans instead. By viewing the letters of the Council and of Poggio Bracciolini in this context, their appearance in a manuscript dedicated to calls for crusade and polemical works on Islam is less surprising. This combination of texts suggests that some contemporaries viewed the reforming councils as the first, stabilizing step toward the larger goal of defeating Islam.

Pesaro 1381, mentioned above, also contains many seemingly disparate texts.[102] This manuscript is an interesting amalgamation that includes several folios of parchment from a thirteenth-century codex bound to either side of a paper codex. Copied in Italy in the fifteenth or

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[99] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fols. 176r–179r. This letter has been translated into English, and published among other places in Fudge, ed. "Letter from Poggio Bracciolini to Leonardo Bruni, Constance, May 30, 1416," in *Jerome of Prague and the Foundations of the Hussite Movement*, 338–343.
[100] Welsh, *The Battle for Christendom*, chapter 6: "The Three-Pope Problem."
[101] For the condemnation of Jerome of Prague, see Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 433–434.
[102] Pesaro, MS 1381.

early sixteenth centuries, this manuscript includes eighteen different texts, varying in length and in topic. For instance, there are Italian poems, historical works, and a treatise on astrology within the codex. Yet, *Contra legem* is set at the head of a series of texts that appears as a cohesive grouping inside the larger manuscript.[103] All five works in this series were copied in the same hand and have the same styling with initials through the text, underlining in red ink, and section markers. Aside from Riccoldo's polemic, these include a description of contemporary heresies ("Ex erroribus christianorum qui in scisma et heresim ceciderunt aliqua inferius describentur breuiter") including the Armenians, Nestorians, and Jacobites, two brief notes on the origins of ancient heresies, and a list of Hussites errors ("Errores Iohannis hus qui fuit dampnatus in concilio constatiene et exinde cremat").[104]

Like Paris 6225, then, Pesaro 1381 pairs Muslims and the Hussites. However, Poggio's letter gave an account of the Hussites partly from a narrative perspective, discussing the condemnation of a follower and the events surrounding his death. The scribe of Pesaro 1381, while mentioning the death of Hus at the Council of Constance, takes a directly polemical perspective on the Hussite heresy, listing fifteen "errors" for which Hus was condemned. The copyist also placed contemporary threats to the Church, such as the Hussites, into a continuum of heresy that stretched back centuries. And most importantly for this study, the copyist also placed Islam in this context through the inclusion of *Contra legem* among these polemics.

Many other *Contra legem* manuscripts related to the issue of Church reform also dedicated space to polemics against various religious "others."[105] For instance, Vienna 3141 contains an anonymous treatise titled *Tractatus de erroribus et haeresibus Graecorum,*

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[103] Pesaro, MS 1381, fols. 11r–29v.
[104] Pesaro, MS 1381, fols. 28v–29v.
[105] Indeed, this category of writing appears more commonly than any other in manuscript copies of *Contra legem*.

Surianorum, Iacobitarum, etc. (Treatise on the Errors and Heresies of the Greeks, the Syrians, the Jacobites, etc.).[106] Paris 3655 includes Francis de Mayrone's *Quaestio de haereticis* (Inquiry on Heretics).[107] Vatican 7317 has a tract that addresses a number of "others," including Muslims, Jews, schismatics, Greeks, Jacobites, Nestorians, and Tartars/Pagans.[108] Finally, Paris 4230 includes a polemic titled *Tractatus contra Judaeos* (Treatise against the Jews).[109] Jews, heretics within Latin Christendom, eastern Christian sects, and Muslims represent the main categories of religious "others" in western Christian thought during this period. Latin Christians clearly categorized and distinguished among religious "others" within these polemics. Yet, their consistent grouping in manuscripts related to Church reform suggests a broader thematic similarity in the eyes of late medieval clerics.

From the late fourteenth through the early sixteenth century, challenges to papal authority motivated papal proponents to reassert the pope's sovereignty, such as by reincorporating Eastern sects into the Latin Church. The rising power of the Ottoman Empire encouraged these proponents to also consider how the pope might establish authority by addressing Islam directly. Therefore, clerics utilized *Contra legem* to emphasize the characterization of Islam as a heresy.

Reading *Contra legem*: Islam as a heresy

By looking more closely at three of the manuscripts discussed above, a more detailed picture of the ways *Contra legem* was read and used to portray Islam as a heresy may be drawn. Vienna 3141 was created partially at the Council of Basel in 1433 and was therefore embedded most directly in the context of conciliarism and church reform. Paris 3655 was copied a decade

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[106] Vienna, MS 3141, fols. 270r–272v. There are many others listed, including the Nestorians, the Armenians, the Maronites, the Georgians, and the Jews.
[107] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 45v–47v.
[108] Vatican, MS 7317, fols. 201r–212v. "Sarracenos," "judeos," "scismaticos," "grecos," "iacobinos," "nestorianos," and "tartaros seu paganos."
[109] Paris, MS lat. 4230, fols. 139r–151v.

earlier in 1423–1424, between the Councils of Constance and Basel, by Amedee Bovier. Finally, Pesaro 1381 was copied in the fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries in Italy. In all three, *Contra legem* was used to cast Islam as a Christian heresy.

In western Europe, the image of Muslims as heretics and Muhammad as a heresiarch developed in the twelfth century.[110] As Christian scholars collected information on Islam, "they studied it in order to place it in their preestablished taxonomy of error, the better to refute it."[111] This tradition, already established in Eastern Christendom by John of Damascus and in Iberia by Paul Alvarus, allowed polemicists to refute Islam using well-established methods and frameworks.[112] Riccoldo relied heavily on this characterization of Islam in *Contra legem*, and these three manuscripts demonstrate that readers found such depictions useful. This reading of *Contra legem* reinforced the placement of Riccoldo's text in manuscripts – and accordingly the issue of Islam – among the threats to the Church that the papacy might "fix."

All three manuscripts deploy *Contra legem* as a response to heresy, using accompanying texts to characterize Islam as a heretical threat to the Church. In Vienna 3141, *Contra legem* is presented as one subsection in a larger work on heresy.[113] That work begins with the letter of Pope Nicholas I, mentioned above, that began the Photian schism. After the letter, there are a series of subheadings, all in the same format, the first of which reads: "What follows are the errors of the Greeks and the first among them is…" with a list of errors taking up the next two folios.[114] The remaining sections on other eastern Christian heresies are even shorter, with brief headings such as "concerning the Jacobites" or "concerning the Nestorians"

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[110] Tolan, *Saracens*, 136.
[111] Tolan, *Saracens*, 137.
[112] Ibid.
[113] *Contra legem* is on fols. 272v–281v of Vienna, MS 3141.
[114] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 270r. "Secuntur errores Grecorum et primus erit iste…"

and paragraphs that follow.[115] Finally, there is a section on the Jews, before the beginning of

Contra legem. The work is titled "Against the law of Muhammad," in the same style of

subheading as the previous sections. While *Contra legem* is longer than the previous sections, the

copyist concluded the work by drawing it back into the larger work with an *explicit* that

referenced the Greek errors.[116]

Paris 3655 situates *Contra legem* similarly.[117] The copyist used blank folios on either side

to section off a series of polemical works within the codex. These include a table "On the

Catholic faith" by Alan of Lille, Riccoldo's *Contra legem*, excerpts from Jacobus de Voragine's

Legenda aurea that discussed Islam (taken from a polemical treatise by Petrus Alfonsi), a treatise

against the Jews by Nicholas of Lyra, and the anonymous polemic against the "Greeks" with

additional notes that was mentioned above.[118] While this section is separated from other works in

the manuscript, there is often only a short space between works within the section to further

emphasize their correlation. For instance, *Legenda aurea* follows *Contra legem* immediately,

with only a sentence in red ink introducing the text to distinguish it from the previous work.

Finally, *Contra legem*'s copyist in Pesaro 1381 also placed that work among other

polemical treatises on religious "others," as described above.[119] *Contra legem* begins the top of a

fresh folio, following a blank verso folio. It ends with a brief concluding statement at the bottom

of a recto, and on the verso of that folio is a brief description of the origin of the Nestorian

heresy.[120] Then follows the treatise on various Eastern Christian "sects," the other note on

ancient heresy, and the list of Hussite errors.[121] Evidence from the binding suggests that this

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[115] Vienna, MS 3141 fol. 271v. ("De iacobitus" and "De Nestorinis")
[116] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 281v. "Hec brevitur de erroribus grecorum dicta…"
[117] *Contra legem* is on fols. 114r–119r of Paris, MS lat. 3655.
[118] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 113r–v, 114r–119r, 119r–120r, 120r–151v, 151v–163r.
[119] *Contra legem* is on fols. 11r–24r of Pesaro, MS 1381.
[120] Pesaro, MS 1381, fol. 24v.
[121] Pesaro, MS 1381, fols. 25r–29v.

collection of texts in the same hand may have been inserted into the codex as one set.[122] The

copyist thus correlated the topics of Islam and Christian heresies, past and contemporary, and

conceived of these deviances as a unit.

In addition to sharing a common context for presenting *Contra legem*, these three

manuscripts all present abbreviated versions of the text.[123] The omissions are significant.

Riccoldo's polemic originally included seventeen chapters and a preface. In each of the three

cases, the text contains some version of each chapter, with one exception. Yet all the chapters are

abridged to varying degrees. By comparing how complete each of the chapters is across these

manuscripts, it emerges that the same chapters are most abridged. Chapter five, which critiques

the Qur'an for not holding virtuous or philosophical sentiments, is never emphasized. Chapters

ten, eleven, and twelve, which dispute the Qur'an based on its violence, lack of organization, and

immorality are also usually highly abbreviated. Indeed, Paris 3655 is missing chapter eleven

altogether. Finally, all three manuscripts minimize chapter fourteen, which tells the story of

Muhammad's night journey.

These chapters all share a focus on criticisms of the Qur'an that do not relate to

Christianity. Riccoldo often used comparison to sharpen his disputation. For example, he

compared the miracles found in the Gospel to the lack thereof in the Qur'an. However, in the

more abridged chapters, Riccoldo focused less on comparative points and more on isolated

critiques of Islam based on universally negative characteristics, such as immorality or virtue.

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[122] The section on heresy is bound together, with gaps in the overall manuscript binding on either side of this section. However, using only digitized color photos (although of a very good quality) of the manuscript makes it difficult to make a more precise description.

[123] Because the three manuscripts abbreviate the text in different ways, I will cite the complete edition of *Contra legem* when discussing a specific passage from the text or when comparing the different manuscripts. See J.M. Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Dominicane: Fede e Controversia nel '300 e '500* 17 (1986): 60–142.

Their lack of interest in these chapters suggests that copyists found this aspect of the disputation less useful. By contrast, each of the three manuscript copies gives a very full representation of chapter one of *Contra legem*. This chapter overviews "the principle errors of the law" of the Qur'an. Riccoldo not only describes the Qur'an's theological "errors," but also actively compares each error to established Christian heresies. For example, he argues, "Indeed Muhammad denies the Trinity with Sabellius," who was a third-century heretic from the Roman Empire.[124] These comparisons would guide an educated churchman or theologian – with a knowledge of historical heresy – to understand the errors propagated by Islam. The copyists of Vienna 3141, Paris 3655, and Pesaro 1381 highlighted this chapter for their readers by presenting a fuller version of the text here.

While the contents of *Contra legem* give some indication of the copyists' intention for the text, marginalia can similarly reveal their readers' mindsets. Although Pesaro 1381 does not have marginalia in *Contra legem*, both Paris 3655 and Vienna 3141 do. Each appears to have only one marginal hand, and the hand is different from the copyist's in both cases. The overall interests of the manuscripts' readers appear to coordinate with – or perhaps are led by – the copyist's focus: comparisons between Christianity and Islam and the figure of Muhammad.[125]

The readers of *Contra legem* in Paris 3655 and Vienna 3141 most often highlighted points of comparison between the two religions. Often, the Paris 3655 reader pointed to where the text described differences in Christian and Muslim beliefs. For example, in chapter five, there is a notation next to a comparison of Muslim and Christian conceptions of the final days and the

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[124] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 64. "Ipse namque Machometus cum Sabellio negat Trinitatem…"
[125] By comparison, I will discuss the very different focus displayed by readers with an interest in crusading in chapter 4.

possibility of gaining salvation.[126] Likewise, in chapter seventeen, Paris 3655's reader denoted an argument that compared the Qur'an to the Gospel. Riccoldo argued that Muslims viewed the Gospel as containing theology and a path to salvation that was too difficult to understand and to follow; by contrast, the Qur'an presented them with an easy, though false, way forward.[127] Vienna 3141's reader highlighted passages that compared Islam to other known heresies. For example, chapter one has two marked abbreviations for *nota*, or "observe." The first corresponding passage describes Muhammad as the heir to Arius and all other heresies and as a puppet of the devil.[128] The second compares Muhammad's description of Christ to the teachings of the early heretic Carpocrates, the founder of a Gnostic sect.[129] The readers of Vienna 3141 and Paris 3655 marked nearby passages in chapter nine that discussed Qur'anic descriptions of angels and demons.[130] Riccoldo criticized these views as theologically unsound from a Christian perspective. Thus, the readers highlighted the differences between the two religions: the soundness of Christianity compared to the deviant nature of Islam.

To further emphasize the heretical nature of Islam, both readers also highlighted descriptions of the Qur'an's false presentation of Christian concepts. The readers annotated chapter nine – which claims that the Qur'an is often false – more often than other chapters.[131] Riccoldo offered many types of critiques, such as that the Qur'an is irrational, immoral, and violent, yet these readers chose the depiction of Islam as a religion of lies, which is consistent with characterizations of heresy as misleading or deceiving. For example, Vienna 3141's reader

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[126] Here, Riccoldo introduced the *shahada*, whereby any Muslim may be saved through a proclamation of faith. Riccoldo characterized this singular requirement as far too easy a path to salvation in comparison to the rigors demanded of Christians. Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 117r.

[127] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 119r. (Chapter 17 is marked as 16 in this manuscript, which is missing chapter 11.)

[128] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 273v.

[129] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 274r.

[130] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 278v; and Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 117r.

[131] See Vienna, MS 3141, fols. 278v–279r; and Paris, MS lat. 3655, fols. 117r–v.

wrote *nota* next to a passage that says the Qur'an argues that God could not have a son because he would also need a wife – an impossibility.[132] Riccoldo asserted that this argument was clearly false and gave an orthodox Christian explanation for the relationship of the Trinity and the Virgin birth. Paris 3655's reader found similar passages of interest in chapter fifteen.[133] For instance, discussions of the Qur'anic descriptions of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary are marked using short notes such as "concerning the Son of Mary," "concerning the Holy Spirit," and "concerning Saint Mary."[134]

While considered false or theologically unsound, these passages demonstrate the shared basis of the two religions, thereby equating Islam with other Christian heresies that deviated from accepted doctrine (often on related topics). Moreover, Riccoldo argued that kernels of Christian truth existed in the Qur'an. The reader of Vienna 3141, for instance, notated a passage in chapter sixteen that said, "For even Muhammad thus commended Christ as the most excellent prophet above all others… and the Gospels as the most magnificent doctrine above all of scriptures of God."[135] Such truths were not, however, reassuring to contemporary Christians. To the contrary, coincidence with orthodox Christian teachings made heresies like Islam all the more dangerous as a lure for followers.

Finally, the copyists and readers of Paris 3655 and Vienna 3141 demonstrated a significant interest in the central figure of Muhammad as the originator of the heresy. In the case of Paris 3655, the copyist constructed the entire text as a treatise on Muhammad. The title of the work is: "Contra Machometum" rather than "Contra legem Saracenorum," and the *incipit* reads:

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[132] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 278v.

[133] In Paris 3655, chapter 15 is marked as chapter 14.

[134] Paris, MS lat. 3655 fol. 118r–v. "de filio marie;" "de spiritu sancto;" "de beata maria;" "de Christus."

[135] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 281r. "Nam et Machometus sicut Christum excellentissime commendauit super omnes alios prophetas qui unquam fuerunt uel erunt, ita etiam magnificauit doctrinam Euangelii super omnes alias scripturas Dei." (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 136).

"Here begins the little book of material about Muhammad and against the law of the Saracens."[136] Moreover, the copyist added the word "machometus" on many occasions throughout the text, where Riccoldo had only implied it or used another word. For example, when discussing a quote from the Qur'an, the original might only say "dicit" with the speaker implied, while Paris 3655 copyist inserted "*machometus* dicit."[137] In other cases, Muhammad is substituted directly for the Qur'an, such as "lex machometi" instead of "lex alchoranus."[138] Finally, on more than one occasion, the copyist added the word *maledicta* (damned) to Muhammad's name as if a title.[139] Similarly, the copyist of Vienna 3141 titled the work *Contra legem Machometi* rather than *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, giving Muhammad ownership over the heresy he created.[140] Moreover, chapter thirteen on Muhammad's biography is more complete than average in both abbreviated versions.

The readers also frequently annotated passages that concerned Muhammad.[141] Vienna 3141's reader marked the text at the first mention of Muhammad, with a brief note that read "concerning Muhammad."[142] The corresponding passage described him as the greatest persecutor of the Church. The two previous persecutors that Riccoldo named, leading up to Muhammad, were the pagans of ancient Rome and the heretics of the early Church. Muhammad's placement on this list immediately implies that he was similarly deviant. This connection is then made explicit in chapter one, which compares Muhammad to other heretics as

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[136] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 114r. "Incipit libelus de materia Machometi et contra legem Sarracenorum."
[137] See, for example, Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 114v. Others can be found throughout the text.
[138] See, for example, Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 116v.
[139] See, for example, Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 114v.
[140] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 272v.
[141] As mentioned above, the readers picked out passages that misrepresented Christian beliefs, and here, too, they have an eye on Muhammad's role. Specifically, they notated those passages wherein the deception is attributed to Muhammad's intentional misinformation or his own inventions. Riccoldo also frequently depicted Islamic beliefs in a more neutral way as coming from the Qur'an rather than attributing them specifically to Muhammad, but the readers in both manuscripts had a particular interest in those passages that highlight Muhammad's role.
[142] Vienna, MS 3141, fol. 273r. "de machometo."

described above. In an example from Paris 3655, the reader wrote in chapter fifteen, "the

miracles of Christ in the Qur'an." The corresponding passage notes Christ's miracles described

in the Qur'an, followed by the statement: "Muhammad, moreover, never performed a miracle

once in the Qur'an."[143] The comparison between the founders of the two religions makes plain to

readers that Muhammad is a heresiarch. In the same chapter, the reader notated a passage that

read, "Muhammad, moreover, was an ignorant teacher, an idiotic man, not knowing another

language than his own, not even understanding the exposition of his own law. For he said, 'only

God knows the exposition of the Qur'an.'"[144]

This identification of Muhammad as the founder and leader of Islam fit into previous

Christian conceptions of heresy that had been traditionally labeled by their leader – Nestorius the

founder of Nestorianism, Arius the founder of Arianism, and Hus the leader of the Hussites.[145]

Focusing on Muhmmad, and especially on his faults, helped western Christians contextualize

Islam within their broader preconceptions.[146] This reading of Muhammad served the broader

reception of *Contra legem* in the context of fifteenth-century church reform. Contemporary

Christians used *Contra legem* to contextualize Islam within a larger panoply of heretical threats

to the unity and strength of the Church. By emphasizing Muhammad's role as heresiarch,

copyists retroactively "burned" him at the stake alongside the likes of Jan Hus.

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[143] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 118v

[144] Paris, MS lat. 3655, fol. 118v. "Machometus autem fuit doctor ignorans, homo idiota, nesciens linguam aliam nisi suam, ignorans etiam expositionem sue legis. Dicit enim quod 'solus Deus nouit expositionem Alchorani'" (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 135).

[145] Although these scribes and readers did not use the term "Muhammadism" in their texts, they referred often to "the law of Muhammad" to give him ownership over the Qur'an and the religion. See chapter 2.

[146] Although this chapter does not have the space to discuss it, it is worth noting Riccoldo's discussions of other religious "others," in *Peregrinationis* and *Ad nationes orientales*. See Camille Rouxpetel, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce's Mission towards the Nestorians and the Jacobites (1288–c.1300): Defining Heresy and Inventing the Relationship with the Other. From Theory to Missionary Experience," *Medieval Encounters* 21 (2015): 250–268.

Conclusion

> Although [the Church] has refuted all the heresies up to our time…it has not applied itself greatly or even slightly to looking into the nature of this pestilence [Islam] or its origin…"[147] – Peter the Venerable, c.1143
>
> A heresy was never so harmful to the Christian religion, not content with the seduction of souls, but having been urged on and provoked in every way for the acquisition of bodies.[148] – Juan de Segovia, c.1456

In 1143, the French abbot Peter the Venerable penned the former words decrying the lack of response to Islam in the Church's traditional method for addressing heresy. His solution was to commission the first Latin translation of the Qur'an to educate churchmen on the heretical doctrine it contained. Three hundred years later, as Juan de Segovia and Nicholas of Cusa sat reading a copy of that Qur'an at the Council of Basel, the conception of Islam as a heretical threat to the Church had not changed.[149]

Fifteenth-century readers found Riccoldo's *Contra legem* a useful tool for understanding Islam, because it often presented Muslim belief through this traditional lens of "heresy."

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[147] Peter the Venerable, *Summa*, translated in Kritzeck, 42. *...quia scilicet cum omnes siue antiquas siue modernas hereses usque ad nostra tempora…sed nec quid tanta pestis esset, aut unde processerit, inquirere saltem uel tenuiter studuit.*

[148] Juan de Segovia, *Prefacio*, lines 101–103. *...numquam heresis tam nociua fuerit religioni Christiane, minime contenta animarum seduction, sed intent solicitaque omnino interemptioni corporum.*

[149] While Islam as heresy did continue to find use in the fifteenth century, it was not the only characterization made. As Ana Echevarría has argued, "Islam was considered a heresy, a sect, a false religion, a superstition, an error, an invention of the devil, a deadly poison, an iniquitous law, a sacrilege, a forgery, etc. All of these names were used to provide the reader with stereotyped images which introduced new arguments, but it is interesting to note that most of these words were taken from the Bible. These anachronisms reduced the understanding of sects and internal fighting between the different groups of Muslims" (Ana Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitudes towards Muslims in Fifteenth Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 103). Thus, fifteenth-century polemicists varied slightly in their classifications. Denys the Carthusian, for instance, described the religion as "Muhammad's perfidy," suggesting infidelity. Alonso de Espina, while relying on Riccoldo's first chapter wherein Riccoldo compared Islam to previous heresies, ultimately argued that Islam was a schism rather than a heresy (Echevarría, 165–166). Yet, for other writers, the label of heresy continued to be useful. Aside from Juan de Segovia, quoted above, Nicholas of Cusa, who was heavily influenced by Riccoldo, likened Islam to a heresy in *Cribatio Alkorani* and Juan de Torquemada, another reader of Riccoldo, said that he had written his polemic "to demonstrate that [Muhammad's] faith contained the mistakes of all the heretics" (Ana Echevarría, "The Polemic Use of the Crusades in Fifteenth Century Literature of the Mendicant Orders in Spain," in *The Crusades: Other Experiences, Alternate Perspectives. Selected Proceedings from the 32nd Annual CEMERS Conference*, ed. Khalil Semaan (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 2003), 141–160, 143).

Riccoldo compared Islamic beliefs to ancient Christian heresies, and he described Muhammad as one in a long line of perpetuators of false beliefs. Copyists contextualized *Contra legem* within that same parade of heretics, schismatics, and "others," which included Jews, Greeks, and other eastern Christians, by placing the text among similar disputations and condemnations of heresy in their manuscripts. John Tolan argued that in the thirteenth century, the characterization of Muslims as heretics "became an important part of Latin Europe's ideology of power."[150] By categorizing Muslims as deviant Christians, Christian rulers could affirm "their right to rule over Muslim subjects."[151] In the fifteenth century, I would argue, proponents of papal supremacy similarly propagated the Church's authority over the threats that Islam posed to Europe.

During this period, the expansion of an Islamic state into Europe competed with concerns among churchmen for the Church's internal stability and specifically its hierarchy of authority. Among pre-Protestant challenges to the Church, criticisms and attacks on the papacy and papal supremacy remained at the forefront. Yet rather than folding under the dual pressure of internal and external problems, the fifteenth-century papacy managed to use these developments to stabilize and enhance its position. The reunification of the Eastern and Western Churches under the supreme rule of the Pope is one example of this process. By marking the Ottomans as "Islam," and Islam as a heresy, the Church could claim jurisdiction over Christendom's response to Ottoman imperialism and assert that popes alone should be responsible for a solution. After the fall of Constantinople, popes turned increasingly to crusade as a solution that they could use to retain and reaffirm their own authority as defenders of Christendom. It is not a coincidence that *Contra legem* was also commonly read within the context of crusade in the decades that follow.

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[150] Tolan, *Saracens*, 169.
[151] Ibid.

Chapter 4. Crusade and Dialogue: European Responses to Ottoman Expansion

In the middle of the fifteenth century, two churchmen obtained copies of *Contra legem Sarracenorum*: John of Capistrano and Nicholas of Cusa. John (Giovanni) of Capistrano was a Franciscan preacher from the kingdom of Naples in Italy. Nicholas of Cusa was a Cardinal and a philosopher from Kues, Germany. They are the two most well-known readers of *Contra legem* prior to Martin Luther, and they read their copies of the polemic in the same period and for the same essential reason: to help formulate a response to the Ottoman Empire's expansion. Yet John and Nicholas developed and pursued two very different approaches to this problem.

Constantinople fell to the Ottoman army in 1453.[1] The Byzantines had spent the preceding decades supplicating western rulers to come to their defense, without much success. But after their defeat, fear of Ottoman expansion grew throughout western Europe, and some even believed that the Ottomans would target Rome next. During this period, Christians across Europe developed responses to this perceived threat. The most popular, and the one that would make John of Capistrano famous, was crusading. In fact, it was Nicholas of Cusa who first invited John to join the crusading effort. The Council of Ratispon, in 1454, was the first diet called to organize a crusade after the fall of Constantinople. Nicholas wrote a letter to John from Ratispon, informing him that the Council "in which even I have taken part by the order of our

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[1] On the fall of Constantinople, see Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Michael Angold, *The Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans: Contexts and Consequences* (New York: Pearson, 2012); Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580: From Lyons to Alcazar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), chapter 3: "The Ottoman Threat, 1396–1502," 80–117; Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, Vol. 2: The Fifteenth Century (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1978), chapter 4: "The Siege and Fall of Constantinople (1453)," 108–137.

most holy Lord, has thus occurred so that the intentions of the Turks may be met with a powerful army."[2] Nicholas urged John to join in those efforts and warned that "the Catholic faith will be wounded" if nothing was done.[3] John's response was overwhelming. He traveled across central and eastern Europe, convincing thousands to join the crusade and traveling with them to Belgrade, where he exhorted the army to victory against the Ottomans at the age of seventy.[4] Meanwhile, Nicholas turned his own efforts toward a different, more scholarly response. He spent years studying the Qur'an and sought to create a lasting dialogue among Christians and Muslims in order to eventually convert Muslims to Christianity through dialogue.

This chapter explores the role of *Contra legem* in both military and less common diplomatic responses to the perceived threat to Europe of Ottoman expansion after the fall of Constantinople. *Contra legem* provided fifteenth-century readers with useful material for a variety of responses, because it presented a highly complex understanding of the Qur'an and Islam. This was the result of Riccoldo's own complex relationship with Islam. He had experienced the fall of Acre – the last major crusader city – in 1291 from Baghdad, thereby witnessing the military strength of Islam through the Mamluk army. He was still in Baghdad in 1295 when the Mongols converted to Islam, and he likely struggled to confront Islam's attraction for religious converts. For Riccoldo, both events represented the power of Islam and the danger that it posed to Christian society. Yet, throughout, he continued to follow his missionary calling both in the Near East and through his later works on the subject. In addition, his training in Scholasticism and his direct knowledge of the Qur'an added to and complicated his approach.

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[2] Nicholas of Cusa, "Epistola Card. Cusani ad Capistranum," in *Annales Minorum seu trium ordinum*, Vol. 12, ed. Luca Wadding (Florence, 1932), 230. "Fuit his diebus congregatio in hoc loco, ut Turcarum proposito per potentem exercitum obvietur, in qua et ego jussu sanctissimi Domini nostri…interfui."

[3] Nicholas of Cusa, "Epistola Card. Cusani ad Capistranum," 230. "…et Catholicam fidem vulneraturam."

[4] Norman Housley, "Giovanni da Capistrano and the Crusade of 1456," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and impact*, ed. Housley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 97–98. Largely for these actions, John of Capistrano was later canonized.

All these elements contended with one another in the text and gave the polemic layers from which crusade propagandists and conciliar diplomats alike could draw inspiration.

Like John of Capistrano, many fifteenth-century Europeans focused on a military response to the Ottoman threat and advocated crusading. A much smaller number, including Nicholas of Cusa, pursued dialogue with Muslims instead of or in addition to the crusades. While the former group read *Contra legem* for its characterizations of Islam as violent and dangerous, the latter sought information on the theological differences between Islam and Christianity. Yet the readers of these manuscripts shared an interest in characterizing the Ottomans as a religious enemy that threatened Christendom. The institutional Church profited from this depiction, because the crusading enterprise was traditionally under papal control. By claiming the Ottomans were a threat to Christianity, and placing that danger under papal jurisdiction, the popes of the mid-fifteenth century used crusade organization and leadership to reassert their authority. This chapter will demonstrate that, while Europeans utilized *Contra legem* very differently depending on whether they sought to promote crusading or debate, these readers all relied on the polemic to demonstrate that the Ottomans were a threat to Christianity specifically because of their religion.

Crusading and the papacy during the rise of the Ottomans

In the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, as the Ottoman Empire expanded through northwest Asia and into southeastern Europe, discussions of the Ottomans also grew in western Europe. Europeans made many crusading plans against the Ottomans and carried out a number of small-scale operations.[5] The papacy authorized thirteen crusading actions between 1347 and

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[5] Norman Housley defined crusade essentially as any war supported by the papacy and undertaken by combatants fulfilling a vow of crusade (Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 2). This contrasts with historians who have characterized crusading under stricter bounds of time and place – most often medieval and the Near East (See, for example, H.E. Mayer, *The Crusades*, 2nd ed., trans. John Gillingham (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988)). Agreeing with Housley's broader definition, we can say that the crusade movement continued to play a tangible role in European society into the sixteenth century.

1400 alone.[6] Among the most momentous of these was the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, where

allied western and central European troops were defeated by the Ottoman army. Two years later,

Byzantine Emperor Manuel II appealed to western rulers for support, and the French King

Charles VI responded by sending a troop to his aid.[7] In the 1440s, the governor of Transylvania

John Hunyadi defeated the Ottomans and temporarily halted their northern progress into Europe.

Italian, French, and German volunteers fought among his ranks as part of a campaign organized

by Pope Eugenius IV in 1439. To encourage participation, the pope had renewed promises of

indulgences – a grant forgiving the crusaders their sins.[8] Although these measures were relatively

small and often ineffective, "the societal reservoir of faith in the Church helped to limit the

effectiveness of criticism after failures."[9]

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, calls for crusade intensified.[10] Pope Nicholas V

immediately issued a bull calling for a new crusade, and the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good,

promised to join a year later. Soon others followed suit, including King Alfonso of Aragon and

Naples and Emperor Frederick III of the Holy Roman Empire. The Councils of Ratispon

(Regensburg) and Frankfurt were called that year for noblemen and papal representatives to

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[6] Michael Horowitz, "Long Time Going: Religion and the Duration of Crusading," *International Security* 34, no. 2 (2009), 179.

[7] Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 80–81.

[8] Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 86.

[9] Horowitz, "Religion and the Duration of Crusading," 185. Horowitz argued that the Reformation and a rising secular nationalism eventually killed crusading efforts in the sixteenth century. He suggested that the Reformation produced challenges to the states that fueled innovations in governance that had an isolating effect, so that transnational crusading efforts were no longer feasible. Yet there were both Catholics and Protestants calling for action against the Ottomans in the sixteenth century. Moreover, while Protestants may not have wished to fight under the pope or on the papacy's behalf, they did not exclude themselves from religious frameworks. As I will discuss in the Afterword, Martin Luther translated *Contra legem* to enlighten the German people on the threat that Islam posed, not mainly as a geopolitical threat to Germany but as a spiritual threat to Christians.

[10] One type of action not discussed in this paragraph is the role of the chivalric military orders during the fifteenth century. These orders were active and involved in both crusading calls and action. Crusading continued to be encouraged among the Order of the Golden Fleece. Moreover, Pius II founded two additional chivalric orders specifically with the aim of fighting the Ottomans: the "Our Lady of Bethlehem" order and the "Society of Jesus." See Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453–1517)* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967), chapter 5: "Chivalry in Action." See also Housley, *The Later Crusades* (reference index for "military orders").

make plans. John of Capistrano's crusaders helped John Hunyadi break the siege of Belgrade in 1456, and more successes followed this one when the fleet of Pope Callixtus III took back islands in the Aegean Sea from Ottoman control and won a battle in Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos.[11] When Pope Pius II succeeded Callixtus, he made even greater efforts to mount a full-scale crusade, calling for a new council at Mantua and eventually promising to lead the crusade himself. He made preparations and even set off for the Near East before passing away of a fever in 1464. Even so, crusading activity continued throughout the following century and a half.[12]

The papacy played a key role in crusading efforts. This allowed the office to reassert its position of power in western Europe. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the creation and implementation of the crusading phenomenon had conferred great strength to the Church and the position of the papacy.[13] At the time, changes such as commercialization, urbanization, and the centralization of government were restructuring society, and the papacy had to define itself in relation to this shifting world. The growing power of individual kings presented a particular challenge to the authority of the pope. By controlling the crusades, the papacy inserted itself into the social and military spaces of western Christian society traditionally dominated by the laity.

This solution again found use in the fifteenth century when the papacy faced new challenges to its authority. As detailed in Chapter Three, the authority of the papacy had been damaged by schism in the fourteenth century and challenged still further by conciliarists in the first half of the fifteenth century. The papacy's success in reuniting the Eastern and Western

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[11] Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 104.

[12] See Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 118–150.

[13] Jonathan Riley-Smith drew out the connections between Church reform and the creation of the First Crusade in the introduction to his survey of that crusade: J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, Reprint (London: Continuum, 2012). See also Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, Reprint (London: Routledge, 2012); Richard Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, (Penguin Books, 1970); and Benjamin Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Churches at the Council of Florence had been critical to reestablishing Rome's control.[14] Pope Eugenius IV, who presided during the Council, capitalized on Byzantine fears of the encroaching Ottoman army to gain Byzantine acknowledgement of papal primacy. Colin Imber has argued, "Although there is no reason to doubt either the pope's sincerity of belief in the supremacy of Rome and Roman doctrine, or in the virtues of crusading, there is equally no reason to doubt that he used these issues to promote his own authority within the church against the challenge of the conciliarists."[15] Thus, Ottoman expansion indirectly strengthened the papacy even before 1453.

After the fall of Constantinople, the popes built on this recovery by issuing new calls for crusade. The papacy continued to claim authority over religious warfare in the fifteenth century, despite other challenges to its sovereignty.[16] Precedent supported the view that the Pope alone had the right to call a crusade. A tract on papal power from 1316 stated, "Whenever the Church is under attack by pagans, heretics, or schismatics, she may, through ecclesiastical censure, compel princes and powers [to act] in her defence…[and] she may compel them to attack the Saracens holding the Church's lands."[17] This position, upheld by the Church through the fifteenth century, granted the papacy a continuing measure of power over Christian monarchs.

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[14] James Hankins, "The Popes and Humanism," in *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture*, ed. Anthony Grafton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 65.

[15] Colin Imber, "The Crusade of Varna, 1443–1445: What Motivated the Crusaders?" in *The Religions of the Book: Christian Perceptions, 1400–1660*, ed. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 50–51.

[16] Housley argued that, "If the papacy looms large, it is because…the Curia possessed the *auctoritas principalis* in crusading affairs" (Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 5). Schwoebel agreed that the popes were seen, at this time, as the only true or rightful authors of crusade (Schwoebel, *Shadow of the Crescent*, 23). Although he primarily discussed the post-Protestant period, Mustafa Soykut argued that after 1453, "for the Holy See in Rome…the theme *Turks* not only presented the opportunity for a prospective European unity, but it also gave the Pontificate the change to bring Christianity once again under the authority of Rome, in an era when the schismatic Byzantine Empire was long gone and the wars between the new schismatic reformed Europeans and the Catholics devastated Europe" (Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the 'Turk' in Italy: A History of the 'Other' in Early Modern Europe: 1453–1683* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001), 46).

[17] Pierre de la Palude, *On Papal Power*. Document 10 in *Documents on the Later Crusades, 1274–1580*, ed. Norman Housley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 50.

By calling Europe's temporal leaders to join a crusade against the Ottomans, the papacy reasserted a measure of moral authority over those rulers.

The damaged reputation of the papacy also stood to benefit from papal leadership over the crusades. Pope Pius II offered to lead the crusade himself when the rulers of Europe would not commit, and he earnestly pursued that mission before his death. Pius had come to hold a perception that "the Ottoman Turks were the normative foe of *Christianitas*."[18] As such, Pius "viewed it as the responsibility of the papacy to look after the defense of the whole of Christendom."[19] This demonstration of papal might, determination, and resources may have reversed some of the skepticism that had grown over the issue of indulgences in the past century. Not everyone accepted the papacy's efforts as moral. Setton noted, "The pope and the emperor were accused of promoting the crusade in order to get money from Germany…and it was widely agreed that the internal reform of both the German church and the state was the indispensable first step toward a crusade"[20] Nevertheless, as fears of Ottoman expansion heightened after 1453, some saw the papacy as the necessary defender of Christendom. Thus, "while crusade continued to stand as a means to protect Christendom from external enemies and simultaneously to unify it, it now offered a way to purify or reform it in one fell swoop."[21]

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[18] Norman Housley, "Conciliar, Imperial, and Papal Authority," 657. Housley argued that, prior to 1453, Pius's thinking on the Near East "lacked the focus and urgency" that it would eventually develop. As a result, in earlier crusade orations he had conflated "Greece and the Holy Land, the Ottomans and the Mamluks." Yet afterward, as his thinking began to crystalize, he viewed the Ottomans as "uncivilized barbarians who must be resisted if the Christian faith was to survive" (Housley, 658). Thus, he characterized Ottoman expansion as a threat not just to Europe but to the Christian faith.

[19] Robert Schwoebel, "Pius II and the Renaissance Papacy," in *Renaissance Men and Ideas*, ed. Schwoebel (New York, 1971), 73.

[20] Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 153.

[21] Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II and the Crusade," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Housley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 49. Pius II appears to have connected all his various goals and plans to the larger objective of strengthening and stabilizing the papal seat, from which Christendom could be protected and sanctified. For instance, Schwoebel has cited a passage from Pius's *Commentaries* in which he claimed that all of his political efforts to defend the land rights of the papacy were done in service of fighting the Turks, through the Pope's stronger position (Schwoebel, "Pius II and the Renaissance Papacy," 780).

