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Chapter 19
Christian missions to Muslims

Martha T. Frederiks

I tell them [the Saracens] the prophets,
What they taught us about God
I proclaim them the Holy Christ,
– Perhaps it may be of use? –
The Holy Gospel.
What can you do better?
If somebody taught them,
Maybe they would convert?
Priest Konrad's Song of Roland (c. 1170)[1]

Introduction

Benjamin Kedar opens his book, *Crusade and mission. European approaches toward the Muslims*, with the intriguing observation that Christian missions to Muslims appear to be a relatively recent phenomenon.[2] While the Church of the East through mission and migration established churches as far east as China and Tibet, and while the Byzantine Church sent missionaries to Eastern Europe and the southern borders of the Arabian peninsula, and the Latin Church directed an ever-expanding Christianisation of northern Europe, sources suggest that during the first five centuries of Islam's existence few, if any, systematic missions were conducted to Muslims. Christians responded to the rise of Islam in a variety of ways, such as with apocalyptic, apologetic and polemical works, public debates, internal reforms and military expeditions. But if texts are a window into the reality on the ground, systematic missionary initiatives towards Muslims were first organised only during the early decades of the 13th century, when the Latin Church encountered

[1] B.Z. Kedar, *Crusade and mission. European approaches toward the Muslims*, Oxford, 1984, p. 122. See also M.G. Cammarota, *'Rolandslied'*, in *CMR* 3, 656-64.
[2] Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, pp. 3-9.

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substantial communities of Muslims in the reconquered territories on the Iberian Peninsula and in the Crusader states.[3]

The accuracy of Kedar's observation of mission to Muslims as a relatively late development depends to a large extent on one's definition of mission. Kedar himself regards mission as 'peaceful efforts to cause the infidel to convert'.[4] His description is helpful in that it highlights the aim of mission activities as conversion.[5] However, his stipulation that mission consists solely of peaceful endeavours precludes the possibility of understanding apocalyptic movements such as the martyrs of Córdoba,[6] apologetic works such as the *Disputation* of Patriarch Timothy I,[7] or polemical texts such as *The Apology of al-Kindī*,[8] as part of a larger Christian project in the context of Islam that consisted of efforts to convert Muslims as well as to avert Christian conversion to Islam. Also, works by people such as Peter of Cluny (d. 1156),[9] Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240),[10] and Ramon Llull (d. 1315-16),[11] seem to suggest that irenic and militant methods were not necessarily considered to be mutually exclusive; many deemed enforced conversion, or military intervention to ensure missionary access, acceptable strategies.

This chapter uses the term 'mission' to denote all intentional efforts aimed at conversion, and situates the rise of mission to Muslims as part of a larger project in the context of Islam and part of a larger reform movement that simultaneously promoted the spiritual renewal of Western Europe's Christianity and the evangelisation of non-Christians. I begin by briefly charting how, via apologetics, polemics, debates and martyrologies, the idea of Christian mission towards Muslims gradually

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[3] See e.g. B. Bombi, 'The Fifth Crusade and the conversion of Muslims', in E.J. Mylod et al. (eds), *The Fifth Crusade in context. The crusading movement in the early thirteenth century*, London, 2017, 68-91, p. 68; A. Mallett, *Popular Muslim reactions to the Franks in the Levant, 1079-1291*, Farnham, 2014, pp. 106-20.

[4] Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. xii.

[5] In missiological circles, there is an ongoing debate as to 'what is mission'. For an overview, see for example D. Bosch, *Transforming mission. Paradigm shifts in the theology of mission*, Maryknoll NY, 1991. Considering the period under discussion, a definition of mission in terms of conversion seems appropriate.

[6] J. Tolan, 'Eulogius of Cordova', in *CMR* 1, 679-83.

[7] M. Heimgartner, 'Disputation with the Caliph al-Mahdī', in *CMR* 1, 522-6.

[8] L. Bottini, *'The Apology of al-Kindi'*, in *CMR* 1, 585-94.

[9] D. Iogna-Prat and J. Tolan, 'Peter of Cluny', in *CMR* 3, 604-10. Kedar points out that Peter of Cluny's famous words 'I love you; loving you I write to you, writing to you I invite you to salvation', are spoken by a man who also lauds the Templars for their continuous crusading work; Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, pp. 99-100.

[10] J. Tolan, 'Jacques de Vitry', in *CMR* 4, 295-306.

[11] H. Hames, 'Ramon Llull', in *CMR* 4, 703-17.

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began to emerge. I then explore key movements, figures and texts that played a crucial role in shaping the reflection and implementation of Christian mission to Muslims, highlighting the differences between them in motivation and the diversity in approaches to mission.

Explaining Islam

The oldest Christian sources referencing Islam are texts that comment on the Arab conquests.[12] Archbishop Sophronius of Jerusalem in his Christmas sermon of 634 laments: 'As once that of the Philistines, so now the army of the godless Saracens has captured the divine Bethlehem and bars our passage there, threatening slaughter and destruction if we leave this holy city and dare to approach our beloved and sacred Bethlehem'.[13] It is only in retrospect, after it had become apparent that with the invaders there came a new religious persuasion, later conceptualised as Islam, that these texts gain a significance beyond the merely political.

Many of these early texts make use of apocalyptic imagery, depicting the Arab-Muslim conquest as a time of trial and tribulation.[14] The Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (c. 691), for example, describes the Arab-Muslim invasions as 'a merciless chastisement' and 'a testing furnace', during which

> [m]any, who were sons of the Church will deny the Christians' true faith, the holy cross, and the glorious mysteries. Without compulsion, lashings, or blows, they will deny Christ and make themselves the equivalent of unbelievers. [...] In the end times, men will leave the faith and go after defiled spirits and the teachings of demons. [...] All who are fraudulent and weak in faith will be tested in this chastisement and become known.

The author urges the believers to remain steadfast, for 'God will remain patient while his worshipers are persecuted so that through chastisement the sons might be known'.[15] The Coptic *Apocalypse of Shenute* (c. 695) uses

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12 See for example H. Suermann, *'The Panegyric of the three holy children of Babylon'*, in *CMR* 1, 127-9; H. Teule, *'The Chronicle of Khuzistan'*, in *CMR* 1, 130-2.

13 R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it. A survey and evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian writings on early Islam*, Princeton NJ, 1997, p. 71; D. Sahas, 'Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem', in *CMR* 1, 120-7.

14 Later authors (e.g. Joachim of Fiore) also make use of apocalyptic imagery; see B. McGinn, 'Joachim of Fiore', in *CMR* 4, 83-91.

15 L. Greisiger, '*The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (*Syriac*)', in *CMR* 1, 163-71. Quotations from M.P. Penn, *When Christians first met Muslims. A sourcebook of the earliest Syriac writings on Islam*, Oakland CA, 2015, pp. 116, 120-1.

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even stronger language and seems to suggest that the harassments and confiscation of property under Muslim rule, and subsequent apostasy of Christians, signal the imminent reign of the Antichrist. The opening passage therefore insists: 'Tell your children of them [i.e. the hardships and miseries], and write them for them so that they may all be vigilant and be guided and be on their guard, so that they will not be negligent and surrender their souls to the devil.'[16]

The pastoral concerns that inform these apocalyptic writings are also expressed in other genres. The *Arabic homily of Pseudo-Theophilus of Alexandria* (late 7th or early 8th century) cautions believers against assimilation to Islam, stressing that Muslims, despite their seemingly pious lifestyle of fasting and prayer, will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.[17] Concern for religious accommodation is also the subject of a letter by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Athanasius of Balad (c. 684), which instructs the clergy to ensure that their parishioners refrain from interfaith marriages and ritually slaughtered meat. About a century later, Pope Hadrian (r. 772-95) sent similar directives to his emissary Egila in Spain, instructing him to denounce matrimonial alliances and other forms of socialising with Muslims and Jews in order to avoid 'contamination' by their 'various errors'.[18] Kindred sentiments are expressed in later works, as is evidenced, for example, by the canonical collections of the Coptic Metropolitan Michael of Damietta and the Dominican canon law expert Raymond of Penyafort (1175-1275).[19]

Texts such as these seem to suggest that, during the first centuries of Islam, church leaders living under Muslim rule understood their first and foremost 'mission' as being to ensure the preservation of the Christian community. Rather than seeking Muslim conversion to Christianity, their prime concern was the flagging allegiance of the faithful. Social pressure, intermarriage, cultural assimilation, harassment and even financial incentives, all strained Christian allegiance, resulting in

[16] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 279; J. van Lent, *'The Apocalypse of Shenute'*, in *CMR* 1, 182-5.

[17] J. van Lent, *'The Arabic homily of Pseudo-Theophilus of Alexandria'*, in *CMR* 1, 256-60.

[18] H. Teule, 'Athanasius of Balad', in *CMR* 1, 157-9; C. Aillet, 'Pope Hadrian's epistles to bishop Egila', in *CMR* 1, 338-42. Raymond of Penyafort in his *Summa de casibus poenitentiae* makes mention of Christians under Muslim rule who venerate Muḥammad as a messenger and saint; see Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 103.

[19] M.N. Swanson, 'Michael of Damietta', in *CMR* 4, 109-14; J. Tolan, 'Raymond of Penyafort', in *CMR* 4, 252-8.

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large-scale conversion to Islam.[20] By framing Muslim political rule in apocalyptic and eschatological terms, they attempted to dissuade religious accommodation and avert Christian conversion to Islam. The rise of Christian apologetic works can also be understood as part of this quest for self-preservation. Though seemingly addressed to Muslims, these apologetic texts were primarily written for Christian audiences. They served as manuals on how to respond to Muslim queries of the Christian faith and may also have had an educational function; examples of such texts included *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid* (mid-8th century), *The dialogue between a Saracen and a Christian* (second half of the 8th century), the *Disputation* (c. 782) of Patriarch Timothy I with the Caliph al-Mahdī and the vast corpus of Theodore Abū Qurra.[21] John Tolan describes their purpose as 'to immunize the faithful against the theological errors of the other and to convince new converts to reject the vestiges of their old religion'.[22]

These texts reflect attempts by church leaders to come to terms, theologically as well as pastorally, with drastic political changes and subsequent social and religious ramifications. *The legend of Sergius Baḥīrā*, an early 9th-century Syriac text, for example, 'seeks to explain the rise of Islam from a Christian perspective', by 'revealing' that Muḥammad was influenced by a Christian monk called Baḥīrā.[23] The text exemplifies how genres such as polemics, apologetics and apocalyptic texts were entangled. The legend frames Islam as a 'simplified version of Christianity suitable for pagan Arabs' and is part of an apocalyptic vision about

[20] The metropolitan of Erbil Isho'yahb III of Adiabene writes in the mid-7th century: 'As for the Arabs, to whom God has at this time given rule (*shūlṭānā*) over the world, you know well how they act towards us. Not only do they not oppose Christianity, but they praise our faith, honour the priests and saints of our Lord, and give aid to the churches and the monasteries. Why then do your *Mrwnaye* reject their faith on a pretext of theirs? And this when the *Mrwnaye* themselves admit that the Arabs have not compelled them to abandon their faith, but only asked them to give up half of their possessions in order to keep their faith. Yet they forsook their faith, which is forever, and retained half of their wealth, which is for a short time' (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 181; H. Teule, 'Isho'yahb III of Adiabene', in *CMR* 1, 133-6). John Tolan writes that, after three centuries, the 'majority' of Christians in the Near East had converted to Islam; J.V. Tolan, *Saracens. Islam in the medieval European imagination*, New York, 2002, p. 55.

[21] M.N. Swanson, '*Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid*', in *CMR* 1, 330-3; P. Schadler, '*The dialogue between a Saracen and a Christian*', in *CMR* 1, 367-70. Other well-known apologetics include the *Disputation* by Patriarch Timothy I (see M. Heimgartner, 'Letter 59 (Disputation with the Caliph al-Mahdī)', in *CMR* 1, 522-6), and the works of Theodore Abū Qurra (see J.C. Lamoreaux, 'Theodore Abū Qurra', in *CMR* 1, 439-91).

[22] Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 36.

[23] B. Roggema, '*The legend of Sergius Baḥīrā*', in *CMR* 1, 600-3.

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the rise of the 'Sons of Ishmael', while seeking to underscore the truth of the Christian faith.

Reflecting on the first centuries of Christian life under Muslim rule, Kedar observes that Christians 'had no choice but to engage in apologetics and polemics, since their self-preservation depended to a considerable extent on their ability to defend their faith against the pressure of the Muslim surrounding'.[24] Therefore, rather than entertaining plans for a mission to Muslims, most energy was channelled into discouraging Christians from converting to Islam. Aspirations of missions to Muslims may have been further curbed by the knowledge that in some settings there was an interdiction against converting from Islam (apostasy). Documents such as *The martyrdom of Anthony* (early 9th century), a sermon by *Gregory Dekapolis* and the *Documentum martyriale* (c. 857) by Eulogius of Cordova,[25] testify to this. However, as the *Ritual of abjuration*, *Tomos*, and other texts demonstrate, conversions from Islam to Christianity did occur.[26] Especially in contact zones such as the Iberian Peninsula, Crete and Sicily, religious identities seem to have been more transient, with conversions primarily perceived as problematic in times of interreligious tensions.[27] Further, the prevailing Christian conceptualisation of Islam was that it was a Christian heresy rather than an independent religious tradition. In his *Summa totius haeresis ac diabolicae sectae Saracenorum siue* (c. 1143) Peter of Cluny, for example, depicts Islam as 'the sum of all heresies previously known to Christendom'.[28] This may also to some extent explain why large-scale Christian mission to Muslims did not occur; heresies required correction rather than mission.[29]

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[24] Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 36.

[25] D.H. Vila, '*The martyrdom of Anthony* (*rawḥ al-Qurashī*)', in *CMR* 1, 498-501; D. Sahas, 'Gregory Dekapolites', in *CMR* 1, 614-17; Tolan, 'Eulogius of Cordova'.

[26] A. Rigo, '*Ritual of abjuration*', in *CMR* 1, 821-4; N. Zorzi, '*Tomos*', in *CMR* 3, 759-63. See also Tolan, 'Jacques de Vitry', p. 301; Mallett, *Popular Muslim reactions*, p. 115.

[27] R.W. Southern, *Western views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 1962, p. 39; J. Coope, *The martyrs of Córdoba. Community and family conflict in an age of mass conversion*, Lincoln NE, 1995, pp. 16-17; R.J. Burns, 'Muslims in the thirteenth-century realms of Aragon. Interaction and reaction', in J.M. Powell (ed.), *Muslims under Latin rule, 1100-1300*, Princeton NJ, 1990, 57-102, p. 81; Mallett, *Popular Muslim reactions*, pp. 108-9.

[28] Iogna-Prat and Tolan, 'Peter of Cluny', p. 607.