Despite the papacy's efforts, western Europe was not as active in responding to calls for crusade as it once had been. Kelly Devries argued that the battle of Nicopolis in 1396 was the last "unified engagement of western European troops fought against the Turks for more than 140 years."[22] Devries admitted that the Hungarians' success in keeping the Ottomans at bay in central Europe may have contributed to the lack of urgency further west.[23] Nevertheless, many actions during this period were planned but not executed. And crusading efforts were often made by small contingents of fighters who fought as volunteers or mercenaries. The large-scale plans made by noblemen and especially by the popes at councils such as Regensburg (1454) and Mantua (1459) came to very little.

Some scholars have characterized the lack of action as a result of increased nationalism and secularization in Europe. Kings and princes did frequently prioritize the internal threats to their nations – usually intra-European wars – and refuse to leave their realms unprotected.[24] The Hundred Years War was one such hindrance, and the popes who reigned throughout the conflict continuously called for an end to such "fratricidal strife" in favor of a joint Anglo-French crusade.[25] Yet the Church made similar calls for peace among western Christians during the calls for the First Crusade and very often afterward. Regnal concerns for individual nations could not fully explain the difference in response over the centuries, then. Some scholars have also argued

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[22] Kelly Devries, "The Lack of a Western European Military Response to the Ottoman Invasions of Eastern Europe from Nicopolis (1396) to Mohacs (1526)," *The Journal of Military History* 63, no. 3 (1999), 544.

[23] Devries, "The Lack of Western European Military Response," 545.

[24] Housley cited financial constraints as the major factor in the lack of practical, active response. He argued that intra-European wars contributed to this problem, because they took money to carry out, and suggested that the methods of waging war also took their toll on the king's coffers, as the military became much more mercenary (Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 427–454).

[25] DeVries, "The Lack of a Western European Military Response," 545–547. Arabatzis suggested that the idea for a perpetual peace among European nations was born under the condition of the Renaissance, print culture, and the "birth of the modern intellectual" as well as fears of Turkish invasions (George Arabatzis, "Sailing away from Byzantium: Renaissance Crusade Literature and Peace Plans," in *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature, 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 467). For him, peace was somehow a more modern than medieval concept.

that new and more secular values dampened enthusiasm for crusading.[26] In this view, "the

maturation of the European nation-states" spurred western Christians to replace concern with

"Christendom" with a more secularized vision of "Europe" and "the West."[27] Thus, at least some

fifteenth-century peoples defined their connections to one another in terms of political rather

than religious culture. They were therefore less eager to fight for a dying conception of

Christendom that no longer bound them to one another.[28]

Scholars have cited this changing, more secular attitude to argue that when new crusading

efforts did occur, they were driven by geopolitical motivations to the exclusion of religious ones.

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[26] See especially James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusades: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111–207; and Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

[27] Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 113. Housley made a similar argument about the changes occurring at this time, noting that the growing conception that "each king is emperor in his kingdom" had "massive implications" for traditional crusading (Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 427). However, Housley emphasized this last phrase, traditional crusading, to assert that it did not obstruct crusading altogether but merely forced crusading to evolve and change. See also Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 84–85; and Denis Hay, *Europe: the Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968). Bisaha has perhaps the most nuanced discussion of these developments, although her presentation does occasionally appear contradictory. She argued, in reference to Hay's work, that Renaissance Christians like Pope Pius II gained a sense of cultural unity from their "perception of opposition to the Turks and 'Asia' – not from any genuine sense that European countries shared many strong similarities beyond religion and the common language of Latin among the elite" (Bisaha, 86). Despite this distinction, Bisaha largely emphasized the secular shift that she saw Europe undergoing at this time. In the last chapter of her monograph, however, she addressed the religious themes and influences within humanist writings and noted that humanists were "fond" of the image of Christendom and argued that they invoked it often in their works (Bisaha, 141). Other scholars have discussed the continued use of Christendom as a powerful symbol or rallying point among western European leaders even while new terminology was being introduced. See, for example, Franklin Baumer, "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps of Christendom," *The American Historical Review* 50 (1944): 26–48.

[28] Other, less dramatic changes have also been suggested. James Hankins noted that the changing focus after the fall of Constantinople from recovering Jerusalem to recovering the Byzantine capital could not spark as much enthusiasm among potential crusaders (Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 113–114). More broadly, he suggested that the religious crises of the period may have been to blame for weakening the religious zeal of those same potential crusaders (Hankins, 145). He also suggested the idea that people had become disillusioned by both princely and papal spending and that it had, therefore, become difficult to fundraise for the crusades. DeVries offered another explanation: that by the fifteenth century fear of the Ottomans, now better known in Europe, dampened enthusiasm for crusading. She argued that humbling defeats such as the massacring at the battle of Nicopolis created "a legend of horror" in western Europe (DeVries, "The Lack of a Western Military Response," 550). Others have argued that a rising diplomacy with the Ottomans was another potential reason for the failure of kings and city-states to commit forces to crusading efforts. Yet, Housley has demonstrated that these diplomatic relations did not truly begin to build until the sixteenth century, fifty years or more after the fall of Constantinople. Alliances were sought out both by the Ottomans and by European powers beginning at this time, yet as Housley argued, crusading continued at the same time as these other efforts and the one was not seen as antithetical to the other at this time. Moreover, he insisted, anti-Turkish crusading still occurred more often and on a greater scale than these military co-operations (Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 119). See also Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, 204–208.

For instance, Christopher Tyerman argued that the emphasis in crusading shifted "from a war of religion to a war of territory" in the fifteenth century.[29] In this view, crusaders fought exclusively to protect their borders. Colin Imber has also made this argument concerning the Crusade of Varna in 1443–5. Imber asserted that these crusades represented nothing so much as a defensive maneuver against an encroaching neighbor.[30] While geopolitical factors certainly played an important role in fifteenth-century crusading, this explanation does not adequately consider the complex and slowly-changing nature of these changes in the European world view. For example, geo-political incentives cannot account for the western European crusaders who followed John of Capistrano to Belgrade to end the Ottoman siege.

To understand the other impetuses behind fifteenth-century crusading, it is necessary to analyze not only execution but also planning and thought. Lack of practical response was not directly correlated to a lack of interest in crusading.[31] As Housley has noted, "too often the assumption has been made that in instances when military consequences were few, the message simply bounced off a soil which had ceased to be receptive to it: in fact, it could have entered the soil and borne quite different fruit."[32] Throughout the fifteenth century, crusading continued to be an ideal that received often enthusiastic support from both governing elites and the general populace in Europe.[33] This support expressed itself in many ways, such as the various Christian leagues that formed throughout the period in Europe to fight the Ottomans, the money that continued to be raised for crusading, and the hiring of mercenaries by noblemen to fight the

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[29] Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 101.
[30] Colin Imber, "The Crusade of Varna," 48.
[31] Schwoebel argued that "failure to render unqualified support for the crusade, or even outright cooperation with the Turks need not mean that a prince was unconcerned with the Turkish threat, or opposed to the papacy's proposed solution [of crusade]" (Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent*, 33).
[32] Housley, "Introduction," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, 11.
[33] For evidence on the continuing power of the idea of Christendom among the governing elites in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Baumer, "England, the Turk, and the Common Corps."

crusade in their places.[34] These newer practices make it "absurd to apply the yardstick of decline to a practice which still commanded interest and respect, and some enthusiasm."[35] Moreover, an analysis of these calls for crusade undermines arguments that religious concerns no longer played a role in crusading in the fifteenth century.

Manuscript copies of *Contra legem* from this period demonstrate that calls and plans for crusade often utilized religious polemics to contextualize and substantiate the need for crusade. Crusade advocates used the text to characterize the Ottomans as adherents of a violent religion and a threat in that capacity. This framework created stakes that went beyond boundaries or the sovereignty of individual nations. The idea of Christendom and the practice of Christianity also required defense. The papacy's need to assert authority can help explain this framing. If the Ottomans, because of their religion, threatened all of Christendom, then the head of the Church should have control in the fight against that enemy. Bisaha argued that the idea of a united Christendom fighting against the Ottomans "underscored cherished concepts of papal monarchy as well as a harmonious and militant Christendom capable of answering the formidable unanimity of the Ottoman Empire."[36] The religious characterization of the enemy, the Ottomans, and the chosen response of crusading extended papal authority.[37]

In the mid-fifteenth century, copyists and readers of *Contra legem* positioned the polemic's discussion of Islam within a crusading milieu of sermons, treatises, and exhortations.[38]

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[34] Bisaha notes, for instance, that the large-scale collection of crusading tithes was a good measure of the widespread concern and general support for crusading at this time (Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 61).

[35] Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 5.

[36] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 141.

[37] Bisaha notes that this "the dream of a united Christendom continued to appeal to a broad audience until the Protestant Reformation nullified the concept" (Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 141).

[38] Tyerman wrote of crusading literature that, "The libraries of the great, rich and pious had long been full of crusade writings, a popularity nurtured by nostalgia and wishful thinking, yet testament to a living cultural tradition and aspiration" (Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades*, 104). His view acknowledges that the idea of crusading continued. Polemics became a part of this new phase of crusading aspirations.

Contra legem became a tool for understanding the nature of the Ottomans in terms of their religion. In this way, polemics such as Riccoldo's became "useful adjuncts to crusading propaganda."[39] This "propaganda" – information about Islam, Muslims, and specifically the Ottomans used to promote the crusades and encourage participation – was transmitted widely through oration as well as through written text. Three manuscript copies of *Contra legem* exemplify the role that this polemic had in shaping and informing these calls for crusade.[40]

Contra legem and the crusader saint

The first manuscript exemplar considered here belonged to the Franciscan crusader John of Capistrano. John obtained a copy, Naples VII C 20, that was originally transcribed at the beginning of the fifteenth century.[41] Three different hands contributed to the manuscript, and the hand responsible for *Contra legem* originated in Northern Europe.[42] John's mobile life as a preacher took him there and throughout Europe, where "[he] amassed numerous manuscripts which, after his death in 1456, were returned to his Italian convent."[43] Naples VII C 20 was among this collection.

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[39] Kenneth Setton, *Western Hostility to Islam and Prophecies of Turkish Doom* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1992), 50.

[40] Robert Schwoebel, "Coexistence, Conversion, and the Crusade Against the Turk," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 186. More commonly in the sixteenth century, the printing press also aided in the dissemination of these messages, further broadening the audience for these polemical writings. For examples of oratorical uses of anti-Islamic polemic, see Echevarría, "The Polemic Use of the Crusades in Fifteenth-Century Literature of the Mendicant Orders in Spain," in *The Crusades. Other Experiences, Alternate Perspectives*, ed. K.I. Semaan (Binghamton, NY, 2003), 141–160.

[41] Cesare Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*, Vol. 1 (Florentiae: Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1971), 402.

[42] Jean-Marie Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum' de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Dominicane: Fede e Controversia nel '300 e '500* 17 (1986): 44. Note that the critical edition of *Contra legem* is contained in this work, on pp. 59–144. If not otherwise stated, my quotations of Riccoldo's work derive from this edition. Unlike the catalog entry for the Naples VII C 20 manuscript, cited above, Mérigoux has dated the manuscript to the fourteenth century. Mérigoux published his overview of the manuscripts in 1986, a decade after the catalog, and he does not explain his reasoning for this dating. There is one text in the manuscript that mentions the date 1326 as the "present" date in two different places, but that date would correspond only to the original composition, not the ms copying.

[43] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Precheur," 40. "Saint Jean de Capistran ayant entrepris de grands voyages en Europe amassa de nombreux manuscrits qui, apres sa mort en 1456, revinrent a son couvent italien." Mérigoux cites J. Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran*, (Heidelberg, 1963), 504.

John was born in the Kingdom of Naples in 1386, and he studied law at the University in Perugia. He joined the Franciscans in 1426 and soon gained great fame as a preacher.[44] In his first few decades preaching, John focused on rooting out heresy and Judaism from western Christendom, and he earned the nickname "Scourge of the Jews" among his admirers. John was preaching in central Europe when he received the letter from Nicholas of Cusa at the Council of Ratispon, described above. At the following crusade council, the Diet of Frankfurt, the papal legate Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (future Pope Pius II) wrote to John as well, urging him to use his talents as a preacher to rouse the tentative Germans to join the crusade.[45]

John did so, embarking on an extensive preaching tour throughout Transylvania and Hungary, covering nearly six hundred kilometers on foot. Along the way, he successfully persuaded thousands in his audiences to join the crusade effort. In July of 1456, Sultan Mehmed II began a siege of Belgrade in Hungary, and not only John's crusaders but John himself – at the age of 70 – joined the Hungarian army there to defend the city. This army was led by John Hunyadi and faced a much larger Ottoman force. John convinced Hunyadi to make a stand and fight for the city, and sources agree that his crusaders played a key role in winning this fight.[46] The battle stabilized the Hungarian border for more than fifty years, delaying the Ottoman advance. While John had made it clear in his letters that his intention was eventually to recapture Jerusalem, he fell ill with plague after the siege and died.[47]

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[44] "Saint John of Capistrano" in *Britannica Academic*. http://academic.eb.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Saint-John-of-Capistrano/43799. Accessed on July 27, 2017.

[45] Housley, "Giovanni da Capistrano," 95.

[46] Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 104.

[47] Housley, "Giovanni da Capistrano." The great Hungarian hero Hunyadi succumbed to the same epidemic, so both men's great legacy remained the victory at Belgrade.

Naples VII C 20 contains six texts, which accord with John of Capistrano's life and objectives.[48] *De eruditione principum* (Concerning Instruction of the Prince, c.1265) by Guillermo Peraldi is a series of sermons and treatises on the proper role and behavior of princes in society.[49] This work, while devoted to monarchical rule, claims "a superior position for the Church and the clergy vis-à-vis secular politics."[50] The second work, titled *De erroribus Grecorum* (Concerning the Errors of the Greeks), is an anonymous polemic against the Byzantine Church.[51] The third text is *Contra legem*.[52] Following it are three short works: a theological treatise on the Antichrist and the end of the world, Thomas Aquinas's *Contra errores Grecorum* (Against the Errors of the Greeks), and a work concerning the unity of God.[53] Thus, three of the six are religious polemics, suggesting that the copyists were concerned with Christian orthodoxy. Moreover, all six promote either the power of the Church or "correct" theology, which John spent his life preaching.

Although the marginal notes in Naples VII C 20 have not been positively identified as John of Capistrano's, they do demonstrate the reader's interest in orthodoxy. The first marginal note in *Contra legem* is a small hand drawn in red ink in the preface. A finger extends to point toward Riccoldo's description of his and the basis for his knowledge of Islam:

> I, in fact, the most lowly in the order of the Friars Preacher [the Dominican order]
> suffering concerning such damnation [as Islam threatened], reflected on my ways and

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[48] Although more than one hand contributed to the creation of the manuscript, the three copyists appear to have collaborated on its contents, because all three were involved in copying the second text. So rather than different copyists adding to the manuscript over time, it seems more likely that the manuscript was created all at once by several men. There are other signs that this was a planned project. Each work is written in two columns per folio. There is a large, bold print handwriting that appears most prominently in Thomas Aquinas's anti-Greek polemic but which also seems to match the bold large print found throughout *Contra legem* and at the beginning of *De eruditione principum*. This handwriting is most often in black ink, but it also appears to be included in red ink in places.

[49] Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20, fols.1r–59v.

[50] See Michiel Verweij, "Princely Virtues or Virtues for Princes? William Peraldus and his *De eruditione principum*," in *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages: 1200–1500*, ed. István Bejczy and Cary Nederman (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2007), 70.

[51] Naples, MS VII C 20, fols. 62r–93v. Handwriting changes come on fols. 79r and 92r.

[52] Naples, MS VII C 20, fols. 94r–106v.

[53] Naples, MS VII C 20, fols. 106v–114r; 115r–125v; and 125v–126v.

turned my feet toward the evidences of God. Whence I travelled across the sea and the desert and I made my way to the most famous city of the Saracens, Baghdad, where generally their most important studies are held, and there I learned the Arabic language together with the letters [alphabet].[54]

As discussed in Chapter Two, Riccoldo's experiences in the Near East as a missionary and his knowledge of Arabic bestowed credibility on his arguments and contributed greatly to his popularity in later centuries. These experiences may also have created a more particular affinity between him and John of Capistrano. Riccoldo's time preaching in the Near East established him as an authority in religious orthodoxy, and his missionary work to many groups in that region lent him critical knowledge of religious "others."

There are only two other marginal notations in *Contra legem* aside from small corrections to the text, and both highlight apologetic arguments in support of Christianity rather than disputations against Islam. These notations are made in the two chapters of *Contra legem* that use Christian precedents – prophecy and miracles – to delegitimize the Qur'an by comparison. Chapter three of *Contra legem* argues that the Qur'an cannot be sent from God because neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament prophesied the coming of Muhammad, although all previous prophets had been foretold in these texts. In Naples VII C 20, there is a long, vertical, bubbled line marking a passage of this chapter, wherein Riccoldo refuted a claim that Christians had corrupted their holy texts to occlude any mention of Muhammad.[55] To do so, he made two arguments in favor of the validity of the Gospels: first, the Gospels were written in different times and places and they were very well-known, so any changes would have been difficult to make and easy to notice; second, if the Christians had sought to change the Gospels, they would

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[54] Naples, MS VII C 20, fol. 94r. "Ego enim minimus in ordine fratrum predicatorum de tanta dampnatione condolens '[red mark] cogitaui uias meas et conuerti pedes meos in testimonia' dei. Unde cum transissem maria et deserta et peruenissem ad famosissimam ciuitatem Saracenorum baldach ubi generale ipsorum solempne habetur studium, ibi pariter linguam et litteram arabicam didici."

[55] Naples, MS VII C 20, fol. 95v.

have made them easier to follow and understand.[56] Thus, while the chapter focuses on refuting the Qur'an's legitimacy, the reader of Naples VII C 20 marked a passage defending the validity and integrity of the Gospels.

The other mark is a vertical symbol in the shape of a fish – a loop with either end protruding at the bottom – that was traditionally a symbol of Christ. The reader made this notation in chapter seven, which argues that the Qur'an cannot be divine, because it was not attested to by any miracle from God, nor did its "author" Muhammad enact any miracle. In this chapter, Riccoldo compared the lack of miracles in the Qur'an to Christian history's abundance of miracles. The fish symbol marks Riccoldo's final example among a list of these miracles: that before Christ came, the whole world worshipped idols, while afterward, they forsook their idols in favor of a much more difficult religion to practice and understand. To accept such a difficult faith, Riccoldo reasoned, the world must have been convinced by miracle.[57] This passage, too, focused more on the validity of Christianity as a religion than on critiquing Islam. This evidence from the marginalia demonstrates that, whether or not John participated in its creation, his copy of *Contra legem* emphasized orthodox Christianity, which John spent his life promulgating.

Yet it is difficult to know how John utilized *Contra legem* as he preached the crusades, due to the lack of marginal notations. Possibly he only adapted the general image of Muslims found in *Contra legem* for his sermons. One contemporary source wrote that John instructed his listeners to think about the atrocities that the Muslims – "dogs" – had committed and their

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[56] This second argument ties together with one of Riccoldo's favorite themes in *Contra legem* – that Christianity is a more taxing and demanding religion to follow than Islam. He suggested that this was both the reason that many people had converted to Islam – because they sought an easier path – and the reason for disputing the Qur'an, because it was simple and easy to discredit, while Christianity was complex and difficult to explain.
[57] Here, again, is an example of Riccoldo's preferred theme: the relative difficulty of each religion.

mocking of Christianity in order to stir the audience up against an enemy.[58] Whatever John

conveyed to his audience, Riccoldo's polemic could provide him with critical insight for his own

edification. A contemporary source noted that John had argued that all "others" – whether

heretic, Jew, or pagan – ought to stand alongside orthodox Christians to fight the Turks, who

were the only meaningful enemy after 1453.[59] Yet without any prior experience with this new

enemy, John had to rely on past scholarship for information and understanding.

Preaching the crusades using *Contra legem*

Although it may be impossible to discover what specific arguments or evidence from

Contra legem that John of Capistrano used for his sermons, two other manuscript copies can

provide examples of how the polemic was used in preaching the crusades. Both manuscripts

were created in the years immediately following the fall of Constantinople.[60] In each, *Contra*

legem was paired with texts concerning crusading and the tension between western Europe,

Islam, and the Near East more generally. The contents of these manuscripts suggest that

fifteenth-century scholars saw *Contra legem* both as part of a medieval model for responding to

Islam and as a reliable source of information to contextualize contemporary reactions. The

marginalia within these copies reveals that readers sought polemical information on Muslims and

Islam that could be useful for promoting a crusade. These ideas, such as the dangerous attraction

of Islam and the violent nature of Muslims and the Qur'an, could be reproduced and

disseminated to convince potential crusaders of the severity of the threat that Islam – now in the

guise of the Ottoman Empire – posed.

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[58] Housley, "Giovanni da Capistrano," 112. Housley noted that this source never witnessed Capistrano's preaching first-hand and may have relied on common tropes to fill in this information. But, he argues, so too might Capistrano, who never had personal experience with Muslims prior to Belgrade.
[59] See Housley, "Giovanni da Capistrano," 112.
[60] Moreover, these two manuscripts appear to belong to the same family tree, a series of related manuscripts that originate with Oviedo 24. See appendix A.

Munich 449 was copied in Bruges, in modern-day Belgium, in 1455.[61] This manuscript

contains three texts relating to Christianity and Islam. The first is Guillaume d'Auvergne's

Tractatus de fide et legibus (Treatise on Faith and the Law).[62] A chair of theology at the

University of Paris and eventually Bishop of Paris, Guillaume displayed concern for religious

orthodoxy throughout his career. In his treatise, he focused primarily on Christian law and

specifically on the Law of Moses. However, he devoted four chapters to Islam and Muslim

adherence to the Law of Moses. *Contra legem* is the second work in the manuscript.[63] The third

is Humbert of Romans's *Sermones de crucis contra Saracenos* (Sermons on the Crusade against

the Saracens).[64] Humbert was the Master General of the Dominican Order of Preachers from

1254 to 1263, after which he lived in a convent in Lyons until his death in 1277. Humbert wrote

the *Sermones* during this later period as a manual to help clergymen preach the crusades. [65] The

work acted as a reference collection with forty-six chapters, each of which had themes, relevant

biblical verses, and *exempla* that could be used to construct different sermons. At the end of each

chapter, Humbert added an *invitatio* for the audience to immediately take the cross.[66]

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[61] Munich, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, MS Clm. 449.

[62] Munich, MS Clm. 449, fols. 1r–119r. There are 35 extant manuscript copies of *De fide et legibus*, as well as a printed edition of the work from Paris in 1674. There is a list of all extant mss and editions for Guillaume's work in Franco Morenzoni and Jean-Yves Tilliette, eds. *Autor de Guillaume d'Auvergne* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 375–399. For an overview of this work, see Sean Murphy, "William of Auvergne," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 4: 1200–1350, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 288–294.

[63] Munich, MS Clm. 449, fols.120r–147r. Munich 449 also contains a copy of the *Regulae* from Riccoldo's *Ad nationes orientales*. This excerpt follows the last chapter of *Contra legem* directly and appears to be a part of the text. See appendix A for more information on this inclusion.

[64] Munich, MS Clm. 449, fols.149r–186v. This text was copied into 18 manuscripts in at least three recensions, and it was printed in Nuremburg in 1495. The text also goes by a longer title: *Liber sive tractatus de predicacione crucis contra Sarracenos infidels et paganos*, or *De predicacione crucis*. See Thomas Kaeppeli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, Vol. 2 (Rome: Santa Sabina, 1970), 289. See also Penny J. Cole, "Humbert of Romans and the Crusade," in *The Experience of Crusading: Western Approaches*, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 157–174.

[65] Thomas E. Burman, "Humbert of Romans," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 4: 1200–1350, 511–512.

[66] Burman, "Humbert of Romans," 511–512.

All three texts in Munich 449, then, were composed by thirteenth-century religious men with an interest in orthodox Christianity and in Islam. Each treatise circulated throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and all three ended up together in a single manuscript, copied in 1455.[67] A postscript at the end of *Contra legem* indicates that three *scriptores* contributed to compiling this manuscript, possibly at a scriptorium in Bruges.[68] Then, a theology professor at Paris who identifies himself as Guido de Donziao corrected the text and made the postscript. Thus, the texts were placed together contemporarily and likely for a unified purpose. The copyists' reasons for creating the manuscript can be contextualized by the events surrounding 1455. Despite fears of further Ottoman expansion and repeated calls for crusade, active participation was still low in the years following the fall of Constantinople. While a few important lords, such as Philip of Burgundy, had pledged to go on crusade, many were more reticent, and even Philip was hindered from leaving by the King of France.[69] In this context, Humbert of Romans's manual for preaching the crusades could prove very useful. Rather than an exact script for preaching, Humbert had created a compendium of *exempla* that would allow preachers to put together their own sermons even in the fifteenth century, with the Ottomans at Constantinople.

As for *Contra legem*, Humbert himself had signaled the need for credible, polemical information on Islam. Humbert expected preachers of the crusade to have a grasp of the origins

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[67] *Contra legem* was the youngest of these texts and traveled the furthest to this destination in Bruges – it was originally copied in Florence, while Humbert likely wrote his work from his convent in Lyons and Guillaume composed his text in Paris.

[68] This postscript is edited in Antoine Dondaine, "Riccoldiana: Notes sur les oeuvres de Riccoldo da Montecroce," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 37 (1967): 135, n.44. Quem tractatum scribi fecit per tres scriptores brugis anno domini 1455 infra ebdomadam tercie dominice post pascha frater guido de donziao sacre theologie indignus professor scolaris parisiensis domini ducis burgundionum et brabantinorum etc. philippi. et compleuit eius correctionem cum tedio vicesimal tercia aprilis post pascha anno domini 1456 quia exemplari caruit et scriptores pictores fuere et hoc hagis in hollandia.

[69] On Philip of Burgundy – commonly called Philip the Good – his interest in the crusade, and the famous Feast of the Pheasant, see Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 91–109.

and doctrine of Islam and past histories of Muslim aggression. He advised the preachers to inform themselves on these matters by consulting other works.[70] *Contra legem* offered preachers a source of credible knowledge on Islam and on the ways that it differed from Christianity. Most fifteenth-century preachers – like John of Capistrano – would not have had the type of exposure to Islam that Riccoldo had gained, and so his polemic could provide a useful supplement to Humbert of Romans's manual.[71]

Like in Naples VII C 20, a reader of Munich 449 emphasized Riccoldo as an authoritative source. This reader explained *Contra legem*'s usefulness in the margins at the end of the text.[72] To do so, the reader established the author's credentials, writing that the polemic was written by Riccoldo, a Dominican preacher who traveled to Baghdad to study Islam and who had read the Qur'an in Arabic to understand the errors and falsehoods that it contained. Riccoldo's experiences and knowledge positioned him as a verified expert on Islam. *Contra legem* could provide useful descriptions for the readers of Munich 449, who were likely somewhat unfamiliar with Islam. For instance, in the first chapter, Riccoldo explained that Muhammad had created Islam by "spewing forth" all the other ancient Christian heresies and combining them into one. He then listed a number of heresies and described what Muhammad took from each.[73] Next to this text in Munich 449, there is a small marginal note that reads: *nota bene* (observe this well). This argument would have appealed to a crusades preacher unfamiliar with Islam who sought to understand it in more familiar terms or to describe it to a Christian audience.

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[70] Christoph Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 115.
[71] Possibly the scribes included *De fide et legibus* for a similar reason. The tract does address Islam, and more generally it discusses orthodox religion. For preachers stirring men to action against another religious group, this source may have been helpful as a sort of guidepost for discussing "right" or "correct" religious belief and practice.
[72] Munich, MS Clm. 449, fol.148r.
[73] Munich 449, fol. 121r. "Et sciendum quod omnium antiquorum hereticorum feces, quas diabolus sparsim seminauerat in aliis simul in Machometum reuomuit."

Paris 6225 was also copied in the mid-fifteenth century, and this codex contains twelve texts including both contemporary and medieval works.[74] The first three texts are related to the Council of Ratispon (Regensburg). This council, from which Nicholas of Cusa wrote to John of Capistrano in 1454, was organized by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III.[75] A second crusade council was held at Frankfurt in the same year, but neither produced decisive action. Paris 6225 includes a list of the leaders, both religious and temporal, in attendance at the Council of Ratispon, as well as copies of an oration made there about the "Turks" and an exhortation against them that apostolic legate Joannis de Castillione gave.[76]

The manuscript then includes a mixture of polemical works and letters, most of which concern Islam and the Near East.[77] Paris 6225 contains an excerpt from Riccoldo's travel guide, *Peregrinationis*, and one from his missionary manual *Ad nationes orientales*, in addition to *Contra legem*.[78] The excerpt from *Peregrinationis* is a portion that closely resembles the arguments made in *Contra legem*.[79] In fact, scholars have argued that this section was an outline for the polemic's eventual creation.[80] In the selection from *Ad nationes*, Riccoldo instructed his

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[74] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 6225. This manuscript is also discussed in chapter 3.

[75] Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 151. Frederick did not attend himself but sent Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini – who later became Pope Pius II – as his spokesman.

[76] List of leaders: fols.1r–1v; oration: fols.2r–6r; and Joannis de Castillione's exhortation: fols. 6v–13r.

[77] There is one treatise between the texts on the Diet of Ratispon and Riccoldo's works. It is titled *De secretis sacrae scripturae* (fols.14r–150r). I have been unable to find information about this text, except that Juan de Segovia, a fifteenth-century Churchman with a strong interest in Islam, had a copy of it in his library. See note 86 below.

[78] *Peregrinationis* excerpt: fols. 154r–161v; *Contra legem*: fols. 164r–174v; "Regulae": fols.174v–175r.

[79] The text in Paris 6225 can be compared to the edition that Rene Kappler made of *Peregrinationis* on the basis of a different manuscript, one which has Riccoldo's handwriting in the margins and can therefore be considered the preeminent copy (René Kappler, *Riccold de Monte Croce, Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient Texte latin et traduction* (Paris: Honoré Champion Editeur, 1997), 36–205). The original manuscript is Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Lat. 4˚ 466. The text from Paris 6225 matches Kappler's edition very closely, although there are some small changes, such as word order changes or additions. There are no "section" titles included in the Paris text, however. In Kappler's edition, Muhammad is often rendered Maccomettus, but in Paris 6225, it is spelled machametus. The excerpt in Paris 6225 ends with the following words: "Tractatus sumptus de libro peregrinationis fratris Riculi ordinis fratrum predicatorum qui peregrinatus fuit in regionibus Orientalibus." Kappler's transcription for this sentence has the word *partibus* rather than *regionibus*. (Kappler, 23).

[80] See, for instance, Kurt Villads Jensen, "Riccoldi Florentini." http://kvj.sdu.dk/Riccoldo/index.html, accessed June 6, 2016. This excerpt does not represent the only information on Muslims in *Peregrinationis*. Earlier sections of the travel guide describe various Muslim practices and their many qualities, and Riccoldo is often very complimentary

readers on the five rules (*regulae*) for all missionaries to follow. There are also two other

medieval treatises on Islam, titled *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Muhammad's Doctrine) and *Chronica*

mendosa et ridicula Sarracenorum (Mendacious and Ridiculous Chronicle of the Saracens).[81]

Doctrina Mahumeti was a pro-Islam polemic in which a Jew questions Muhammad as to his

doctrine and then converts to Islam. *Chronica mendosa et ridicula Sarracenorum* related the

genealogy of Muhammad and his life as well as the events of early Islamic history through the

reign of the second Umayyad caliph in 683. These two texts were translated from Arabic into

Latin in the twelfth century at the request of the twelfth-century abbot Peter the Venerable.[82]

Finally, Paris 6225 has several sets of letters. Among these is a series of letters between the

Kings of England and France and the Council of Basel on the subject of ending their war in favor

of a crusade.[83] Another, much earlier series of letters is between Peter the Venerable and another

French abbot Bernard of Clairvaux, who discussed studying Islam during the Second Crusade.[84]

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in these descriptions. If this excerpt was copied from a complete version of the text, it would suggest that the copyist had a specifically polemical intention, rather than a desire to provide accurate information alone.

[81] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fols. 236r–244v and fols. 248v–266r, respectively. On *Doctrina Mahumeti*, see Óscar de la Cruz Palma and Cándida Ferrero Hernández, "Hermann of Carinthia," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 3: 1050–1200, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 503–507. On *Chronica mendosa et ridicula Sarracenorum*, see Óscar de la Cruz Palma and Cándida Ferrero Hernández, "Robert of Ketton," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 3, 515–519.

[82] These two translations, along with the translation of the Qur'an and several other related translated works, are together often referred to as the "Toledo Collection." For more on the manuscripts containing all or part of this collection, see: M.T. D'Alverny, "Quelques Manuscrits de la 'Collectio Toletana," in *Petrus Venerabilis 1156–1956: Studies and Texts Commemorating the Eighth Centenary of his Death*, ed. Giles Constable and James Kritzeck (Rome: Orbis Catholicus, 1956), 202–218. D'Alverny discussed fifteen different manuscripts in this article, including Paris 6225 as well as another manuscript copy that contains *Contra legem*, Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS H. II. 33. For more on the creation of this "collection" and on Peter the Venerable, see James Krtizeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964). Kritzeck's study includes a brief introduction to the translators of these two works, Robert of Ketton and Hermann of Dalmattia, as well as editions of two polemics that Peter wrote using these translated texts. Mérigoux suggested that Riccoldo used Peter's polemics almost 150 years later as a critical source for *Contra legem* (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 31–33).

[83] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fols.179r–181v.

[84] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fols. 182r–235v.

There is also a copy of the letter of Prester John on uniting Christian forces across the world against Islam.[85]

Eight different hands contributed to copying Paris 6225, and even sections with seeming correspondence had more than one scribe. For instance, the texts concerning the Council of Ratispon were written in two different hands, as were the two main works by Riccoldo, *Peregrinationis* and *Contra legem*. While the same hand did copy both *Doctrina Mahumeti* and *Chronica mendosa et ridicula Sarracenorum*, that hand was not responsible for the related letters of Peter the Venerable and Bernard of Clairvaux. Thus, while there are connections between many of the texts, many different scribes were invovled. These characteristics make it difficult to know the circumstances behind the creation of Paris 6225. Did the manuscript pass from scribe to scribe, each adding texts that seemed useful or appropriate? Did multiple scribes make a comprehensive plan for the manuscript in which they all participated in copying? Was it created over a great span of time or in a short period? Manuscripts could grow over time as they passed from hand to hand. However, where men gathered, they often brought and exchanged texts; so, Paris 6225 may also have been compiled in a single place. The Council of Ratispon is one possible place of origin. It is also possible that scribes appended new folios on the Council to the beginning of the manuscript once there.[86] Another possibility is that an attendee at the Council took home the folios on Ratispon and later connected them to a manuscript kept elsewhere.

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[85] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fols. 244v–248r. Many medieval Europeans believed that this letter was written by an eastern Christian lord asking the pope to form an alliance with Christians in the East to create a united Christendom and defeat the Islamic nations between them. The true origins of the letter are still debated among scholars. It was likely a twelfth-century letter, but no twelfth-century manuscripts are known. In its time, the letter excited great interest among western Christians who felt the potential benefits of an eastern Christian magnate who might fight against Muslim forces alongside them. The letter "became one of the most widely read documents of medieval times" (Robert Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972), 41). There are nearly one hundred surviving manuscripts of the letter in Latin alone, and there are, additionally, translations into French, German, English, Russian, Serbian, and other languages. It also was printed on innumerable occasions.

[86] We know that many of the texts found in this very manuscript were also spread in this way. For instance, at the Council of Basel, Nicholas of Cusa found copies of *Doctrina Mahumeti* and *Cronica mendosa et ridicula*

Contra legem's role within Paris 6225 appears to be similar to Munich 449. The polemic supplied crusade advocates – and here, likely, organizers – with information about Islam to utilize in their planning and promulgating. The type of *exhortatio* that Paris 6225 documented at large events like Ratispon worked in cooperation with the daily efforts of preachers such as John of Capistrano in trying to inspire crusade participation. Riccoldo's polemic provided an authoritative basis for the claims made in these *exhortatios*. Aspects of Paris 6225 clearly speak to this desire to establish *auctoritas*.[87] Riccoldo's experience in the Near East is highlighted and attested to by the inclusion of *Peregrinationis*. Additionally, his knowledge of Arabic and Arabic sources is marked throughout *Contra legem*. For instance, in chapter four, Riccoldo described four different stories told in the Islamic tradition, three from the Qur'an and one from *Doctrina Mahumeti*.[88] Each of these stories is annotated in the margins with a small wavy line at the exact point wherein the source of the story is named.[89] During this period, information on Islam was in demand by those organizing the crusades, because the crusade was not just against an imperial

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Sarracenorum* as well as a third translation, and he had these collated into a manuscript for his library (Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 108). See Marica Costigliolo, "Qur'anic Sources of Nicholas of Cusa," *Mediaevistik* 24 (2011): 224. Nicholas of Cusa also lent Juan de Segovia his copy of the translated Qur'an at this time, so that was circulating as well (James Biechler, "Three Manuscripts on Islam from the Library of Nicholas of Cusa," *Manuscripta* 27 (1983): 91–100). We also know that at some point Juan de Segovia had a copy of *De secretis sacrae Scripturae*, so it is possible that he had possession of this text before the Council of Basel and circulated it there or else that he acquired it while at the Council. (Ana Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith: The Attitude towards Muslims in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 38; Benigno Hernández Montes, *Biblioteca de Juan de Segovia: edicion y comentario de su escritura de donacion* (Madrid, 1984), 102).

[87] Very briefly, medieval views on authorship and scholarship placed enormous importance on *auctoritas*, or the "authority" of established texts. Texts with *auctoritas* were seen to have authentic or respected authorship, and traditionally this was limited to classical texts such as those produced by the Church Fathers. Reference to an *auctor* or an authoritative text conferred legitimacy on contemporary scholarship. On *auctoritas* in the Middle Ages, see A.J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship* (London: Scolar Press, 1984); A.J. Minnis and A.B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c.1100–1375: The Commentary Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic traditions and vernacular texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For a brief overview, see Jan M. Ziolkowski, "Cultures of Authority in the Long Twelfth Century," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 108 (2009): 421–448. On *auctoritas* in the religious polemic tradition, see Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

[88] Mérigoux identified the fourth story as coming from *Doctrina Mahumeti* (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 79, n. 23). In the text, Riccoldo identified it as coming from "*libro narrationum*."

[89] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol. 165v.

power (the Ottoman Empire). For papal proponents seeking links to a traditional past, the crusade was against a specifically Muslim enemy. Riccoldo's polemic could serve as an authentic source of knowledge on the Ottomans in this context.

The marginalia in these two manuscripts demonstrates that crusade advocates used *Contra legem* to characterize the Ottomans as dangerous – specifically because of their religion. In Munich 449, there are several hands in the margins of *Contra legem*, two of which occur most commonly. The dominant hand in the side margins usually either summarizes notable arguments or demarcates lists or examples in the text. The fact that most of these notes are summaries or indicators rather than commentary or analysis suggests that the reader found the same use for Munich 449 as the copyists had intended – as a reference guide for other works, such as sermons. A second hand appears in the upper margins of the folios and gives titles for each chapter.[90] In Paris 6225, there are many hands in the margins throughout the manuscript but only one or two hands in *Contra legem*. One of these hands wrote out the notes, which often mark or summarize important points. There are also several drawings throughout the text, but it is difficult to tell whether they were done in the same hand or another.

Contra legem provided concrete arguments for these readers about the dangers of Islam and its consequent threat to Christianity. From a geo-political perspective, the danger of Ottoman expansion was well-known. As the orator at Ratispon declared, "By now the worshippers of Muhammad have seized four [cities]: Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, and

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[90] Both hands also appear in the margins of the other two texts, *De fide et legibus* and *Sermones de crucis* with similar regularity and for the same purposes. For instance, on fol. 178 there are notes about the origins of Muhammad, the Qur'an, indulgences, and the crusade, all of which mark these topics out from the main text. There are also three or four other hands in the margins of *De fide et legibus* and several in *Sermones de crucis*. One of these hands, much larger than the others, has several notes that all match. They read: "invita" with a number (17, 18, 19, 20). These are moments within the text in which a preacher might "invite" his audience to take the cross. Maier noted that Humbert inserted various formulaic "invitations" that were marked in the margins to be more easily found during a sermon, and these notes appear to be clear examples of this practice continuing even in the fifteenth century (Maier, *Preaching the Crusades*, 115).

in fact it is not doubtful that they will be able to take even Rome."[91] Yet, from the perspective

offered by *Contra legem*, the expansion of an Islamic state also threatened Christian faith,

because it raised the likelihood of conversion. *Contra legem* portrayed Islam as a dangerously

attractive religion for those with weak or loose convictions. Riccoldo often depicted Islam as a

lax, "easy" religion to follow – in direct contrast to Christianity, which was rigorous.

Readers of Paris 6225 paid attention to this argument throughout *Contra legem*. For

instance, in the last chapter, a reader drew a small hand with a finger pointing into the text from

the outer margin where Riccoldo argued that Qur'anic law was very easy to follow – as

Muhammad had intended.[92] Then, another reader drew a small loop mark where Riccoldo argued

that Islam was attractive to those who did not desire to take the difficult (but, to Riccoldo,

rewarding) path of Christianity. Riccoldo concluded that "a Christian would never become a

Saracen [Muslim] in death but in life. However, a Saracen would rather become a Christian in

death than in life."[93] He argued that the benefits of Islam were all worldly, while the benefits of

Christianity came in the next life. By appropriating this argument, crusade advocates could

highlight the dangers of Islamic expansion into Europe for the Christian faith.

Paris 6225's readers also annotated explanations for why conversion in the opposite

direction (Muslims converting to Christianity) was so rare. For example, in chapter fifteen, there

is a short note in the outer margin marking the section of the text that reads: "Hence the Qur'an

itself maliciously provides for and puts in place four solutions [to guard against conversion]

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[91] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol. 3r. "Iam quatuor obtinent Mahumeti cultores Hierosolimitanam, Alexandrinam, Anthiocenam et Constantinopolitanam non dubitat quin et Romanam possit obtinere."

[92] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.174v.

[93] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.170v. "Christianus nunquam efficitur Sarracenus in morte sed in vita. Sarracenus autem potius efficitur Christianus in morte quam in vita." Life might be more enjoyable as a Muslim, according to Riccoldo's argument, because the rules were laxer and less moral; but only Christianity could lead to salvation.

…lest its falsity should be discovered."[94] The four solutions are to kill anyone who says

something contrary to the Qur'an, to forbid Muslims from debating with men of other religions,

to forbid them from believing any such men whom they do contact, and to separate itself as a

book of law from all others.[95] Thus, *Contra legem* warned readers of the dangerous double-

entrapment of which Islam was capable, both to ensnare Christians and to prevent Muslims from

escaping. From the perspective of a crusading advocate, it would be very difficult to attack such

a religion through mission. Crusading could thus be proposed as the only feasible option.

Readers of *Contra legem* also highlighted the physical threat posed by Islam, using

Riccoldo's discussions of Muslim violence. Critically, Riccoldo attributed this characterization

less to the nature of Muslims than to their religion. Throughout *Contra legem*, Riccoldo asserted

that the Qur'an encouraged and sanctified violence against non-Muslims. Readers of both Paris

6225 and Munich 449 paid particular attention to chapter ten, titled: "The Qur'an cannot be the

law of God because it is violent."[96] For instance, there is a note in the outer margin of Paris 6225

that says: "3 signs," marking the passage that reads, "Truly there are three clear signs of the

violence of the law [the Qur'an], in addition to the aforementioned one which has already been

said, that it [the Qur'an] so often says and commands 'Kill.'"[97] Riccoldo then listed the three

signs: first, Muhammad said that Islam would only last as long as Muslims remained in power,

temporally, through force; second, those who teach the Qur'an wield a sword in order to terrorize

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[94] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.173r. "Unde et Alchoran etiam sibi maliciose prouidit et posuit quattuor remedia ne desereretur a suis et ne falsitas eius deprehenderetur."

[95] Riccoldo also makes references to the places in the Qur'an that support these conclusions.

[96] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.170v. This is both the heading for chapter 10 in the original manuscript and the first line of the chapter in both the original manuscript and Paris 6225: "Decimo considerare debemus quod alchoranum non sit lex dei quia est violenta."

[97] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.170v. "Tria uero sunt expressa signa uiolentie legis predicte absque eo quod dictum est quia totiens dicit et mandate: 'Occidite.'"

their followers into submission; and third, the Assassins, who are masters of violence and murder, are themselves Muslims and support the Muslim.[98]

The Paris 6225 reader drew a large sword in the outer margin of the folio near Riccoldo's explanation of the second sign, where he argued that while Christians wield only a cross, Muslims wield a sword.[99] In Munich 449, the reader singled out the first sign instead. The text reads, "One [sign] is that Muhammad said to them that such a law [the Qur'an] would endure as long as they were victorious in arms and in temporal power."[100] Next to the text is the short note: *hic bene* ([observe] this well).[101] The note highlights this passage as useful for future readers. The message that a preacher could take away is clear: Islam would not be defeated as a religion until it was defeated militarily. Riccoldo stated that Muhammad himself argued that the strength of the Qur'an lay in the Islamic military. This passage, therefore, could supply a clear inducement for waging war on Muslims: to eradicate Islam altogether.

Finally, in Paris 6225, a different passage from chapter ten is also highlighted by a hand with two fingers extending toward a passage that reads: "It should be noted, moreover, that there are four kinds among those holding to the errors of Muhammad [Islam]."[102] Within the following list, the four kinds of people that Riccoldo included are each blocked out, further emphasizing

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[98] See Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 111–112. The "Assassins" were a sect of Shī'a Muslims who lived in the mountains of Syria and Iran and who held a particular fascination in medieval Europe as expert killers. The name comes from the Arabic word hashashi, meaning a user of the drug hashish (a claim that has not been substantiated) and, of course, is now a common English noun. See Farhad Daftary, *The Assassin Legends: Myths of the Isma'ilis* (I.B.Tauris, 1995).

[99] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.171r. "Christianii vero, dum predicant, non ensem sed crucem eleuant, ad ostendendum non signa uiolentie sed innocentie uelet homines qui mittuntur a Christo 'sicut oues in medio luporum.'"

[100] Munich, MS Clm. 449, fol.135r. "Unum est quia machometus dixit eis quod tantum duraret lex illa quantum duraret eis uictoria armorum et potential temporalis."

[101] Other notes in this hand, as well as other scribes throughout the corpus, used the phrase *nota* or *nota bene* (observe, or obseve well) to note passages of interest. I take this note to carry the same meaning due to its similarities to the hand's other notes.

[102] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.170v. "Notandum autem quod 'quatuor sunt partes tenentium Mahometi errorem."

this argument in the manuscript.[103] First are Muslims who were brought to Islam "by the sword" – those who had been forced to convert.[104] At a time when many Christians believed that the Ottomans would soon be marching on Rome itself, it would be alarming to learn that forced conversion might be the result. By highlighting these aspects of Riccoldo's argument, fifteenth-century readers of *Contra legem* found an image of Islam that they could use to justify and encourage crusading against the Ottomans, whose violence – it could be argued from this information – was predicated on their religion. These two manuscripts provide examples of the ways that fifteenth-century crusading proponents appropriated *Contra legem*. Their copyists and readers sought an authoritative source for the specific kind of threats that the Ottoman Empire posed as a religious entity. Such a characterization, as discussed above and in Chapter Three, would allow the papacy to claim jurisdiction over the Ottoman problem.

A dialogic approach

While crusading was a more common European response to Ottoman expansion after the fall of Constantinople, Nicholas of Cusa's copy of *Contra legem* in Kues 107 illustrates a different approach based on dialogue.[105] Nicholas of Cusa was born in modern Bernkastel-Kues,

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[103] This type of blocking is not common in this manuscript. It is difficult to tell who was responsible for the blocking, the copyist or a reader, because there appears to be space enough for the blocking left by the copyist, but the markings themselves almost overlap over the words that go before, as though they were fit in later. See fol.170v.

[104] Paris, MS lat. 6225, fol.170v. "Prima pars ingress est Saracenismum, eorum qui per gladium intrauerunt sicut dictum est, et nunc etiam suum cognoscentes errorem resipiscerent nisi gladium formidarent." The others include those who have been deceived by the lies of the Qur'an, those who are Muslims only because their ancestors were, and those who desired to live a laxer life.

[105] Mérigoux gave a description of this manuscript in his critical edition of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 39–40). In one small error, Mérigoux stated, "Au chapitre 13 (fol. 220r), le copiste a ecrit en marge, face au nom de Baheyra: 'in arabica,'" which Mérigoux likely believed was a reference to the original manuscript copy of *Contra legem*, annotated by Riccoldo (Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173, fols.185r–218r) where the name was written in Arabic script as well as in a transliteration. This note actually reads "iacobitus," which is a reference to the description of the man Baheyra, who Riccoldo said was a Jacobite. For more on the legends surrounding Bahira in Christian polemics, see Barbara Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahira: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). See p. 181 on Riccoldo.

Germany in 1401.[106] He studied law and theology before his ordination, and then he began work

for a papal legate. While Nicholas participated in the Council of Basel as a conciliar-reformist,

he eventually took up the cause of the papacy and was named a cardinal in 1448. Nicholas's

early interest in Islam was apparent at the Council of Basel, where he obtained a copy of the

Qur'an in Latin. He studied the text with fellow-councilman Juan de Segovia. Following the fall

of Constantinople, Nicholas wrote *De pace fidei* (On the Peace of Faith), in which men of

different religions established a dialogue set in heaven to discuss a means of achieving unity

among themselves.[107] Then, in 1461, he composed *Cribratio Alkorani* (Sifting the Qur'an), a

detailed polemic against the Qur'an.[108] Nicholas died in 1464, days before Pius II's death on

crusade.

Thus, although Nicholas attended crusading councils and went on preaching tours at the

behest of the Pope, he was more interested in responding to Ottoman expansion through

scholarly research on Islam. *Contra legem* became a critical source for Nicholas in this process.

In *Cribratio Alkorani*, Nicholas described his first encounter with *Contra legem*: "After this, in

Rome, I saw the little book of brother Riccoldo of the Order of Preachers, who learned the

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[106] See John Tolan, "Nicholas of Cusa," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 5: 1350–1500, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 421–428.

[107] For a critical edition and translation of the text, see Nicholas of Cusa, *On Interreligious Harmony: Text, Concordance, and Translation of* De pace fidei, eds. James E. Biechler and H. Lawrence Bond (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990). See also Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's* De pace fidei *and* Cribratio Alkorani: *Translation and Analysis* (Minneapolis: A.J. Banning Press, 1990). For studies of the text, see Joshua Hollman, *The Religious Concordance: Nicholas of Cusa and Christian-Muslim Dialogue* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); and Ian Christopher Levy, Rita George-Tvrtković, and Donald Duclow, eds. *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam: Polemic and Dialogue in the Late Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[108] For a critical edition of *Cribratio Alkorani*, see Ludovicus Hagemann, ed., *Cribratio Alkorani*, in Nicolai de Cusa, *Opera Omnia: Iussu et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Heidelbergensis*, Vol. 8 (Hamburgi: In Aedibus Felicis Meiner, 1986). For a translation of *Cribratio*, see Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's* De pace fidei *and* Cribratio Alkorani. For a few additional works related to *Cribratio*, see Costigliolo, "Qur'anic Sources of Nicholas of Cusa," 219–238; Jasper Hopkins, "Islam and the West: Riccoldo of Montecroce and Nicholas of Cusa," in *Miscellany on Nicholas of Cusa*, ed. Hopkins (Minneapolis: A.J. Banning Press, 1994); and Biechler, "Three Manuscripts."

Arabic letters in Baghdad, and [the book] pleased more than the others."[109] Sometime after 1453,

Nicholas commissioned a copy of *Contra legem* into Kues 107 while in Rome.[110] The copyist

also included Dionysius the Carthusian's *Contra perfidiam Mahumeti* (Against the Perfidy of

Muhammad, 1452). Dionysius was a Carthusian monk from the Netherlands who had

accompanied Nicholas on a preaching tour for a crusade in 1452. Nicholas requested that

Dionysius compose the polemic on this occasion.[111] These are the only two works in Kues 107.

Nicholas made notes in the margins of both texts, and his hand is the only one in the codex aside

from the copyist's. This manuscript became a critical companion to Kues 108, which contained

Nicholas's copy of the Qur'an as well as several other texts from the collection commissioned by

Peter the Venerable in the twelfth century. These manuscripts, and particularly *Contra legem*,

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[109] *Cribratio*, ed. Hagemann, 6. "Vidi post hoc Romae libellum fratris Ricoldi Ordinis Praedicatorum, qui Arabicis litteris in Baldach operam dedit, et plus ceteris placuit."

[110] The exact date for the creation of the manuscript remains unknown. Nicholas wrote that he discovered the work after commissioning the treatise by Dionysius the Carthusian, written in 1452, that is discussed in this paragraph. Nicholas began writing *Cribratio* in 1459, which gives us the latest possible date for his discovery. Within this seven-year gap, we know that Nicholas was in Rome at least twice: first, he visited from March 5 to May 29, 1453 and later, he came in late 1458 and remained until his death in 1464 (Concetta Bianca, "The Roman Library of Nicholas of Cusa," in *Scrittura Biblioteche e stampa a roma nel quattrocento* (1982), 690–691). He may have commissioned Kues 107 during either visit. Biechler suggested that the marginalia likely dated to 1453 based on a comparison to Nicholas's notations in Kues 108, but his evidence is tenuous (see James Biechler, "Three Manuscripts on Islam," 96). If Nicholas did already have Kues 107 in his possession in 1453, then it seems likely that he traveled with the manuscript on his return visit in 1458 when he composed *Cribratio*. In his description of Kues 107, Mérigoux noted that "toutes ces corrections de type humaniste se retrouvent dans le ms. V [Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Vat. lat. 7317, fols. 267v–300r], copié à la même époque, également à Rome, pour le cardinal Capranica" (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 40). This second manuscript was copied in 1458, and Nicholas had an acquaintance with Cardinal Capranica, whom he had taught previously at the university of Padua and who had been at the Council of Basel. It seems likely, therefore, that the Vatican manuscript was copied from Kues 107, although the reverse is also possible. Nicholas may also have commissioned Kues 107 at this same time or even from the Vatican manuscript if the second date is correct. The two manuscripts are in different hands.

[111] During this period, the Byzantine government was actively seeking aid from western European powers against the Ottoman Turks (see chapter 3). While many in Europe did not acknowledge the extent of the danger that the Ottomans posed until after the fall of the Byzantine capital, there were nonetheless half-hearted gestures toward helping the eastern Christians, and this preaching tour is one such example.

provided Nicholas with critical evidence and ideas for proposing interreligious dialogue in

Cribratio Alkorani.[112]

      Like the readers of Paris 6225 and Munich 449, Nicholas viewed Ottoman expansion as a

threat to Christian faith. As discussed above, Riccoldo had emphasized that Islam was dangerous

because it enticed those who sought an easier path to salvation than Christianity. In his reading

of *Contra legem*, Nicholas highlighted the same danger concerning religious conversion that

readers of Paris 6225 and Munich 449 had underscored. For example, Nicholas marked the same

passage in chapter ten regarding conversion patterns that the Paris 6225 reader had highlighted.

He drew a small vertical fish with a wavy line beneath it next to the passage that argued that

while Christians would only convert during life (to enjoy the benefits of an easy, even lascivious

lifestyle), Muslims would only convert at death (to gain the benefit of salvation).[113] Thus, like

the crusade advocates, Nicholas used *Contra legem* to establish the stakes of Ottoman expansion

in terms of the threat to individual Christians and to Christendom.

      However, Nicholas's reading of *Contra legem* differed markedly from the crusade

advocates in other respects. While crusade advocates sought evidence of Muslim violence and

the need for military action, Nicholas prioritized evidence for how best to convince Muslims to

convert, despite the difficulties. Notably, Nicholas annotated chapter eight, which argues that the

Qur'an is irrational, and chapter nine, which argues that the Qur'an contains falsehoods, more

heavily than average. By comparison, the only place in which Nicholas annotated chapter ten on

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[112] On the extensive influence of *Contra legem* on Nicholas's *Cribratio*, see see Waggoner Karchner, "Deciphering the Qur'an in Late Medieval Europe: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Nicholas of Cusa, and the Text-Centered Development of Interreligious Dialogue," *Journal of Medieval History*, forthcoming.

[113] Kues, MS 107, fol. 216v. "Huius autem signum est in utrisque quia cum aliqui Saraceni efficiantur Christiani et aliqui Christiani efficiantur Saraceni, Christianus nunquam efficitur Saracenus in morte quam in vita, Saracenus autem potius efficitur Christianus in morte quam in vita."

the violence of the Qur'an has already been cited, and that passage discussed conversion rather than Muslim or Qur'anic violence.

Nicholas focused on passages from *Contra legem* that demonstrated the Qur'an's support of Christian beliefs. Such evidence would allow Nicholas to enter into dialogue with Muslims using their own holy text for substantiation. For instance, in chapter fifteen, Riccoldo noted that, "The Saracens say that the Jews corrupted the books of the Old Testament and the Christians corrupted the Gospels and the books of the New Testament so that there is nothing true remaining in the world concerning scripture except what is in the Qur'an."[114] Riccoldo responded to this claim with a citation of the Qur'an:

> Yet it is shown in chapter three that this is false and [goes] against the Qur'an. Moreover, why would such a prophet as Muhammad is reputed to be have commended something corrupt as exemplary and said that salvation and direction [could be found] in these [holy texts] or else why could he not predict that they would be corrupted in the future? But rather he said the opposite, namely that if the Saracens were in doubt concerning the Qur'an, that they ought to seek out those who accepted books [from God] before them, that is, the Christians and the Jews.[115]

Nicholas added a note in the margins next to this passage, where he summarized Riccoldo's argument: "The Saracens say that the Jews and the Christians corrupted their books, but this is not what Muhammad said in the Qur'an."[116] It is notable that Riccoldo had already discussed this Muslim claim in chapter three. Yet Nicholas made a point to annotate this passage rather than the earlier one. In chapter three, Riccoldo had focused largely on historical and rational arguments,

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[114] Kues, MS 107, fol. 226v. "Et dicunt Sarraceni quod iudei corruperunt libros ueteris testamenti et Christiani corruperunt euangelium et libros noui testamenti et quod nichil ueritatis remansit in mundo de scripturis nisi quantum est Alchorani."

[115] Kues, MS 107, fol. 226v. "Sed ostensum est supra in tertio capitulo quod hoc est falsum et contra Alchoranum. Patet quomodo tantus propheta qualem ipsi reputat machometum tantum commendasset exemplaria corrupta et dixisset quod in eis est salus et directio uel quomodo non predixisset in posterum corrumpenda? Sed potius dixit contrarium, scilicet quod si Saraceni erant in dubio de Alchorano, quod peterent ab illis qui ante eos acceperant libros scilicet a Chrisitanis et a Iudeis."

[116] Kues, MS 107, fol. 226v. "Sarraceni dicunt Judeos et Chrsitianos corruperunt libros sed hoc non dicit mahmath in alchorano."

asserting that Christians could not have corrupted their holy texts, because they could not have made such changes universally, and Christians were divided into many sects and would not have been able to agree on changes. Yet Nicholas chose to emphasize Riccoldo's later argument, which relied not on reason or history but on evidence from the Qur'an. Nicholas also underlined the supporting quotation from the Qur'an and marked it in the inner margin with a small pointed line.[117] Nicholas's reading demonstrates that he sought evidence from the Qur'an, which would be more useful in a dialogue with Muslims, in order to support Christian claims.

Nicholas also concentrated on passages where Riccoldo defended Christianity against alleged Muslim arguments against it. Cataloging these arguments was another useful tactic for preparing a dialogue because these passages offered examples from "the other side." For example, Riccoldo often described the Qur'an's views of Christ. While some views worked to prop up Christian theology, others were more contradictory, and Riccoldo used the latter as an opportunity to espouse correct theology. In chapter nine, for instance, Riccoldo wrote that Muslims describe Christ as a man who was born from a woman. He then corrected this impression, asserting "Indeed Christians do not attribute to the son of God that he is from a woman but rather that he is like heat from a flame or brilliance from the sun; moreover, all truly say that a word being said is generated or begotten, yet not from woman."[118] Nicholas drew a small notation next to the text using two dots and a vertical line to highlight this argument.

Similarly, in chapter fifteen, Nicholas drew a bubble line to mark out a passage with a note next to it that said *nota bene* (observe this well). In the corresponding text, Riccoldo argued

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[117] Kues, MS 107, fol. 226v.

[118] Kues, MS 107, fol. 213v. "Non enim Christiani dant Deo filium tanquam ex muliere sed sicut est calor ab igne splendor a sole et uerbum a dicente que omnia uere nasci et generari dicuntur et non ex uxore." On fol. 225, Riccoldo expounds further on this argument, and Nicholas again marks the passage, this time using a long line with several bubbles that runs down the margin next to the relevant text.

against the Qur'anic point that Jesus never actually said he was God during his life. Riccoldo

replied that Christ also never said that he was a servant of God anywhere in the Gospels,

although Muslims still believed this much. Rather, Jesus showed that he was both God and

man/servant through his many works, which is why he said, "'If you do not want to believe,

believe the works.'"[119] Riccoldo's attempts to correct points of "error" within the Qur'an offered

his reader sound theological or exegetical points that could easily be explained to potential

Muslim converts. At the same time, these passages refuted claims made in the Qur'an, thereby

implicitly showing the falsity of that text to a Muslim audience. For Nicholas's goal of opening a

dialogue, such assessments could prove very useful.

Nicholas also annotated passages that explicitly delegitimized the Qur'an and could be

used to convince Muslims of its inauthenticity. For instance, Riccoldo frequently noted that God

often spoke in the plural in the Qur'an. He argued that this was an irrational representation of

God, whose essence is singular, unless God was referring to himself as the Trinity. Nicholas

summarized this argument at its first appearance in chapter two with a note in the margin saying,

"God is introduced in the plural when speaking about himself."[120] He marked the argument in

several additional places throughout Kues 107 as well. This argument critiqued the Qur'an as

irrational, making it impossible that the text could be divinely inspired. Moreover, Riccoldo

issued a caveat: if the Qur'an was correct in using the plural, it must be affirming God's triune

nature, a critical point of Christian theology. Nicholas's interest in these types of passages

demonstrates his focus on using the Qur'an to understand the relationship between Islam and

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[119] Kues, MS 107, fol. 226r. The text reads: "Non tamen inuenitur in toto Euangelio quod ipse diceret se serum Dei ut non induceret errorem, nec dixit expresse: 'Ego sum Deus' nex dixit 'Sum homo' sed ueris et manifestis operibus ostendit quod erat uerus Deus et uerus homo et ideo dixit 'Si michi non uultis credere operibus credite.'"
[120] Kues, MS 107, fol. 197v. "Deum introduxit pluraliter de se loquentem."

Christianity. He could then persuade an eventual Muslim audience of Christian superiority using their own text.

Finally, Nicholas sought passages from *Contra legem* that offered more "conciliatory" critiques of the Qur'an. In chapter eight, for instance, Riccoldo cited the place in the Qur'an that commands Muslims to wash with water before prayer. If there is no water, the worshippers are instructed to instead wash themselves with dust. Why – Riccoldo asked – would dust ever be considered a worthy substitute for water? Riccoldo did acknowledge that the practice of washing with water was rational. Yet, he continued, as much as washing with water was a rational act, so much was washing with dust an irrational one. Nicholas marked this passage with an "etc." sign in the margins, indicating that this was a particularly useful example among many in the chapter on irrationality.[121] In the passage, Riccoldo had balanced the part of the Qur'an that was judged in a positive light with the part that appeared to be illogical or misguided. This type of analysis might allow Nicholas to approach a potential Muslim audience in a conciliatory, even somewhat complimentary manner.

Nicholas of Cusa's approach to addressing Ottoman expansion, while unusual for his time, was faithful to Riccoldo's own desire to develop a text that aided interreligious dialogue and conversion. Riccoldo had spent the end of the thirteenth century traveling in the Near East as a missionary to Muslims as well as Jews and eastern Christians, and he continued to write about this approach after his return to Italy. Many scholars have suggested that Riccoldo was discouraged by his missionary experiences and that *Contra legem* was the effort of a man who had abandoned missionary work and sought the solace of a scholarly exercise instead.[122] I would

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[121] Kues, MS 107, fol. 208r.
[122] See, for example, John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 246.

argue, to the contrary, that *Contra legem* was a missionizing work in its own right and an attempt to continue the dialogue he had begun in the Near East.[123] While written for other Christians who might someday engage in this work, rather than directly for Muslims, the polemic nevertheless retained features of a dialogue. In this way, while *Contra legem* did provide polemical fodder for crusade advocates, Nicholas of Cusa more closely mirrored Riccoldo's attempt at dialogue in his *Cribratio Alkorani*.

Nevertheless, these two categories – crusade literature and polemic – did not exist in separate vacuums. Nicholas's *Cribratio Alkorani*, heavily influenced by *Contra legem*, was originally "written for Pius II and cited as influencing the pope's famous letter [to Mehmed II] inviting the Muslim conqueror of Constantinople to become a Christian."[124] Yet Pius also relied on religious polemics such as *Cribratio* during crusade planning. Scholars have debated which texts most influenced Pius in his crusading rhetoric, Nicholas's *Cribratio* or Juan de Torquemada's *Contra principales errores perfidi Machometi*.[125] Juan had a long history of service to the papacy, first as a papal theologian at the Council of Basel, then as a diplomat, and eventually as a cardinal. He wrote his polemic in preparation for the Council at Mantua, and Pius used this text in his speech exhorting the attendees to join the crusade.[126] Yet, notably, Juan also read and was influenced by *Contra legem*.[127] Many western European clerics chose not to limit themselves to a single approach against the Ottomans. Responses to Islam in the thirteenth century were not so very different from the options that fifteenth-century Christians found.

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[123] See Introduction.
[124] Biechler, "Three Manuscripts on Islam," 91.
[125] See Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith*, 45–46, 77–79; and Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 459–460.
[126] Ana Echevarría, "Juan de Torquemada," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, 447–448.
[127] See Costigliolo, "Qur'anic Sources of Nicholas of Cusa," 223; and Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Precheur," 50. Mérigoux noted that Juan de Torquemada had participated at the Council of Florence, which took place at the Santa Maria Novella convent – Riccoldo's convent and the home of his original manuscript. He suggested that he may have first read *Contra legem* on this occasion.

Crusading, mission, dialogue – all had their merits in the eyes of western Christians and most supported each approach to a degree. Riccoldo spent many years missionizing to Muslims, yet he also saw firsthand the difficulties of such an attempt and witnessed the threat of Muslim armies. His polemic reflected his own complicated relationship with Islam. Therefore, it proved itself useful to many different readers in the following centuries.

Conclusion

In the mid-fifteenth century, western Europeans relied on *Contra legem* for a variety of responses to Ottoman expansion. Just as crusade promoters like John of Capistrano turned to *Contra legem* for evidence to support their military actions, so too did Nicholas of Cusa when he began to write a polemical work in hopes of beginning a dialogue with Muslims. Some, such as Juan de Torquemada, used Riccoldo's work both as a source for a new polemic and simultaneously to propagate the crusade. Whatever their intentions, most readers during this post-1453 period appropriated *Contra legem* to establish the same essential foundation for their responses. Riccoldo's anti-Islamic polemic, when applied to fifteenth-century circumstances, offered a specific view of the Ottoman Empire as a danger to Christendom. As a Muslim power, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire was also characterized as the expansion of Islam. *Contra legem* outlined the many dangers inherent in this religion, whether due to its material attractions, its violence, or its misleading doctrine. Readers then portrayed Ottoman power in terms of this threat to the Christian faith.

Thus, despite the many changes to European society over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, many continued to find benefit in conceiving of Islamic powers in the terms of religious difference laid out by Riccoldo. The papacy and papal proponents, in particular, benefited from this depiction of the Ottomans as a religious enemy. After the fall of

Constantinople, this group reasserted the papacy's authoritative position in western Christian society partially by directing new crusading efforts, a responsibility derived from its position as defender of the Church and leader of crusades. Robert Schwoebel argued that this positioning had very real effects: "The Turkish threat worked toward reviving a waning loyalty to the *Respublica Christiana* and gave new life to the old cry for peace and unity in a Christendom subject to the pope." [128] Even more tangibly, Schwoebel suggested that the fall of Constantinople postponed the Protestant revolution. At the least, as the last two chapters indicate, papal proponents managed to dampen reformist movements by using this moment to reassert the popes' authority. While the Protestant Reformation did eventually destroy the idea of a unified Christendom, Protestants continued to use much of the same religious rhetoric as fifteenth-century Europeans.[129] Indeed, as will be discussed in the Afterword, Martin Luther promulgated *Contra legem* as a critical source for responding to Ottoman encroachment into Europe in the mid-sixteenth century. Meanwhile, the rise of humanism and its influence on scholarship also had an impact on the relationships between Islam, Europe, and the Church. Yet, the *Contra legem* manuscript corpus demonstrates that fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanists also continued to rely on medieval polemics as they sought to understand and contextualize the Ottoman Empire.

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[128] Schwoebel, *Shadow of the Crescent*, 23.

[129] Housley made this important argument about later crusade efforts and religion: "It is too easy to dismiss crusading as part of a world which was vanishing as all the regions of Europe moved towards the 'new world' of Reformation, consolidated military structures, and the practice of *Realpolitik*. Such changes were slow and piecemeal, and they incorporated parts of the 'old' world rather than rudely discarding them. This applies to the military and political aspects of crusading, but above all to its place in the religious thinking of contemporaries" (Housley, "Introduction," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, 12).

Chapter 5: Humanist Readings of *Contra legem*: Philosophy, Philology, and Polemic during the Renaissance

Of those humanists with a marked interest in Islam, Theodor Bibliander is among the best known for his publication of the Latin Qur'an in 1543. Bibliander, born as Theodor Buchmann, was a well-known linguist working in Basel.[1] His *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran* (The Principles of Muhammad of the Saracens, and His Life and Successors, and Doctrine and His Qur'an) was a collection of works on Islam, including a Latin translation of the Qur'an as well as Riccoldo's *Contra legem*.[2] When Bibliander first attempted to print this collection, censors in Basel prohibited its distribution due to the inclusion of the Qur'an. However, Martin Luther spoke on behalf of the project and publication proceeded. The entire project included three volumes with material on Islam from the twelfth century to the contemporary period.[3] Bibliander published a bilingual version of *Contra legem*, which included Demetrius Cydones's Greek translation alongside Bartholomew Picenus's Latin translation of the Greek, done at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Yet Bibliander, while well-known, was hardly the first humanist scholar to demonstrate interest in *Contra legem* and Islam. Humanist scholars and clergy read *Contra legem* throughout

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[1] Bruce Gordon, "Theodor Bibliander," *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 6, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 675–676.

[2] Gordon, "Theodor Bibliander," 680–683.

[3] For more on Bibliander's project, see G. Miller, "Theodor Bibliander's *Machumetis Saracenorum principis eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina ac ipse alcoran* (1543) as the Sixteenth-Century 'Encyclopedia' of Islam," *ICMR* 24 (2013): 241–254; Katya Vehlow, "The Swiss Reformers Zwingli, Bullinger and Bibliander and Their Attitude to Islam (1520–1560)," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 6 (1995): 229–254; Harry Clark, "The Publication of the Qur'an in Latin: A Reformation Dilemma," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 15 (1984): 3–12; Harmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation: Studien Zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beirut: In Kommission Bei Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart, 1995), 181–209; Thomas Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 110–121.

the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to understand and react to the expanding Ottoman Empire. Likely, these are some of the same humanists who wrote about Islam in support of the papacy's crusade efforts. As discussed in previous chapters, the fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century papacy faced severe challenges to its sovereignty in the Church and in European society. The papacy and its supporters seized on different means of regaining authority and reestablishing control during this time.[4] The rise of the humanist movement and the popularity of humanist scholarship presented an opportunity for the papacy.[5] Popes began to bring humanists under their patronage and create allies within the humanist movement. Papal secretaries became almost exclusively humanists, and bureaucratic documents took on the humanistic script.[6] Indeed, Poggio Bracciolini, a major influencer of this style of writing, was himself a papal secretary at the Councils of Constance and Basel.[7] James Hankins has argued that this alliance between the papacy and humanism was natural, given the papacy's decline during the time of humanism's rise.[8] As an institution, the papacy had struggled for more than a century with decreasing authority and increasing calls for reform.[9] Humanist supporters of the pope argued that the papacy "had truly inherited the Roman Empire – not its military strength but its imperial mission to civilize and unite."[10] Thus, the Renaissance promise of renewal also held promise for the Papal curia seeking to reestablish its power.

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[4] See Carol Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), Introduction, chapter 1.

[5] The reverse was also true. While some humanists proved supportive of the papacy, others challenged that institution. These latter humanists were anticlerical or at least critical of the clergy. Humanist reformers focused their moral condemnations on the Curia and the Papacy. See John F. D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 212–236; James Hankins, "The Popes and Humanism," in *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture*, ed. Anthony Grafton (Washington: Library of Congress; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 47–85, 51.

[6] Hankins, "The Popes and Humanism," 48.

[7] See chapter 3.

[8] Hankins, "The Popes and Humanism," 62.

[9] Again, see chapter 3 on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century challenges to papal sovereignty.

[10] Hankins, "The Popes and Humanism," 70.

As papal supporters, this group of humanists addressed one of the fifteenth-century popes' most pressing concerns: the Ottoman Empire. Many humanists acted "as publicists and rhetoricians on the Turkish advance," cultivating responses to Ottoman expansion in their literary endeavors.[11] Through a constant output of letters and orations declaring the threat that the Ottomans posed to Europe, these humanist scholars promoted the cause of crusade.[12] In this way, popes harnessed the rhetorical powers of the humanists to bolster their claims of authority – as head of the *ecclesia catholica* – over the threat of a religious "other" to Christendom.

Scholars have emphasized the unique approaches that humanists took to understand and characterize the Ottomans, particularly through more "secular" rhetoric than in the medieval past. Yet, however much these writers added new perspectives and vocabulary to western Christian understanding of the Ottomans, they also relied on medieval anti-Islamic polemics to provide perspective. There were no classical models, strictly speaking, for understanding Islam, and in any case, medieval scholars had already informed their perspective from classical interpretations of religious difference.[13] As such, many humanists found medieval polemics like *Contra legem* a useful place to turn for information and inspiration.[14]

The reception history of *Contra legem* suggests that Riccoldo's work was favored by humanists attempting to learn about Islam from a polemical perspective. The number of humanist-influenced copies of *Contra legem* in the manuscript corpus is significant: features such as the use of humanistic script in the text or the margins, companion texts bound alongside the polemic, and the use of the vernacular allow for the identification of at least six humanist

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[11] Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 141.

[12] See Hankins, "The Popes and Humanism," 63–65.

[13] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 5.

[14] Medieval history was also a place to turn for the humanists, who used the success and commitment of early crusaders as models for their own exhortations and orations against the Ottomans. See Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, chapter 1.

copies of *Contra legem* from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[15] A closer study of these

copies reveal that humanist scholars read Riccoldo's polemic from a different perspective than

those church reformists and crusade preachers that have been discussed in previous chapters.

Humanist copyists and readers of *Contra legem* demonstrated a philological interest in

the Latin text, as well as in Riccoldo's inclusion of Arabic, that does not frequently appear in

other *Contra legem* manuscripts. By making humanist interventions to the text's grammar and

orthography, these scribes created copies of *Contra legem* that fit contemporary styles. From a

polemical perspective, these humanists highlighted Riccoldo's moral, historical, and

philosophical critiques of Islam more frequently than his theological assessments. Thus, the

humanist readers of *Contra legem* developed selective critiques of the Ottomans based on those

of their values which they found reflected in the text. In other words, they appropriated

Riccoldo's medieval arguments which aligned with humanist emphases on morality, philosophy,

and history to better understand and characterize the Ottomans. These interactions with the text

demonstrate that the humanist readers of *Contra legem* found ways to make traditional polemical

arguments against Islam appear contemporary or "modern." More broadly, humanist readings of

Contra legem demonstrate the wide-ranging appeal and adaptability of Riccoldo's text in new

contexts. These characteristics surely played a part in the polemic's long-term popularity.

The role of humanism in European-Ottoman relations

In previous centuries, clerics and later mendicants disseminated calls for crusade through

letters and sermons, and anti-Islamic polemics were also produced within the Church. In the

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[15] There are two additional manuscripts that will not be discussed in this chapter, but which have signs of humanist influence. One is Belluno, Biblioteca Lolliliana, MS 30. Although I was unable to access the manuscript, the manuscript includes an epigram for a humanist Pandolfo Collenuccio (1444–1504), who was a magistrate in Florence under Lorenzo de Medici. Cf. G. Mazzatinti, *Inventari dei Manoscritti delle Biblioteche d'Italia* (Forli, 1890), T.2, 123. For more information, see appendix A. The second is Krakow, National Museum of Krakow, MNK-Rkps-1401. This manuscript is written in humanistic script. There are no other signs of a humanist reader in the manuscript that are comparable to the other manuscripts, so it is not discussed in detail.

fourteenth century, laymen such as humanist scholars began to join clerical writers in producing Islam-related texts.[16] The study of Islam falls outside the bounds of humanism as traditionally circumscribed by historians. Many scholars have overlooked a vast crusading literature in favor of more traditional humanist topics such as Latin philology, education, and the arts. Yet, contemporary humanists did not have the uniform focus on classical Antiquity that is sometimes attributed to them.[17] As Robert Schwoebel has noted, "the causes of the liberal arts and that of the crusade, however incongruous, were advanced by the same pens."[18]

The number of works humanists produced on Islam and the Ottomans is staggering. The surviving literary compositions by humanists on the crusades in the 1430s–1480s is equal in volume to all the crusading literature produced during the high medieval period combined.[19] The "exhortation to war against the [Ottoman] barbarians" was commonly included at occasions such as diplomatic congresses, the elevations of popes, the receptions of ambassadors, and even the marriages of princes.[20] Some scholars have argued that these orations were merely rhetorical exercises without any hope or expectation for response.[21] Yet the climate in Europe at this time suggests otherwise. Many humanists saw it as a Christian duty to exhort their leaders to protect faith, as well as learning, from Ottoman destruction.[22] Moreover, many humanists held "the

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[16] James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 115–6.

[17] See, for instance, humanist interest in church reform and theology in John F. D'Amico, "Humanism and Prereformation Theology," in *Renaissance Humanism*, Vol. 3, ed. Albert Rabil Jr. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 349–379; and Charles G. Nauert, "Rethinking 'Christian Humanism'," in *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Angelo Mazzocco (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 155–180.