[29] Tolan observes that in medieval Europe conceptualisations of Islam as paganism were also popular. He writes: 'This portrayal placed the Crusades firmly in an old and familiar place in Christian history, as part of the age-old struggle against pagan demon worship', and adds: 'The image is so common that writers on Islam who know better – from the twelfth century on – go to great pains to explain that the Saracens *are not* pagans' (Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 128).

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Muslim conversion

By the 11th century, the theme of Muslim conversion begins to appear in texts with some frequency, often in the context of the Spanish *reconquista* or the crusades.[30] An early reference to what may have been a mission to Muslims is a passage in the *Life of Saint Nicon*.[31] This Greek text, probably written in Sparta in the mid-11th century, recounts that, after the fall of the Emirate of Crete in 961, the Byzantine monk Nikon Metanoeite travelled to Crete to preach.

> Now he reached the island just when it had been snatched from the hands of the Agarenes. […] The island still bore traces of the vile superstition of the Agarenes, since its inhabitants, by time and long fellowship with the Saracens, alas! were led astray to their customs and foul and unhallowed rites. Therefore, when the great one began to cry 'Repent' according to his custom, they cried out against this strange and foreign preaching. And inflamed with passion, they violently opposed the just man, wishing to destroy him. The strangeness and unusualness of the thing inflamed them to obvious madness; for they were already converted, as our story has made clear, to the superstitious error of the Saracens. And so the blessed one saw their harshness and wildness, and realized that he would never prevail against their resistance without a wise plan. So he used, as they say, the next best tack, putting aside the first, and, in the manner of wise doctors, he wisely contrived their salvation. […] Then he somehow gently seized upon their hearts[…] And so the blessed one, if not through the power of his word, but through that of virtue, was a wise fisherman and skilled in hunting souls of men.[32]

Whether or not Nicon's sojourn in Crete can be understood as an attempt to convert Muslims is a matter of conjecture. While some scholars maintain that he preached to Muslims, others presume that the author of Nicon's *Vita* embellished Nicon's achievements in Crete; they suggest that his main audience consisted of Muslims of Christian ancestry, whose families had only recently converted to Islam, or of Christians whose faith had been 'contaminated' by Islam.[33] Another early missionary

[30] According to Kedar, two groups were most prone to conversion: members of the nobility who wanted to safeguard their social status, and slaves who considered conversion a means of emancipation (Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 83; cf. Mallett, *Popular Muslim reactions*, pp. 109-10, 113, 116).

[31] T. Pratsch, '*Life of Saint Nicon*', in *CMR* 2, 643-5.

[32] D.F. Sullivan (ed. and trans., *The life of Saint Nikon*, Brookline MA, 1987, pp. 83-7.

[33] Thomas Pratsch believes Nikon preached to Muslims; see 'Life of Saint Nicon', p. 644. Others disagree; see e.g. E. Voulgarakis, 'Nikon Metanoeite und die

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expedition seems to have been undertaken by the hermit Anastasius of Cluny, who is said to have been sent to Spain on the instructions of Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073-85) around 1074. Transmitted only in *Vita S Anastasii auctore Galtero*, opinions vary as to whether Anastasius's work was among Muslims in the recently reconquered territories or in areas under Muslim rule.[34] The *Vita* relates that Anastasius's mission was unproductive and that he eventually returned to France.

The conversion of Muslims in reconquered territories is also a concern expressed by Pope Urban II (r. 1088-99), best known for summoning the First Crusade. Urban instructed the archbishop of Toledo 'to endeavour by word and example to convert, with God's grace, the infidels to the faith'.[35] However, there is little evidence that his instructions resulted in systematic missionary endeavours, though in reconquered Spain and Sicily occasional conversions from Islam to Christianity did occur.[36] Joseph O'Callaghan, discussing the position of *mudejars* in the reconquered territories in Castile and Portugal, attributes this partly to the accommodative attitude of the Spanish conquerers, and partly to the fact that many Muslims chose to leave the conquered territories, hoping for a turn of events with the Almoravid ascendency.[37] He writes: 'The impetus for mission among Muslims came from outside the peninsula',

Rechristianisierung der Kreter von Islam', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 47 (1963) 192-204, 258-69, p. 199; A. Louth, *Greek East and Latin West. The church 681-1071*, New York, 2007, p. 261; Sullivan, *Life of Saint Nikon*, pp. 278-9; A. Kaldellis, *Streams of gold, rivers of blood. The rise and fall of Byzantium, 955 AD to the First Crusade*, Oxford, 2017, pp. 37, 310. Ibn Jubayr claims that Crete's Muslims were forcibly converted after the conquest by the Byzantine Emperor Nicephoros II (r. 963-69). Ibn Jubayr, who describes the conversion of Muslims in Crete in a passage on Sicily, writes: 'The most clear-sighted of them fear that it shall chance to them as it did in earlier times to the Muslim inhabitants of Crete. There a Christian despotism so long visited them with one (painful) circumstance after another that they were all constrained to turn Christian, only those escaping whom God so decreed'; Ibn Jubayr, *The travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. and intro. R.J.C. Broadhurst, London, 1952, p. 259.

[34] Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 45.

[35] Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 46; T. Mastnak, 'Urban II', in *CMR* 3, 229-48.

[36] For the way the various kingdoms related to their religious minorities, see e.g. J.M. Powell (ed.), *Muslims under Latin rule, 1100-1300*, Princeton NJ, 2014; B.A. Catlos, *The victors and the vanquished. Christians and Muslims of Catalonia and Aragon, 1050-1300*, Cambridge, 2004; H.J. Hames (ed.), *Jews, Muslims and Christians in and around the Crown of Aragon*, Leiden, 2004.

[37] J.F. O'Callaghan, 'The Mudejars of Castile and Portugal in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in J.M. Powell (ed.), *Muslims under Latin rule 1100-1300*, Princeton NJ, 1990, 1-56, p. 14.

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and 'Hispanic Christians seem not to have made any concerted effort to convert the subject Moors'.[38]

Texts written in 11th and 12th centuries appear to indicate that the theme of enforced conversion of Muslims raised fewer qualms in other parts of Europe. By the mid-12th century, conversion (including enforced conversion) of Muslims seems to have become widely accepted as a central goal of the crusades. Hugh of Flavigny's account of the pilgrimage of Richard, Abbott of St-Vanne, for example, expresses the need for Muslim conversion in connection with pilgrimage and the crusades.[39] Similar sentiments are expressed in the Latin hagiography *Martyrdom of Bishop Thiemo* (early 12th century),[40] the account or the siege and conquest of Lisbon in *De expugnatione Lyxbonensi* (c. 1147) and the *Instruction in the Catholic faith to the sultan* (c. 1177) by Pope Alexander III (r. 1159-81).[41] Also, Peter of Cluny, in his preface to *Contra sectam Saracenorum* (c. 1155), mentions Muslim conversion, though he seems to have had few illusions that his Latin refutation would actually produce tangible results.[42] The opening chapter of Pfaffe Konrad's *Rolandslied*, written around 1170, also takes up the theme. It describes the crusader ideals, the readiness to become a martyr at the hands of Muslims, the rumours of Muslim leaders willing to convert, and the necessity of evangelisation and baptism. In the opening pages, Pfaffe Konrad has Bishop St Johannes exclaim:

> 'Should my lord be willing – and I hope for his support,' he said, 'I would like to cross the Guadalquivir River to the city of Almeria and there proclaim God's word. I do not fear death in any form. If I were worthy of

[38] O'Callaghan, 'Mudejars of Castile', pp. 46, 48. O'Callaghan supports his argument with a reference to Alfonso X of Castile's *Siete partidas* (mid-13th century), which approved of mission by example but rejected all forms of enforced conversion. The text instructs Christians 'to labor by good words and suitable preaching to convert the Moors and cause them to believe in our faith and to lead them to it not by force nor by pressure . . . for (the Lord) is not pleased by service that men give him through fear, but with that that they do willingly and without any pressure' (O'Callaghan, 'Mudejars of Castile', p. 50).