[18] Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453–1517)* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967), 152.

[19] Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 117.

[20] Robert Schwoebel, "Coexistence, Conversion, and the Crusade Against the Turks," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965): 165.

[21] Schwoebel, "Coexistence, Conversion, and the Crusade," 165–166. See also Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 4. Schwoebel cites, as an example of this position, M.P. Gilmore, *The World of Humanism, 1453–1517* (New York, 1952), 21; and D. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350–1700* (Liverpool, 1954), vii, 25.

[22] Schwoebel, "Coexistence, Conversion, and the Crusade," 182–183.

belief that crusade or some type of armed response was the only way to confront Muslims, specifically Ottomans."[23] As Nancy Bisaha has suggested, the substantial number of treatises on crusades and the Ottomans suggests that this was "a timely and serious issue that drew a sizable readership."[24] These pursuits, then, can be understood as central to the humanist movement, rather than peripheral to it.[25]

These humanists brought unique perspectives and disciplinary methods to Latin Europe's centuries-old task of studying Islam and creating crusade literature.[26] They utilized new language and concepts and preferred classical literary models in their writings on Islam.[27] Scholars have particularly emphasized the more "secular" tone and content that humanists brought to these works. For instance, Bisaha asserted that much of the humanist literature on the Ottomans reflected a new tendency to emphasize Islam's political and cultural threat to Europe while softening or ignoring religious concerns.[28] George Arabatzis suggested a practical reason for this

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[23] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 166. Bisaha rightly notes that more than one Renaissance thinker also employed polemic for conversion purposes and that the use of polemic and even support for crusading did not preclude a genuine desire to convert the Muslims (Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 150).

[24] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 5. It is difficult to assess the size of this readership or its impact on a wider audience through speeches and sermons that utilized these writings. While Hankins also emphasized the massive amounts of crusade literature produced at this time, he noted that the humanists intended a narrower audience than their clerical forerunners, aiming at governing elites rather than the general populace (Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 116). George Arabatzis used Bessarion as one example of a humanist who sought not the spread of mass propaganda but rather the persuasion of a small elite. He suggests that within this new method, "a strategic theory was taking the place of faith" (George Arabatzis, "Sailing Away from Byzantium: Renaissance Crusade Literature and Peace Plans," in *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature, 800–1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 473).

[25] Margaret Meserve argued that the humanists recognized early on that the crusade could serve their varied agendas: "Genuine concern, shrewd political maneuvering and self-conscious displays of erudition and expertise" were all present in the corpus of humanist writing on the crusades. Moreover, she suggested, many humanists saw an intimate connection between the problems of East and West, and discussion of the Turks often were, at heart, also discussions of internal reform (Margaret Meserve, "Italian Humanists and the Problem of the Crusade," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housely (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 15).

[26] See Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 3.

[27] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 8–9; 71.

[28] Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 8–9. See also Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 116, 145. Bisaha does go into detail later in her monograph on the religious aspects of humanist crusade literature, but these claims are almost always tempered by a continuing assertion of the new, secular overtones of the works.

separation of religion from the crusades: the disputed question of whether the pope or a secular ruler would head the crusade. Humanist thinkers, Arabatzis argued, wanted to fight Turkish atrocities without coming under the yoke of the papacy.[29] Arabatzis asserted that these humanists "secularized" crusading literature, part of a "general articulation of secular identity within the West" at this time.[30] Other scholars have added to this narrative, in which humanism and secularization are inextricably linked. Yet Arabatzis's argument overlooks the participation of many humanists in crusade propagation directly on behalf of the Pope.

Certain unusual lines of inquiry can be identified in humanist writing on Islam. In particular, humanists were often influenced by their interest in liberal arts such as history.[31] For this reason, many humanists studied the origins of the Ottomans, or "Turks," which they debated throughout the fifteenth century.[32] Their descriptions of the Ottomans reflected the "historical evidence" of those origins. As a result, these writers commonly characterized the Ottomans as barbarians.[33] Humanists applied this term because of the way that the nomadic Turkish tribes had come from afar and conquered other regions. Simultaneously, the moniker evoked the nature of the Turks, which humanists often characterized as brutish and inhumane. These descriptions were confirmed, in the minds of many humanists, after the fall of Constantinople. The Ottomans were said to have destroyed much of the Byzantine capital, which was seen as a stronghold for classical knowledge, thereby affirming humanist views that the Ottomans did not value learning.

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[29] Arabatzis, "Sailing away from Byzantium," 468.

[30] Arabatzis, "Sailing away from Byzantium," 469.

[31] Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*.

[32] Many scholars have done work on these "origins" debates. See, for instance, Michael Heath, "Renaissance Scholars and the Origins of the Turks," *Bibliotheque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 41 no. 3 (1979): 453–471; John Donnelly, "The Moslem Enemy in Renaissance Epic: Ariosto, Tasso, and Camoens," *Yale Italian Studies* 1 (1977): 162–170; Terence Spencer, "Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance," *The Modern Language Review* 47, no. 3 (1952): 330–333; Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, chapter 2; and Margaret Meserve, "Medieval Sources for Renaissance Theories on the Origins of the Ottoman Turks," in *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), 409–436.

[33] See, for instance, Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 44.

In an effort to emphasize these changes to European studies of Islamic powers, some scholars have run the risk of creating a false equivalence between these new ways of describing Muslims and an increase in "secular" attitudes. These scholars have insisted that humanists deliberately downplayed theologically-based descriptors in favor of philosophical or cultural language.[34] They highlight a change from medieval, theological images of Muslims as heretics and schismatics to Renaissance cultural images of Muslims as crude barbarians, arguing that this change represented an exchange of religious for secular values.

Yet these changes in vocabulary and emphasis did not *ipso facto* require separation from a religious mindset, only a theological one. Scholars wrote about Islam through the lens that suited contemporary trends in thought. Thus, the humanist frame for understanding Islam centered on preconceptions of civility and humanity – and their opposites. However, the underlying view might still have been linked to religion or religious culture. In the thirteenth century, the rise of scholasticism led many clerics and mendicants – particularly the Dominicans – to value logic as highly as many humanists would later value the classicizing civilization by which they characterized their scholarship and culture. Adherents of scholasticism, such as Riccoldo himself, argued that Christianity was an inherently rational religion and that unbelievers must consequently be irrational.[35] Thus, the thirteenth century saw a growing image of Muslims as illogical and their religion as absurd. Religion and rational thought were not separate aspects of culture; they were linked. In the following centuries, humanists prized

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[34] See Nancy Bisaha, "New Barbarian or Worthy Adversary? Humanist Constructs of the Ottoman Turks in Fifteenth-Century Italy," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perceptions of Other*, ed. David Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), esp. 186–189; Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 120–124; Kate Fleet, "Italian Perceptions of the Turks in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 5, no. 2 (1995): 163–166; Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 2–5.

[35] See John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 233–255.

civilized nature and consequently saw Christians as more civilized than Muslims. Religion and

civility do not need to be considered as separate any more than religion and rational thought had

been.

Those humanists interested in the Ottomans expanded upon, rather than replaced,

religious and theological perspectives on Islam, often relying on traditional medieval knowledge

to increase their understanding. The *Contra legem* corpus reveals the ways that humanists read

and used Riccoldo's anti-Qur'an polemic to develop their own positions on Islam. Humanist

copyists and readers of *Contra legem* had unique interests in and uses for the text, as will be

described below. Nevertheless, their reliance on a text about Islam, written before the rise of the

Ottomans, suggests that many humanists saw a benefit in perpetuating a view of the Ottomans

based on religious difference as much as on any other cultural or historical facet.

Identifying humanist copies of *Contra legem*

Of the thirty-one known extant copies of *Contra legem*, five offer distinctive evidence of

humanist creation.[36] The first is Florence 431, a manuscript that was compiled during the middle

decades of the fifteenth century.[37] *Contra legem* is the first text bound in the manuscript, and it is

a complete copy that closely resembles the original version.[38] At some point, the copyist went

back through this copy of *Contra legem* and made corrections to the text to match it even more

faithfully to the original by adding words or phrases that were left out, correcting spelling in

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[36] A sixth manuscript will be introduced in the following section which did not have a humanist origin, only a humanist reader.

[37] Florence, Biblioteca Medici Laurenziana, Aquisti e Doni MS 431.

[38] This "original" version was determined by scholars to have notes and corrections by Riccoldo himself, and the critical edition was done by Jean-Marie Mérigoux based on this manuscript copy, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale de Florence, MS Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173. See J-M Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Dominicane: Fede e Controversia nel '300 e '500* 17 (1986): 1–144. This critical edition will be used to cite from or quote *Contra legem* wherever not otherwise stated.

places, and inserting other, similar changes.[39] There are also six other works or excerpts, four of which appear to be in the same hand as *Contra legem*, divided by one text in a second hand. The final text is in a third hand, and the signature attributes it to Ieronimus Iohannes, dated June 2, 1439 in Florence. However, the middle text in the second hand is a letter from Pope Pius II to Mehmed II, originally written in 1461. This dating suggests that the contents were added to the manuscript in reverse order. The copyist of *Contra legem* also added marginalia to the other two texts, further suggesting that this scribe worked last and added *Contra legem* at the end.

The copyist of *Contra legem* and the companion texts, which polemicize Islam and Judaism, is not identified in the manuscript. However, the humanistic script used to copy the text indicates the copyist's identity.[40] The reason that this humanist scholar added *Contra legem* to the manuscript is suggested in a short prologue to the text. Before introducing *Contra legem* and Riccoldo as its author, the copyist wrote that St Jerome, in his translation of the chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea, instructed his readers to continue his work, to edit and add to it in order to improve it.[41] The passage suggests that the copyist saw adding *Contra legem* to the manuscript as a way to improve understanding of Islam and religious "others." The copyist's inclusion of a reference to an ancient Church Father may further hint at a humanist education and interests.

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[39] Moreover, the copyist also added notes and additions to the Florence 431 version that are found in the margins of the original manuscript. For instance, in chapter 8, there are three long marginal additions written by Riccoldo in the original manuscript that have been inserted into the MS Florence 431 by means of small scraps of paper secured to the paper near the binding at the same points of the text where they were found in the original (these additions can be found on fols.196v, 197r, and 199v in the original). In Florence 431, the folios were renumbered to accommodate these scraps. If the copyist was in Florence, as was Ieronimus Iohannes, he may have consulted the original manuscript and found the additions at the source. For more on these additions, see appendix A.

[40] For information on the history and development of humanistic script, see Alfred Fairbank and Berthold Wolpe, *Renaissance Handwriting: An Anthology of Italic Scripts* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1960); and B.L. Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1960).

[41] Florence, MS 431, fol. 1r. The text reads, "Abbatis Hyeronius in traductione cronice Eubii Cesarinesis [Eusebius of Caesarea] ad uniuersos scriptores seu librorum exemplatores ita igitur. Diuro te quocumque hos descripsis libros per dominum nostrum iesuorum Christum et gloriosum eius adventum in quo ueniet iudicare uiuos et mortuos: ut conferas et scrippsis: et emendes ad exemplaria ea de quibus scrippis diligenter. Et hoc adiurationis genus transcribas et transferas in eum codicem quem descripsis."

The second humanist copy is Florence 3026.[42] As described in Chapter One, this

manuscript was copied by the Venetian Paolo Angelo. According to the story that Paolo tells in

the preface, his grandfather had owned a copy of *Contra legem*, and after his father inherited the

manuscript it was seized by Ottoman forces who ransacked his town. The father ransomed the

manuscript in Constantinople and apparently bequeathed it to his son, Paolo, who copied the text

into Florence 3026 and sent this copy to Pope Adrian VI on July 13, 1523. Paolo wrote the

manuscript in a fairly neat humanistic script. The text is complete, and it matches the original

manuscript very closely. Moreover, a few corrections are made by a second hand in the margins,

suggesting that a later reader had access to an even more faithful transcription of the text. *Contra

legem* is the only text included in the manuscript.

Evidence of Paolo's humanism-inspired vision for the text appears less in the manuscript

copy for Pope Adrian than in a contemporary published edition. As he explained to the Pope,

Paolo believed that the text ought to be translated into many vernacular languages and

disseminated as widely as possible. He translated the work into Italian himself and had it printed

in Venice in the same year. Paolo included his own short polemical work, which takes up sixteen

folios of the printed edition, while Riccoldo's treatise takes up the remaining forty.[43] The printed

edition preserves many of the marginal glosses that Paolo Angelo made in the manuscript.

During the Renaissance period, humanist study became connected to the proliferation of

vernacular literature.[44] Among humanists' many pursuits, "two particularly striking ways that

people engaged in humanist studies were by translating classical and humanist texts into the

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[42] Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 3026.
[43] The title page calls the work, *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad Saracenos cum libello contra Alcoranum pro puida preuiaque dispositione conenrsionis infidelium omnium mirabiliter et fere repente ad Iesum Chrisum Dominum Deum nostrum, uiam, ueritatem, et uitam plene satietatis: cui soli sit semper omnis laus, honor, et Gloria, nobis autem obedientia fidelis, et pura tantum. Amen.*
[44] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Latin and Vernacular in Fourteenth-and Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association, 1985).

vernacular and by reading or copying these vernacular texts."[45] Thus, Paolo's desire to

disseminate the text in the vernacular indicates a humanist proclivity.

The third humanist copy of *Contra legem* is Pistoia A.1.[46] This manuscript was written by

the humanist Girolamo Zenoni in 1483. Emilio Panella identified this copy of *Contra legem*

several years after a critical edition was published in 1986. Panella acknowledged Zenoni's

autograph and noted that he was a Pistoiese humanist and a canon of the cathedral church of

Pistoia (d.1501).[47] Archivists have described Zenoni as a "bibliophile, copyist, and illuminator,"

and his name is scattered throughout catalogs of Italian archives.[48] Zenoni's version of *Contra

legem* is not faithful to the original text in wording, although the content and meaning remain the

same. Rather, the text reads as a sort of paraphrase of Riccoldo's original. Zenoni's manuscript

shows distinct signs of his humanist interests. One of the most unusual of these is a set of two

Greek words embedded within the text. Panella identified one of these, noting that the copyist

wrote, in "irregularly small, capitalized Greek characters," the words *monarchian mosmou*

instead of the original Latin "monarchiam mundi."[49] In the second case, Greek characters are

substituted for the Latin word "antropomorphositis."[50] In this latter case, Zenoni glossed the

word in Latin in the margin. The inclusion of Greek may signal Zenoni's classical education.

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[45] Brian Jeffrey Maxson, "'This Sort of Men': The Vernacular and the Humanist Movement in Fifteenth-Century Florence," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 16 (2013): 257–271, 258.

[46] Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, MS A.1.

[47] Emilio Panella, "Un altro manoscritto del *Contra legem Sarracenorum*." http://www.e-theca.net/emiliopanella/riccoldo/ricerc.htm. Accessed July 13, 2018.

[48] Medieval Francophone Literary Culture Outside France, "Pistoia, Archivio Capitolare, C 57 and C128," http://www.medievalfrancophone.ac.uk/browse/mss/324/ms_part.html. See also, for examples, Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Iter Italicum, Vol. 6*, 145; "Owners of Incunabula," https://data.cerl.org/owners/2939; Capitular Archive of Pistoia, "Girolamo Zenoni," http://www.archiviocapitolaredipistoia.it/eng/girolamo_zenoni_inventario_della_biblioteca_14871497_pt_ac_l8_m26-idm26.php; Manus Online, "Girolamo Zenoni," https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaAutore.php?ID=198688.

[49] Panella, "Un altro manoscritto del *Contra legem Sarracenorum*." See Pistoia, MS A1, fol. 55r.

[50] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 58r.

Moreover, Zenoni added *Contra legem* to a manuscript that already had many humanist features. The manuscript contains another copy of Pope Pius's *Letter to Mehmed II*. However, these are the only works on Islam, the latter of which is itself arguably humanist in style and intent.[51] Other works include a fellow Pistoiese humanist Buonaccorso da Montemagno's (c.1391–1460) *De nobilitate disputatio* and Italian humanist Guarino Veronese's (1374–1460) *Ephitalamium in Karolum Gonzagam et Luciam Estensem*. Zenoni also copied out orations, such as one given in 1474 by the humanist cardinal Giacomo Piccolomini on the death of a fellow cardinal and the oration of Florentine humanist Cristoforo Landino (1425–1478) at the funeral of a fellow humanist scholar.[52] Further, Zenoni added classical works, such as a *Tabula per alphabetum* of Aristotle and series of verses such as "de vita rustica et urbana" by Claudius Claudianus (c. 370). Finally, he also included two short treatises in vernacular Italian.[53] Thus, Zenoni integrated Riccoldo's polemic into an entire culture of humanist learning.

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[51] Some scholars have argued that Pius's motives in organizing a crusade and writing to Mehmed were entirely political and have noted the emphasis that Pius placed on secular issues such as increased power and land. Hankins argued that "The possibility that Mehmed II might convert to Christianity raised in acute form the question whether the West was fighting to preserve its religion or its political freedom," suggesting that Europe would maintain its political freedom by negotiating Mehmed's conversion (Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 130). Yet, if true, this argument suggests that the war was fought primarily on religious grounds, because the change of religion would be seen as grounds to end the war. Moreover, I would suggest that the opposite conclusion could be drawn from the same possibility. See for instance, Andrea Moudarres, who argues that Pius II's attempts at effecting a conversion "emphasized the importance of faith in Quattrocento political discourse and the belief that politics alone may not overcome conflicts rooted in religious grounds." (Andrea Moudarres, "Crusade and Conversion: Islam as Schism in Pius II and Nicholas of Cusa," *MLN* 128, no. 1 (2013): 52). Nancy Bisaha has developed her own take on the letter, arguing that Pius wrote "almost schizophrenically regarding the Turks," occasionally writing as humanist (read: secular) and occasionally as churchman (read: religious). She suggests that this two-faced approach to the Turks demonstrates Pius's struggle between his position as a religious leader and his humanist interests or "secular loves." (Bisaha, "Pope Pius II and the Crusade," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 47). This take on Pius and his writings implies that humanists and churchmen were somehow mutually exclusive professions and is likely based on deeper assumptions that humanism was inherently secular in nature. See also Leslie F. Smith, "Pope Pius II's Use of Turkish Atrocities," *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 46 (1966): 408–415; and Robert Schwoebel, "Pius II and the Renaissance Papacy," in *Renaissance Men and Ideas*, ed. R. Schwoebel (New York, 1971).

[52] Giacomo Piccolomini was also from the Province of Pistoia. He worked as the private secretary of Cardinal Domenico Capranica, an owner of another copy of *Contra legem* (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS vat. Lat. 7317), before becoming a papal secretary to Pope Pius II, who raised him to Bishop and then Cardinal of Pavia.

[53] See note 45 on the vernacular in humanist studies.

The final two copies with humanist origins are Turin H.II.33 and Dresden A.120.B.[54] The

two manuscripts can largely be discussed together, because the Turin manuscript was copied

from the Dresden one.[55] Neither Turin H.II.33 nor Dresden A.120.B contain a complete copy of

Contra legem. Dresden A.120.B includes only the first fourteen and a half chapters, while Turin

H.II.33 has only the first twelve and a half chapters. Thus, Turin was clearly copied from

Dresden, rather than the other way around. Because the two are so closely aligned, the changes

made by the humanist copyists to the text in one of these manuscripts usually apply to the other.

This is not always the case, however. The Turin copyist used far fewer abbreviations than the

Dresden copyist, so the humanist spelling choices of the former, explored below, are clearer.

They both contain several works from the Toledo Collection in addition to *Contra legem*.

The Toledo Collection was a series of translated works on Islam commissioned by Peter the

Venerable, abbot of Cluny in the mid-twelfth century.[56] This collection includes the first Latin

translation of the Qur'an by Robert of Ketton, as well as several texts on the history of Islam and

Muhammad such as *Doctrina Mahumeti*, *Chronica mendosa et ridicula Sarracenorum*, and *De

generatione Maumetis*. Peter the Venerable also wrote two polemical treatises based on these

translations, and one of these, *Summa totius haeresis ac diabolicae sectae Saracenorum*, is

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[54] Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS H. II. 33; Dresden, Sachsische Landesbibliothek, MS A.120.B. Thomas Burman
has briefly discussed Dresden A.120.B. He mentions *Contra legem* only to note that its inclusion in place of the
Apology of al-Kindi from the Toledo Collection is unusual (Burman, *Reading the Qur'an*, 99).

[55] In the preface, the two copies are missing the same small chunk of text, as well as a single word from the first
chapter title in the table of contents. Throughout, the same type of similarities – usually things that deviate from the
original text in the same exact way – demonstrate that Turin was in fact copied directly from Dresden. For instance,
the headers for the chapters match one another but not the original, as do the many of the Qur'anic surah titles.

[56] For more on the manuscripts containing all or part of this collection, see Marie-Thérèse D'Alverny, "Quelques
Manuscrits de la 'Collectio Toletana," in *Petrus Venerabilis 1156–1956: Studies and Texts Commemorating the
Eighth Centenary of his Death*, ed. Giles Constable and James Kritzeck (Rome: Orbis Catholicus, 1956), 202–218.
D'Alverny discussed fifteen different manuscripts in this article, including Paris 6225 as well as Turin H.II.33. For
more on the creation of this "collection" and on Peter the Venerable, see James Krtizeck, *Peter the Venerable and
Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964). Kritzeck's study includes a brief introduction to the
translators of these two works, Robert of Ketton and Hermann of Dalmattia, as well as editions of two polemics that
Peter wrote using these translated texts. Mérigoux suggested that Riccoldo used Peter's polemics almost 150 years
later as a critical source for *Contra legem* (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 31–33).

included. The contents, in fact, match a portion of Bibliander's sixteenth-century publication described above.[57] But while Dresden A.120.B does not contain any other works by Riccoldo, Turin H.II.33 does include an excerpt of his *Epistolae*. Despite these medieval contents, both manuscripts were copied in the sixteenth century in humanistic scripts.[58] These scripts, as well as the above-mentioned changes to the text, give the best indication that humanist-trained scholars copied both manuscripts.

All five copies of *Contra legem* described here have their origins in the humanist tradition, demonstrating that humanist scholars found use for anti-Islamic polemics. The manuscripts do not, alone, offer overwhelming evidence for the reasons that some humanists wanted to learn about Islam. Yet the contexts described above, whereby humanists participated widely in creating crusading pamphlets, anti-Ottoman speeches, and other literature related to Islam, both polemical and otherwise, offer a strong explanation for this research. By exploring and comparing these copies of *Contra legem*, it is possible to explicate the specific ways that these humanists read and used this information on Islam.

Humanist readings of *Contra legem*

A survey of the marginalia from humanist copies of *Contra legem* reveals that copyists and readers highlighted those of Riccoldo's arguments that centered on philosophy, history, and morality in order to understand how these valued themes of humanist study could be used to understand and refute Islam. There are no marginal notes in Torino H.II.33, except for one small correction to the text, so this manuscript will be left aside for now. While there are many more marginal notes in Florence 431, most of these are corrections to the text rather than glosses, and

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[57] These late manuscript copies may have had some sort of connection to this project, although it is difficult to determine what, if any.

[58] The Dresden copy of *Contra legem* is done in two hands – both humanistic scripts. However, the first hand is responsible for the vast majority of the text, and so any references to the Dresden copyist will refer to this first hand.

so only a few examples will come from this manuscript. However, one additional copy can be discussed in this context. Although the manuscript Bergamo 172 does not contain evidence of a humanist origin, there are clear indications that humanist scholars gained access to the manuscript at a later date.[59] There are marginal notes and markings throughout the text in multiple hands, all of which are done in humanistic scripts. Furthermore, a brief text, *Sententiae Pilate*, was appended to the end of the manuscript in another humanistic script.[60] Thus, the marginal notes from this manuscript can usefully be compared to the other copies of the text.

Humanist respect for classical learning led fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century readers and copyists to highlight those passages of *Contra legem* in which Riccoldo relied on sources that they respected or admired. Copyists and readers glossed references to ancient philosophers, in particular, for easy referral.[61] For instance, Paolo Angelo in Florence 3026, a copyist in Dresden A.120.B, and a reader of Bergamo 172 all highlighted the word *platonicorum* in the text by writing *platonici* (the Platonists) in the neighboring margin.[62] The corresponding text describes the beliefs of an ancient heresy as deriving from the "sayings of the Platonists."[63] Readers could take away a negative correlation between orthodox Christianity and Platonist thought that was occurring in the late antique period.

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[59] Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, MA 172.

[60] This manuscript also contains an unattributed text in the same hand as *Contra legem*. This text includes a drawing of two figures. One is a man sitting on a pedestal, one hand held out against the other figure, and his chin resting on the other. He has no shirt, but shorts, long hair, and a beard. The second figure, a boy with no beard, is standing, looking at the man, and holding a chain connected to the first man's ankle. The boy is wearing a green tunic.

[61] Interestingly, the only correction – and marginal note – in the entire text of Turin H.II.33 is a single word, "philosophers," replacing the incorrect word "prophets" in the text. This was a mistake carried over from the Dresden A.120.B version of the text that was also corrected in the margin.

[62] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 6r. Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 2r. Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 207v. The main glosser of Dresden A.120.B is not the copyist of *Contra legem*; rather, the hand matches that of the copyist of the earlier works in the manuscript, also a humanistic script.

[63] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 6r. "Et uidetur hec position a platonicorum dictis exorta, qui ponebant summum deum patrem…"

Yet Riccoldo more often accorded the ancient philosophers a positive place in relation to Christianity and morality. Moreover, he contrasted these teachings to Islamic ones as further proof of the unsuitability of Islamic beliefs. These associations fitted well with humanist ideas about the ways that ancient (pre-Christian) philosophy could find a place in contemporary Christian thought.[64] For example, in chapter twelve, Riccoldo argued that the Qur'an was bad or evil, and that it could not be divine in nature because God represented "the highest good."[65] He then quoted, "'The best, moreover, are led by the best'" and attributed the quotation to Dionysius II, the fourth-century BC ruler of Syracuse whom Plato attempted to teach.[66] A reader of Florence 3026 added an insertion mark immediately following Dionysius's name in the text and wrote "et plato" in the margin to indicate that this idea stemmed from Platonic philosophy.[67] In this section – as in many others – Riccoldo also used Qur'anic citations to support his argument, a tactic he believed useful for developing a dialogue with Muslims. Yet the humanist readers here and throughout the text highlighted classical Latin and Greek philosophical authorities rather than these citations.

Riccoldo similarly referenced Aristotle in *Contra legem*. In chapter five, he cited Christ's saying that the path to [eternal] life was very narrow. He followed this, "And in this sentiment agrees Aristotle, who said that it is as difficult to operate according to virtue as it is to reach the center of a circle, which few do."[68] A reader of Bergamo 172 underlined the latter quote and

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[64] Hankins, "The Popes and Humanism," 50–60; Ada Palmer, "Humanist Lives of Classical Philosophers and the Idea of Renaissance Secularization: Virtue, Rhetoric, and the Orthodox Sources of Unbelief," *Renaissance Quarterly* 70 (2017): 935–976.
[65] *Contra legem*, 115. "Deus enim est summe bonus."
[66] *Contra legem*, 115.
[67] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 24v. "Optimi autem est optima adducere."
[68] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 7r. "Christus autem hec eadem in suo Euangelio ostendit dicens quod 'arta uia est que ducit ad uitam et quod pauci sunt qui uadant per eam et lata est uia que ducit ad mortem,' etc. Et in hoc consonant sententia Aristotilis qui dicit quod difficile est operari secundum uirtutem sicut attingere centrum in circulo quod pauci faciunt."

wrote "AR" in the margins to signify Aristotle. This exact marking is found again in chapter

eight. In the nearby text, Riccoldo noted that Muhammad never mentioned anything about "true

blessedness, meaning a vision of God and the perfection of the soul."[69] He wrote that, in this

matter, Muhammad "clearly reveals himself to be against Christ and all the prophets, and all the

philosophers."[70] For support, Riccoldo cited the Gospel of John. Then, he quoted Aristotle's

Ethics and *Metaphysics*: "a life that is [led] according to intellect is optimal."[71] The Dresden

reader also glossed this reference, although the text is rendered differently in this copy.[72] The

above examples suggest that these humanist readers preferred classical philosophical references

not only to Qur'anic but even to Biblical evidence. This does not mean that humanist readers saw

ancient philosophy as having a greater authority than the Bible, but it does suggest that they used

Contra legem in part to find the former type of authority. Riccoldo's use of ancient philosophers

attracted humanist readers who sought to put philosophical teachings that they valued into

Christian contexts – and polemical uses.

Humanist interest in the relationship between philosophy, Christianity, and Islam

included concern for Muslim philosophers as well as classical ones. For instance, Riccoldo

mentioned the eleventh-century Persian scholar Ibn Sīnā, who was widely known as Avicenna in

medieval and early modern Europe, where his philosophical ideas were debated. Avicenna's

works were first translated into Latin in the twelfth century in Iberia and became highly

influential in the works of thirteenth-century proponents of Scholasticism such as Thomas

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[69] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 12r. "Nam de uera beatitudine, et [ut] de uisione [Dei] et perfectione anime, nullam omnino mentionem facit Machometus."

[70] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 12r. "In hoc enim apertissime ostendit se esse contrarium Christo et omnibus prophetis et omnibus philosophis."

[71] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 12r. "Et Aristotiles dicit in nino ethicorum et in decimo methaphisice quod vita que est secundum intellectum est optima."

[72] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 218r. It says, "et philosophis dicit quod in actu ille impossibile est hominem intelligere." The reader then wrote in the neighboring margin: "Aristotles dicit hominem in cortu non posse intelligere."

Aquinas.[73] Dante depicted Avicenna as belonging in Limbo alongside other, non-Christian, yet

virtuous or moral thinkers and writers such as Plato. Riccoldo, however, cited Avicenna in a less

positive context. In chapter one, when he named certain heretical ideas as coming from

Platonism, he added that the Platonists "agreed with the opinion of Avicenna."[74] Humanist

readers and copyists concentrated on this reference: "auicenna" is glossed in the margins by

Paolo in Florence 3026, Zenoni in Pistoia A.1, a copyist in Dresden A.120.B, and a reader of

Bergamo 172.[75] While it is unclear from these glosses whether the humanist readers took the

same polemical view of Avicenna as Riccoldo, their interest in his citation of Avicenna as a

philosopher is evident.

Despite philosophical differences between Riccoldo and some Arab philosophers like

Avicenna, Riccoldo was among those writers who propagated a common conception that Arab

philosophers were not true Muslims – and even that they were secret Christians.[76] The syllogism

was simple enough: the Qur'an was a false and irrational collection of beliefs, and this was easy

for any rational thinker to see. Therefore, learned Arab philosophers could not reasonably accept

the teachings of the Qur'an. For instance, Riccoldo argued in chapter thirteen, "Moreover the

Saracens who were skilled in philosophy rose up against each other and began to read the books

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[73] Dag Nikolaus Hasse and Amos Bertolacci, eds. *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's* Metaphysics (Berlin-Boston: Walter De Gruyter, 2012), 1–5. See also Amos Bertolacci, "On the Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics before Albertus Magnus: An Attempt at Periodization," in *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's* Metaphysics, 197–223; Marie-Thérèse D'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. R.L. Benson and G. Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 421–462; Charles Burnett, "Arabic into Latin: The Reception of Arabic Philosophy into Western Europe," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, eds. P. Adamson and R. Taylor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 370–404.
[74] *Contra legem*, 64. "Cui etiam opinion consonant opinion Auicenne."
[75] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 6v; Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 57r; Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 207v; Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 2r.
[76] John Tolan has argued that this stance developed in the thirteenth century, when mendicant missionaries emphasized the irrationality of Islam at the same time that Europeans were translating and integrating respected Muslim scholarship into university curriculum. The suggestion that Muslim philosophers did not believe in Islam or even had secretly converted to Christianity, could help explain the contrast. John Tolan, "Saracen Philosophers Secretly Deride Islam," *Medieval Encounters* 8 (2002): 184–208; on Riccoldo, 205–207.

of Aristotle and Plato and began to disdain all the sects of the Saracens and the Qur'an itself."[77]

In the margins of Dresden A.120.B, the glosser wrote "Arab philosophers disdain the religion."[78]

Humanist scholars could appreciate Riccoldo's argument. Pre-Christian philosophers were born

too soon, while Muslim philosophers were born in the wrong place, yet humanists both had the

potential for moral or philosophical insight.

In addition to philosophy, humanist readers also attended particularly to Riccoldo's

historical exposition. Occasionally, readers highlighted historical moments to place them into

context. Zenoni, for instance, frequently glossed the names of historical figures in Pistoia A.1 to

situate the polemical arguments within a Roman historical context. For example, Riccoldo

argued in chapter nine that the Qur'an contained falsehoods, such as that the Virgin Mary was

the sister of Moses and Aaron. Riccoldo explained that their sister Mary lived in the reign of

Hezekiah, seven hundred years before the Virgin Mary, who lived during the reign of Octavius.[79]

In the margins, Zenoni wrote "emperor Octavius" to highlight this historical detail.[80] A reader of

Bergamo 172 glossed the same section, writing "Rome in the time of king Hezekiah."[81]

In the same chapter, Riccoldo asserted that the Qur'an lied when it said that Moses was a

Muslim, because Muhammad arose during the time of Heraclius, whose reign began in 610

AD.[82] In Pistoia, Zenoni wrote "emperor Heraclius" in the margins next to this passage.[83] He

made the same note again in chapter thirteen, where Riccoldo described the reign of Heraclius as

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[77] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fols. 230v–231r. "Surrexerunt autem contra utrosque Saraceni quidam periti in philosophia et ceperunt legere in libris Aristotilis et Platonis et inceperunt contempnere omnes sectas Saracenorum et ipsum Alchoranum."
[78] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 231r. "Philosophis arabes contempnebat religionem."
[79] See *Contra legem*, 104.
[80] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 71v. "Octauianus imperator."
[81] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 14v.
[82] See *Contra legem*, 102.
[83] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 71r. "Heraclius imperator."

inciting the Devil to move against Christianity.[84] A copyist of Dresden A.120.B made the exact same gloss.[85] Zenoni also noted the date of Muhammad's birth – 616 – in the margins of chapter thirteen on Muhammad's life.[86] The Dresden A.120.B glossers denoted other historical timepoints. In chapter nine, one gloss read "in the time of the reign of the Jews and the builders of Rome," and another read "the time during which Muhammad lived."[87] Another Dresden A.120.B glosser highlighted the history of the Gospels in chapter three, where Riccoldo discussed the Gospels' multilingual creation. The reader glossed the text, writing, "Matthew wrote the Gospel in Hebrew, John in Greek, Luke in Greek, and Mark in Latin."[88] These names and brief notes served as historical reference points for the humanist readers on Biblical and Muslim histories.

The humanist readers also found an interest in historical information on early persecutions of the Church. For example, in the preface to the text, Riccoldo created context by describing the three "great" persecutions of the Church. The first was persecution by the pagans prior to the conversion of Constantine; the second was the slew of early heretics such as Arius, Sabellius, and Macedonius that the early Church fathers had to combat; the third was a rise in hypocrisy that led to Islam. Zenoni glossed Pistoia A.1 with three notes: "first persecution of the Church," "second persecution," and "third persecution" to highlight this structuring.[89] One of Bergamo 172's readers made the same type of glosses, naming the persecutions: "first the church

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[84] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 76v.

[85] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 229v. "heraclius imperator."

[86] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 76v.

[87] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fols. 223r, 222r. "tempora Iudeorum regnum et edificatores Romae;" "tempora quo fuit Mahumetus."

[88] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 210v. "Matheus scripsit euangelium hebraice, Iohannes grece, Lucas grece, Marcus Latine."

[89] Pistoia, MS A.1, fols. 55r–v. "Prima persecutio ecclesie," "secunda persecutio," and "tertia persecutio."

was persecuted by pagans," "second by heretics," and "third by hypocrisy."[90] A copyist of

Dresden A.120.B wrote more briefly, "three persecutions of the Christian faith."[91]

Riccoldo expanded on the first persecution in chapter three. He wrote that Christianity

was not accepted in early Rome,

> not because many men and women did not receive gods and goddesses, but
> because Christ was called God without permission of the Romans, who prohibited
> that anyone appoint a god without the authority of the senate, and also because
> this god did not permit any partner. For if they received this god, they would be
> compelled to give up all other gods, which also was against the pacts of the
> provinces and the laws and customs of the Romans.[92]

In Dresden A.120.B., a copyist marked the passage with a note that read: "The Romans

prohibited anyone to designate a god without the authority of the Senate." [93] This gloss suggests

that the reader had a historian's interest in Roman political practices. Others focused on the

religious aspect. For instance, a reader of Bergamo 172 wrote, "the Romans who persecuted the

Christians until the year 300."[94]

This popular theme appeared once again in chapter seven. In a discussion of miracles,

Riccoldo argued that Christianity's victory over paganism was a miracle to rival and beat any:

> For indeed it is evident that the whole world was worshiping idols and especially the
> Romans who held rule over the world. They accepted the Christian faith and not only
> accepted the crucified Christ to be truly God but even scorned all other gods who for so
> long gave them answers in idolatry and did not impose anything burdensome, although
> the Christian faith imposed arduous and unaccustomed things on the world…all this the
> world accepted and dismissed the old rite whether on account of an adequate miracle or
> without a miracle.[95]

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[90] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 1r. "primo ecclesie persequtio a paganis," "secunda a hereticis" "tertia ypocritay."
[91] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 206r.
[92] *Contra legem*, 73. "…non quia non recepissent iam plures homines et mulieres deos et deas, sed quia Christus fuit dictus Deus absque licentia Romanorum quod ipsi prohibuerunt quod nullus diceretur deus sine auctoritate senatus, et etiam quia iste deus non patiebatur consortem. Nam si istum deum reciperent cogebantur omnes alios deos relinquere, quod etiam erat contra pacta prouinciarum et legis et consuetudinis Romanorum."
[93] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 211r. "Romani prohibuerunt dici aliquem deum sine auctoritatem senatus."
[94] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 5r. "Romani qui christiano persequutis ccc annis."
[95] Florence, MS 431, fol. 7r. "Constat enim quod totus mundus colebat idola et maxime romani qui tenebant monarchiam mundi. Hi receperunt fidem christianam et non solum acceptauerunt Christum crucifixum esse uere Deum sed etiam spreuerunt omnes alios deos qui tanto tempore in ydolis dabant eis responsa nec imponebant eis

In the Florence 431 copy, the copyist added the marginal note "*argumentum optimum.*" The historical argument that Christianity had already claimed its victory during the shining classical period was, for this humanist reader, an ideal argument in favor of Christianity's power over Islam and other newer threats. A reader of Florence 3026 marked this same passage using a sharp pointed line of demarcation to highlight it.[96] The theme of persecution allowed Riccoldo to both support Christianity as a religion able to withstand many tests and to contextualize Islam as the most recent in a history of persecutions against the Church. The humanist readers of *Contra legem*, in turn, highlighted this historical view.

Humanist readers also highlighted Riccoldo's direct comparisons between early Christian heresies and Islam in the first chapter. Paolo Angelo, Girolamo Zenoni, and a copyist in Dresden A.120.B all heavily glossed these heresies and heresiarchs so that the margins are much fuller in this chapter than on average. Zenoni included glosses for the heretics Sabellius, Arius, Carpocrates, Cerdonius, Mani, Donatus, Origen, Macedonius, Cheritus, Ebiona, and Nicholas. Paolo included all of these except Sabellius and Mani.[97] Paolo also added glosses for *Eunomius*, Jews (*iudei*), and pagans (*pagani*). The copyist in Dresden A.120.B included all the above-mentioned glosses, except Jews and pagans.[98] Moreover, glossers in both Dresden A.120.B and Pistoia A.1 included marginal notes for Nestorians and Jacobites – two eastern Christian heretical groups –in chapter three. These marginal notes demonstrate a link in humanist thinking between Islam, the subject of their study, and ancient heresies that plagued the early Church. Whether Riccoldo's work demonstrated this link to this readership for the first time or cemented

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aliqua grauia cum fides Christiana tamen ardua et insolita mundo imponat ut contempnere mundum contempnere seipsum diligere inimicos orare pro persequentibus benefacere malefacientibus aliena non appetere propria largiri. Hec omnia mundus acceptauit et ritum pristinum dimisit aut propter sufficientia miracula aut sine miraculo."

[96] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 14r.

[97] Florence, MS 431, fol. 6r–7r. However, he spelled *Carpocrate* as *carpotrutes*, *Cerdonio* as *ceremus*, and *Cherinto* as *coranamus*.

[98] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 207v–208r. Cheritus is spelled *Therinte* while Carpocrate is rendered *harpocrates*

an existing connection, these humanists clearly wished to emphasize the relationship. Their interest in connections between old and new persecutions suggests that humanists found Riccoldo's characterization of Islam as a persecutor of Christianity compelling.

Finally, humanist readers of *Contra legem* also demonstrated an interest in morality, and specifically the immorality of Islamic law, practice, and history. Riccoldo often drew on the common medieval critique of Islam as a "lax" religion. Polemicists used this term to accuse the Qur'an of holding lascivious laws and encouraging immoral practices regarding sex and other "bodily pleasures." Riccoldo also meant "lax" to indicate the "easy" way in which Muslims could gain salvation, by saying the *shahada* rather than through a lifetime of faith, good works, and penance. The humanist readers of Bergamo 172, in particular, frequently emphasized this theme. In the case of the former meaning of laxity, key words such as v*oluptas*, meaning "pleasure" or "delight" (often referring to physical pleasures) are frequently glossed in the margins.[99] In chapter one, other related notes refer to the "many wives" that marriage laws allowed and the permissibility of "sodomy with men and women."[100] In chapter five, there are notes mentioning "homicide," "rape," and "concupiscence" in the margins of the text.[101] In chapter six, the reader again points out a passage on sodomy.[102] In chapter eight, the margins contain notes on adultery, sinfulness, and indulgence, while drawn hands point into the text at places that discuss carnality among Muslims and sexual practices concerning women.[103]

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[99] Multiple examples can be found in chapters 1, 7, and 8.

[100] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 3r. "plures uxores" "sodomia generaliter cum uiro et muliere"

[101] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 7v. "homicidium" "rapina" "concupiscienta"

[102] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 8r. The Dresden reader notated this section as well, writing "sodomia concedit" in the neighboring margin (Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 215r).

[103] Bergamo, MS 172, fols. 10r–13r. Interestingly, this type of gloss does not appear in chapter 13, which describes the life of Muhammad. It was common to focus overwhelmingly on criticizing Muhammad in anti-Islamic polemic. For instance, in Dresden A.120.B, most of the marginal notes on this type of laxity concern Muhammad specifically (see, for instance, Dresden, MS A.120.B, fols. 217r–v, 218v, 219r, and 228r). By comparison, the readers of Bergamo 172, at least, clearly were more interested in the mores of Muslims generally.

Regarding the second meaning of laxity, the Bergamo readers highlighted Riccoldo's arguments on Muslim salvation or damnation. In chapter five, for example, Riccoldo wrote that, "The Qur'an holds in the chapter Mary…that all Saracens are going to hell."[104] A reader underlined this sentence and added a demarcation line on the inner margin and a gloss on the outer margin that reads "Hell. All of the Saracens have been damned by Muhammad."[105] In the same chapter, Riccoldo discussed the *shahada* and wrote that Muslims believe that eternal blessedness "is placed in those senses, namely in food and luxury and lush gardens and sumptuous clothing." A reader underlined this list and wrote "blessedness" in the margin.[106] In chapter seven, Riccoldo introduced the word "Muslim" – *messelamin* – which he said means "saved one." He also repeated the idea of the *shahadah* and asserted that Muhammad had said anyone could enter paradise, despite their sins.[107] In the margins next to this passage, a reader glossed the text with: "Saracens, that is, saved ones," while a second reader added glosses just below that read "the salvation of Muhammad" and "paradise."[108] The glosses "salus Muhammad" and "salus saraceni" also appear in chapters eight and sixteen, respectively, near similar passages.[109] The regularity of glosses on laxity in Islam suggests that this was a favored argument against Muslims among humanist readers, who had an interest in morality.[110]

[104] *Contra legem*, 81. "Alia uero dententia de hoc habetur in Alchorano in capitulo Meriem quod interpretatur Maria quod omnes Saraceni ibunt ad infernum."

[105] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 7v. "infernus. Saraceni damnati omnes Maumetus."

[106] Bergamo, MS 172, fol.7v. "beatitudo."

[107] See *Contra legem*, 88–89. "Unde et Sarraceni non uocantur Sarraceni sed *messelamin* quod interpretatur 'saluati.' Ipse autem uere credunt se esse saluatos et derident Christianos qui nolunt dici 'messelamin,' idest 'saluati, ut ipsi, sed Christiani. Cum autem plurimi a Mahometo talem saluationem acciperent ex predicta causa postea fecit preconizari. 'Quicumque dixerit "Non est Deus nisi Deus" intrabit paradisum, etiam si fornicates fuerit et si latrocinatus.'"

[108] Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 9v. "Saraceni id est saluati" "saluatio maumetis" "paradisus" The Dresden reader likewise glossed this section with notes that read "messelamni" and "omnis peccatores saluari si dixerint non est deus nisi deus." Dresden, MS A.120.B, fols. 216r–v.

[109] Bergamo, MS 172, fols. 11r, 25r.

[110] D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome*, 236. See also Amos Edelheit, *Scholastic Florence: Moral Psychology in the Quattrocento* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), chapter 2: A Renaissance Discourse on Evil; Jill Kraye, *Classical Traditions in Renaissance Philosophy* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2002), "Classical Ethics in the

While humanists brought a unique perspective to their reading of *Contra legem*, they also took away traditional ideas about Islam. *Contra legem*'s large compendium of arguments on all aspects of Islam and the Qur'an made this text a useful source for readers with a variety of perspectives and motives. As demonstrated above, the patterns visible in these humanist copies show distinct, often "typically" humanist interests such as history, philosophy, and morality. Nevertheless, Riccoldo's characterizations of the Qur'an as irrational, of Islam as a heresy, and of Muslims as lax were not innovative. Rather, they fit into a long history of anti-Islamic polemic. Many humanists, often depicted as innovators in characterizing Islam, in fact relied on such traditional arguments to understand Islam. As will be discussed in the Afterword, twelfth- and thirteenth-century polemical arguments have continued to influence European Christian engagement with Islam long past the Renaissance, even up to the present day. Here, it is notable that what is often characterized by scholars as new, innovative, or even modern – humanist study and characterizations of Islam – often had foundations in traditional anti-Islamic polemic.

Humanist marks on the text

In addition to the humanists' annotations of the historical, moral, and philosophical components of Riccoldo's arguments, these readers also made philological and literary interventions to the text.[111] On the whole, these changes are not substantive, meaning that they do not alter the polemical meaning of the text. Nevertheless, an overview of the changes that

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Renaissance"; David Lines, *Aristotle's 'Ethics' in the Italian Renaissance (ca.1300–1650): The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Lynn Joy, "Epicureanism in Renaissance Moral and Natural Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992): 573–583; and Raymond Weiss, *Maimonides' Ethics: The Encounter of Philosophic and Religious Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[111] Of course, philological interests in the context of polemical intent was not limited to humanists. As Thomas Burman has explored in great detail, the translators of the Qur'an into Latin in medieval and early modern Europe often demonstrated philological interests that worked independently of polemical motives (Thomas Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). In the cases I will be discussing, philology manifests itself in specifically humanist ways, through changes to the Latin that stressed classical standards.

copyists made to the text provides a compelling example of movement from medieval Latin to the neo-Latin developed by humanists during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By altering the text to reflect humanist language choices, these copyists produced copies of *Contra legem* that had the appearance of humanist character, despite the text's unchanged medieval nature.

Changes to the text were generally small and simple in nature, such as orthographical modifications. For example, in Florence 431, Florence 3026, Pistoia A.1, and Turin H.II.33, the words *nichil* (nothing) and *michi* (me) used in the original manuscript were "corrected" to *nihil* and *mihi* respectively.[112] The move from "h" to "ch" was a commonplace for Latin spelling in the Middle Ages.[113] However, this form was not used in classical Latin, and humanists began to reuse the classical forms of *nihil* and *mihi* by the fifteenth century. The change from using "c" to "t" is another common reform from medieval "back" to classical Latin.[114] For instance, the Florence 3026 copyist changed *efficacia* to *efficatia* and *nuncius* into *nuntius*. Meanwhile, in Turin H.II.33, the letter *f* is replaced with the classical *ph*.[115] For instance, the copyist wrote the original *nefariam* as *nephariam*. This change does not appear in its father copy, Dresden A.120.B, however.

Vowels, as well as consonants, saw changes from the classical to the medieval period. For instance, the "a" was often dropped from the diphthong *ae* in medieval Latin. In Dresden A.120.B and Turin H.II.33, the copyists reinserted the full diphthong in many places.[116] For

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[112] As indicated above, any mention of the "original" manuscript refers to Florence, MS C.8.1173 (see note 38). The Dresden A 120 B copyist abbreviated these words, so it is not possible to indicate whether *mihi* or *michi*, for instance, was intended.

[113] For a brief reference guide to this and other changes to medieval Latin orthography, see Greti Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," in *A Companion to the Latin Language*, ed. James Clackson (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 296. For further reference, see F.A.C. Mantello and A.G. Rigg, eds. *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, Part Two: C: Medieval Latin Philology (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 71–136. Extensive bibliographies are included in the latter work.

[114] Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 295.

[115] On the change between ph and f, see Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 296.

[116] Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 293.

example, the original *doctrine* became *doctrinae*, *vite* was spelled *vitae*, *que* was turned into *quae*, and the prefix *pre* became *prae*. Another common change was that the letter *h* was added to the beginning of *i* or *y* words, while humanists also substituted *y* for *i*, although this change was inconsistent.[117] For instance, in Florence 3026 and Pistoia A.1 the name "ieronimus" was spelled *Hyeronimus*, and in Dresden A 120 B and Turin H.II.33, it was spelled *Hieronymus*. The first two copyists changed only the first *i* to *y* while the other two changed only the second. All three, however, added the *H*. The Dresden A.120.B and Turin H.II.33 copyists also changed *Eraclii* into *Heraclii*. The addition of "h" can be found outside of proper nouns as well, such as *ypocrisi* becoming *hypocrisy* in Florence 3026 and Dresden A.120.B and *hypocrisim* in Pistoia A.1, although the Turin H.II.33 copyist reverted to the *yposcrisi* spelling. There are other interesting inconsistencies between the Dresden and Turin copies. For instance, in both Dresden A.120.B and Turin H.II.33, *martyres* in the original is spelled *martires*. Yet, the Turin H.II.33 copy renders the phrase *tyrannis paganis* as *tiranis paganis*, although the Dresden copyist had maintained the "y" in *tyrannis*.

Another interesting change to track among the copies concerns an entire word, rather than a single letter: *actor*. In the original text, Riccoldo used the word *actor* to describe Muhammad. More specifically, he wrote that his thirteenth chapter would address the "*actor* and inventor of the Qur'an." The word *actor* was frequently used in medieval Latin to signify an author or an authority – the person from whom authentic or authoritative knowledge had generated.[118] In both Florence 3026 and Dresden A.120.B, the copyists employed the word *auctor* instead or *actor*. *Auctor*, while giving a similar connotation of "originator" or "authority," was a classical Latin

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[117] Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 294. Dinkova-Bruun offers an explanation for the confusion between y and i.
[118] Marie-Dominique Chenu, "Auctor, Actor, Autor," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi-Bulletin du Cange* (1927): 81–86. On medieval theories of authorship, see A.J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984), 73–117.

spelling choice. The Turin H.II.33 copyist made a further change, deviating again from the Dresden copy by using the word *author*, which again connoted the same meaning. This spelling was not widely in use before the Renaissance period and is connected to humanist uses. All three versions reinforce the polemical argument that the Qur'an was not given by God but was written by Muhammad. Yet the copyists made changes to the orthography of the text.

Humanist scribes also made changes to word order and grammar within sentences, although these are less common in Dresden A 120 B and Turin H.II.33, where the text is highly faithful to the original in everything except spelling. As with the spelling changes, grammar changes attempted to "correct" the text according to classical rules. For instance, there is a sentence in the original copy that reads, "Sed datum est tunc et additum ecclesie lumen doctrine."[119] In Florence 431, the same sentence reads "Sed datum est tunc et additum ecclesie *doctrine lumen.*" In classical Latin, the main noun of the sentence (here, *lumen*) is traditionally placed both after the verb and after any accompanying genitive nouns (nouns of possession). Yet in medieval Latin, these rules about word order are much looser.[120] In this case, *doctrine* and *ecclesie* (teachings and church respectively) are both genitives that possess the word *lumen* (light) that have been split, while in Florence 431 the copyist corrected this grammatical problem by placing the nominative noun at the end. In Florence 3026, there are examples of other kinds of word order changes that give the text a more classically correct grammar. For instance, in chapter three, the copyist switches the order of two verbs within a sentence without making any other changes, so that "ostendere possumus" became "possumus ostendere," a more classical, orthodox position for a conjugated-infinitive verb pair.[121]

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[119] See *Contra legem*, 61. "But at that time the light of the teaching of the church was given and even added to."
[120] Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 298–302.
[121] Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 299.

Another example of a small but meaningful grammatical change concerns verb types. In the first sentence of chapter nine, for instance, the original text reads, "Nonum considerare oportet quod lex ista non sit lex Dei quia continent falsitates apertas."[122] In Florence 431, this is changed to read instead, "Nonum *considerandum est* quod lex ista non sit lex dei quia continent falsitates apertas." The first sentence used the present tense verb *oportet*, "one ought," paired with the infinitive verb *considerare*, "to consider." This is a simple combination of verb forms commonly used in medieval Latin, which tended toward simplification.[123] The Florence 431 copyist, by contrast, used a gerundive verb tense for the verb *considerare*, which is a more complex verb form that conveys a sense of obligation through the tense itself and can be translated as "ought to (consider)." Thus, both forms convey the same meaning. This trend toward classical grammar patterns can be seen throughout the text, especially in Florence 431.

Similar changes appear in Florence 3026 and Pistoia A.1. For example, in the preface the original text reads, "…per quem modum possint facilius reuocant ad deum sectatores tante perfidie."[124] In Florence 3026, the copyist changed the present tense *possunt* to the subjunctive *possint*.[125] This is an example of a reversion to the classical use of the subjunctive in subordinate clauses; often Medieval Latin defaulted to the indicative (possunt).[126] Another sentence from the original preface reads, "Verba sunt ecclesie militantis que suspirat et ingemiscit grauata diuresis afflictionibus, a quibus diuino auxilio liberari confidit."[127] In Pistoia A.1, Zenoni changed the present, conjugated verb *sunt* [they are] into the infinitive form *esse* [to be].[128] These minute

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[122] *Contra legem*, 100. "Ninth, it ought to be considered that this law is not the law of God because it contains clear falsehoods."
[123] Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 298–302.
[124] *Contra legem*, 63.
[125] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 6r.
[126] Dinkova-Bruun, "Medieval Latin," 301.
[127] *Contra legem*, 60.
[128] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 55r.

alterations do not change the meaning. Rather, they are signs of the classicizing culture to which the copyists aspired. They signaled to readers the copyists' humanist education and interests in classical Latin structure and grammar.

A similar type of change is the choice of classical vocabulary. For instance, in the original text, Riccoldo explained his methods for disputing Islam, stating that he would use the Qur'an to prove its own lack of divine inspiration. He wrote, "hoc autem ostendere possumus per ipsum Alchoranum, ut Golias proprio gladio iuguletur."[129] In Florence 431, the copyist wrote, "hoc autem ostendere possumus per ipsum Alchoranum, ut Golias proprio *mucrone* iuguletur."[130] The meanings of the two words, *gladio* and *mucrone* are the same; both refer to a sword. Yet *mucrone* was used in early Latin. By making this substitution, the copyist continued the trend of implementing small changes to the text that better conformed with classical choices and advertised a knowledge of the history of Latin.[131] It is notable that Florence 431 conforms very well to the original in terms of content. For that reason, the changes made can be taken as very conscious choices to deviate from the original, in order to better fit classical norms.

Another commonality among these copies of *Contra legem* is the addition of clarifiers in the text to ease understanding. Riccoldo had anticipated a fourteenth-century Dominican missionary audience, so the added explanations could help a sixteenth-century lay, humanist reader. For example, when discussing his travels to the city of Baghdad, an Islamic center in Riccoldo's time, he wrote: "I traveled to the most famous city of the Muslims, Baghdad."[132] In both Florence 431 and Florence 3026, the copyists added a single word to this text, so that it read

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[129] *Contra legem*, 70. "Moreover we will be able to show this through the Qur'an itself, so that Goliath will be killed by his own sword."
[130] Florence, MS 431, fol. 3v.
[131] Similarly, the Florence 3026 copyist substituted the word *orbem* for *mundum* (Florence, MS 3026, fol. 5r).
[132] *Contra legem*, 62. "peruenissem ad famosissimam ciuitatem Saracenorum Baldaccum."

"I traveled to the most famous city of the Muslims *named* Baghdad."[133] By the fall of

Constantinople in 1453, Baghdad was no longer the cultural hub that it had been in the thirteenth

century, and it was likely less well-known to western Christians. Possibly, an explanation for this

foreign word – *baldaccum* – needed to be added. In Pistoia A.1, Zenoni went even further, in a

section where he paraphrased the original text. He wrote [in Riccoldo's voice] "In Syria, I

navigated through dangerous land like the desert until I reached Baghdad, the noble Syrian

city."[134] Not only did he include the information that Baghdad was a city in the land of Syria, but

he described the city (now likely seen as a classical imperial city) as "noble." In the preface of

Florence 3026, the copyist attributed a biblical quotation to David, while Riccoldo had not

included an attribution.[135] Possibly Riccoldo did not see any need to attribute the quote for his

audience, while Paolo Angelo thought it helpful. Similarly, in Turin H.II.33, the copyist wrote

"beati Gregorii *pape*" (blessed Pope Gregory) instead of the original "beati Gregorii."[136] While

these changes to the text are unrelated to classical standards, they suggest some level of

awareness by the copyists of the text's original context. Moreover, they demonstrate a desire to

update or otherwise clarify the text for a contemporary audience.

The last, and unique, change to *Contra legem* in the humanist copies is Paolo Angelo's

addition in Florence 3026 of a Renaissance-era literary apparatus: punctuation. Punctuation in

Latin texts developed with the invention of the printing press, and it did not become common

until the early sixteenth century.[137] Paolo's use of punctuation, then, is fitting, because he is

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[133] Florence, MS 431, fol. 1v; Florence, MS 3026, fol. 5v. "peruenissem ad famosissimam ciuitatem Saracenorum *nomine* Baldachum/Valdacum." The Florence 3026 copyist spelled Baghdad using the second listed spelling.
[134] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 56r. "in Syria nauigassem…pericula terre quia deserta superassem ad Baldatum nobile Syrie urbe.
[135] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 5r.
[136] Turin, MS H.II.33, fol. 247v.
[137] Arthur Hodgman, "Latin Equivalents of Punctuation Marks," *The Classical Journal* 19 (1924): 403–404; M.B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scholar, 1992).

known to have printed an edition of the text, in translation. In Florence 3026, the entire text is punctuated. Paolo added periods, commas, colons, and semi-colons throughout the manuscript to break up the text. For instance, where Riccoldo had composed a list of three or more items, Paolo would copy the list using colons or commas instead of "et" to separate the items. Thus, a section in the preface originally read "frendens et fremens et insibilans," whereas Paolo wrote "frendens: fremens: et insibillans."[138] These later changes to the text, from spelling to grammar to punctuation, did not change the meaning of the work. The examples given demonstrate that the polemical content and authentic information provided by Riccoldo remained intact for future readers. These modifications instead serve to highlight the philological and literary interests of humanist readers during this period. In practice, these alterations created a text that looked "modern" – with all the hallmarks of humanist language – but which remained medieval in message. This cloaking may have contributed to the text's continuing popularity in later centuries.

Forays into Arabic

The philological interests of humanist readers and copyists appears to have extended to their encounters with Arabic in *Contra legem*.[139] Riccoldo claimed to have learned Arabic while traveling in Baghdad, and evidence from his copy of the Qur'an, now held in Paris, corroborates this.[140] In *Contra legem*, he included not only his own quotations of the Qur'an, but also transliterations for many Surah titles and other Arabic names and words, as well as a single word in Arabic script.[141] This word is the name of the Christian heretic, Baḥīrā, which Riccoldo gave

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[138] Florence, MS 3026, fol. 5r.
[139] On humanist and other early modern interest in Arabic, see Karl H. Dannenfeldt, "The Renaissance Humanists and the Knowledge of Arabic," *Studies in the Renaissance* 2 (1955): 96–117; and Charles Burnett, Alastair Hamilton, and Jan Loop, eds., *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
[140] For a study of Riccoldo's Qur'an, see Thomas Burman, "How an Italian Friar Read His Arabic Qur'an," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society* no. 125, Dante and Islam (2007): 93–109.
[141] Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 208r.

in Arabic as [بحيرا]. Mérigoux has argued that the reader who added corrections to the Florence

431 copy was a fifteenth-century Orientalist humanist based on a correction made to this

word.[142] The copyist transcribed the name of the Christian heretic as *Baherya* rather than the

original *Baheyra*. Then, in the space above the word, the corrector wrote *ira* to indicate that the

word ought to be spelled *Bahira* or *Baheira*.[143] Thus, the corrector gave a more accurate

transliteration for the Arabic word.

However, the rest of the Arabic words and Surah titles are treated far more inconsistently

in this copy, suggesting that the spelling correction above was not the result of substantial Arabic

knowledge. The copyist of Florence 431 transcribed many words differently from the original.

Some of these changes were made in-line, with the new transcription written next to the original

transcription and connected with the word *ut*. In other cases, a corrected version was written in

the space directly above the word or else in the margins. For example, the surah title al-

Mu'minūn was originally transcribed *Elmuminim*. In Florence 431, the copyist wrote *Elmuninum*

and then wrote an *m* over the first *n*, correcting it to *Elmuminum*.[144] This change appeared to

simply correct a typo, rather than moving toward a more accurate transliteration. The reasoning

behind other changes is less clear. For instance, the surah title al-A'rāf, originally spelled

Elaaraf, is written this way in Florence 431: *elkrafi ut eleaaraf*.[145] The surah title al-Anfāl,

originally transcribed as *Elemfaal*, is written *elfahal ut elemfael*. It is unclear from where the

copyist derived the former spellings of these titles. Additionally, the reader who corrected *bahira*

did not offer changes in any of these cases.

[142] "Il semble que l'on puisse attribuer ces corrections à un humaniste orientaliste du XV siècle car les mots arabes ont été corrigés dans le sens d'une exacte translittération" (Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Precheur," 38).
[143] Florence, MS 431, fol. 16v; See Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 208r.
[144] Florence, MS 431, fol. 5v. See Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 192v.
[145] Florence, MS 431, fol. 6r. See Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol.193v.

The case of Baḥīrā might, then, be a result of Latin philology rather than Arabic knowledge. As discussed above, humanist scholars made changes between the use of *i* and *y* for Latin words very inconsistently in these copies. A look at other humanist copies demonstrates that the same changes occurred in their transliterations. For instance, while the Dresden A 120 B copyist did not make any changes to Surat al-Mā'ida, originally transliterated as both *elmayde* or *elmeyde*, the Turin H.II.33 copyist made a common y → i change for these words. Thus, *elmeyde* became *elmeide* and *elmayde* became *elmaide*. Zenoni made the same changes in Pistoia A.1.

Other changes also seem to have stemmed from Latin humanist sensibilities. For example, in Paolo's Florence 3026, the original *alchorano* and *mahometus* lose their "h" and become *alcorano* and *macometus*. Similarly, the name of the mule, *elborak*, became *elborach*. In other cases, the changes were likely copyist errors, as seen in Florence 431. For example, Sūrat al-Anbiyā, originally *elenbia*, is spelled *elembia* in Paolo's Florence 3026, Zenoni's Pistoia A.1, and Dresden A 120 B. The Dresden A 120 B/Turin H.II.33 copyists also copied al-Anfāl (originally *elemfaal*) as *elenfaal*, while Zenoni wrote Sūrat an-Nisā, originally *elnesa*, as *eluesa*.

Some of the changes, particularly in Florence 3026, do seem more connected to knowledge of Arabic, because they change the Latin-based "el" beginning of the word into "al." In Arabic, *al* is the definite article "the." Therefore, many Surah titles begin with "al" in Arabic transliteration. In Florence 3026, this change occurs, but it is not consistent. For example, *elaaraf* (Sūrat al-A'rāf) becomes *alaaraf*, and *elbachera* (Sūrat al-Baqarah) becomes *albechera*. Yet, in many other cases, "el" remains at the start of the surah titles, such as in the case of *elgen* (al-Jinn) or *elnahel* (an-Naḥl). This inconsistency makes analysis difficult.

While, overall, these humanist scholars appear to have had little knowledge of Arabic, evidence suggests that many of them held some interest in Arabic and Islamic terms. Likely their

respect for linguists and authoritative language led them to value Riccoldo's work above non-Arabic speaking polemicists. Thus, although Paolo Angelo did not highlight Arabic words in his manuscript copy for Pope Hadrian VI, he did so in his printed Italian translation. Specifically, Paolo glossed most of the Surah titles in the margins of the printed edition. These glosses would allow the reader to quickly find passages wherein Riccoldo quoted from the Qur'an and to denote from which "chapter" (read, "Surah") they derived.[146] For instance, the margins in chapter three include all six surah titles mentioned: "capitolo de Iona," "Capitolo Elhagar," "Capitolo Elmeyde," "Capitolo Elmayde," "Capitolo Elmesan," and "Capitolo lcz."[147] There is also an annotation in this chapter for the word "Calipha," when the Caliph of Baghdad is mentioned. While the names of Christian heretics in chapter one are also heavily glossed, there are very few other, non-Surah glosses in this edition, further emphasizing the Arabic words.

Other copyists highlighted different types of Islam-related words. For instance, in Dresden A.120.B a humanist reader glossed the first mention of Baghdad in the preface, writing, "Baghdad [is] the premier city of the Saracens."[148] The word *baldacco* is also underlined in the main text of this copy. Zenoni glossed this part of the text in Pistoia A.1 as well, writing "city of Baghdad" in the margin.[149] Later in the text, both a Dresden copyist and Zenoni glossed the word *calipha* in the margins, while a reader of Bergamo 172 wrote *calipha de Baldacho* and a second reader wrote *baldacho*.[150] Zenoni glossed another mention of a caliph in chapter three, and he annotated the first mentions of the words "Muhammad" and "Qur'an" in the text as well.[151] In

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[146] The glosses use the word *capitolo*, or chapter, before the Surah name.
[147] Paolo Angelo, "Epistola Pauli Angeli ad Saracenos cum libello contra Alcoranu," (Venice, ca.1520), fols. 23r–25r. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/ucm.5325014732. The last two of these are different from what is rendered in the original, but they match what is printed in the manuscript. Interestingly, however, "elmaide" in the manuscript is returned back to the original "elmayde" in the printed text.
[148] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 206v. "Baldacum ciuitas saracenorum primaria."
[149] Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 56r. "Baldach ciuitate"
[150] Dresden, MS A.120.B., fol. 231r; Pistoia, MS A.1, fol. 77v; Bergamo, MS 172, fol. 20r.
[151] Pistoia, MS A.1, fols. 62r, 55v. "Mahumetus" and "Alchoranus."

chapter seven, a copyist of Dresden A.120.B glossed Riccoldo's rendering of "Muslim," *messelamni*, in the margins next to its first appearance in the text.[152] Even at the end of the fifteenth century, this word was not well-known in Europe, as words like "Saracen" and "Turk" continued to dominate Latin writing.[153]

Most uniquely among readers of *Contra legem*, this Dresden copyist also glossed Riccoldo's description of the Sunni-Shī'a division within Islam. In a brief passage, Riccoldo noted that divisions existed not only between Westerners and Easterners, but also among Easterners and among Westerners. He stated that, "Some [Saracens] in fact follow Muhammad and they are many, and some follow Ali and they are few and less evil, and they say that Muhammad usurped for himself by tyrannical power that which was Ali's."[154] In the margins of Dresden A.120.B, a copyist wrote "division of the sects of the Arabs," followed by "sect of Muhammad" and "sect of Ali."[155] This interest in Arabic and Islamic words could arguably have two motivations. Some humanists, in their search for authentic and accurate information, likely highlighted these foreign words that could help widen their knowledge base. Additionally, those humanists engaged in producing crusade literature may also have found the information useful for their campaigns. These motives are not, of course, mutually exclusive.

Conclusion

When the linguist Bibliander chose to publish the bilingual version of *Contra legem* alongside the translated Qur'an and other polemical works, he was following in a line of humanist thinkers who turned to Riccoldo to contextualize and analyze the Ottoman threat.

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[152] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 216r. "Messelamni"
[153] Tolan, *Saracens*, xv. Tolan cites Petrus Alfonsi and William of Tripoli as exceptions, not mentioning Riccoldo.
[154] *Contra legem*, 121. "Quidam enim secuntur Mahometum et isti sunt plures, et quidam secuntur Haali, et isti sunt pauciores et minus mali, et dicunt quod Machometus usurpauit sibi per tirampnicam potentiam quod erat Haali."
[155] Dresden, MS A.120.B, fol. 230v. "diuisio sectarum arabum" "secta Mahumetus" "secta haali"

Scholars have argued that humanists discarded religious considerations in favor of other cultural and political angles when addressing the Ottomans. Yet many humanists' enduring interest in medieval anti-Islamic polemics like *Contra legem* suggests that their approach was more complex. It cannot be said that humanist scholars invented an entirely new way of characterizing Muslims nor that they simply regurgitated all of the medieval arguments on the subject. Rather, like other groups with varying interests and agendas, humanists writing about Islam emphasized and expanded upon those topics that they found most relevant.

These humanist readers of *Contra legem* continued to frame the Ottomans in terms of their religious differences to Europeans, even while exploring "humanist" aspects of these differences. Philosophy, morality, and history took center stage in the marginal notations of the early modern copies of *Contra legem*. Yet each theme was connected to Muslims through their religion rather than their innate character. Philosophical differences between revered classical writers such as Aristotle and the Qur'an were highlighted. To medieval polemicists, the laxity of the Qur'an's suggested pathway to salvation opened up an immoral lifestyle for Muslims that humanist readers also found problematic. And historical inaccuracies within the Qur'an proved, to the humanist reader, its unreliability. Thus, the main concerns of humanist readers were often polemical, with an emphasis on religious difference. Copyists did make changes to *Contra legem* based on philological concerns for "proper" orthography and grammar. While these modifications did not alter the polemical intent of the text, they did "update" the work, giving Riccoldo's arguments an outwardly humanist appearance.

The early modern reception of medieval ideas and arguments, overlapping as it did with philological concerns and a new, humanist appearance to these texts, helped perpetuate those polemical traditions as a foundation for engagement with Islam. Scholars during the rise of

Orientalist studies and the Enlightenment likely found works like Riccoldo's, cloaked in

humanist discussions of philosophy and philology, appealing. Therefore, exploring humanist

uses of a medieval text exemplifies the challenges of periodizing European engagement with

Islam. The compendium of arguments against Islam and the Qur'an that Riccoldo compiled and

developed belongs to his own particular moment and circumstances. Yet the text found many

new lives, based on new contexts and interests. Thus, as Europe changed, medieval polemical

views retained a prominent place in Christian understanding of Islam, through the Renaissance,

the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and even the turn of the twenty-first century.

Afterword: Riccoldo's Legacy from Martin Luther to 9/11

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, a small Protestant press called Lutheran News Inc. published a book on Islam with explicitly polemical aims.[1] The back cover of the book reveals its framework: "Political correctness insists that Islam is a religion of peace, and that Jews, Muslims and Christians all worship the same God. An objective appraisal of Islam exposes the absurdity of both of those claims."[2] This book, titled *Islam in the Crucible: Can It Pass the Test?*, is in fact an English translation of a seven-hundred-year-old polemic. Riccoldo's *Contra legem* found new life almost exactly seven centuries after its first composition, redeployed for a new audience, in a new world inconceivable to Riccoldo.

How had *Contra legem* reached this evangelical group who determined to further its reception and influence? The discovery of Riccoldo's polemic was mediated through the group's namesake, Martin Luther. Luther had come across *Contra legem* in Barthelemy Picenus's Latin rendition of Cydones's Greek translation of the text.[3] Yet, he did not immediately develop a regard for the polemic.[4] Then, on Mardi-Gras, February 21, 1542, Luther read the Qur'an in translation. Upon this reading, he gained a newfound appreciation for *Contra legem* and its

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[1] Riccoldo da Montecroce and Martin Luther, *Islam in the Crucible: Can it Pass the Test?*, trans. Thomas C. Pfotenhauer (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, 2002).

[2] Joel C. Gerlach, Back Cover of *Islam in the Crucible*.

[3] The work was printed in Rome in 1506 and reprinted in Paris in 1509, 1511, and 1514. It is unclear which copy Martin Luther read. On Martin Luther's reading of *Contra legem* and his work on Islam, see David Grafton, "Martin Luther's Sources on the Turk and Islam in the Midst of the Fear of Ottoman Imperialism," *The Muslim World* 107 (2017): 665–683.

[4] Jean-Marie Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orient à la fin du XIII siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum' de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Memorie Domenicane* 17 (1986): 1–58, 56–57.

accuracy. Within less than two months, Luther had translated his copy of *Contra legem* into

German, and he published the work very soon after.[5]

Luther's interest in the Qur'an stemmed from the continuing threat from the Ottoman

armies, which had laid siege to Vienna in 1529.[6] He declared that the "Saracens and Turks" had

enjoyed victories against the Christians for hundreds of years and foresaw a continuation in this

condition.[7] His worry that Muslim authorities might eventually rule the German heartlands led to

a concern for the Christian populations of those territories. Luther believed that he needed to

prepare German Christians to remain steadfast in their faith against the temptation to convert to

Islam if the region fell to Turkish armies.[8] He wrote in the preface to his translation of

Riccoldo's polemic that he made the work available so that Germans would both understand the

evils of Islam and be strengthened in their own faith.[9] By translating the work into German, he

hoped to make it available to a wider, non-clerical audience. For this same reason, he made slight

changes, "altering the text as he saw fit to make it more palatable to an audience less inclined to

understand formal theological argumentation."[10] For example, he "removed the passages which

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[5] Martin Luther, *Verlegung des Alcoran Bruder Richardi Prediger Ordens, anno 1300, Verdeudscht durch D. Mar. Lu.* (Wittenberg, gedruckt durch Hans Lufft, 1542). After the initial publication, the translation was reprinted several times: Augsburg, 1582; Rudelstadt, 1664; Nuremberg, 1684.

[6] See Luther's own work on the Turks, written prior to his translation: Martin Luther, *On War Against the Turks*. In *Works of Martin Luther*, Vol 5. trans. C.M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman Company and The Castle Press, 1931). On Luther's interest in Islam, see also Adam Francisco, *Martin Luther and Islam: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Polemics and Apologetics* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Egil Grislis, "Luther and the Turks," *The Muslim World* 64, no. 3 (1974): 180–93; George W. Forell, "Luther and the War against the Turks," *Church History* 14, no. 4 (1945); Murat Iyigun, "Luther and Suleyman," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, no. 4 (2008): 1465–94; G. Simon, "Luther's Attitude Toward Islam," *The Muslim World* 21, no. 3 (1931): 257–62; Henry Smith, "Luther and Islam," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 39, no. 3 (1923): 218–20; David Sukwon Choi, "Martin Luther's Response to the Turkish Threat: Continuity and Contrast with the Medieval Commentators Riccoldo Da Monte Crose and Nichols of Cusa," Thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 2003.

[7] Luther, *Verlegung*, 2v. "das die Sarracenen und Turcken so viel hundert jar eitel sieg und gluck wider die Christen wir aber viel unglucks wider sie gehabt."

[8] Francisco, *Martin Luther and Islam*, 236.

[9] Luther, *Verlegung*, 2r. "...Das doch bei uns deutschen auch ertand werde wie ein schend licher Glaube des Mahmets Glaube ist Damit wir gesterckt werden in unserm Christlichen Glauben."

[10] Francisco, *Martin Luther and Islam*, 209.

seemed to him to be maybe too Catholic or scholastic."[11] Luther explained that this German

audience had very little acquaintance with the Qur'an and needed proper instruction. Unlike

Riccoldo, Luther did not harbor any pretensions about converting Muslims. He not only declared

this task impossibile but wrote that Riccoldo had taught him so in *Contra legem*.[12]

Luther further aided in the reception of *Contra legem* at this time by supporting a

separate publication effort. The scholar Theodor Bibliander put together a collection of works on

Islam called *Machumetis Saracenorum*, which included a Latin translation of the Qur'an and a

Greek and Latin side-by-side edition of *Contra legem*.[13] Like Luther, Bibliander also believed

that knowledge of Islam could best equip the European population for an Ottoman invasion and

possibly Ottoman rule. Bibliander attempted to publish this collection in Basel in 1543, but

censors in the city halted the project and seized all copies of the work. Luther interceded with the

Basel magistrates, who had particularly objected to the inclusion of the Qur'an, and his support

helped the work reach publication. Several variant publications of this project even included a

preface by Luther.

While Luther and Bibliander echoed many of Riccoldo's previous readers in their

concern for the Ottomans, these men were also different, because Protestant. Following the

Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, Catholics and Protestants did not widely unite

against Islam as a common enemy. More often, Protestant literature likened Muslims to

Catholics and deemed Muhammad and the Pope both enemies.[14] Despite this viewpoint, Luther,

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[11] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 57.

[12] Luther, *Verlegung*, 4r. "Denn es bezeuget auch dieser Richard / das die Mahmetischen nicht zubeteren sind aus der versache / Sie sind so hart verstocht." Adam Francisco has argued that Luther did consider the possibility of converting Muslims, "although he confessed that the chances were slim" (Francisco, *Martin Luther*, 180).

[13] See Bruce Gordon, "Theodor Bibliander," in *Christian-Muslim Relations, A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 6: Western Europe, 1500–1600, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 680. For an account of Bibliander's project and Luther's involvement, see Grafton, "Martin Luther's Sources on the Turk and Islam," 679.