[39] P. Healy, 'Hugh of Flavigny', in *CMR* 3, 301-6. A. Cutler, 'The First Crusade and the idea of conversion', *The Muslim World* 58 (1968) 57-71, 155-64; see also A. Cutler, *Catholic missions to Muslims at the end of the First Crusade*, Los Angeles CA, 1963 (PhD Diss. University of Southern California); http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll17/id/154281.

[40] J. Tolan, *'Martyrdom of Bishop Thiemo'*, in *CMR* 3, 555-7.

[41] J. Tolan, 'Alexander III', in *CMR* 3, 695-6.

[42] Peter of Cluny writes: 'If the Moslems cannot be converted by it, at least it is right for the learned to support the weaker brethren in the Church, who are so easily scandalized by small things', cited in Southern, *Western views of Islam*, p. 39.

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> having fire or sword purify my body and God so willed, then I could be certain that He wanted me.'[43]

Likewise, Byzantine texts of the period also refer to Muslim conversion. *The Alexiad* (c. 1148) by Anna Comnena speaks about the ambitions of her father, Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (r. 1081-1118), 'to bring into the fold of our church not only the Scythian nomads, but also the whole of Persia, as well as the barbarians who inhabit Libya and Egypt and follow the rites of Mohammed'. Muslim subjects in lands reconquered by the Byzantine crown were either enforced or more often enticed to embrace Christianity, it seems.[44] However, in most of these works, mission to Muslims remains a literary imaginary. Substantial and tangible missionary work among Muslims only began to emerge in the second decade of the 13th century, and it would take the mendicant orders to transform the ideas, and the ideals, into action.

The mendicant missions to Muslims

Jessica Bird situates the origins of mission (in the strict sense of the word) to Muslims within the Parisian reform circles around Peter the Chanter (d. 1197). Bird states that the Parisian group, which included men such as Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240) and Oliver of Paderborn (d. 1227),[45] was strongly influenced by the apocalyptic writings of Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202);[46] they interpreted the crises that afflicted Europe (e.g. wars, heresy, 'pagans' in the Baltics, Muslims in Spain and the eastern Mediterranean) as signs of the Apocalypse. Attributing these crises to a lack of religious commitment, they aspired to spiritual renewal and ecclesial reform, concerns that were also at the centre of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). By demonstrating that people like De Vitry and Oliver de Paderborn were also associated with the Albigensian and Baltic crusades, Bird argues that mission to Muslims was part of a much larger movement of renewal, which included spiritual renewal of churches in Europe and the Orient and the suppression of heresy (Abigensians and Muslims), a

[43] J.W. Thomas (ed. and trans.), *Priest Konrad's Song of Roland*, Columbia SC, 1994, p. 27.
[44] Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, trans., E.A.W. Dawes, Cambridge, Ontario, 2000, p. 116.
[45] J. Bird, 'Oliver of Paderborn', in *CMR* 4, 212-29.
[46] McGinn, 'Joachim of Fiore'.

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view also advanced by John Tolan.[47] Several names are linked to these beginnings of systematised missions; most prominent among them are Jacques de Vitry,[48] Oliver of Paderborn, Francis of Assisi (d. 1226)[49] and the founder of the Dominican order, Dominic Guzmán (1170-1221).[50]

Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre between 1216 and 1229, had already gained a reputation as a popular preacher before he was appointed bishop of Acre, promoting spiritual renewal and crusader ideals. On arrival in the crusader kingdom, he was shocked by the life-style of its residents and the melée of Christian traditions in the Holy Land, and he took to preaching tours to try to remedy the situation. It seems that the first Muslim conversions occurred as a by-product of this itinerant Christian ministry. According to Tolan, de Vitry had a basic knowledge of Islam and was probably familiar with some of the popular polemical writings on Islam of his time, such as the works of William of Tyre (d. c. 1185)[51] and Petrus Alfonsi (d. after 1116).[52] Tolan also writes that de Vitry, in his *Historia orientalis*, concludes 'that it is not difficult to convert Muslims to Christianity through preaching and example, and that many learned Muslims realize the falseness of their faith and are ready to abandon it'.[53]

Not averse to enforced baptism, de Vitry took up work among Muslim captives, and among enslaved children in particular. His letters, written during his participation in the Fifth Crusade, describe how Muslims fleeing the beleaguered city of Damietta offered themselves or their children for baptism in order to escape enslavement or death. They also document that, after the fall of Damietta in 1219, de Vitry bought some 500 children from among the captives, baptised them and had them raised as Christians by friends or nuns.[54] Though an avid supporter of

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[47] J. Bird, 'Crusade and conversion after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). Oliver of Paderborn's and James of Vitry's mission to Muslims reconsidered', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 21 (2004) 23-47, pp. 24-5; Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 199-201, 216-18.

[48] Tolan, 'Jacques de Vitry'.

[49] J. Tolan, *Saint Francis and the sultan. The curious history of a Christian-Muslim encounter*, Oxford, 2009; R. Armour, *Islam, Christianity and the West. A troubled history*, Maryknoll NY, 2004, p. 88.

[50] Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, pp. 120-1.

[51] A. Mallett, 'William of Tyre', in *CMR* 3, 769-77.

[52] J. Tolan, 'Petrus Alfonsi', in *CMR* 3, 356-62. There are interesting similarities between de Vitry's work among enslaved children and those of e.g. the Spiritans in East Africa in the 19th century; see P. Kollmann, *The evangelisation of slaves and Catholic origins in East Africa*, Maryknoll NY, 2005.

[53] Tolan, 'Jacques de Vitry', pp. 298, 301.

[54] See also Bombi, 'Fifth Crusade'.

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the crusades, de Vitry believed in the two-tier strategy of military campaigns and preaching.[55] His *Epistola* 6 and *Historia occidentalis*, possibly the earliest sources on Francis of Assisi's renowned encounter with the Egyptian Sultan Malik al-Kāmil, laud the Franciscan missions to the Saracens because of their public preaching and exemplary lifestyle of humility and simplicity, but are also somewhat sceptical about what this approach would accomplish.[56]

The Paris-trained cleric Oliver of Paderborn, who recruited for and participated in the Fifth Crusade, also witnessed Francis's attempt to evangelise the sultan. Emboldened by Malik al-Kāmil's honourable treatment of both Francis and Christian prisoners of war, Oliver wrote two letters, a *Letter to al-Kāmil of Egypt*, and a *Letter to the learned men of Egypt*, inviting them to convert to Christianity and allow Christian missionary work in their realm. Oliver can be considered a representative of the time-honoured approach that sought to convert sovereigns, as being gatekeepers to the evangelisation of a people, while his letters are indicative of the persistent rumours in medieval Christendom that some Muslim rulers were willing to convert. His missionary tactic hinged on rational argumentation,[57] a strategy that would be honed to perfection by the Dominicans.[58]

Another key figure in the development of mission to Muslims (theoretically as well as actually) is Francis of Assisi. While Francis's encounter with the Ayyubid sultan in 1219 is probably the best-known episode in Francis's attempts at Muslim conversion,[59] possibly the earlier of his

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[55] Tolan, 'Jacques de Vitry', p. 298.

[56] Bombi, 'Fifth Crusade', p. 74; Tolan, 'Jacques de Vitry', p. 305.

[57] In his letter, Oliver of Paderborn links mission and crusade by maintaining that the military intervention is the result of the rejection of mission. He states: 'If your people had publicly granted admittance to the teaching of Christ and his preachers, God's church would gladly have sent them the sword of God's word, and joyfully invited them to the community of faith. But because it does not find any other remedy against the Saracen might, the law of the Catholic princes licitly makes use of the material sword for the defense of Christianity and the recovery of its right. For assuredly all laws and all rights permit the repulsion of force by force' (Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 132).

[58] Bird, 'Oliver of Paderborn', pp. 218-22. It is uncertain whether the letters were actually sent or were a mere literary exercise.

[59] Studies on Francis's encounter with Sultan Malik al-Kāmil are numerous. See e.g. J. Hoeberichts, *Franciscus en de Islam*, Utrecht, 1991, English trans. *Francis and Islam*, Quincy IL, 1997; Tolan, *Saint Francis and the sultan*; P. Moses, *The saint and the sultan. The crusades, Islam and Francis of Assisi's mission of peace*, New York, 2009; G. Dardess and M.L. Krier Mich, *In the spirit of St Francis and the sultan. Catholics and Muslims working together for the common good*, Maryknoll NY, 2011; K. Warren, *Daring to cross the threshold. Francis of Assisi encounters Sultan Malek al Kamil*, Eugene OR, 2012; J. Hoeberichts, *Franciscus en de Sultan. Mannen van vrede,* Nijmegen, 2012; Bombi, 'Fifth Crusade'.

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two rules, the *Regula non bullata* (1221), gives more insight into how he envisioned this. Chapter 16, entitled *Those who are going among Saracens and other non-believers*, states:

> The Lord says: Behold, I am sending you as lambs in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be prudent as serpents and simple as doves (Mt. 10:16). [...] As for the brothers who go, they can live spiritually among [the Saracens and nonbelievers] in two ways. One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake (1 Pet. 2:13) and to acknowledge that they are Christians. Another way is to proclaim the word of God when they see that it pleases the Lord, so that they believe in the all-powerful God – Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit – the Creator of all, in the Son Who is the Redeemer and Saviour, and that they be baptized and become Christians.[60]

For Francis, mission was an integral aspect of the re-enactment of the *vita apostolica* that he envisioned, and mission to Muslims was part of an all-encompassing mission project that would eventually bring Franciscans to Karakorum (William of Rubroeck / Rubruck), China, India, New Spain, West Africa and Mozambique.[61] Following in Christ's Apostles' footsteps of mission by preaching and example, martyrdom was one of the possible – and at times inevitable – consequences of this venture, and considered the ultimate witness to the Gospel.[62]

Apart from his encounter with Sultan Malik al-Kāmil, Francis was never personally involved in mission to Muslims. His call for mission among the Saracens and the suggestion of a possible martyrdom in

[60] *Francis and Clare. The complete works*, ed. and trans. R.J. Armstrong and I.C. Braidy, New York, 1982, p. 121. For a discussion, see L. Gallant, 'Francis of Assisi forerunner of interreligious dialogue. Chapter 16 of the Earlier Rule revisited', *Franciscan Studies* 64 (2006) 53-82.

[61] J. Moorman, *History of the Franciscan order. From its origins to the year 1517*, Oxford, 1968; C. Dawson (ed.), *The Mongol mission. Narratives and letters to the Franciscan missionaries in Mongolia and China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries*, New York, 1955; A. Camps, *The Friars Minor in China (1294-1955)*, Hong Kong, 2000; A. Camps, 'Franciscan missions to the Mogul Court', in A. Camps, *Studies in Asian mission history 1958-1996*, Leiden, 2014, 60-74; S.E. Turley, *Franciscan spirituality and mission in New Spain 1524-1599. Conflict beneath the sycamore tree*, Burlington VT, 2013; C. Racheado, 'Alexis de St. Lô', in *CMR* 11, 556-60; C. Racheado, 'Gaspar de Seville', in *CMR* 11, 573-7; N. Vila-Santa, 'Francisco Coutinho', in *CMR* 7, 849-52. See also J. Richard, *La Paupeté et les missions d'orient au moyen age (XIIIe-XVe siècle)*, Rome, 1977, and A. Müller, *Bettelmönche in islamischer Fremde. Institutionelle Rahmenbedingungen franziskanischer und dominikanischer Mission in muslimischen Räumen des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Münster, 2002.

[62] Bombi, Kedar and Tolan differ over the extent to which martyrdom was part of Francis's aims in mission among Muslims, or whether the emphasis on martyrdom was introduced his Franciscan biographers; see Bombi, 'Fifth Crusade', p. 71; Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 215; Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, pp. 124-5.

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the process, however, found ample response among his friars, many of whom, according to Tolan, were characterised more by a zeal for preaching and martyrdom than by knowledge of Islam. As early as 1220, six friars were martyred after attacking Islam in Muslim Seville and Morocco. They were the first of a long list of Franciscan martyrs who died at the hands of (often reluctant) Muslim authorities: six Franciscans were put to death in Ceuta in 1224, two in Valencia in 1228, five in Marrakesh in 1232, one in Fez in 1246, ten in the Near East in the period 1265-9 and seven in Tripoli in 1289.[63] Kedar pointedly observes:

> But since it soon transpired that Mendicant missionizing in Muslim countries was much more conducive to filling heaven with Christian martyrs than the earth with Muslim converts, and that preaching stood a chance of success only among Muslims subjected to Christian rule, practical men could not regard this Mendicant activity as a viable solution to the Muslim threat.[64]

Tolan interprets the fact that most of these martyrs were not canonised until 1442 as an indication that the Vatican was ambivalent towards this mission-by-martyrdom strategy.[65] Francis's rule of 1223, the *Regula Bullata*, may possibly reflect this ambivalence; it restricts mission among 'the Saracens' to those who are considered suitable by their superiors. Furthermore, contemporaries criticised the Franciscan quest for martyrdom. Thomas of Chantom wrote:

> It therefore seems that preachers should not hesitate to go and preach where they know they will be killed as long as it is the authority of the church that sends them. But to this some say that things are different with the Saracens than they once were with the Gentiles. For the Gentiles listened to the preaching of the apostles and others and argued with them, and many of them were converted by them. They did not kill the preachers as long as any hope remained that they might pervert them to their idolatry. But now it has been decreed among the Saracens that if anyone comes as a preacher, as soon as he names Christ, he should immediately be killed without being heard out. And so they say that to go to such people is not

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[63] Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 218. Kedar also hypothesises that the friars' bold attacks on Islam were not merely instigated by a desire for Muslim converts or attempts to gain the martyr's palm, but were also a tactic to ensure Muslims' eternal condemnation: 'Moreover, it is plausible to assume that among the friars who adopted this stance, there were some who […] believed that by openly attacking the religion of the Saracens and calling upon them to convert, they would ensure eternal punishment for their unrepentant listeners' (Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 126).

[64] Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 155.

[65] Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 218.

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> to go to preaching, but rather to go to death without preaching. Nor are they certain that God will produce miracles through them when they die.[66]

The Franciscan strategy of preaching without knowledge of Arabic and Islam was criticised even within the Franciscan order itself. Roger Bacon (d. after 1292) for example, in his *Opus maius*, writes that 'no one knows the necessary languages; the types of unbelief have not been studied and distinguished; and there has been no study of the arguments by which each can be refuted';[67] therefore he 'proposed preaching, rational arguments and study of languages as the most effective means to convert the infidel'.[68] Much of the content of Bacon's criticism of the Franciscan missionary strategy had already been taken up by the other mendicant order with missionary ambitions: the Dominicans. From the mid-13th century onwards most of the Iberian Peninsula had been reconquered, leading to more and more Muslims and Jews living under Christian rule.