[14] For more on Protestant discussions of Islam, see John W. Bohnstedt, "The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era," *Transactions of the American Philosophical*

Bibliander, and other Protestants did not reject Catholic knowledge of Islam that had accumulated over the centuries. Luther knew that Riccoldo had lived "over two hundred years ago," before the Ottomans had grown powerful.[15] He recognized Riccoldo's knowledge of and authority on Islam without any qualms about his mendicant status. However, Protestant uses of *Contra legem* shifted from the fifteenth century, when papal supporters positioned Islam as a threat that fell under the pope's jurisdiction. Protestants, far from hoping to reposition the pope as rightful head of the Church by means of his leadership against unbelief, denied this authority and declared the pope one anti-Christ and the Ottoman sultan a second.[16] By translating Riccoldo's work into a vernacular language, Luther hoped to empower German Christians. Equipped with Riccoldo's insights, the Lutherans rather than the institutional Catholic Church (led by the pope) could claim authority for securing their own fates.

While Luther's and Bibliander's projects were the last new publications of *Contra legem* until *Islam in the Crucible* in 2002, Riccoldo's polemic informed work on Islam both directly and indirectly over the following half millennium.[17] Priests and scholars continued to use and cite *Contra legem* in a wide variety of contexts in the early modern period. For instance, churchmen and scholars utilized *Contra legem* in Iberia as they struggled with the perceived challenges of the Muslim and Morisco populations. Martín García, the Bishop of Barcelona,

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Society 58, no. 9 (1968): 1–58; Stephen Fischer-Galati, "The Protestant Reformation and Islam," in *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern*, 53–64 (New York, 1969); Samir Khalaf, "Protestant Images of Islam: Disparaging Stereotypes Reconfirmed," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 8, no. 2 (July 1, 1997): 211–29; Gregory J. Miller, "Holy War and Holy Terror: Views of Islam in German Pamphlet Literature, 1520–1545," PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 1994; Kenneth M. Setton, "Lutheranism and the Turkish Peril," *Balkan Studies* 3, no. 1 (1962): 133.

[15] Luther, *Verlegung*, 1v. "So ist Bruder Richard gewest wol fur zweyhundert jaren fast unter Reiser Alberto dem ersten da Dominicus und franciscus orden nicht alt gewest sind / Denne er redet und weis nichts von Turchen / welche aller erst vor cc. jaren haben angefangen zu regirn / und dis nehefte hundert jar…"

[16] Denise Spellberg, *Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an: Islam and the Founders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 15.

[17] While I will discuss a number of known examples in the following few pages, I would note here that there are likely many more influences that I have not yet discovered and indeed likely some that no one has yet discovered, or which are difficult to trace. For a list of those influenced by Riccoldo, which I have put together with reliance on the work of many scholars, see the Bibliography.

utilized Riccoldo's story of a converted caliph of Baghdad in two known sermons from 1520 and cited Riccoldo directly in one of these.[18] Lope de Obregón, a priest in Ávila, relied heavily on Riccoldo's polemical arguments in his own refutation of the Qur'an, published in 1555 in Granada.[19] Likewise when Pedro Guerra de Lorca, a scholar from Granada, wrote a manual (published in Madrid in 1586) with sixteen catechisms for the "instruction and assimilation of the Moriscos," he utilized material from chapters one and six of *Contra legem* in one of these catechisms as well as in the introductory material.[20] Then, in the mid-seventeenth century, the preacher and missionary Juan de Almarza wrote a series of catechisms to convert Muslim slaves in Murcia, and he, too, relied on *Contra legem* for information on Islam and the Qur'an.[21] Through works like these, Riccoldo's knowledge and arguments reached an ever wider audience throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Contra legem continued to be read outside Iberia as well. Juan Luis Vives, for instance, was a humanist scholar who, although born in Spain, spent much of his life in northern Europe. Luis Vives wrote several polemical works on Islam, often addressing the dangers of Ottoman expansion into Europe. In *De veritate fidei Christianae* (1540), Luis Vives relied frequently on *Contra legem* for arguments on and citations from the Qur'an.[22] In England, the famous Arabist William Bedwell used Riccoldo's polemic in his scholarship. Bedwell had compiled multiple Arabic-Latin dictionaries and traveled throughout Europe to work with other Arabists before publishing a series of texts on Islam under the title *Mohammedis imposturae* in London in 1615.

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[18] Manuel Montoza Coca, *Los* Sermones *de Don Martín García, obispo de Barcelona. Edición y Estudio*, Tesis Doctoral (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 2018), 70, 273.

[19] Ryan Szpiech, "Lope Obregón," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 6, 170–174.

[20] Jason Busic, "Pedro Guerra de Lorca," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 6, 252. Busic notes that Pedro likely relied on Bibliander's edition of the text.

[21] Emanuele Colombo, "Juan de Almarza," in *Christian-Muslim Relations, A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 9: Western and Southern Europe, 1600–1700, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 340.

[22] J.L. Vives, *De veritate fidei Christianae: Book IV: The Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, ed. and trans. Edward V. George (Leiden: Brill, 2017). See many notes throughout by George referring to CA (*Confutatio Alcorani*).

Bedwell relied in part on Bibliander's 1543 publication, appropriaating not only *Contra legem* but other works from that project.[23] A fellow Englishman, Matthew Sutcliffe used Picenus's 1511 printed Latin translation of *Contra legem* as a source. Sutcliffe, a royal chaplain to Elizabeth I, wrote a polemic entitled *De Turcopapism*. As the title suggests, this treatise attacked both the Ottomans and the Catholic Church, indicating many similarities between the two. His work, published in 1599, demonstrated that "a non-specialist could write about Islam at considerable length by using what was available in Latin and vernacular sources" such as *Contra legem*.[24] Meanwhile, across the Channel in the Dutch Republic, the lawyer and scholar Hugo Grotius composed a series of polemical works entirely in didactic poetry, for the use of laypeople, in 1620. In his notes, Grotius directly cited *Contra legem*, then known as *Confutatio Alcorani*.[25] These examples suggest that in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans further removed from the "front line" in the Balkans continued to identify Ottoman power with Islamic dominance, as had Luther and Bibliander. Riccoldo's early modern popularity thus relied partly on readers' applications of *Contra legem* to their own circumstances.

Traces of Riccoldo's influence can even be found in the eighteenth century in the English-speaking world that, by this time, reached across the Atlantic.[26] In 1734, George Sale

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[23] Alastair Hamilton, "William Bedwell," in *Christian-Muslim Relations, A Bibliographical History*, Vol. 8: Northern and Eastern Europe, 1600–1700, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 61.

[24] Clinton Bennett, "Matthew Sutcliffe," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 8, 144

[25] He also cited Juan Luis Vives's *De veritate fidei Christianae*, which as noted above also relies on *Contra legem* (Juan was known in English as Joannes Ludovicus Vives). Lucien van Liere, "Hugo Grotius," in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 8, 584–588.

"Confutatio alcorani" became the most popular title for writers to use when referring to *Contra legem* after Bibliander used the title in his 1543 edition. In manuscripts, the work had many different titles, often variations of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (See appendix A; see also chapter 2). The first Latin edition, made by Antonio de la Peña, was titled *Improbatio alcorani* (1500). The next, a translation into Latin from the Greek by Barthelemy Picenus de Montearduo, was titled *Confutatio legis late Sarrhacenis a maledicto Mahometo* (1506). Then, when Bibliander published the Latin-Greek facing edition in 1543, he titled the work *Confutatio alcorani*. For citations of all late medieval/early modern print editions and translations, see appendix A and the bibliography.

[26] Back on the eastern side of the ocean, an example of Riccoldo's turn-of-the-century influence appears in the work of Humphrey Prideaux. Prideaux was an English churchman and orientalist. His work, *The True Nature of Imposture fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet* (1697), became popular as "The Life of Mahomet." This tract was

published an English translation of the Qur'an.[27] This translation remained the best-known

English version for over two centuries, well into the 1900s.[28] Sale's translation included a

lengthy preface, which he called "a preliminary discourse," as well as "explanatory notes, taken

from the most approved commentators."[29] Riccoldo is cited within, as one of these esteemed

commentators, thus establishing his continued reputation in western studies of Islam. In "chapter

sixteen" of Sale's *Koran*, a note explains that "according to some Christian writers," a Jew

named Abdullab Ebn Salam helped Muhammad to craft his message.[30] A citation below this note

reveals that the "Christian writers" refers to Riccoldo, cited as "Ricardi, *Confut. Legis*

Saracenicae, c.13." Sale had read Bibliander's publication of the Latin Qur'an – dubbed very

poor scholarship by that Englishman.[31] In the process of thumbing through its pages, he almost

certainly read Bibliander's version of *Contra legem* as well. While this is Sale's only direct

citation of *Contra legem*, it is not far-fetched to imagine that Riccoldo's text had a broader, often

indirect influence on the contents of the commentaries and explanations included for readers.

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criticized by George Sale in his translation of the Qur'an, discussed below. Prideaux cited Riccoldo several times and included him in a list of sources, with the following description: "Richardi Confutatio Legis Saracenicae. Author was a Dominican Friar, who in the Year 1210, went to Bagdat, of purpose to study the Mahometan Religion out of their own Books, in order to confute it; and on his Return publish'd this learned and judicious Tract concerning it. Demetrius Cydonius translated it into Greek for the Emperor Cantacuzenus, who makes great use of it, taking thence most of that which he hath of any Moment in his four Orations against the Mahometan Religion. From this Greek Version of Demetrius Cydonius it was translated back again into Latin by Bartholomeus Picenus, which Translation is publish'd with the Latin Alcoran of Bibliander, and that is all we now have of it, The Original being lost. This, and Johannes Andreas's *Tract de Confusione Sectae Mahometanae*, are the best of any that have been formerly publish'd by the Western Writers on this Argument, and best accord with what the Mahometans themselves teach of their Religion. Others have too much spent themselves on false Notions concerning it, for want of an exact Knowledge of that which they wrote against" (Humphrey Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet* (London, 1716), 285).

[27] George Sale, *The Koran; Commonly called The Alcoran of Mohammed, translated into English immediately from the original Arabic…* (London, 1734).
[28] Alexander Bevilacqua, "The Qur'an Translations of Marracci and Sale," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 76 (2013): 93–130, 93.
[29] Sale, *The Koran*, title page.
[30] Sale, *The Koran*, 223. This was one of several popular claims concerning Muhammad's "sources" for the Qur'an. Many polemicists, from the early medieval period on, declared that at least one person, usually a Jew, an Eastern Christian heretic, or both, had helped Muhammad to write the Qur'an or even led him astray toward heretical views.
[31] Sale, *The Koran*, v.

In some ways, Sale's scholarship on Islam – and his motives for the publication – seem distant from Riccoldo's work and aims. Sale argued that his English translation had an academic value, as no previous translation from Arabic to English existed at the time. He characterized the Qur'an as "the various laws and constitutions of civilized nations," and suggested that Islamic nations must be studied more than most due to their enormous political success, both in their origin and in the contemporary period.[32] Sale thus positioned his translation as an aid in the "comparative science of government."[33] Alexander Bevilacqua has also suggested that Sale was motivated by profits. He had few means of supporting his family and was encouraged by the publisher who recognized that the Muslim Near East was a popular subject in eighteenth-century England.[34] Riccoldo had also keenly felt the success of Islamic nations, but his study emerged from a medieval Dominican framework of religious dialogue, not Enlightenment comparative politics. Nor was Riccoldo interested in remuneration, for even if his work could have afforded him a profit, he was a mendicant sworn to cast aside his possessions.

Yet, like *Contra legem*, Sale's work must also be characterized as polemical in places. Far from avoiding polemical language, Sale declared Muhammad "criminal" for "imposing a false religion on mankind," although he did also praise Muhammad's virtues.[35] Moreover, Sale even discussed the place of missionary work in his preface to the reader. He laid forth several "rules" for the conversion of Muslims – similar in intent to Riccoldo's *regulae* at the end of *Ad nationes*. Sale's rules urged potential missionaries to speak positively, avoid weak arguments, and not betray any aspect of the Christian faith in order to gain a convert. Sale's dedication to an

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[32] Bevilacqua, "The Qur'an Translations," 100.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid, 100–101.
[35] Sale, "To the Reader," *The Koran*, v.

Enlightened, academic study of the politics of Islamic nations did not, then, preclude his engagement in polemical framing of the issues.

Sale also followed in the practice – customary in northern Europe since the Reformation – of situating his discussion of the Qur'an within the context of the Catholic-Protestant divide. He argued that Catholic scholars "are so far from having done any service in their refutations of Mohammedism, that by endeavouring to defend their idolatry and other superstitions, they have rather contributed to the encrease of that aversion which the Moammedans in general have to the Christian Religion, and given them great advantages in the dispute."[36] By contrast, "The Protestants alone are able to attack the Koran with success; and for them, I trust, Providence has reserved the glory of its overthrow."[37] Despite his disdain for the polemical efforts of Catholics, Sale – like Luther – appears to have exempted sources like Riccoldo from this criticism, perhaps because he was too ancient a figure for critique. Whatever the reasons for inclusion, Sale's citation of Riccoldo exemplifies the longevity of *Contra legem* and its relevance to Western thought on Islam.

Several decades later, Thomas Jefferson purchased a copy of Sale's Qur'an.[38] As he and other founders of the United States began to visualize their new nation and its composition, some expressed an interest in the idea of potential Muslim citizens in a religiously plural society. This idea remained largely rhetorical during this period, as the vast majority of Muslims in America at this time were slaves with no right to citizenship.[39] Moreover, it was a marginal notion, not widely supported. Yet the idea survived largely because of the influence of a few men such as

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[36] Sale, "To the Reader," *The Koran*, iv.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Denise Spellberg, *Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an*. On Jefferson's reading of the Qur'an, see chapter 3: What Jefferson Learned – and Didn't – from His Qur'an, 81–123. See also Kevin Hayes, "How Thomas Jefferson Read the Qur'an," *Early American Literature* 39 (2004): 247–259.
[39] Spellberg, *Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an*, 10.

Thomas Jefferson, who purchased Sale's Qur'an eleven years before he wrote the Declaration of

Independence and engaged in these debates. Sale's Qur'an "was deemed the most informative

and accurate translation" available in the colonies, so it is no surprise that Jefferson turned to this

text to learn about Islam.[40] Moreover, Jefferson's reliance on the Qur'an to learn about Islam

followed in a long tradition of Qur'an-centric study by Christians that Riccoldo had championed.

Jefferson's copy, surviving in the Library of Congress, is a vestige of *Contra legem*'s influence

in the Atlantic world. More broadly, the early modern reception of medieval ideas and arguments

helped perpetuate those polemical traditions as a foundation for engagement with Islam well into

the Enlightenment period.

Indeed, western Christian engagement with Islam has been influenced by the medieval

polemical paradigm all the way up to the present day. In 2002, *Contra legem* found a direct

impact in the United States, when Luther News Inc. published their translation *Islam in the*

Crucible: Can it Pass the Test?[41] As mentioned above, the publication appeared several months

after 9/11, and the group's website continues to sell copies. The title immediately declares an

intent to "test" Islam severely, and all indicators suggest a negative answer to the question. On

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[40] Spellberg, *Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an*, 85.
[41] A second English translation was published in 2010. This translation, titled *Refutation of the Koran*, is attributed to Riccoldo of Monte Croce OP and the translation is attributed to "Londini Ensis," Latin for "Sword of London." The work was self-published by the translator. Like *Islam in the Crucible*, this translation was made directly from Martin Luther's German translation (which, again, was itself made from a Latin translation of a Greek translation of the original Latin version). The translator notes in a preface that they had originally made the translation in 2002 – the same year that *Islam in the Crucible* was published. They included a brief "preface to the new edition" and a slightly longer "preface." Then, the work proceeds beginning with Picenus's prologue rather than Luther's. The work then follows Riccoldo's prologue and seventeen chapters and ends with a preface that Martin Luther wrote for Bibliander's publication of the Qur'an in 1543. While the date of translation and the pseudonym adopted by the translator are both suggestive of a polemical intent, the translator stated their reasons for publishing as pseudo-scholarly. They state in the preface that the technology of print-on-demand "affords me this opportunity to make my work available cheaply to the world-wide scholarly community, and I hope that it will be of at least some benefit to those who are interested" (ii). However, they qualify this hope with a note of the existence of Mérigoux's Latin edition (unknown to the translator originally) as well as the fact that the translation "is no scholarly work and it stands without peer review" (ii). On the polemical value of the text, the translator wrote, "As for criticism of brother Riccoldo's confutation and his arguments, far be it from me to make judgements concerning the value or validity of anything put forward by such a great scholar. That, I might suggest, is for the reader to decide" (v).

the book's cover, a domed mosque rises in the background with minarets topped with crescents clearly visible. In the foreground, three empty crucifixes stand on a hillside, their placement suggesting their triumph. The cover lists two authors, Riccoldo da Montecroce and Martin Luther, and a translator, Thomas C. Pfotenhauer. The book, dedicated to Jesus Christ, includes several components. After a brief foreword by Reverend Robert King, Ph.D., Third Vice-President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the translator added a brief preface and an introduction. This introductory material frames the book in the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the growing Muslim population of North America, and the varied language being used to understand Islam.

Pfotenhauer initiates his translation with Martin Luther's preface to Riccoldo's work. Then comes Riccoldo's prologue, the seventeen body chapters, and Martin Luther's conclusion. He also added endnotes for each section that, among other things, cite the Qur'an passages referenced in the text. Pfotenhauer wrote that he included these notes, "to aid readers in drawing their own conclusions as to whether or not Riccoldo\Luther are being objective and balanced."[42] After Luther's conclusion, the publisher included a brief, anonymous section titled "The Life and Times of Muhammad: A Brief Biography." The text ends with a note that the primary source for the biography is: "A. Guillaume's *The Life of Muhammad*, a translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah (1995)."[43] The biography is brief and simple, containing passages such as, "One night, while asleep in the cave of *Hira*, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhmmad showing him writing and commanding him to 'READ!'"[44] Following the biography is a "primary source" bibliography that ranges from Norman Daniel's *Islam and the West* to a translated copy of

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[42] Pfotenhauer, "Introduction," *Islam in the Crucible*, xi–xii.
[43] *Islam in the Crucible*, 155.
[44] *Islam in the Crucible*, 144.

Stories from the Thousand and One Nights (1909) and a "pamphlets" bibliography as well as a general index and a scriptural index.

The book concludes with a "Message from the Publisher." This message shifts the framework for this publication to include other problems facing Christianity. The editor, Herman Otten, poses the question: why is *Christian News* publishing this translation? He answers, "all of Christendom is facing a tremendous crisis."[45] Yet rather than addressing the 9/11 attacks, Otten reports that a *Newsweek* survey has recently exposed the large number of Roman Catholic priests who are homosexual and/or sexually active. Otten extols his publication's attempts to publicize this crisis, which went largely unnoticed for over a decade. Then, he shifts to discuss the decline in faith in America and the move toward "deeds not creeds" characterizing the contemporary moment.[46] Next, Otten notes that, "ever since September 11, 2001 much attention has been given to Islam and the Koran" and decries that "the Pope has kissed the Koran. U.S. President George Bush has said that Islam is a religion of peace."[47] He concludes by calling for a new Reformation of the Church that recalls all "true" Christians away from corrupt and evil leadership.

Several correlations between this modern translation and *Contra legem*'s previous history deserve attention. Pfotenhauer linked his goals explicitly to those of the twelfth-century polemicist Peter the Venerable, whose work provided a model for many western polemicists. Peter had commissioned the first Latin translation of the Qur'an as well as several other texts from the Islamic tradition.[48] He eventually used these sources to compose two polemics against Islam. Peter stated, "Certainly it will not be possible for the work, undertaken for the cause of God, to escape completely without fruit; whether that may be to make converts, to resist

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[45] Herman Otten, "A Message from the Publisher," in *Islam in the Crucible*, 169.
[46] Otten, *Islam in the Crucible*, 174.
[47] Otten, *Islam in the Crucible*, 174.
[48] This is the same Latin translation of the Qur'an that Bibliander published in 1543 alongside *Contra legem*.

enemies, or to fortify those at home."[49] Peter emphasized the latter goal more fully in a letter to a colleague. He insisted, "If thereby those in error cannot be converted, at least a learned man, or a teacher, if he has zeal for justice, should look after and provide for the weak ones in the Church, who are inclined to be tempted to evil."[50] Many other medieval polemicists shared these goals, and in later centuries, pastors such as Martin Luther adopted them too.

Pfotenhauer expressed the same aims for his translation that Peter the Venerable had identified almost nine hundred years previously: protection of the Christian flock and conversion of Muslims. In the introduction, Pfotenhauer described the origin of his interest in Islam: travel to the Near East and a few attempts at mission there. Then, he declared that "Christians, some all too prone to fall under the sway of Muhammad's errors, must be warned. At the same time, Muslims must be given the opportunity to learn about the true Christ and his saving work."[51] Pfotenhauer clearly echoes polemicists from centuries past. Moreover, he explicitly quoted Peter the Venerable to express the irenic framework he envisioned. Pfotenhauer ended his introduction with Peter's rhetorical address to Muslims: "I attack you, not as some of us often do by arms, but by words; not by force, but by reason; not in hatred, but in love. I love you; loving you, I write to you, writing to you, I invite you to salvation."[52] Pfotenhauer clearly saw himself operating within a long Christian tradition of anti-Islamic polemic.

Seven centuries separate Pfotenhauer from Riccoldo, so the contexts of their interactions with Islam were vastly different. Yet their perceptions of Islamic threat and their reactions to this perceived danger were remarkably similar. When Riccoldo wrote *Contra legem* in 1301, he felt

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[49] Peter the Venerable, trans. James Kritzeck, in *Peter the Venerable and Islam* from *Liber Contra Sectam sive Haeresim Saracenorum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 159.

[50] Peter the Venerable, *Letter to Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. in Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 45.

[51] Pfotenhauer, "Introduction," *Islam in the Crucible*, viii.

[52] Pfotenhauer, "Introduction," *Islam in the Crucible*, xiv.

the onus of a recent history of setbacks for western Christians. In 1099, crusading armies from western Europe had taken the city of Jerusalem and set up their own Christian kingdom in the region. Less than a century later, crusader states lost Jerusalem, and, almost as soon as Riccoldo entered the Near East, the kingdom fell entirely with the loss of Acre in 1291. After this, although western Christians occasionally discussed plans for a new crusade, no substantive action was taken to retake these lands. Moreover, a new Islamic power, the Ottoman Empire, began to expand in all directions, including northwest into Europe.

The dominating success of the Ottomans had a critical role in driving European Christians, especially members of the clergy, to envisage a general Islamic menace.[53] One of the longest lasting empires in history, the Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299 and only dissolved in the years after World War I. In the fourteenth century, the Ottomans quickly gained power in Anatolia and the Balkans. For centuries, the Byzantine Empire, ruled by eastern Orthodox Christians, had served as a buffer between western Catholic Christians and the Islamic world. After 1453, when Constantinople finally fell to the Ottomans, Latin Christian rulers faced continued military threats to the borders of central Europe. The Ottomans continued to expand their borders northwest sporadically until the Siege of Vienna in 1529, and fear of Ottoman expansionism lasted far longer. Many western Christians correlated these military defeats – and especially the loss of Constantinople – with the historic losses of the crusader states. Thus, late medieval Christian scholars often generalized in characterizing the circumstances as a long history of defeat and humiliation for Christianity against Islam.[54]

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[53] Norman Housley, in discussing changes to images of Muslims over time, notes that "the *imago Turci* was at once more rounded and more complex than the earlier image of the 'Saracen'" (Norman Housley, "The Crusades and Islam," *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007): 189–208, 206). Nevertheless, Housley notes that the new image, while it had more components (both a barbarian *and* an enemy of the faith), was still driven by a polemical aim to generate resistance to the Ottomans. See also Introduction, note 53.

[54] Housley argued that the crusader failings beginning with the fall of Jerusalem led to a long period of introspection on Islamic success and Christian failure: "the essential worldview had not changed – Christianity must triumph and

This defensive position to which western Christians had grown accustomed in the late medieval period was at odds with the destiny that many western Christians, and especially clergymen and monastics, believed Christianity had mandated for them: to cover the Earth. The ideal, triumphal vision of Christianity was that it enveloped the known world. Christian scholars in late medieval Europe, however, recognized that Islam was growing. As the bounds of the Ottoman Empire expanded, Islam continued to gain adherents. Western Christians, who generally subscribed to a universalist viewpoint, saw this growth as threatening to the evangelical promise of Christianity. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire was recast by many simply as "Islam" to emphasize the primary threat that Turkish imperialism posed. Medieval and early modern Christians believed that their religion was destined to encompass the entire world. The successes of Islamic powers in the late Middle Ages suggested otherwise.

At the outset of the twenty-first-century War on Terror, Pfotenhauer expressed the stakes of Muslim expansion in the same terms of "Islam v. Christianity" adopted by Riccoldo in 1301. Over the intervening period, European Christians had succeeded in spreading Christianity across a much wider portion of the world, often through imposition. Missionaries participated heavily in the Age of Exploration and Discovery, and Christians dominated the settler population. In the United States, Protestant Christianity became the dominant, if never the "official," religion. Nevertheless, the events of 9/11 reanimated the idea of a general threat from "Islam." In the foreword to *Islam in the Crucible*, Reverend Robert King declared, "There is alarming evidence from reliable resources and observations of the rapidly growing population and increasing popularity of Muslims with their Christless religion in the United States, Africa, Asia, and other

'paganism' must perish – but it was now placed within a process of incessant oscillation between triumphalism and anxiety. This oscillation persisted for centuries, arguably right up to the battle of Lepanto in 1571" (Housley, "The Crusades and Islam," 204).

parts of the world."[55] 2018 Pew Research Center estimates place the Muslim population of the U.S. at approximately 1.1%, but this low number has only been attained since 9/11.[56] Yet King's alarm at a rapidly increasing Muslim population echoes the fears of medieval and early modern European Christians, who cast the danger of Islam both as a matter of numbers and of interest.

Any discomfort that evangelical Christians may have felt at the relative growth of Islam in North America was catalyzed (to put it mildly) by the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Pfotenhauer asserted in his preface, "I believe the events of 9/11 have (or, certainly should have) awakened Bible-believing Christians to the need to examine, or reexamine, the claims of Islam as a religion." This call to action reflects centuries of use of *Contra legem*: a source of information for understanding Islam within a Christian worldview. In particular, Pfotenhauer hoped that *Contra legem* might contradict some of the common understandings of Islam in America. He argued that, "Christians should cringe when told, 'Muslims and Christians worship the same God.'"[57] Pfotenhauer, hoping to instruct Christians otherwise, positioned *Contra legem* as a tool that would illuminate the true nature of Islam. He offered a prayer that "the contents will edify Christians, both lay and clergy, including precious, blood-bought souls now dwelling in the ranks of Islam."[58] This hope mimicked Luther's intention to prepare Christians for life under Islamic rule by educating them on Islam. On the back cover, a blurb by Joel Gerlach, a professor at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, expresses the acceptance of this framing: "*Islam in the Crucible*

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[55] Robert King, "Foreword," *Islam in the Crucible*, ii.
[56] Pew Research Center, "New estimate shows U.S. Muslim population continues to grow," http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/03/new-estimates-show-u-s-muslim-population-continues-to-grow/. Accessed November 29, 2018. Worldwide, the Pew Research Center estimated that there were 1.6 billion Muslims in 2010. By the year 2050, the Pew Research Center estimates that this number will grow to 2.76 billion, or 29.7% of the world's population. Pew Research Center, "World's Muslim Population more Widespread than you Might Think." http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/31/worlds-muslim-population-more-widespread-than-you-might-think/. Accessed January 22, 2018.
[57] Pfotenhauer, "Preface," *Islam in the Crucible*, iii.
[58] Pfotenhauer, "Introduction," *Islam in the Crucible*, viii.

offers everything a reader needs to know to properly evaluate all the politically correct propaganda about Islam so prevalent today."[59] The suggestion that a seven-hundred-year-old Latin text contains everything Anglophone Christians should know about Islam is a strong indication of the continuing influence of medieval approaches to Islam on modern society.

Finally, *Islam in the Crucible* produced a surprising comparison to the late medieval troubles *within* the Church. As explored throughout this dissertation, late medieval readers of *Contra legem* faced crises in Church authority that informed their readings. Reformers challenged the sovereignty of the pope, and some readers positioned Islam as a potential response. If the Church claimed jurisdiction over the perceived dangers of Islam, it could reassert its authority. Herman Otten's note at the end of *Islam in the Crucible* is oddly reminiscent of this late medieval relationship between Islam and the Church. Otten, raging against the Catholic Church and the "liberal" Christian movement toward "deeds not creeds," declared that "the time has come for true Christians…to leave their churches, join a Bible believing church, and work for the realignment and reformation of all of Christendom."[60] Otten characterized the moment as a period of crisis for the Church. He positioned his newsletter – and his faith– as a bulwark fighting against Islam and Catholicism all at once: "During the last forty years *Christian News* has probably published more on Islam…and what has been going on theologically within the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant denominations than almost any other publication."[61] Thus, again, we can see Islam used as a tool for navigating intra-Church politics and strife.

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[59] Joel Gerlach, *Islam in the Crucible*, back cover. For a useful essay on the history of the term "politically correct" over the past several decades and its role in the 2016 election, see Moira Weigel, "Political Correctness: how the right invented a phantom enemy," November 20, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/30/political-correctness-how-the-right-invented-phantom-enemy-donald-trump. Accessed January 22, 2019.
[60] Otten, "A Message from the Publisher," *Islam in the Crucible*, 177.
[61] Ibid, 178.

The similarities between past and contemporary uses of *Contra legem* are a testimony to the continuities in western Christian-Muslim relations over time. Yet Riccoldo, his late medieval and early modern readers, Pfotenhauer, and other polemicists represent a minority of the Christian population's thinking about Islam. Scholarly polemic based on a study of the Qur'an is undoubtedly an unpopular approach. We might then imagine that if an evangelical group in Missouri has not evolved from "medieval" ideas of Islam, at least the rest of us have. Yet other "medieval" ideas persist in mainstream American discourse, suggesting that the ideas that Riccoldo and others espoused have had a critical, lasting effect on popular culture as well. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, pertinent information about Islam and Muslims was often distilled by and for preachers. There is evidence of stories from Riccoldo's written works finding their way into sermons in Italy. Crusade preachers utilized these polemics to incite participants to join the cause. Others used the information to shame Christians into better practice.

These popularized ideas about Islam, stemming from learned works such as *Contra legem*, have had a lasting effect. One day, several years ago, I was reading an article on an online news site. I cannot remember the article's topic, but it concerned Islam. Against my better judgment, I scrolled through some of the comments left by anonymous readers (today's version of marginalia?), when the phrase "by the sword" jumped off the page at me. The commenter was describing the violent nature of Muslims by declaring that Islam only spread "by the sword," meaning through violent compulsion. I had recently begun my research on Riccoldo and medieval Christian polemics, and this phrase was already very familiar to me.

The notion that Islam was successful because it compelled conversion through violence was popular in medieval Europe. When Riccoldo listed the ways in which people converted to

Islam in *Contra legem*, he first named "those who entered [Islam] by the sword, as it is said."[62]

This argument allowed Christians in Europe the comfortable notion that Islam did not have a credible religious attraction, and that Christianity only suffered in comparison because it refused to force conversion.[63] Of course, western Christians were not innocent in this regard, and physical violence is not the only means of forcing conversion. Still, they imagined Islam could only overcome Christianity by using "the sword" to gain followers. This argument delegitimized Islam as a compelling religion to any who valued Christian "peace." The claim continued to find use in the colonial period as the "clash of civilizations" concept positioned Christianity as the "light," Islam as the "dark."[64] And, today, "the continuing global circulation of these stereotypes" has caused many to position the U.S. "war on terror" as an extension of this same struggle.[65] Thus, this popular medieval argument has had a history and influence as broad and rich as *Contra legem*.

This attitude toward Islam has colored the language used to describe Islam in common discourse. For instance, in the 2018 U.S. midterm election for the first time two Muslim women were elected to Congress.[66] Coverage of this event led to anti-Muslim rhetoric in public commentary. Indeed, my first search for an article on this topic, from the Washington Post, led me to the very first comment, in which a reader declared that "Everything [in Islam] boils down

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[62] *Contra legem*, 110. "Prima pars ingressa est Saracenismum, eorum qui per gladium intrauerunt sicut dictum est, et nunc etiam suum cognoscentes errorem resipisceret nisi gladium formidarent."

[63] On violence in early Islam, see Thomas Sizgorich, "'Do Prophets Come with a Sword?' Conquest, Empire, and Historical Narrative in the Early Islamic World," *The American Historical Review* 112 (2007): 993–1015; and Sizgorich, "Sanctified Violence: Monotheist Militancy as the Tie That Bound Christian Rome and Islam," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77 (2009): 895–921.

[64] Carl W. Ernst, *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9.

[65] Ibid. See also Catherine V. Scott, "Imagining Terror in an Era of Globalization: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Construction of Terrorism after 9/11, *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (2009): 579–590.

[66] While these were the first two Muslim women to be elected to Congress, the first Muslim won a seat twelve years previously, in 2006. This representative, Keith Ellison (MN), was sworn into office using Jefferson's copy of George Sale's Qur'an. This swearing-in ceremony created a considerable controversy. Rashida Tlaib, one of the two Muslim women elected, also chose the Founding Father's copy of the Qur'an for her swearing-in ceremony.

to domination and submission; every challenge represents a 'battle' to be won."[67] The reader

subverted ideas about spiritual submission (the meaning of the word Islam) to God and suggests

instead a physical submission. Such physicality fits into common misconceptions of Islam that

gained relevance in the United States after 9/11.

 While such rhetoric is more common in online discourse, medieval approaches to Islam

also find appeal in this setting. For example, in the comment section of a 2016 article on the anti-

Islamic website "Jihad Watch," one reader wrote, "If anyone questions anyone's authority to

discuss or debate The Cult of Submission, Islam, I always refer them to the Quaran [sic] of

which a number of copies are freely available on the internet. Simply reading that document and

the hate speech it contains will be more than enough to convince the skeptical of what Islam is

all about."[68] This reader had essentially the same approach to Islam as Riccoldo, Luther,

Pfotenhauer, and their readers, to read the Qur'an for proof of Islam's ineligibility as a godly or

true religion. While Riccoldo may not have intended his work to spark hatred, as this commenter

did, many of Riccoldo's readers did use *Contra legem* with such intentions.

 In this dissertation, I have attempted to demonstrate the innumerable potential lives of

knowledge – however accurate or inaccurate – based on how that knowledge gets put to use. The

rich history of Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra legem Sarracenorum* exemplifies our

understanding of how knowledge is constructed, transmitted, and appropriated as well as how

critical context is to this appropriation. The events of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries

sharpened the need to understand Islam, and Riccoldo's direct knowledge of Arabic and

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[67] Shari Corbitt, Comment in article by Michelle Boorstein, "First two Muslim women win congressional seats from Minnesota, Michigan," *The Washington Post*, November 7, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2018/11/07/first-two-muslim-women-win-congressional-seats-minnesota-michigan/?utm_term=.9c79775c4952. Accessed November 26, 2018.
[68] "G," Comment on November 16, 2016 at 11:54am, "Huffington Post's Christopher Mathias uses SPLC hit list of foes of jihad terror to smear Bannon," https://www.jihadwatch.org/2016/11/huffington-posts-christopher-mathias-uses-splc-hit-list-of-foes-of-jihad-terror-to-smear-bannon/ Accessed November 26, 2018.

experience with Muslims imbued his polemic with the authority to provide such knowledge. In

particular, the Church was struggling to reassert its sovereignty in Europe at the same moment as

the Ottoman Empire began to expand and encroach there. Riccoldo's polemic proved adaptable

to these circumstances and was utilized by papal proponents to characterize Ottoman expansion

as a growing Islamic threat that the papacy must and would defeat. These circumstances

contributed to the continued conflation among many of the Ottoman Empire with Islam.

Moreover, as demonstrated in this Afterword, *Contra legem*'s adaptability – and medieval,

polemical views of Islam – far outlasted European fears of Ottoman expansion.[69]

The 9/11 terrorist attacks encouraged a growing wave of Islamophobia in the West,

which has in turn stimulated a growth in an "us versus them" ideology. This rhetoric has seeped

into politics and spread to include a broader anti-immigrant platform. Islamophobia drove many

over the centuries to learn (however selectively) more about Islam and to use that knowledge to

discredit and attack it. In late medieval Europe, this Islamophobia was put to use to support

particular claims to authority and power, most commonly the claims of the papacy and the

Catholic Church. Today, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric dominate the political scene in

western Europe and the United States and have contributed to a shift in power dynamics.[70] The

differences between these two periods are vast. Yet the similarities are surely cautionary. Several

months after 9/11, my grandmother passed away. An immigrant to the U.S. and a dedicated

peace activist, she had a favorite saying that translates as, "No peace without justice, no justice

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[69] My own encounter with the modern facets of *Contra legem*'s afterlife occurred while conducting research for this dissertation. One of the thirty-one known Latin copies of the text is currently housed at the Santa Sabina OP Convent Archive in Rome. I attempted to view this manuscript through several different channels during my research. However, the archivist in charge denied any access to this manuscript because of the inflammatory materials that it contained.

[70] For recent coverage, see, for instance, BBC, "Europe and nationalism: A country-by-country guide," September 10, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006. Accessed November 29, 2018. See also "Theme Panel: Populism, Immigration, Race, and LGBT Rights in the U.S. and Europe," *Premium Official News*, July 13, 2017.

without truth." In the age of "fake news," it is clear that knowledge is malleable, and bent facts

often used as weapons. As a historian, I can only hope that contextualizing the uses of

knowledge may disarm those who seek to empower themselves against truth, justice, and peace.

Appendix A: Sources for the Transmission of *Contra legem*

There are thirty-one known, extant manuscripts containing part or all of *Contra legem* in Latin. J-M Mérigoux has identified the preeminent copy, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173.[1] Riccoldo made additions and comments in the margins of this copy, establishing it as what we can refer to as the "original" copy. As Mérigoux has provided a detailed description of this manuscript and its history, I will focus on the remaining thirty manuscript copies, using Florence C.8.1173 for reference and comparison. Mérigoux offered brief descriptions of twenty-seven copies, although the descriptions vary greatly in content and thoroughness.[2] Several years later, Emilio Panella identified and described one additional copy.[3] I have now ascertained the existence of two additional manuscripts beyond these. What follows is a current list of known copies, a description of each, and a diagram demonstrating the relationships among these copies. I have also included notes and observations on the features of this manuscript corpus, relationships between the original manuscript and the corpus, relationships among the copies, and a brief list of other sources of transmission for the text of *Contra legem*, including printed editions and translations.

Latin manuscripts containing *Contra legem*

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173 (referred to by Mérigoux as SMN)
Avignon, Musée Calvet, MS 58

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[1] Jean-Marie Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle," *Memorie Dominicane: Fede e Controversia nel '300 e '500* 17 (1986): 1–144, 6–11.
[2] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 35–43. In cases where the shelf-mark information has changed since Mérigoux's publication, a footnote will indicate the original mark.
[3] Emile Panella, "Ricerche su Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 58 (1988): 19–22.

Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS A X 41
Belluno, Biblioteca Lolliana, MS 30
Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Locatelli, MA 172[4]
Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 2655[5]
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library, MS 335[6]*
Dresden, Sachsische Landesbibliothek, MS A.120.B[7]*
Florence, Biblioteca Medici Laurenziana, MS Acquisti e Doni 431
Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 3026
Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Theology 262
Krakow, National Museum of Krakow, MS MNK-Rkps-1401[8]
Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 107
London, British Library, MS Royal 13 E IX
Munich, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, MS Clm. 449
Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20
Oviedo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS 24
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 3655[9]*
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 4230[10]*
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 6225
Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, MS 1381
Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, MS A.1**
Rome, Archivum Generale O.P. (Santa Sabina), MS XIV 28 b
Salamanca, Privately-held, MS***
Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina, MA 56-2-14[11]
Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS BCT 21-10
Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS BCT 5-35***
Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS H.II.33
Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 7317
Vienna, Universitätsbibliothek, Theologische Sammelhandschrift, MS 3141
Vienna, Universitätsbibliothek, Historische Sammelhandschrift, MS 3320

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[4] Cited by Mérigoux as MS 60 (40).

[5] In Antoine Dondaine's study of Riccoldo's works, published in 1967, Dondaine listed twenty-six known manuscript copies of *Contra legem*. However, one of these – Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 673 – is not listed in Mérigoux's later study (Antoine Dondaine, "Ricoldiana. Notes sur les oeuvres de Riccoldo da Montecroce," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 37 (1967): 119–179, 135–6. I have not been able to verify that a copy of *Contra legem* is included in this manuscript, although it seems unlikely that Mérigoux, who was very well-acquainted with Dondaine's work, would have left it out if not verified. Likewise, an unverifiable citation for another manuscript copy of *Contra legem* can be found at Mirabile ("Ricoldus de Monte Cruscis n. 1242, m. 31–10–1320," *Mirabile: Digital Archives for Medieval Culture*, http://www.mirabileweb.it/title/libellus-contra-legem-sarracenorum-title/1523, accessed November 10, 2018). This website lists Pistoia, Biblioteca Leoniana, MS 31 as a copy, but the website's information concerning Riccoldo's works is very sporadic and incomplete.

[6] Available digitally at "Parker Library on the Web." https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/fn364rc0124.

[7] Available digitally at "Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB)." https://digital.slub-dresden.de/en/workview/dlf/18602/1/0/.

[8] Formerly: Krakow, Museum Czartoyski, MS 1401. A large family collection, including the manuscript, was sold/donated to the National Museum in late 2016. The collection also included rare and valuable artwork by DaVinci and Rembrandt among others.

[9] Available digitally at "BnF Gallica." https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52508161d?rk=21459;2.

[10] Available digitally at "BnF Gallica." https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9067672p?rk=21459;2.

[11] The previous shelf-mark for this manuscript was MS 82-1-7.

*entire manuscript is currently available digitally
**identified by E. Panella
***newly identified

A - Avignon, Musée Calvet, MS 58, fols. 205r–220v: 14th century; parchment; 220 folios; 300x215mm; originated at the Dominican monastery of Avignon; single, gothic-style hand throughout manuscript; contains other works on theology and religious polemic. CLS: no title; incomplete text, which ends in the middle of chapter 15, although there is a marginal note at the bottom of the verso folio to indicate that the copyist intended to continue copying the text; text begins: "incipit libellus fratris Richoldi, ordinis Predicatorum, contra legem Sarracenorum. Prohemium;" contains evidence of a close relationship to SMN, such as the inclusion of a marginal note found in chapter 1 of SMN; there are headings for each chapter; folios 219 and 220 are in reverse order; many hands in the margins, some of which appear to be proto-humanist in style; hands contribute a variety of markings and notes, some of which are lengthy. See catalog entry: http://www.bibliotheques-calvet.org/pagesFR/pageconsultation.php?groupe=4&strFond=ouv_127.

B - Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS A X 41, fols. 184v–185r: 15th century; post-1439; paper; 281 folios; 220x150mm; CLS is in one of six hands in manuscript, an early humanist hand; contains 22 other works on theology and the Church as well as Islam; several watermarks are visible. CLS: incomplete text, containing only the preface of CLS; text matches SMN text very closely; no title or introduction; no marginalia. Manuscript also contains a copy of the final chapter of ADNO, called *regulae*. See catalog entry: https://www.ub.unibas.ch/digi/a100/kataloge/mscr/mscr_a/BAU_5_000108917_cat.pdf.

Be - Belluno, Biblioteca Lolliana, MS 30: 14th century; parchment; contains an epigram of the humanist Pandolfo Collenuccio (1444–1504), a Florentine magistrate, preceding CLS. Text begins: "incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi de Florentia contra legem saracenorum." I was unable to view this manuscript in any form; therefore, it is not analyzed in this dissertation beyond its presence in the corpus and these few known facts made available in G. Mazzatinti, *Inventari dei Manoscritti delle Biblioteche d'Italia*, Forlì, 1890, T.2, p123.

Br - Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Locatelli, MA 172, fols. 1r–27r: 15th century; paper; 30 folios; 284x210mm; likely place of origin in northern Italy; CLS in a gothic script, which is one of two hands in the manuscript; 16th-century numbering; introductory folio has an index for the text in a humanist hand; following CLS, contains an unidentified text with a drawing in green ink of two men; the much larger figure, wearing shorts but no shirt with shoulder length hair and a beard, is seated on a pedestal with a hand resting on his chin and the other held out against the second figure, who is much younger-looking, beardless, and wearing a tunic, standing and holding a chain connected to the ankle of the first figure and looking at him; also contains a short humanist treatise. CLS: no title; begins: "incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi ordinis fratrum predicatorum contra legem Saracenorum" in red ink; complete text; header only for the first chapter; text closely resembles SMN; none of Riccoldo's marginal additions; ends: "mundo quod nobis concedat huius Christus Amen," followed by "ava pistis"; occasional underlining; heavy marginalia throughout in several hands; two watermarks. See catalog entry: https://manus.iccu.sbn.it//opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=49450.

Bo - Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 2655 (lat. 1396), fols. 103r–116v: 1463; paper; 116 folios; 220x140mm; origin in Italy; possibly the convent S. Marcelli of Rome; contains writing in Italian; one hand in a gothic script; contains polemics and theological works. CLS: no title; attributed to an unidentified Matthew de Regamo, in an incipit which reads "Venerabilis Religiosus vir frater Matheus de Remago ordinis predicatorum… anno domini MCCCC 6 de una mensis februarii ab in Incarnationes Iehsus etc."; complete text; matches SMN closely; no chapter headers; chapter 16 is missing from the table of contents; there is a break in the text in chapter 2; contains none of the additions from chapter 8; text ends "Et sic est finis explicit anno domini etc. lxiii septima die mensis Augusti etc."; frequent marginal markings and one note. For catalog entry, see https://ia601406.us.archive.org/33/items/studiitalianidif1718fireuoft/studiitalianidif1718fireuoft.pdf. p.83.

C - Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library, MS 335, fols. 74r–101r: 15th century; paper; first folio is a 14th c. flyleaf made of vellum; 153 folios; 218x148mm; originated in Ely, England; contains writing in Anglo-Norman; several hands; CLS in a gothic script; contains works on Islam as well as minor, miscellaneous texts. CLS: no title; text begins: "incipit libellus fratris Ricculdi ordinis predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum prohemium"; complete text; matches SMN closely; contains a note in chapter 1 that was originally made in SMN; contains chapter headers; none of the additions from chapter 8; chapter 16 is labelled as 17, and 17 as 18; text ends: "explicit."; underlining in red ink throughout; marginal notes in copyist's hand. See catalog information at https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/fn364rc0124.

D - Dresden, Sachsische Landesbibliothek, MS A. 120 B, fols. 206r–234v: 16th century; pre-1525; paper; 234 folios; two hands, both in humanistic script; CLS is copied mainly by the first but finished by the second; contains texts from the Toledo Collection, including Robert of Ketton's Qur'an. CLS: titled "Riccoldus contra legem Saracenorum: qui ante CCLVIII annos fuit."; incomplete; ends in the middle of chapter 15, at the end of a verso folios that indicates there may have been other folios that are now missing; text matches SMN closely, but with humanist spelling changes; chapter headings; none of the chapter 8 additions; multiple hands in the margins making frequent notes. For a digital copy and more information on the manuscript, see: http://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/18602/1/.

F1 - Florence, Biblioteca Medici Laurenziana, Acquisti e Doni, MS 431, fols. 1r–22r: June 2, 1439; paper; 188 folios; 208x144mm; originated in Florence at S. Maria de Clareto monastery (OESA); multiple hands; CLS copied by Brother Ieronimus Iohannes; contains polemical works and texts on theology. CLS: titled "contra alchoranum saracenorum legem"; begins "egregium ac perutile compendium contra alchoranum saracenorum legem, a quodam frater predicatorum editum. Incipit. Iste frater nominatur Ricoldus"; complete text; humanist changes to the text throughout; chapter headers; Riccoldo's three additions from chapter 8 have been inserted into the manuscript with small scraps of paper; other additions are also present in the margins; ends: "Explicit eregium ac perutile compendium…editum. Laus deo"; marginal notes in a humanistic script making corrections to the text that bring it closer to SMN. Before the text, there is a short prologue referencing St. Jerome; after the text, there is a list of 12 "articles" of Muslim perfidy, which acts as a type of summation. For information on this manuscript, see: http://www.mirabileweb.it/manuscript/firenze-biblioteca-medicea-laurenziana-acquisti-e--manoscript/107688. For bibliographic information, see: http://opac.bml.firenze.sbn.it/Bibliografia.htm?idlist=1&record=100912492819.

F2 - Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 3026, fols. 5r–36v: July 13, 1523; paper; 36 folios; 70x140mm; copied by Paolo Angelo, a scholar who published an Italian translation of the text, in a humanistic script; use of punctuation in the text. CLS is sole text; no title; complete text; matches SMN closely but with humanist changes; chapter headings; none of the chapter 8 additions; many corrections to the text throughout by the copyist; text ends: "explicit liber fratris Ricoldi de ordine predicatorum contra legem sarracenorum largitus toti Christianitati ab Incognito Christi suo persequetor in tamen ipsi legis quis falso per Christi…anno salutis MDXXIII die xiii Julii. Ponit sanctissimi D. N. Domini Adriani di pro pape sexti anno I"; two additional hands in the margins. Contains a four-folio preface by Paolo on the circumstances of his copying the text. For catalog entry, see: *Inventario e stima della Libreria Riccardi: Manoscritti e edizioni del secolo XV* (Florene, 1810). Entry 3027. http://www.riccardiana.firenze.sbn.it/BRFI_INVENTARIO_E_STIMA_1810.pdf.

G - Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Theology, MS 262, fols. 25r–49v: 1486; paper; 49 folios; 205x135mm; copied by Petrus Remuldi de Confluencia in a neo-gothic script; contains one other religious polemic. CLS: no title; like Bologna, the text is attributed to Matthew de Remago: Venerabilis et religiousus vir frater Matheus de Remagi ordinis praedicatorum… anno 1486 decima octava mensis februarii ab incarnatione domini"; copyist appears to spell "Baldaccum" as "Saldacium"; incomplete; text ends in the middle of chapter 14, mid-sentence; text matches SMN closely with some changes; in table of contents, chapter 17 is listed as 16 and sixteen isn't represented; there is a break in chapter 2; none of the chapter 8 additions; a few of the Surah titles are underlined; no marginalia. See catalog entry in *Die Handschriften in Göttingen. Bd. 2: Universitätsbibliothek. Geschichte, Karten, Naturwissenschaften, Theologie, Handscriften aus Lüneburg* (Berlin, Verlag von A. Bath, 1893), 461–462. http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/#|9.

K - Krakow, National Museum of Krakow, MNK-Rkps-1401, fols. 120r–167r: 15th century; parchment; 186 folios; one hand throughout; humanistic script; contains works on Islam as well as a few miscellaneous extracts; a second text is mistakenly attributed to Riccoldo by a much later reader or archivist. CLS: no title; text begins "incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi de florentia ordinis predicatorum et diuiditur in 17 capitula"; incomplete text; missing the preface, although it contains the table of contents; text is abbreviated or abridged throughout, but all seventeen chapters are present in some form; chapter headers in red ink; text ends: "quam nobis concedat obseruare qui uinit et negnat per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen. Deo gratis"; a few of the Surah titles are underlined; several hands made notes in the margins. See former catalog entry: *Catalogus codicum mani scriptorum Musei Principum Czartoryski Cracoviensis.* Vol.II. 199–200. Oprac. S. Kutrzeba, Kraków 1908–1913.

BK - Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 107, fols. 194r–232r: 15th century; c.1453–1459; parchment; 232 folios; origin in Rome; commissioned and owned by Nicholas of Cusa; one hand throughout; neat gothic script; contains one other anti-Islamic polemic. CLS: titled "contra legem Sarracenorum"; text begins "Incipit libellus quem composuit frater Ricoldus ordinis predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum"; text is complete and appears to be a close witness to SMN; includes all of Riccoldo's additions to the text, including his *incipit*, chapter 8 additions, and several smaller red-ink additions to the text throughout, as well as a break in chapter 17; contains chapter headers; text ends "explicit. Deo gratis"; frequent underlining throughout; 2 marginal hands: copyist (corrections or additions) and Nicholas of

Cusa (notes or glosses). Microfilm available at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library. For the microfilm catalog entry, see:
http://www.vhmml.us/research2014/catalog/detail.asp?MSID=110049.

L - London, British Library, MS Royal 13 E IX, fols. 78r–92v: 14th century; post 1394, c.1400; parchment; 326 folios; 17.75"x17.88"; origin in St. Albans, England; contains writing in Anglo-Norman; one hand throughout in a gothic script; contains at least 25 texts and excerpts on British, European, and Church history, Islam, and prophecies and visions, among other topics. CLS: titled "Anti alcoron Machometi"; no *incipit* or *explicit*; complete text; matches SMN but with small changes throughout; part of chapter 8 (the middle section) has been inserted by the copyist into the middle of chapter 7, although the chapters both begin and end normally; none of the chapter 8 additions; 2 hands visible in the margins, including the copyist's; some marginal notations, mostly corrections, in intermittent chapters. The following text, "Life of Muhammad," is treated as though it could be a part of CLS. For catalog entry, see http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-002106890.

M - Munich, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, MS Clm. 449, fols.120r–148r: 1455; paper; 186 folios; origin in Bruges; three hands, which collaborated to create the entire manuscript; 2 of them responsible for CLS; contains 3 works on religion and crusade. CLS: titled "contra legem machometi"; complete text; some abridgement or abbreviation in the text and other changes that do not resemble SMN; chapter headings given in the upper margins; first two additions from chapter 8 are included; chapter 17 is not demarcated or distinguished from chapter 16; text ends: "expliciunt dicta utilissima riculdi super errores machometi. Deo gratias"; following is a paragraph in the bottom margin identifying Riccoldo and describing the circumstances of the text's copying; frequent underlining of names, quotations, and Surah titles; several marginal hands; one primary hand added heavy marginal notations throughout the text. This manuscript also contains the final chapter of ADNO on *regulae* for missionaries. For catalog entry, see: http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00008251/image_132.

N - Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20, fols. 94r–106v: 14th century; parchment; 127 folios; 215x300mm; origin in northern Europe; acquired in the 15th century by John of Capistrano, an Italian Franciscan who preached throughout Europe and eventually led a crusading contingent to Hungary where he died in 1456; this manuscript was returned to the library at the convent of Capistrano; three hands; CLS in a neat, gothic script; contains six works on rulership, religion, and polemic. CLS: two titles: "De Sarracenis" and "de erroribus saracenorum"; complete text; some small changes from SMN; contains chapter headers; there is a break in chapter 5 and the second part is labelled chapter 6, but then the regular chapter 6 begins normally; none of the chapter 8 additions; Surah titles and quotations often underlined; two or three hands in the margins, sparsely commenting and making corrections. For catalog entry, see: C. Cenci, *Manoscritti francescani della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*, I, Quaracchi-Firenze, 1971, N 238.

O - Oviedo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS 24, fols. 91r–113v: 1437; paper; 124 folios; 290x210mm; origin at the Council of Basel; commissioned by Juan de Corral, a Dominican legate from the Castilian delegation; two hands; the second is only responsible for a short, later humanist treatise; CLS in gothic script; contains 6 works on topics including church reform, Islam, and rhetoric; there are watermarks in places throughout this manuscript in the shape of a

bunch of grapes. CLS: no title; complete text; matches SMN very closely with very small changes; no chapter headings; contains the first two additions from chapter 8; chapter 17 contains a break in the text that matches SMN; text ends "explicit completus die martis ante omnium sanctorum annorum (MCCCC)XXXVII"; underlining in red ink throughout the text, especially for Qur'anic quotations; no marginalia. This manuscript also contains a copy of ADNO, with the first four chapters preceding CLS and the final chapter, *regulae*, following it; ADNO then ends "expliciunt opera Ricaldi super Mahometi errores bene utilia." For catalog, see: Oviedo Cathedral Church, *Notas para un catálogo de códices de la cathedral ovetense* (Madrid, 1963), 289–291.

P1 - Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 3655, fols. 114r–119r: 1423–1424; paper; 179 folios; origin at a convent in Montpellier, France; copied by brother Amedee Bovier, a student; contains eleven works, the majority on heresy, leadership, and religion. CLS: titled "Contra Machometum"; text begins "incipit libelus de materia Machometi et contra legem Sarracenorum"; incomplete; missing chapter 11 as well as the table of contents from the preface; text is also highly abbreviated/abridged; no chapter headings, although they are numbered; none of the chapter 8 additions; text ends "Plura scriptor huius caterni de hac materia scripsisset. Sed omni die incarcerationem vel mortem timore expectant eo quod rumor fuit inter Sarracenos de passagio per christianos et dixerunt quod tunc christiani fuerunt in portu Scriptum in Monte Syon"; some quotations are underlined throughout; two hands in the margins, one of which is the copyist's, making regular notes. For catalog entry, see: https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc61604w.

P2 - Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 4230, fols. 159v–183v: 1384; parchment; approximately; 194 folios; may have originated in Avignon; one hand throughout main texts; one other hand responsible for a single, one-folio text; neat gothic script; 12 works on a miscellany of topics such as poverty, fate, ecclesiastical power; some texts are late antique in origin. CLS: titled "Opus fratris Ricoldi florentini ordinis fratrem predicatores contra Saracenos"; complete text; matches SMN closely with only small changes; chapters 16 and 17 are not distinguished by any header or initial, yet they are present; no chapter headings; chapter 2 is slightly abbreviated; none of the chapter 8 additions; text ends "Explicit tractatus seu disputacio fratris Ricoldi florentini ordinis fratrem predicatorum contra saracenos et Alchoranum. Deo gratis"; one hand visible in the margins making a few notes. This manuscript contains a second work attributed to Riccoldo: "Incipit tractatus seu disputatco Fratris Ricoldi, Florentini, ordinis fratrem Praedicatorum contra Saracenos et lege Alcoranum." This attribution has not yet been satisfactorily confirmed. Cf. Daniel Pachurka, *Tractatus seu disputatio contra Saracenos et Alchoranum: Edition; Ubersetzung; Kommentar* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2016). For catalog entry, see: https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc63005c.

P3 - Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 6225, fols. 164r–175r: 15th century; c.1440–1454; paper; 266 folios; 8 total hands; CLS written in a cramped but even script; contains 12 texts including works from a crusading council, texts on Islam, and letters. CLS: incomplete; missing the preface and the first part of chapter 1; also missing a section from near the beginning of chapter 13 to near the end of chapter 14; in both cases, it is possible that the folios were removed because the text begins at the top of a new folio in the middle of a sentence; text matches SMN very closely; no chapter headings; the first two additions from chapter 8 are present; chapter 17 contains the same break seen in SMN; one hand made occasional notes in the

margins; a second may have been responsible for the many marginal notations, markings, and drawings seen throughout. The final chapter from ADNO (*regulae*) is included at the end of CLS; an excerpt of Riccoldo's *Peregrinationis* is also included, although it is in a different hand. For catalog entry, see: https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc65289m.

Pe - Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, MS 1381, 11r–24r: 15th or 16th century; paper; 128 folios; 150x218mm; origin in Italy; contains writing in Italian vernacular; 10 or more hands total in the manuscript; CLS in a humanistic script; contains a miscellany of 18 works, including ones on Constantinople, heresy, pilgrimage, poetry, history, astronomy, and rhetoric. CLS: text begins: "Ex libello fratris Ricaldi ordinis predicatorum qui fuit in studio saracenorum et nouit literam eorum et legem machometi eorum pseudoprophetam quam legem ipsi uocant alchoranum"; incomplete; all chapters are present but heavily abridged or paraphrased; most extreme forms are chapters 11 and 12, each represented by a single sentence; no chapter headings; an abbreviated form of Riccoldo's second addition from chapter 8 is present; in chapter 9, the copyist added a long paragraph to the middle of the chapter in a slightly smaller script; chapters 14–17 are not distinguished in any way; instead they appear to comprise a single chapter; text ends: "finis"; text is occasionally underlined in red ink; no marginalia. For catalog entry, see: G. Mazzatinti, *Inventari dei Manoscritti delle Biblioteche d'Italia*, Vol. XLIII (Firenze, 1930), 161–162, N 1381. See also: A. Sorbelli, *Inventari dei Manoscritti delle Biblioteche d'Italia*, Vol. XLV (Firenze, 1890).

Pi - Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, MS A.1, fols. 55r–83v: 1483; paper; 144 folios; 236x165mm; some damage to the folios, including in CLS; origin in Italy; copied by the humanist Girolamo Zenoni in a humanistic script; contains 15 texts on Islam, religion, medicine, poetry, orations, and several humanist and classical works; two additional texts were added to the middle of the manuscript in an 18th-century hand. CLS: no title; incomplete text; all chapters are present in some form, but they are abridged or paraphrased; chapter headers throughout; none of the additions from chapter 8; text ends "Finis. Laus deo. 1483"; within the text, two words are written in Greek rather than Latin; only Zenoni's hand in the margins; marginal note in Italian at the beginning of the text; frequent glossing throughout the text. See catalog entry: https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=189914.

R - Rome, Archivum Generale O.P. (Santa Sabina), MS XIV 28 b, fols. 96v–154v: 15th century; parchment; 262 folios; 275x195mm or 290x210mm; contains polemics on Islam, Judaism, and the Greeks. CLS: text begins "Incipit libellus fratris Rituldi ordinis predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum"; incomplete text; chapter 17 is missing; none of the chapter 8 additions; text ends "Explicit libellus editus a fratre Rituldo ordinis predicatorum contra legem sarracenorum"; I was unable to view this manuscript in any form because the archive would not grant access; therefore, it is not analyzed in this dissertation beyond its presence in the corpus and these few known facts made available in Dondaine, "Riccoldiana," pp. 176–179 and in the digital catalog for the archive. For a link to the online database of the archive, see: http://www.op.org/en/content/archivum.

Sa - Salamanca, Privately-held MS, fols. 1r–53r: 15th century; paper; contains works on religious "others;" CLS appears to have been bound into this manuscript after its initial creation because it is in a separate hand, has its own foliation, and is separated by several blank folios; the first set

of texts is numbered but the folios contain signs of humidity and many of the numbers are no longer visible. CLS in Latin in a neat gothic hand; remaining texts, also religious polemics, are in Castilian in another hand. CLS: no title; complete text; several folios are out of order (ff. 51–52 ought to be in between ff. 29 and 30) and one (f.57) is missing altogether; text is similar to SMN with some small changes; chapter headers in red ink; none of the chapter 8 additions; text ends "Explicit libellus contra legem Sarracenorum editus a frater ricoldo Florentino de ordine fratrem predicatorum. Deo gratis. Amen"; many marginal notes throughout the text: frequent glosses in the copyist's hand as well as several notes in a second hand.

S - Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina, MA 56-2-14, fols. 147r–173v: 15th century; paper; 173 folios; 280x204mm; contains several printed pages of a work in Spanish at both ends of the manuscript; one hand throughout in a gothic hybrid script; contains 3 total works, all religious polemics. CLS: no title; text begins: "Incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi ordinis fratrum predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum"; incomplete text ending near the beginning of chapter 14, although there is a placemark at the bottom of the folio that indicates that the copyist intended to continue copying; text matches SMN closely; contains chapter headers; none of the chapter 8 additions; two hands in the margins: one is the copyist's and the other appears to be slightly later; occasional, long glosses of the text.

T1 - Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS BCT 21-10, fols. 62r–96v: 15th century; paper; 119 folios; 212x158mm; one hand throughout the main manuscript in a neo-Carolingian script; one folio at the end is in a later humanist hand; contains 5 texts on religion and polemic. CLS: no title; text begins "Incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi ordinis fratrum predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum. prohemium"; complete text; matches SMN very closely; contains chapter headers; none of the chapter 8 additions; while there is no break in chapter 17 to match SMN, there is a short addition ("hec solutio") where the break would occur; text ends "deo gratis. explicit libellus fratris Ricoldi ordinis fratrum predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum"; three or more hands in the margins; two appear to be later, humanist hands and a third is the copyist's; notes appear sporadically. For information on the manuscript, see: José M. Millás Vallicrosa, *Las traducciones orientales en los manuscritos de la Biblioteca Catedral de Toledo* (Madrid, 1942), 52–54.

T2 - Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS BCT 5-35, fols. 141r–171r: 15th century; c.1415–1440; paper; 211 folios; 210x145mm; 4–5 different hands throughout; CLS in a neat, gothic hand; contains 18 texts including works from the councils of Basel and Constance, a series of correspondence, and other miscellany; there are watermarks close to the bindings throughout the manuscript. Watermarks in *Contra legem* include images of a bunch of grapes – which match the watermark in Oviedo 24 – and a steer. CLS: no title; text begins "Incipiunt dicta Rikaldi super errore Machometi"; complete text; matches SMN very closely; no chapter headers; contains the first two additions from chapter 8; contains the same break in chapter 17 as seen in SMN; very occasional underlining in the text; in the margins, the copyist has made two small corrections to the text and one additional note appears in a second hand. CLS is followed by the *regulae* from ADNO, and this addition ends: "Explicunt dicta Ricaldi super machometi errorem bene utilia." For catalog entry, see: Biblioteca de la revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos, *Catálogo de la librería del cabildo Toledano por D. José M. Octavio de Toledo*, Volume 1: Manuscritos (Madrid, 1903), 11–12.

Tu - Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS H.II.33, fols. 247r–267v: 16th century; c.1525; paper; 267 folios; appears to be Italian in origin (Cf. D'Alverny, "Quelques Manuscrits de la 'Collectio Toletana'," in *Petrus Venerabilis 1156–1956: Studies and Texts Commemorating the Eighth Centenary of his Death*, ed. Constable and Kritzeck (Rome, 1956)); two hands total; CLS in a thin, neat humanistic script; contains 8 works including Robert of Ketton's Qur'an and other treatises on the Qur'an as well as a copy of Riccoldo's *Epistolae*. CLS: titled "Riccoldus contra legem Saracenorum"; incomplete text; ends in the middle of chapter 13; text matches SMN closely although with some humanist changes to spelling; there are chapter headers throughout; none of the chapter 8 additions; only one correction in the copyist's hand in the margins. An abbreviated version of Riccoldo's *Peregrinationis* is included in the manuscript before CLS. For catalog entries, see: J. Pasini, *Manuscriptorum codicum bibliothecae Regii Taurinensis Athenaei,* Pars altera (Taurini, 1749), 46–47; Mazzatinti, *Inventari dei manoscritti*, Vol. 28 (Firenze, 1922), 124, N. 1213; Codices manuscripti Bibliothecae regii taurinensis athenaei, per linguas digesti & binas in partes distribute, in quarum prima Hebraei & Graeci, in altera Latini, Italici & Gallici, 46–47.
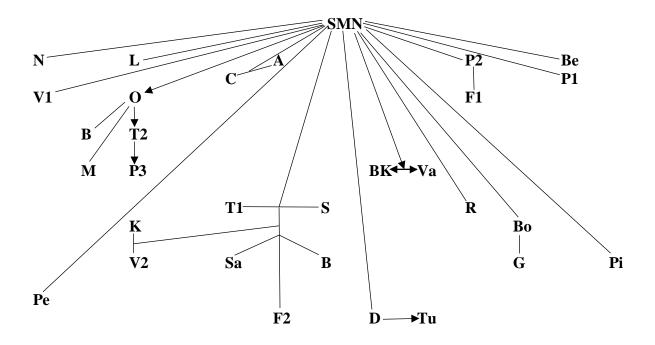
Va - Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 7317, fols. 267v–300r: 1458; paper; 396 folios; origin in Rome; at least four hands; CLS in a neat gothic script, copied by Arnold Melxter at the request of Cardinal Firmano Capranica; contains 9 works on history, travel, and the Near East, including a copy of Riccoldo's *Epistolae*. CLS: complete text; very similar text to SMN; contains chapter headers, although chapters 4–7 contain the header that belongs to the following chapter; in chapter 7, there is a number "130" written and underlined that had been crossed out in SMN; contains all three additions from chapter 8; contains the same break in chapter 17 as SMN; text ends: "explicit"; two hands in the margins both copied out the chapter headers, on either side of the text; one of these hands included an incipit for the text: "incipit libellus que composuit frater Ricoldus ordinis predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum." See catalog entry at: http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guii/console. Search field – shelfmark; Filter – Vat.lat. Term – 7317.

V1 - Vienna, Universitätsbibliothek, Theologische Sammelhandschrift, MS 3141, fols. 272v–281v: 1433; paper; 284 folios; 287x207mm; origin at the Council of Basel; four hands; CLS in a small, cramped hand – possibly from Italy; contains 7 works on late antique histories and culture as well as heresy. CLS: titled "Contra legem Machometi"; incomplete text; an abbreviated version of the original text containing all of the chapters except 15; text does match SMN fairly closely but it has been pared down; none of the chapter 8 additions; text ends: "Hec breuitur de erroribus grecorum dicta ad primus sufficiantur"; a few short marginal notes throughout CLS in a single hand. For catalog entry, see: http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC13958031.

V2 - Vienna, Universitätsbibliothek, Historische Sammelhandschrift, MS 3320, fols. 52r–62v: 15th century; c.1471; paper; 79 folios; 300x205mm; one hand in a neat, early humanistic script; contains 5 texts on history, travel and the East, and Islam. CLS: text begins "Incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi florentini ordinis predicatorum contra legem prophanam sarracenorum prologus"; incomplete text; all 17 chapters are included but the text is abridged, especially in the second half; headers for chapters 1–7; chapter 15 begins with the word "nouiter" instead of "consequenter"; text ends "Quam nobis obseruare concedat qui vinunt et regnat per infinita

secula seculorum. Amen. Deo Gratis"; only one correction by the copyist in the margins; other texts contain much heavier marginalia in another hand. For catalog entry, see: http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AL00173275.

Potential stemma:

*Chart shows a sense of time, descending vertically from the 14th through the 16th centuries.
**Direct relationships are indicated with an arrow, while indirect relationships or unestablished ones are indicated with a line.

Features and relationships of the Latin corpus

One of the most striking features of the corpus is its variety. No two manuscripts are identical; more than that, many of them are very different from one another. While many copies contain the complete text, others are heavily abridged. Some are beautifully scripted with detailed decoration that suggest an ornamental purpose, while others are hastily scribbled with many notations throughout the margins that indicate a robust use. A few copies are bound alone,

yet others sit within a broad compendium of works on matters as far-afield as purgatory and the study of birds. The differences are substantial and critical for understanding the reception history of *Contra legem*. Yet careful study also reveals similarities and points of comparison within the corpus that are equally revealing.

Manuscripts as vessels

The contents and style of the manuscripts differ vastly, hinting at the different uses to which *Contra legem* was put and the contexts in which it was read. Riccoldo's original copy has unique features. It is fairly ornate at the beginning of the text, where there is a large, highly detailed initial "Q" in blue, red, and brown ink, with a detailed portrait of Riccoldo inside the Q. Riccoldo appears in front of a red background with his arms crossed, wearing a black habit, with grey tonsured hair and a long grey beard. He has a slight, closed smile and is looking off to the right, almost as a pleased teacher, or even father, might look after those who followed on in his place. The text is neat and evenly spaced. There are headers, section markers, and underlining in red ink, and decorated chapter initials in red and blue ink. Additionally, there are marginal notations and several markings in a few hands throughout the text. The manuscript contains a series of additional works on the Near East and religion and theology.[12]

Copies of *Contra legem* traveled alongside texts on a host of topics that do not always fall into easy patterns. Twelve manuscripts contain between two and five texts total; eleven manuscripts contain between six and fifteen texts total; and four manuscripts contain between sixteen and twenty-five texts. Of these, twelve manuscripts are copied entirely in a single hand, while the others are done in multiple hands. These other works often provide the greatest insight into the contexts in which *Contra legem* was transmitted. For instance, *Contra legem* may have

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[12] Full description of contents in Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 8–9.

been received for very different reasons in a manuscript devoted to crusade treatises than in a manuscript centered on problems for the Church such as heresy, concubinage, and simony.

One of the most common categories of texts with which *Contra legem* traveled is religious polemic. Many copies contain other polemics, although only some are against Islam. Other polemics attack Judaism, the Greek church, and eastern Christian "heresies." Some manuscripts are exclusively dedicated to polemic. Many others also contain texts devoted to other theological issues such as purgatory, monastic life, or the Virgin Mary or else texts on the Near East such as travelogues. Other notable patterns, explored throughout this dissertation, include crusading material and treatises on Church reform. A number of manuscripts contain texts on a whole miscellany of topics, including British, European, and Church history, theories of rulership, nature and diet, science, grammar, and rhetoric. Letters, orations, poems, epigrams, and eulogies can be found within the manuscripts. One manuscript even contains legal charters. These works range in origin from classical Rome to the contemporary moment.

Additionally, many of the *Contra legem* manuscripts also contained other works by Riccoldo. Riccoldo wrote a missionary handbook entitled *Ad nationes orientales*, a pilgrimage narrative called *Liber peregrinationis* and a series of letters, *Epistolae V commentatoriae de perdition Acconis 1291*. The entire text of *Ad nationes* is preserved in both the original copy and one other; moreover, four other copies contain an excerpt from this work. In one of these latter copies, excerpts from Riccoldo's *Peregrinationis* are also included, although in another hand. Finally, two copies contain abbreviated versions of the *Epistolae*. Two other manuscripts present a complication of this reception history: works that a contemporary reader or modern archivist have attributed to Riccoldo, but which cannot be substantiated.[13]

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[13] The first case is P2, which contains a work attributed by the copyist to Riccoldo, but which has not yet been satisfactorily confirmed as genuinely authored by Riccoldo. See Introduction, Note 12. The second case is K, which

Aside from content, the thirty copies' styling also varies greatly. Ten of the copies are decorative, with some type of ornate embellishment. These often include large initial Qs in multiple colors at the beginning of the text, often with intricate designs surrounding the letter and even extending down and across the margins to create a border effect. These texts are all neatly written, in straight lines across the folio, with even spacing between each line and wide-set margins surrounding the text. Care and attention went into the copying of these manuscripts, suggesting that they served more than a very basic, utilitarian need, had a well-to-do owner, or both. Eleven copies are complete, often with titles and fully filled-in initials and multiple ink colors. However, these copies have a more simplistic style, with bolded or enlarged initials lacking any decoration or flourish. Finally, seven copies are not complete in terms of detail. Initials, in particular, were never filled in for these copies. They vary, otherwise, in their style; some have a very neat script, titles or headers, and margins, while others are messier and appear to have been hastily done. Although these styles can only hint at the circumstances in which these copies were made, the great variety itself is a telling factor for understanding the transmission of the text.

The marginalia surrounding the text also hints these copies biographies. Four copies do not have any marginalia in the text of *Contra legem*, suggesting that the copy was not frequently read or closely used. All the other copies have marginalia, although there are many variations here too. Seven copies are only marked by one hand, either the copyist's or a reader's, while fifteen are marked by two or three different hands and two copies contain six or more hands. Common markings include demarcation lines, plus signs or similar marks, and small hands with pointing fingers. More complex markings are rare. Paris 6225 contains several unusual examples

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begins with a work that the archivist has attributed to Riccoldo, but which does not match any of his known works. It is possible that the archivist made this mistake due to the presence of *Contra legem* in the same manuscript.

such as a profile and a sword. Written notes also vary greatly: a few copies only have a single

marginal note; many copies average about one note per chapter; still others contain somewhere

between fifty and eighty total notes, or approximately three to four notes per chapter. Bergamo

172 and Munich 449 stand out with 249 and 266 total notes respectively. These notes are often

glosses of the text, in varying lengths, to guide the reader or act as an index. Copyist notes are

usually corrections to the text. Finally, other notes highlight the text for readers, such as

"observe" or "good argument." The presence of marginalia is a strong indication of readers' use

of the text and which sections they found most useful.

Finally, odd features in this corpus can also hint at how *Contra legem* traveled. For

instance, one codex has much earlier parchment folios appended on either side of the manuscript,

while another contains a few pages of printed text on either side. Some of the texts in these

manuscripts are in vernacular languages, such as Italian, French, English, and Spanish. As

vessels for transmitting *Contra legem*, these manuscripts provide a wealth of potential hints as to

when, where, and why Europeans read and used Riccoldo's work.

Complete copies and abridgments

Riccoldo's original copy includes a preface, a table of contents, and seventeen chapters of

varying lengths, taking up 33.5 folios. Seventeen of the thirty copies transmit this entire text.

Three of these – Avignon 58, Salamanca, and London 13 E IX – have folios or text that are out

of order, yet still present. The remaining thirteen, however, offer incomplete versions. None of

these copies is missing the exact same portion. Pistoia A.1, Vienna 3320, and Pesaro 1381 are

abridged. They technically contain all eighteen chapters but not in their entirety. Each of these

three copies abridges the text in different places. Occasionally, in each, the text matches the

original very closely, so that little change is noticeable. More often, the text is abbreviated, with

sentences and even paragraphs missing, but the original text remains intact where it was present. In some places, however, the text is paraphrased rather than cut. The meaning remains similar, but the wording is very different. These copies of *Contra legem* transmit many of Riccoldo's original ideas and arguments without preserving their original form.

Of the remaining ten copies, three are both abridged and missing text entirely, and seven are unabridged but missing a portion. The missing sections vary widely. Krakow 1401, which is partially abridged, is only missing the preface, while Basel A.X.41 only contains the preface. Paris 3655 and Vienna 3141, which are also abridged, omit chapters eleven and fifteen respectively. Paris 6225 is the only copy that is missing text from multiple places: the preface through the middle of chapter one is not included, nor is a brief section from the middle of chapter thirteen partway through chapter fourteen. More often, the text ends somewhere in the last few chapters. Turin H.II.33 stops in chapter thirteen, Göttingen 262 and Seville 56-2-14 end in chapter fourteen, and Dresden A.120.B and Avignon 58 terminate in chapter fifteen. The copyists of these latter works do not appear to have made a purposeful choice to omit specific material. In almost every case, the text stops at the end of a verso folio, often mid-sentence, as though the copyist had plans to continue. In the cases of Seville 56-2-14 and Avignon 58, moreover, the copyists included a note in the bottom margin with the next word that would come on the following folio. This was a common practice among scribes to keep their place when they took breaks from copying. Thus, many of the incomplete copies likely were not conscious choices to leave out certain material.