The Dominican order aspired to conversion in the newly conquered territories. Initially founded by Dominic Guzmán to combat the Cathars, the Dominicans soon directed their energy to Jews and Muslims under Christian rule. But where the Franciscans opted for public preaching and martyrdom, often openly vilifying Islam and its prophet, the Dominicans opted for an intellectual approach.[69] According to Tolan, the 'Dominican friars studied Arabic, pored over Koran and Hadith, engaged Muslim scholars in theological debate, and preached to captive Muslim audiences in the mosques of the Crown of Aragon' in the hope of proving Christianity's superiority.[70] Dominicans like Raymond de Peynafort (d. 1275)[71] and Ramon Martí (c. 1220-c. 1284)[72] established Arabic schools in Valencia to teach its Arabic-speaking Muslim population the rudiments of the Christian faith. De Peynaforte claimed that, through the schools he founded, tens of thousands of (often upper-class) Muslims were converted.[73]

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[66] Cited as in Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 230-1.
[67] Southern, *Western views of Islam*, p. 57. For a discussion of Bacon by Southern, see pp. 56-61; see also A. Power, 'Roger Bacon', in *CMR* 4, 457-70.
[68] A. Klemeshov, 'The conversion and destruction of the infidels in the works of Roger Bacon', in J. Carvalho (ed.), *Religion and power in Europe. Conflict and convergence*, Pisa, 2007, 15-27.
[69] The Gregorian report, summarised in Matthew Paris's *Chronica majora*, gives some insight in the lines of argumentation of the Dominicans; see L. Giamalva, 'The Gregorian report', in *CMR* 4, 259-63.
[70] Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 172.
[71] Tolan, 'Raymond de Penyafort', pp. 253-8.
[72] T.E. Burman, 'Ramon Marti', in *CMR* 4, 381-90.
[73] Burns, 'Muslims in the thirteenth-century', p. 83. Burns points to a difference of the treatment of the Muslim population in Aragon and Castile (who were typically banned,

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The Dominican approach, as espoused by men like Ramon Martí (Spain), Thomas Aquinas (Italy),[74] Alfonso Buenhombre (Marrakesh),[75] William of Tripoli (Acre)[76] and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (Baghdad),[77] hinged on persuasion by rational arguments. In-depth knowledge of Jewish and Muslim sources, however, did not make the Dominican representations of Islam and Muḥammad any more sympathetic. Rather, public debates with representatives from the Jewish and Muslim elite, with their rational but vehement attacks on Jewish and Muslim sacred scriptures as contradictory, confusing and irrational, proved counter-productive and hardened Jewish and Muslim resistance to conversion. Despite de Peynaforte's claims of Muslim conversions, by the end of the 13th century the hope that Muslims would willingly convert in large numbers had begun to dwindle. The fall of Acre (1291), the enslavement of large numbers of Christians, the conversion of the Mongol Ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295-1304) to Islam, and the subsequent destruction of churches, synagogues and Buddhist temples, seemed to signal Muslim advance rather than defeat.

The letters of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (d. 1320) reflect his disillusionment and despondency at this turn of events; he writes: '[…] the people of the East now openly say that you [God] are powerless to help us', and: 'If it pleases you that Muḥammad rules, make this known to us so that we might venerate him.'[78] Bird, reflecting on these early Franciscan and Dominican missions among Muslims, writes that '(a)lthough hopes for the conversion of Muslim rulers persisted, most missionaries from both the Franciscan and Dominican orders soon focused their efforts on preventing apostasy among Latin Christians living in proximity with suspect groups and on Christian captives, who it was feared would convert to Islam or eastern Christian sects'.[79]

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enslaved or given the choice to migrate with only their portable belongings) from that accorded to Valencia's substantial Muslim population. The Valencian Muslims were allowed to continue practising their religion. As most of them were only literate in Arabic, the Dominicans established Arabic schools to persuade them to convert to Christianity.

[74] D. Burrell and J. Tolan, 'Thomas Aquinas', in *CMR* 4, 521-9.
[75] Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 281-2.
[76] T.E. Burman, 'William of Tripoli', in *CMR* 4, 515-20.
[77] T.E. Burman, 'Riccoldo da Monte di Croce', in *CMR* 4, 678-91.
[78] Burman, 'Riccoldo da Monte di Croce', p. 681.
[79] Bird, 'Crusade and conversion', p. 30.

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The Muslim in our midst

By the mid-13th century, the Reconquista had brought most of the Iberian Peninsula under Christian rule, but its on-going impact on social and societal interactions in the reconquered territories sparked a yearning for a new, more peaceful order among some intellectuals. One such person was Raymond (Ramon / Raimundo) Llull (d. c. 1315). Born into a noble family on Mallorca just after the island had been reconquered by James I of Aragon (r. 1213-76), Llull grew up in a predominantly Muslim society, but was also a first-hand witness of the rapid impoverishment and marginalisation of Mallorca's Muslim population.[80] A series of visions (c. 1263) signalled a turning point in his life. Having witnessed the discord brought about by religious and linguistic diversity, he decided to abandon his life as a courtier, become a Franciscan tertiary and dedicate himself to the pursuit of a world in which these diversities were surmounted. In Llull's view, this new order could only be attained by purging it of diversity; the conversion of Muslims (and Jews) played a central role in this project. This evokes from Gregory Stone the remark that 'Llull's effort to replace physical combat with the verbal construction of a new world is an infliction on others of a discursive power ultimately more destructive of alterity and more pernicious than military action.'[81]

Llull spent the remainder of his life in quest of this new order. He studied Arabic and preached to Muslims, tried to write the best possible book to explain Christianity to Muslims (the *Ars major*) and lobbied for missionary training schools where aspiring missionaries could study Islam and Arabic.[82] To bring about Muslim conversion, he conceived of a method of preaching that replicated the Dominican approach in its emphasis on knowledge of Islam, but differed from the Dominicans by its positive argumentation.[83] Though Llull continued to hold onto Christianity as the only true religion, his writings demonstrate regard for Islam and contend that missionaries could and should build on what Muslims already believed.[84] Llull made several unsuccessful missionary journeys

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[80] G.B. Stone, 'Ramon Llull', in M.R. Menocal, R.P Schneidlin and M. Sells (eds), *The literature of al-Andalus*, Cambridge, 2012, 345-57.

[81] Stone, 'Ramon Llull', p. 348.

[82] With the financial backing of King James of Mallorca, Llull was able to open such a school in a monastery in Miramar, Mallorca, in about 1276. It was frequented by Franciscan missionaries who wanted to study Arabic; Hames, 'Ramon Llull', p. 705.

[83] Hames, 'Ramon Llull'.

[84] Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 256-8.

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to North Africa (to Tunis in 1293 and 1314, and to Bougie in 1307), leaving him somewhat disillusioned regarding the feasibility of his project.