Transmitted features of the original

In some of the copies, a number of features of Riccoldo's original can be identified, indicating a close relationship to this manuscript. The first feature, which Mérigoux discussed, is

the addition of several lengthy marginal notes in chapter eight. Riccoldo made three additions to the chapter in red ink in the margins of the text. Eight copies preserve at least one of these additions, usually inserted into the text in the places where Riccoldo had indicated in his notes.[14] Pesaro 1381, which contains the second of Riccoldo's additions in a paraphrased form, is the only abridged copy to contain any form of these additions. Florence 431 contains all three; however, they were appended to the copy after its composition. The copyist or binder added three small scraps of paper, attached in the center at the binding, among the folios of chapter eight. Their correct positioning in the text is marked by asterisks. These addenda, along with many corrections to the text, suggest that the copyist later had access to a more faithful copy of the original or else the original itself. Four copies – Oviedo 24, Munich 449, Paris 6225, and Toledo 5-35 – contain the first two additions but do not include the third. This pattern suggests both a close relationship to the original manuscript and amongst each of these copies. Finally, Kues 107 and Vatican 7317 contain all three additions. The inclusion of Riccoldo's own notes in the main text of these copies demonstrates a direct relationship to the original.

Another marginal note also found inclusion in two manuscript copies. In the first chapter of the original, there is a marginal note in a different hand from either the copyist's or Riccoldo's. The note reads, "Observe that where [the text] below is marked with a red line, it is the text of the Qur'an."[15] Throughout the text, red lines highlight passages that either quote the Qur'an directly or else paraphrase information from it. Two copies, Avignon 58 and Cambridge

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[14] In his descriptions of the manuscripts, Mérigoux cited several manuscripts as having a very close relation to the original copy: Avignon 58, Oviedo 24, Paris 6225, and Florence 431 – this last due to the corrections found therein rather than the text itself.

[15] Nota quod ubi est inferius signatum cum uirgula de rubio est textus Alchorani." Florence, Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173, fol. 186v. In his edition, Mérigoux noted that this note was not in the copyist's hand and also that the underlining did not always correspond to texts of the Qur'an; rather, several passages expressed a "position musulmane" rather than a verse from the Qur'an (Mérigoux, ed. "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur florentin en orientà la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le 'Contra legem Sarracenorum' de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce," 64).

335, have preserved the note as well as much of the same underlining. In Cambridge 335, the copyist included the note within the main text. Yet, unlike the surrounding text, this sentence is written in red ink. The Avignon 58 copyist, meanwhile, included the note in red ink as well, but in the bottom margin of the folio. The even more uncommon inclusion of this reader's note indicates the scribes' direct access to the original text.

The original copy also contains a noticeable break in the text in the middle of chapter seventeen. The chapter begins normally at the bottom of fol. 217r. There is a large initial "A" in red ink, decorated with blue ink, and Riccoldo added a brief header in red ink: "Response of the Saracens as predicted…chapter seventeen."[16] Then, in the middle of fol. 217v, there is a second initial, this one in blue ink with red decorations (the copyist or decorator had alternated the coloring throughout the text). Riccoldo also added a short red header to this section, that reads "the emptying of a position" although without any chapter number[17] For the remainder of the chapter, Riccoldo refutes arguments that he had introduced in the first part of the chapter. Five copies of *Contra legem* maintain this break in the text: Kues 107, Vatican 7317, Oviedo 24, Paris 6225, and Toledo 5-35.[18] It is notable that each of these copies also contains two or three of the additions from chapter eight. Kues 107 and Vatican 7317 also maintain Riccoldo's addition of the header *euacuatio positionis*.

A much less noticeable feature of the original text is found in the preface – and not in most copies. Riccoldo wrote, "And, first, in fact, there madness manifestly occurred through persecutions by the Jews and the tyrannical pagans."[19] Yet, in the copies, this sentence is almost always rendered "…through persecutions by the tyrannical pagans," omitting any mention of the

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[16] Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 217r. "responsio Saracenorum ad predicta…capitulo XVII."
[17] Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 217v. "euacuatio positionis."
[18] As mentioned above, five copies do not contain chapter 17 at all.
[19] *Contra legem*, 60. "Primo namque passa est rabiem manifeste persecutionis a Iudeis et tyrannis paganis."

Jews.[20] Only three copies maintain "iudeis et" in the sentence: Oviedo 24, Toledo 5-35, and Basel A.X.41. Oviedo 24 and Toledo 5-35 demonstrated their close relationship to the original text in the preceding comparisons. Yet Basel A.X.41 has not had another opportunity to do so, because this copy only contains the preface, while the features mentioned arise in chapters 8, 1, and 17.

A final important feature of the original copy emerges from comparison with many of the same copies. In Florence C.8.1173, *Contra legem* is immediately followed by Riccoldo's *Ad nationes orientales*. This treatise was a guidebook for Dominican missionaries going to the Near East. Riccoldo described the various peoples found there, sorted according to the ease with which they might be converted. In *Ad nationes*, Riccoldo referenced *Contra legem*, noting that he would not describe Muslims because he had already discussed them at length. The two works, copied together, can arguably be considered a pair.[21] Yet *Ad nationes* was much less popular than *Contra legem* in later centuries. The full text is only extant in three known manuscripts, one of which is Oviedo 24. The Oviedo copyist made an editorial change. *Contra legem* is inserted into *Ad nationes*, essentially replacing the "missing" Muslim section. Only the final chapter on *regulae* (rules) for missionaries follows *Contra legem* in this manuscript. Four other manuscripts, Toledo 5-35, Paris 6225, Munich 449, and Basel A.X.41, contain copies of the *regulae* without the rest of *Ad nationes*, suggesting that copyists saw this section as a part of *Contra legem*.

It is worth briefly mentioning several features of these copies by which they differ from the original. In the original text, Riccoldo quoted Psalms 118:84–86. The end of this quote reads "iniqui persecuti sunt me, adiuua me." Yet, Riccoldo ended the quotation at "sunt me" and

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[20] "Primo namque passa est rabiem manifeste persecutionis a tyrannis paganis."
[21] See Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 12–13.

omitted "adiuua me."[22] While many of the manuscripts copied this quotation as Riccoldo had,

eleven of the copies added the "adiuua me" to the end of the quotation. Even copies that have

remarkable similarities to the original text, including Kues 107, Vatican 7317, Munich 449, and

Basel A.X.41, made this change, presumably a scribal filling-in, based on long monastic

familiarity.

Another common change occurred at the beginning of chapter one. In the original text,

Riccoldo discussed Muhammad's repetition of "all of the ancient heresies." Yet nine of the thirty

extant copies made a small change in this sentence, from *all* (omnium) to *many* (multorum) of

the heresies. Finally, as Mérigoux has discussed, Riccoldo discussed the caliph of Baghdad in

chapter thirteen. He gave the word *nomine* and left a blank space to be filled with the name. Only

seven copies maintained this blank space, including Oviedo 24 and Avignon 58; eleven copies

removed the blank space, including Toledo 5-35, Cambridge 335, and Munich 449; six omitted

both the space and the word *nomine*, including Kues 107 and Vatican 7317; and two copies filled

in a name.[23] None of the thirty copies is a perfect replication of the original text; yet, changes to

the text vary greatly. Differences such as these, which affect many copies, may provide a better

window into the relationships between the original and these copies as well as among the copies.

Family trees

As suggested in the diagram above, comparison of the manuscript corpus reveals several

close relationships. The most direct relationships can be linked to Oviedo 24. Oviedo 24, as

indicated above, was likely a direct "descendent" or witness of the original. The text retains

many of the original features, including the entire text of *Ad nationes*. In turn, Toledo 5-35

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[22] Psalms 118:84–86. Florence, MS C.8.1173, fol. 186v.
[23] A few manuscripts are not included in this tally because they are abbreviated copies or copies that ended before the end of chapter 13.

appears to have been copied directly from Oviedo 24. The textual similarities in these two copies

suggests an immediate relationship. Moreover, because Toledo 5-35 contains only the last

chapter of *Ad nationes*, among other reasons, it must have been copied from Oviedo 24 rather

than the other way around. These manuscripts originated at the same ecumenical council of

Basel. Although Basel A.X. 41 only contains the preface of *Contra legem*, there is sufficient

evidence to suggest that this version was also copied at Basel from either Oviedo 24 or Toledo 5-

35. Paris 6225 was copied directly from Toledo 5-35 as well. Finally, Munich 449 has critical

similarities to this manuscript family, although the exact *stemma* is less clear due to changes in

the text.

A second relationship is manifest between Kues 107 and Vatican 7317. These two share

the same specific similarities with the original manuscript that many other copies lack, including

the break in chapter seventeen and all three additions from chapter eight. The two copies do have

some textual changes from the original, as noted by Mérigoux. Because the same changes exist

in both copies, it is evident that one was made from the original and the other copied from the

first, rather than both from the original. It is unclear, however, which copy was made from the

other and which copy is a direct descendant of the original manuscript. Both manuscripts were

copied at Rome in the same decade, and the owners of these two manuscripts knew one another.

Two other close relationships are detectable among the corpus. The copyists of Bologna

2655 and Göttingen 262 both attribute *Contra legem* to an unknown Dominican named Matthew

de Remago, rather than Riccoldo. They use almost identical descriptions to introduce the text.

Many other similarities within the text further suggest a close connection. Both copies originated

in the second half of the fifteenth century: Bologna 2655 in 1463 and Göttingen 262 in 1486.

However, there is evidence that Göttingen 262 was not copied directly from Bologna. For

instance, Göttingen 262 contains a phrase from the original copy that Bologna 2655 had omitted, likely a copyist oversight. Possibly the two copies shared an unknown or non-extant parent copy and can thus be considered siblings. A direct relationship is also discernable in Turin H.II.33 and Dresden A.120.B. The former was copied directly from the latter in the early sixteenth century. Not only are the two texts nearly identical, but the remaining contents of each manuscript also match. While both copies are incomplete, Turin H.II.33 ends slightly earlier than Dresden A.120.B, so that it must have been copied from Dresden A.120.B rather than the reverse.

Finally, several other relationships are also detectable although less well defined. Six manuscripts have similar endings, an added line that does not have any origin in the original text. Toledo 21-10, Bergamo 172, Florence 3026, and Salamanca all have a very similar version of this sentence. Vienna 3320 and Krakow 1401 contain a variant, which is longer but has similarities to the first. Vienna 3320 and Krakow 1401 also have other small similarities to one another. Toledo 21-10 contains resemblances to Seville 56-2-14 that suggest an indirect relationship. Cambridge 335 and Avignon 58 both contain the marginal notation from chapter one in the original text, as well as several other features that suggest a relationship, although many differences are also observable. All of these relationships deserve further study.

Early modern translations and printed editions

While this dissertation focuses primarily on the Latin manuscript corpus, readers also transmitted the text through translations and print editions that I occasionally address. These versions also have a *stemma*. The Greek scholar Demetrius Cydones made the first translation of *Contra legem* from Latin into Greek in the 1360s, although it is uncertain what copy of the text he used and whether it survives. Fourteen copies of his translation survive in manuscripts. Then, in 1506, Bartholomy Picenus, admiring Cydones's translation, translated it back into Latin, and

this version was reprinted several times. This Latin translation also became the basis for a later edition of the Greek and Latin texts, printed side-by-side in 1543, as well as for Martin Luther's translation of the text into German in 1542. There are, additionally, several known copies of the text in an Old Russian translation. It is unclear whether this translation originated from the Greek or Latin version. An edition of the original Latin and a Spanish translation were published at the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is unclear whether the Spanish translation was made from this former edition or from a manuscript copy, possibly Seville 56-2-14.[24] Additionally, in 1523, Paolo Angelo translated the text into Italian from his manuscript copy of the text (F2). Although some of these translations and editions have received scholarly study in other places, there is no published list that currently contains all known versions of the text.[25]

Greek manuscripts:

Athens, Historikon Mouseion tou Neou Hellenismou, Kodikes tes Historikes kai Ethnologikes Hetaireias, MS 37, ff. 1r–70r.
Athens, Metochoin tou Panagiou Taphou, MS 616, ff. 1r–43v.
Athos, Karakallou, MS 60.
Athos, Laura, MS 1854, ff. 49r–108v.
Athos, Vatopediou, MS 658, ff. 1r–71v.
Edirne, MS 1097 (9, 2).
Madrid, El Escorial, MS 553 = Ω IV.1, ff. 1r–65v.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS grec 1191, ff. 89–116.
Patmos, Mone tou Hagiou Ioannou tou Theologou, MS 418.
Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat, Gr. 433, ff. 180–243v.
Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Gr. 706, ff. 79r–135v.
Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat, Gr. 1570, ff. 2r–170v.
Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat, Gr. 1748, ff. 57r–120v.
Vienna, Österreiche Nationalbibliothek, MS theol. Gr. 261, ff. 119r–260r.

Russian manuscripts:

Moscow, Russkaia Gosudarstvennaia Bibilioteka, Muzeinoe sobranie, f.178, MS 204.
Moscow, Russkaia Gosudarstvennaia Bibilioteka, f.304, MS 730, II.363–394v.
Velikie Chet'I Minei (Uspenskii sbornik XII–XIII v.v., ed. S.I. Kotkov, 1971).

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[24] Mérigoux, "L'ouvrage d'un frère Prêcheur," 46.
[25] For a list of these studies, as well as a list of modern publications and translations of *Contra legem*, see Bibliography.

Printed editions and translations:

Anonymous. *Reprobacion del Alcoran*. Seville: Peter Hagenbach, 1502.

Antonio de la Peña. *Improbatio alcorani*. Seville: Stanislas Polonus, 1500.

Barthelemy Picenus de Montearduo. *Richardi ex ordine fratrum, qui apud Latinos praedicatores appellantur, Confutatio legis late Sarrhacenis a maledicto Mahometo*. Rome: Ioannes Besicken Alemanus, 1506 (repr. Paris, 1509, 1511, 1514; Venice, 1607).

Martin Luther. *Verlegung des Alcoran Bruder Richardi Prediger Ordens, anno 1300, Verdeudscht durcht D. Mar. Lu.* Wittenberg: gedruckt durch Hans Lufft, 1542.

Paolo Angelo. *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad Saracenos cum libello contra Alcoranum*. Venice: Alessandro Bindoni, c.1520

Theodore Bibliander. *Confutatio alcorani,* in *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina ac ipse Alcoran…*, 3 vols, Basel, 1543. II, pp. 82–165.

Appendix B: Contents of Manuscripts containing *Contra legem Sarracenorum*

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Sopp. C.8.1173
- ff. 1r–2v: De Veronica et nece Pylati. Cum autem Pylatus dominum crucifigendum.
- Ff. 2v–24v: Liber venerabilis Hugues de sancto Victorie, de institutione noviter.
- ff. 25r–29r: Abgarus rex ciuitatis Edesse
- ff. 29r–32v: Epistola sancti Dyonisii ad Thimotheum de felici martyrio apostolorum Petri et Pauli.
- ff. 32v–33v: Vita de mores gentis Bragmanorum
- ff. 33v–35r: Responsa facta non verbo sed tamen scripto Adriano imperatori a secondo phylosopho pittagoream taciturnitatem
- ff. 35r–42v: Exempla quedam de natura camelorum
- ff. 42v–56r: Vita et obitus sancti Albani regis Ungarie; De iudeorum expugnatione facta per Vespasianum
- ff. 56r–119r: De miraculis beatae Virginis
- ff. 121r–183r: Humbert of Romans, Tractatus de dono timoris
- ***ff. 185r–218r: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Contra legem Sarracenorum***
- ff. 219r–244r: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Ad nationes orientales

Avignon, Musée Calvet, MS 58
- ff. 1r–44v: Thomas Aquinas writings on Ecclesiastes
- ff. 45r–201r: Porcheto de Salvaignis, Victoria adversus impios Hebraeos
- ff. 201r– 204r: unattributed text – related to alphabet
- f.204v: blank
- ***ff. 205r–220v: Contra legem Sarracenorum***

Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, MS A X 41
- f. 1r: Excerpta ex patribus, Augustinius
- f. 1v: blank
- ff.2r–74r: Stimulus amoris: "Ista oracio siue prologus pertinet ad librum sequentem scilicet ad stimulum amoris boneuenture"
- ff. 74v–75v: Iubilus de nominee Iesu: "Incipit Iubilus beati Bernardi abbatis deuotissimus (Ihesu dulcis memoria Dans vera cordis gaudia / … – … Vt nos donet celestibus. Cum ipso frui sedibus Amen"
- ff. 75v–82r: Ps. Augustinus (Iohannes Fiscamnensis?), meditations cum additionibus
- ff. 82r–89v: Ps. Augustinus (Baldricus abbas Burguliensis), de visitation infirmorum
- ff. 89v–97r: Ps. Augustinus (Pelagius), De vita christiana
- ff. 97v–99v: Ps. Vincentius Ferrer, tractatus consolatoris in tentationibus circa fidem
- ff. 100r–106v: Eadmerus Cantuariensis, de beatitudine caelestis patriate
- ff. 106v–107v: Consideranda in horis canonicis de passione domini

- ff. 108r–111v: Testamentum Anselmi (admonitions morienti faciendae)
- ff. 112r–121r: original entry: Dominicus Capranica? Tractatus de arte moriendi
- ff. 121v–126v: Bonaventura, de praeparatione ad missam
- ff. 127r–157r: Ps. Albertus magnus, tractatus de veris virtutibus sive Paradisus animae
- ff. 157v–184v: Tractatus de decem praeceptus
- ***ff. 184v–185r: Ricoldus de Monte crucis, confutatio Alcorani***
- ff.196v–197v: Ricoldus de Monte crucis, regulae generales pro fratribus qui mittuntur ad exteras nationes
- f. 198r: blank
- f. 198v: "In hoc libro agitur de magnitudine dignitatis sacerdocii… – …magnitudinem officii et oneris sacerdotalis accurate describit."
- ff. 199r–243r: Iohannes Chrysostomus, de sacerdotio libri VI latine
- ff. 243v–267r: Ambrosius, de Cain et Abel libri II
- ff. 267v–268r: corrected: Articuli de auctoritate conciliorum et fide catholica conclusi 1439 Apr. 24, cum augment
- f. 268v: Oratio ad Tyrum quondam laurea coronandum
- ff. 269r–280: Humbertus de Romanis, abundantia exemplorum seu De dono timoris (fragment)
- ff. 281r–v.: blank

Belluno, Biblioteca Lolliana, MS 30
- Epigram for Pandolfo Collenuccio
- ***Ricoldi de Florentia, Contra legem Saracenorum***

Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Locatelli, MA 172
- ***ff. 1r–27r: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Contra legem Saracenorum***
- ff. 27v–29v: unattributed text with drawing
- ff. 30r–v: blank folio
- f. 31r: Sententia Pilate

Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 2655
- ff. 1r–93v: Speculum ammonitionis anirnae ad corpus
- f.94r: blank
- f.94v: unattributed paragraph written in Italian
- ff. 95r–103r: Incipit epistola translata ex arabico in latinum per fratrem Alfonsum boni hominis hyspanum ordinis, que est Epistola quam scripsit Magister Samuel Israelita
- ***ff. 103r–116v: Matthaei de Rotomago Libellus contra Alcoranum***

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library, MS 335
- ff. 1r–9v: Sarracenus (pseudo-al-Kindi), Epistola ad Christianum
- ff. 9v–44r: Response of a Christian to the letters of the Saracen
- ff. 44r–45r: Peter the Venerable OSB, Epistola ad Bernardum Claravallensem de impia secta Muhamet
- ff. 45r–48v: Peter the Venerable OSB, Summa totius haeresis Sarracenorum
- ff. 48v–49r: Cronica mendosa et ridiculosa sarracenorum

- ff.49v–56v: Robert of Ketton, Prologus Roberti translatoris uiri eruditi et scolastici ad dominum Petrum abbatem
- ff. 57r–65r: Hermann of Carinthia (attrib.), De generatione Mahumet et nutritura eius
- ff. 65r–73r: Hermann of Carinthia (attrib.), De doctrina Mahumet
- ff. 73r–74r: Robert of Ketton, Preface to the Liber legis Saracenorum quem Alchoran uocant
- ***ff. 74r–101r: Riccoldus de Monte Crucis OP, Libellus contra legem Sarracenorum***
- ff. 101r–118v: Vincent of Beauvais OP, Speculum historiale (extract from book 25, 118–45)
- ff. 119r–121v: Tractatus de dungionibus diaboli
- ff. 121v–122v: pseudo–Bonaventure OFM, Sermo de modo uiuendi
- ff. 123r–127v: Sermons
- f.128r–v = blank folio
- ff. 129r–131v: Treatise on birds, fish, marvels and animals
- ff. 132r–132v: Orthographia gallica – On French pronunciation
- ff. 132v–133v: De septem signis in Christi natiutate
- ff. 133v–135v: De duodecim lapidibus civitatis Dei
- ff. 136r–137v: Regula fratrum minorum (extract)
- ff. 138r–142v: Tracts on diet in French and Latin (Prognostications) – On diet, regimen, and weather during the twelve months, in French
- ff. 143r–153v: Documents relating to Roger Raude of Kenynghale and Robert Longham – Copies of documents
- f. 152v: blank except a note at the bottom of the folio that says "iste liber pertinent ecclesie"

Dresden, Sachsische Landesbibliothek, MS A.120.B
- ff. 1r–3r: "Quedam sumula breuis contra hereses et sectam diabolice fraudis saracenorum siue ismaeilitar"
- ff. 3r–13v: Cronica Saracenorum
- ff. 13v–24r: "De generatione Maumetis et nutritura eius quod transtulit hermannus clauus apud legionensem hispanie civitatem…"
- ff. 24v–35r: "Doctrina Maumetis ab eodem Hermanno translate incipit foeliciter…"
- ff. 35v–36v: "Prefatio Roberti translatioris ad dominum Petrum abbatem cluniacen…in libro legis saracenorum, quem Alchoran uocant…"
- ff. 37r–73r: Tabula capitolorum
- ff. 73v–205v: "Incipit Lex Saracenorum quam Alchoran uocant…"
- ***ff. 206r–234v: "Riccoldus contra legem Saracenorum: qui ante…"***

Florence, Biblioteca Medici Laurenziana, MS Acquisti e Doni 431
- ***ff. 1r–22v: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Contra legem Sarracenorum***
- ff. 22v–23v: Secta turcea siue saracenica
- ff. 24r–27v: De erroribus maumethus
- ff. 28r–79v: Epistola ad Mahumetum Turcorum principum, Pius II papa
- ff. 80r–81r: Epistola Morbisani ad Pium papam II

- f. 81v: blank
- ff. 82r–124r: Liber Gerhardi contra Iudeos
- ff. 125r–180r: Tractatus de corpore Christi, Albertinus Mantuanus
- ff. 180v–181r: unattributed texts

Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 3026
- ff. 1r–4v: Paolo Angelo, Preface
- *ff. 5r–36v: Contra legem Sarracenorum*

Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Theology 262
- ff. 1r–24v: Epistola translate de arabico in latium per fratrem Alfonsum Boni Hominis Hispanum que est epistola quam scripsit Magister Samuel Israelita ad Rabi Ysac
- *ff. 25r–49v: Contra legem Saracenorum*

Krakow, National Museum of Krakow, MS MNK-Rkps-1401
- ff.1r–119v: Liber de redemption de cautione terrae sanctae [attributed to "Ricoldi de Florentia"]
- *ff. 120r–167r: Incipit libellus fratris Ricoldi de Florentia ordinis predicatorum contra legem Sarracenorum et dividitur in 17 capitula*
- ff. 167r–168v: De Machometo extracta de legenda aurea
- ff. 168v–186r: Extracta de Micholao de Lira super Appochalipsi de Machometo et eius lege

Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, MS 107
- ff. 1r–193v: Dionysius the Carthusian, *Contra Perfidiam Mahumeti*
- *ff. 194r–232r: Riccoldo of Montecroce, Contra Legem Sarracenorum*

London, British Library, MS Royal 13 E IX
- ff.1r–v: content lists
- f. 2r: "nomina Romanorum pontificum" from St. Peter to Urban VI
- f 2v: "nomina Imperatorum" from Octouianus to Lodowicus dux Bauarie
- f.3r: Thirty-four irregular French verses on the early inhabitants of Britain from Albina to Brutus Greenshield; followed by a list in Latin of early British kings
- f. 3v: List of the kings of England in Latin and French
- ff. 4r–v: French verse on the Battle of Abbey roll found in Brompton's chronicle, with variations
- ff. 5r–22r: "Desitu mundi et eius mirabilibus" - excerpts from the Otia Imperialia of Gervase of Tilbury – the geographical section
- ff. 22v–25v: excerpt of the Imago Mundi attributed to Honorius of Autun and others
- ff. 25v–27r: more excerpts from Gervase of Tilbury, book III relating to the miraculous images of the Lord
- ff. 27r–v: prophecies of Merlin Sylvester and others
- f. 27v: vision purported to have been seen by Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury at Sens; also printed by Migne
- ff. 28r–39v: "De situ et mirabilibus mundi" – extracts from Gervase of Tilbury, book III, miraculous tales
- ff. 40r–71v: a Latin version of the Travels of Sir John Mandeville

- ff. 72r–77r: "De spiritu Willelmi" – Gervase of Tilbury, book III, a story of a demonological experience that happened to an Englishman while in France
- f. 77v: blank
- **ff. 78r–92v: "Anti alcoran Machometi" by Ricoldus de Montecrucis**
- ff. 93r–94r: Life of Mahomet
- ff. 94r–v: Thomas Becket's vision at Sens
- ff. 94v–95r: Prophecy of a friar to Pope Innocent VI occurring in 1356
- ff. 95r–101r: "Libellus de emendacione vite Ricardi heremite", sc. Richard Rolle of Hampole
- f.101v: blank
- ff. 102r–137v: "De gestis imperatorum et pontificum Romano. Rum" the Chronicles of Martinus Polonus
- f. 116r: fragment of an inventory of relics at St. Albans Abbey – inserted into former text
- ff.138r–v: blank
- ff. 139r–145v: "Excerpciones Iohannis de sua historia aurea" an Abridgment of the Historia Aurea of John of Tinmouth
- ff. 145v–160r: an abridgement of an English history chronicle, which takes up in 1347, where John of Tinmouth, the previous text, left off
- f.160v: blank
- ff. 161r–171v: Extracts from Higden's Polychronicon, book I, – "Descriptio regni Anglie sub compendio compilata"
- ff. 171v–177v: "Gesta regum Anglie compendiose compilate." A chronicle of the kings of England from Brutus to Edward III
- ff.178r–v: blank
- f. 179r–331v: Chronicle of English history from 1272 to 1392; compiled by the historiographers of St. Albans Abbey

Munich, Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, MS Clm. 449
- ff. 1r–119r: Alberti M. (alias Guilelmi Parisiensis), tractatus de fide et legibus
- **ff. 120r–147r: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Contra legem Sarracenorum**
- ff. 149r–186v: Humbert of Romans, Sermones de crucis contra Saracenos

Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS VII C 20
- ff. 1r–59v: De eruditione principum, fr. Guillelmi Peraldi
- ff. 62r–93v. De erroribus Grecorum
- **ff. 94r–106v. De Sarracenis. Opus fr. Ricoldi de Montecruce ord. Praed.**
- ff. 106.v–114r: Tractatum istum divido 3rd, in quo agitur de futuro tempore antichristi et fine mundi siue assertione (in 10 chapters)
- ff. 115r–125v: Incipit liber contra errores Grecorum, editus a fr. Thoma de Aquino ord. Pred. ad preces Urbani (IV) pape
- ff. 125v–126v: Unitas est qua unaqueque res est una siue enim lit. Dominici Gundisalvi

Oviedo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS 24
- ff. 1r–12r: De matrimonio clericorum concubinariorum
- ff. 13r–52e: Tractatus de potestate pape et concilii generalis (en tres tratados)

- ff. 52v–56v – blank folios
- ff. 57r–66v: Tratado de Santo Tomás de Aquino: Contra Sarracenos
- ff. 69r–85r: De gentibus Orientis
- ff. 85v–90v: Blank folios
- ***ff. 91r–113v: Tractatus contra Sarracenos***
- ff. 113v–114v: Regulae
- ff. 114v–124v: Tratado de retórica

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 3655
- ff.1r–35r: Alanus de Insulis, De fide catholica contra haereticos
- ff. 36r–39v: blank folios
- ff. 40r–45v: Franciscus de Mayronis, Tractatus de principatu temporali
- ff. 45v–47v: Franciscus de Mayronis, Quaestiode haereticis
- ff. 48r–63v: De conceptione Virginis Mariae
- ff. 64r–73v = blank folios
- ff. 74r–89v: Quaestio de papae authoritate
- ff. 90r–112v = blank folios
- ff. 113r–v: Table - de fide Catholica, Alan de Lille
- ***ff. 114r–119r: Contra Machometum (Confutatio Alcorani) by Ricoldo de Monte Crucis***
- ff. 119r–120r: Jacobus de Voragine, Legenda aurea
- ff. 120r–135v: Nicolas de Lyra, Probatio adventus Christi, redactio II
- ff. 135v–151v: Responsio ad quemdam Judaeum
- ff. 151v–161r: Contra errores Graecorum
- ff. 161r–163r: "Incipit aliqua notabilia contra prefatos errores Grecorum…"
- ff. 161v–172v: blank pages
- ff. 173r–179r: Petrus Iohannus Olivi; "Incipit tractatus de verditionibus…"
- ff. 180r–195v = blank

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 4230
- ff. 1r–37r: Alexandri de Saucto Elpidio, ordinis Eremitarum sancti Augustini, tractatus de ecclesiastica potestate: inserta est donation Constantini Magni facta Ecclesiae Romanae
- ff. 37v–53r: Eiusdem expositio in principium evangelii secundum Joannem
- ff. 53v–54v: blank folios
- ff. 55r–101v: Eiusdem epitome librorum sancti Augustini de civitate Dei
- ff. 102r–v: blank folios
- ff. 103r–121v: Sancti Isidori, synonymorum, sive soliloquiorum liber
- ff.122r–v: blank folios
- ff. 123r–130v: Fratris Dionysii de Cole, ordinis Eremitarum sancti Augustini, tractatus de fato et praescientia divina
- ff. 131r–132v: Testimonia duodecim Patriarcharum de Christo
- ff. 132v–134v: Tractatus de Anti Christo
- ff. 135r–138r: Excerptum ex tractatu Origenis de novem festivitatibus in Veteri Testamento
- f. 138v: blank folio

- ff. 139r–151v: Bernardi Oliverii, ordinis Eremitarum sancti Augustini, tractatus contra Judaeos
- *ff. 151v–183v: Fratris Ricoldi, Florentini, ordinis Praedicatorum disputatio contra Saracenos et Alcoranum*
- ff.151v–159r: Peregrinationis
- ff. 159v–183v: Contra legem
- ff. 184r–v: blank folios
- ff. 185r–194v: Tractatus qui mensa pauperum inscribitur: authore A. ordinis Eremitarum sancti Augustini

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 6225
- ff.1r–1v: List of leaders at Ratispon
- ff.2r–6r: Oration at the diet of Ratispon
- ff.6v–13r: Exhortation against the Turks
- ff.14r–30v: Anonymiliber de secretis sacrae Scripturae
- ff.34r–150r: De secretus sacre scripturae liber
- ff.154r–161v: Peregrinationis
- *ff.164r–175r: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Contra legem Sarracenorum and Ad nationes orientales (excerpt)*
- f.175v: unattributed text
- ff.179r–181v: Letters from the Kings of France and England to the Council of Basel and response.
- ff. 182r–235v: Letter from Peter the Venerable to Bernard of Clairvaux
- ff.236r–244v: Doctrina Mahumeti
- ff.244v–248r: Letter from Prester John to the Pope
- ff.248v–266r: Chronica mendosa et ridicula Sarracenorum

Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, MS 1381
- ff. 1r–6v: De Constantinopolis expugnatione
- ff. 7r–8r: Serventese, in tetrastici incatenati [Italian]
- ff. 8v–10r: Serventese, in tetrastici incatenati, intitolato: "Lamento de Laxaro Imperadore" [Italian]
- f. 10v: blank folio
- *ff. 11r–24r: Contra legem Sarracenorum*
- f.24v: Notizia brevissima sopra un'apparizione diabolica al tempo degli Imperatori Teodosio e Valentiniano (anno 425)
- ff. 25r–27v: Ex erroribus Christianorum qui in scisma et heresia ceciderunt aliqua infernis describentur breviter
- f.28r: Notizie di alter eresie (anno 175)
- ff. 28v–29v: Errores Johannis Hus qui fuit dampnatus in concilio Constantiensi et exinde cremates
- f. 30r: Notizia di alcun: luoghi santi
- f.30v: blank
- ff. 31r–87v: Fiore d'Italia

- f. 88r: Sonetto
- ff. 88r–88v: Ballata
- ff. 88v: Sentenze e proposizioni latine
- ff. 89r–97v: Festa nobilia per totum annum 1539
- ff. 98r–98v: blank folios
- ff. 99r–105r: Figurazioni e tavole astrologiche e rosa dei venti
- f. 105v: blank folio
- f. 106r: Terzine
- f. 106v: blank folio
- ff. 107r–111r: Instructio in confessione facienda
- f. 111v: blank folio
- ff. 112r–128v: Ea epistolis Marci Tulii Ciceronis aliquae commendatitiae

Pistoia, Biblioteca Forteguerriana, MS A.1
- ff. 1r–45r: Pope Pius II, Epistula ad Mahumetum
- ff. 45v–48r: Trattato sull'arte della flebotomia
- ff. 48v–52r: Antonio da Massa Marittima, Regola e vita degli amatori di Gesu
- ***ff. 55r–83v: Riccoldo da Montecroce, OP, Contra legem Sarracenorum***
- ff. 85r–87v: Buonaccorso da Montemagno (ca. 1391–1429), De nobilitate disputatio; begins: infra consulatum militaris gloria cuiquam."
- ff. 87v–88v: Guarino Veronese (1374–1460), Ephitalamium in Karolum Gonzagam et Luciam Estensem
- ff. 88v–90v: Lucianus (120–ca.180); translated by Giovanni Aurispa (1376–1459), Epistula et dialogus, Charon sive contemplantes
- ff. 91r–93v: cardinal Ammannati Piccolomini (1422–1479), Oratio in morte cardinalis Theanensis
- ff. 93v–94r: Claudius Claudianus (ca. 370), Versus, Carmina minora, versus de vita rustica et urbana
- ff. 94r–96r: Versi, frammenti e lettere (verses, fragments, and letters)
- f.97r: Domenico Amati (15th c.), Versi
- f.97v: Pietro Tartaglia (15th c.), Versi
- ff.105r–123v: Tabula in utroque iure per alphabetum
- ff. 124r–134r: Aristotle, Tabula in Aristotelem per alphabetum
- ff. 134r–137r: Thomas Aquinas, Tractatus de potentiis animae
- ff. 137r–142v: Cristoforo Landino (1425–1478), Oratio in funere Donati Acciaiuoli
- ff. 143v–144v: Orationes (Oratio ad effugandum demones et malos spiritus)

Rome, Archivum Generale O.P. (Santa Sabina), MS XIV 28 b
- ff. 1r–16r: Iohannes conversus
- ff. 16v–54v: Alphonsus Bonihominis, O.P., Epistola Samuelis
- ff. 54v–96v: Nicolaus de Lira, Quaestio de adventu Christi
- ***ff. 96v–154v: Riccoldus de Monte Crucis, O.P., Contra legem Sarracenorum***
- ff. 155r–200r: Petrus de Pennis, O.P., Contra Alchoranum

- ff. 200v–222r: Contra Mahometum
- ff. 225r–255r: Petrus Alphonsus, Extr. De conversion
- ff. 255v–257r: Anonymous, Errores Grecorum
- ff. 258r–260v: Anonymous, De nationibus
- ff. 260v–262v: Iohannes de Podio, O.P., Contra grecos (excerpt)

Salamanca, Privately-held, MS
- ff. 1r–60v: *Libro de las tres creencias*, attributed to Alfonso de Valladolid (Castilian)
- ff. 60v–108r: *Epistola Rabbi Samuelis*, by Alfonso Buenhombre (Castilian)
- several blank folios
- ***ff.1r–53r: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Contra legem [separate foliation]***

Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina, MA 56-2-14
- ff. 1r–122v: Pugio fidei adversus mauros et iudaeos, Raimundus Martini
- ff. 123r–146r: Quaestiones disputatae contra Iudaeos, Nicolaus de Lyra
- f.146v: blank
- ***ff. 147r–173v: Contra legem Sarracenorum, Ricoldus de Montecrucis***

Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS BCT 21-10
- ff. 1r–21v: Epistola quam scripsit magister Samuel israelita oriundus de ciuiate regis Marrochiam ad Rabi Isaac
- ff. 22r–61v: Sumula beati isidori de testimonio Christi contra hebreos
- ***ff. 62r–96v: Contra legem Saracenorum***
- ff. 97r–119r: Tractatus de purgatorio
- ff. 119r–v: Sonetto [Italian]

Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo, MS BCT 5-35
- ff. 0r–v: early modern contents list
- ff. 1r–56v: Alanus anoige, Epistolae et alia opuscula de calamitatibus Gallie
- ff. 56v–97v: Jean Gerson, Tractatus de ecclesiastica potestate, seu de origine juris et legum, pronunciatus Constantiae tempore generalis concilii
- 98r: blank folio
- 98v–99r: chart
- ff. 99v–100v: unattributed text on church power
- 101r: chart
- ff. 101v–126v: tractatus qui intitulatur de racione et Constantia sumendi corpus xpi editus per venerabilem magistrum nicholaum de cracouia egregium sacre theologie doctorem
- ff. 127r–132r: Oracio facta per Venerabilem dmn nicholaum prepositum cracouiensi Regis polonies in gentili Cogregatione sacri basiliensis concilii in aduentu dmni huchonis secretarii ipsius Regis
- ff.132v–134v: Responsio
- ff.134v–140v: Incipit sermo per morte Regis polonies
- ***ff. 141r–171r: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Ad nationes and Contra legem Sarracenorum***
- ff. 171v–175v: blank folios

- ff. 176r–187r: Epistola Leonardi aretini cancellarii florentinorum directa illustri dne Baptiste de Malatestis super lectione poetarum
- f. 187v: blank folio
- ff.188r–194r: tabula magistri Johannis de dec. liber decretorum
- f. 194v: blank folio
- ff. 195r–197v: Johannis, De spiritu sancto
- ff. 198r–201v: blank
- ff. 202r–211v: Johannis, De mersione Naaman septies in Jordane
- f.112: blank

Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS H.II.33
- ff.1r–1v: Summula brevis contra hereses et setam diabolice fraudis Saracenoruam sive Ismaelitarum
- ff. 2r–3v: Prefatio Roberti translatoris ad dominum Petrum Abbatem cluniacensem in libro legis Saracenorum quem Alchoram uocant in collectionem praeceptorum quam Daumeth per angelum gabrielem qui de coelo sibi missa fecit
- ff.4r–6v: blank
- ff.7r–205v: Lex Saracenorum sive Alchoranus Latine versus a Roberto Retenensi ex iussu Petri Abbatis Cluniacensis
- ff.206r–v: blank
- ff.207r–214v: Cronica Saracenorum
- ff.215r–223v: De generatione Maumethis et nutritura eius ab hermano clauo apud legionensem hispanie ciuitate
- ff.224r–232v: Doctrina Mahumedis ab Hermano translate
- ff.233r–234v – blank folios
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- ff.246r–246v: Epistolae ad ecclesiam triumphantem, Riccoldo da Montecroce
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