Llull's project is best illustrated in *The gentile and the three wise men* (1274),[85] which presents 'a cordial debate between a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim before a Gentile who seeks the truth'.[86] Llull has each of the discussants explain his faith to the Gentile, after which the men depart, leaving it to the Gentile to decide which religion is best. In the course of the discussion one of the characters exclaims:

> Ah! What a great good fortune it would be if [...] we could all – every man on earth – be under one religion and belief, so that there would be no more rancour or ill will among men, who hate each other because of diversity and contrariness of beliefs and sects! And just as there is only one God, Father, Creator and Lord of everything that exists, so all peoples could unite and become one people. (Prologue, *Selected works*, vol. 1, p. 116)[87]

The book stands out among contemporary publications because of its fair and informed representation of the three religions and its lack of polemics. Though it is open-ended and the reader is left in the dark as to the Gentile's preference, close reading reveals that the Gentile critically interrogates the Muslim position repeatedly, thus displaying a bias towards Christianity.[88]

Though the older Llull continued to advocate the importance of preaching and prayer, he also endorsed a more confrontational approach. Realising that mere preaching would not achieve Muslim conversion and the envisioned new order, Llull validated the idea of military expeditions (e.g. a crusade to recover Acre) that would compel Muslim rulers to admit Christian preachers. Highly educated preachers trained in Arabic were to accompany these crusading armies to preach to prisoners of war. Llull believed that these prisoners, once subjected to enforced Christian education, would convert to Christianity without much resistance. Thus, by the end of his life, Llull was convinced that his dream of a new order would only be realised by the wielding of the Church's 'two swords (intellectual and corporeal power)'.[89] In the grand Franciscan

85 Hames, 'Ramon Llull', pp. 709-12.
86 Hames, 'Ramon Llull', p. 709.
87 Cited in Stone, 'Ramon Llull', p. 346.
88 Tolan describes the book as an 'irenic island' in a 'sea of tempestuous disputation and polemic', but also states that closer scrutiny of the text reveals a distinct bias towards the ideas brought forward by the Christian (Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 266).
89 Stone, 'Ramon Llull', p. 247.

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tradition of martyrdom, legend has it that Llull was stoned by an angry mob of Muslims in Tunis or Bougie whilst on a missionary expedition and died of his injuries (1315 or 1316), either in North Africa or on the journey home to Mallorca.

Llull was not the only scholar in late medieval times who pursued peace amidst religious and cultural diversity. The quest for peace and unity also features prominently in the work of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64)[90] and Juan de Segovia (c. 1390-1458),[91] though both lived in a time of Ottoman advance, iconically embodied in the fall of Constantinople. Both men had attended the Council of Basel (1431) and were influenced by its achievement of reconciling with the majority of the Hussites through cautious, respectful negotiation. The optimism that followed the Council – based on the belief that it was possible to heal the major schisms in the Church – is evident in Nicholas of Cusa's *De pace fide* (1453).[92] The book presents a fictive setting in which wise men from various religious traditions engage in a conversation, only to conclude that 'their faith and religion is one, under a diversity of rites (*una religio in rituum varietate*)'.[93] In a later day and age, Theodor Bibliander's *De monarchia* (1533) made a similar case for the universal nature of religion.[94] And Nicholas of Cusa's *Cribratio Alkorani* (1461) also testifies to a genuine interest in Islam's sacred text and reflects his serious consideration of the possibility that nuggets of truth can be found in the Qur'an.

Where Nicholas of Cusa's work seems to promote dialogue and inter-religious reconciliation rather than mission, his contemporary and friend Juan de Segovia considered Muslim conversion non-negotiable. Influenced like Nicholas by the Council of Basel, Juan de Segovia maintained that, before Muslims could be receptive to Christian mission, their misconceptions about Christianity needed to be redressed. Once this was

[90] J. Tolan, 'Nicholas of Cusa', in *CMR* 5, 421-8. See also I.A. Levy, D.F. Duclow and R. George-Tvrtković (eds), *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam. Polemic and dialogue in the late Middle Ages*, Leiden, 2014.

[91] A.M. Wolf, 'Juan de Segovia', in *CMR* 5, 429-42; A.M. Wolf, *Juan de Segovia and the fight for peace. Christians and Muslims in the fifteenth century*, Notre Dame IN, 2014.

[92] For the text, see *Nicolas of Cusa's De pace fidei and cribratio alkorani. Translation and analysis*, trans. J. Hopkins, Minneapolis MN, 1994, pp. 33-71.

[93] Tolan, 'Nicholas of Cusa', p. 423.

[94] B. Gordon, 'Theodor Bibliander', in *CMR* 6, 673-85. Because Bibliander believed that the second coming of Christ was imminent, he considered it a Christian duty to evangelise Muslims. His three-volume *Machumetis Saracenorum pricipis, eiusque successorum vitae, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran* (1543) was intended to serve as a preparation for missionaries to Muslims. He considered knowledge of the Qur'an essential for the success of missions.

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accomplished, the Christian message could be preached by means of a *via pacis et doctrinae* in a terminology comprehensible and inoffensive to Muslims. Missionary access to territories under Muslim rule, in Juan de Segovia's opinion, would have to be achieved via diplomatic negotiations rather than by military means. Anne Marie Wolf writes: 'Any contemporaries who had hoped for a quick solution would have been frustrated by his long-range approach to their problem.'[95]

Few contemporaries, it seems, seriously engaged with the ideas of Nicholas of Cusa and Juan de Segovia, with one noted exception: Hernando de Talavera (d. 1507).[96] In post-1492 Spain, the two dominant approaches to Muslim conversion, persuasion or force, are personified in the iconic figures of Hernando de Talavera and Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436-1517). De Talavera had been trained at the University of Salamanca; influenced by the ideas of Juan de Segovia and Nicholas de Cusa he seems to have conceived of Islam as both a religion and a culture.[97] When after the fall of Granada (1492) he was appointed its archbishop, de Talavera implemented a missionary strategy that he had developed in Seville and described in his *Católica impugnación* (1479). The strategy hinged on the dual approach of acculturation and evangelisation of the newly converted. De Talavera argued that observance of everyday religious practice (e.g. making the sign of the cross), and the accommodation of Christian identity markers in terms of dress code and language, would diminish the distinctions between 'old' and 'new' Christians and would facilitate the integration of the newly converted. He also believed that outward practice would serve as a preparation for inward conversion.

Alongside attention to performative religion, de Talavera recognised that effective religious instruction of Muslims required teachers, who were familiar with Arabic as well as with Muslim beliefs and practices, to have a conviction reminiscent of what Ramon de Penyaforte and Ramon Martí had underscored with regard to the Valencian *mudejars*. Isabella Iannuzzi writes:

> Talavera perceived the importance of the everyday as a normalising factor for both the newly converted and the host community. This is the great novelty of his approach. Only by carefully preparing the clergy in Christian

[95] Wolf, *Juan de Segovia and the fight for peace*, p. 175. For an elaborate discussion of Juan de Segovia's views on Muslim conversion, see pp. 175-222.
[96] I. Iannuzzi, 'Hernando de Talavera', in *CMR* 6, 59-66.
[97] Iannuzzi, 'Hernando de Talavera', p. 65.

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> teachings and in the culture of those who are to be converted is effective evangelisation possible. Thus, he was eager for his priests in Granada to learn Arabic […] In the cultural *milieu* of the University of Salamanca, Talavera had absorbed the ideas of Juan de Segovia and Nicolas de Cusa about the conversion of Muslims by addressing cultural differences as well as difference in belief.[98]

De Talavera personifies a pastoral approach to Muslim conversion, advocating the gradual initiation of Muslims into the Christian faith. Likewise, there are indications that contemporaries, such as Gómez García and his *Carro de dos vidas* (1500),[99] Juan Bautista de Jerónimo Anyés (1480-1553)[100] and Pedro de Alcalá (d. after 1508) 'regarded Muslims as lost rather than recalcitrant and they thought that patient preaching of the Christian Gospel in the Muslims' own language, using terms that they would recognize (such as *miḥrāb* for altar, *ṣalāt* for the mass), would secure true conversions'.[101] To facilitate Christian education of Muslims, de Alcalá composed an Arabic grammar. The tone of his introduction to this is respectful towards Muslims, and in the religious texts he included in the grammar itself he adopted Muslim terms (e.g. *Allāh, miḥrāb* and *ṣalāt*) to describe Christian beliefs and practices.[102] Similarly, Pedro Ramirez de Alba's *Doctrina Christiana* (c. 1526), which aimed to explain Christianity and Christian practices to newly baptised Moriscos, shows no disdain for Islam, but rather represents a genuine invitation to the newly converted to inwardly embrace the Christian faith after outward baptism. It also pleads with the *Cristianos viejos* to willingly receive the new converts into their community and provide them with good examples.[103] In Valencia, whose sizable Muslim population had been forced to convert in the aftermath of the revolt of the Germanías (1519-22), Bernando Pérez

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[98] Iannuzzi, 'Hernando de Talavera', p. 65.

[99] R. Perez, 'Gómez García', in *CMR* 6, 54-9. García's book presents an entreaty for a peaceful evangelisation of Muslims and was published just after the Mudéjar revolt in Granada. This signalled the beginning of the politics of enforced conversion, spearheaded by Archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros.

[100] For the instruction of Moriscos in Valencia, see also B.F. Llopis, 'Juan Bautista de Jerónimo Anyés', in *CMR* 6, 144-9. Anyés favours an irenic approach to evangelise Valencia's Moriscos. Standing in the humanist tradition, he considers Muslims to be 'innocents' who are born in the wrong religion and need guidance and education to come to the true faith.

[101] M.T. Frederiks, 'Introduction: Christians, Muslims and empires in the sixteenth century', in *CMR* 6, 1-10, p. 5.

[102] O. Zwartjes, 'Pedro de Alcalá', *CMR* 6, 73-8; M.J. Framiñán de Miguel, 'Martín Pérez de Alaya', in *CMR* 7, 207-14.

[103] L. Resines, 'Pedro Ramírez de Alba', in *CMR* 6, 93-5.

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de Chinchón (d. 1548) composed a series of sermons that in simple but respectful words reject Muslim beliefs and teach Christianity.[104]

While throughout the 16th century there was support in Spain for the method of conversion by persuasion, the more hardline approach of enforced conversion, as advocated and implemented by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, found more widespread patronage. From 1499 onwards, he ordered the burning of Islamic books and the transformation of mosques into churches in Granada, and forced its Muslims to submit to baptism. His close companion, Antonio García de Villalpando (d. 1513), supported his campaign against Islam and argued that it was legal for the monarchs to confiscate Muslim and Jewish property.[105] In Zaragoza, Joan Martí Figuerola's aggressive missionary tactics of entering the mosque to preach and refute Islam (1519) caused such commotion among Muslims, as well as the civil authorities, that he was asked to leave the town.[106] In Aragón, the Augustinian friar Alonso de Orozco (1500-91) wrote a popular, polemical catechism, which depicted Islam as the work of the devil and propagated Christianity as the only and absolute truth. The fact that the catechism saw three editions between 1568 and 1575 indicates the widespread support for his views.[107] Also, Pedro Guerra de Lorca's *Catecheses mysagogicae* (1586)[108] and the *Catecismo del Sacromonte* (1588)[109] were strongly polemical, condemning Islam as well as Moriscos who retained their former cultural and linguistic habits. Yet despite these aggressive missionary techniques, the continued resistance of Moriscos to embrace Christianity is evident from the numerous documents (royal laws, edicts, *pragmáticas*, as well as Church documents) issued throughout the 16th century, instructing Moriscos to convert and/or change their lifestyle. During the course of the century, the tone of these documents became increasingly harsh, ultimately culminating in the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1608.[110]

[104] F. Pons Fuster, 'Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón', in *CMR* 6, 119-24.
[105] A.I. Carrasco Manchado, 'Antonio García de Villalpando', in *CMR* 6, 49-53.
[106] E. Ruiz García, 'Joan Martí Figuerola', in *CMR* 6, 88-92.
[107] L. Resines, 'Alonso de Orozco', in *CMR* 7, 219-23.
[108] J. Busic, 'Pedro Guerra de Lorca', in *CMR* 7, 250-8.
[109] L. Resines, 'Catechismo del Sacromonte', in *CMR* 7, 265-7.
[110] Frederiks, 'Introduction: Christians, Muslims', pp. 2-7.

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Mission beyond Latin Christendom

As Christian missions to Muslims in Spain, Italy, North Africa and the Crusader states had demonstrated, neither exemplary lifestyle, persuasion or intellectual engagement nor force had been able to secure large numbers of Muslim converts; disenchantment over this fact gradually turned into bitterness, animosity and repression, with the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1608 as its all-time low.[111] Yet, despite the surrender of the last Islamic dynasty on the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 and the unremitting marginalisation of Moriscos, Islam seemed on the rise. Rather than the imagined ultimate victory over Muslim empires, 16th-century Ottoman control over the Mediterranean, Asia and large parts of Europe signalled Muslim expansion rather than decline.

Sixteenth-century political achievements of Muslim empires gave rise to a new wave of apocalyptic, apologetic and polemical literature (e.g. *Türkenbüchlein*), expressing concern over the inroads Islam was making into Christian communities.[112] In Georgia and Armenia, where Ottoman-Safavid clashes had resulted in numerous casualties, martyrologies were composed to buoy the faithful.[113] In Russia, Archbishop Feodosil of Novgorod (1491-1563) hailed Grand Prince Ivan IV (r. 1547-84) for his campaigns against Kazan, lauding him as 'defender of the orthodox faith', and meanwhile he reminded him of his duty to convert the 'pagans' (Muslims) of Kazan.[114] Maximus the Greek (1475-1556), an Orthodox monk from Athos who spent most of his working life in Russia, wrote *Answers of the Christians to the Hagarenes who revile our Orthodox faith* (c. 1525), which evidences that, in early 16th-century Russia, Christians felt compelled to defend their faith.[115]

Meanwhile, Christians were converting to Islam in large numbers in central and eastern Europe. Abbot Macarie's *The Chronicle of Moldova from 1504 to 1551* describes in bitter terms how the Ottomans persuaded Prince Iliaş Rareş to convert to Islam. The prince, Macarie writes,

[111] Nearly a century earlier, in 1497, also under Spanish influence, King Manuel I of Portugal had ordered the entire non-Christian population to convert or go into exile; R.L. de Jesus, 'King Manuel I of Portugal', in *CMR* 7, 745-8.

[112] S. Küçükhyüseyin, 'Benedict Curipeschitz', in *CMR* 7, 168-73.

[113] S.P. Cowe, 'Martyrology of Xačʿatur Kołbecʿi in 1517, in *CMR* 7, 588-91; S.P. Cowe, 'Grigoris Ałtʿamarcʿi', in *CMR* 7, 599-607; S.P. Cowe, 'Mec Peron', in *CMR* 7, 668-72. The Kazan campaigns against the Tartars also produced martyrs; see C. Soldat, 'Nifont Kormilitsin', in *CMR* 7, 372-8.

[114] C. Soldat, 'Feodosil, archbishop of Novgorod', in *CMR* 7, 308-12.

[115] D. Savelyev, 'Maximus the Greek', in *CMR* 7, 135-40.

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subsequently 'surrounded himself with the sons and daughters of Hagar and even with "Turkish whores" and followed their malicious advice until the Devil settled in his soul. He abjured the faith of his ancestors, embraced Islam and took the name of the "damned Muhammad", which was synonymous with Satan.'[116]

Anton Vrančić (1503-1573), historiographer and later archbishop of Esztergom, also signalled how, under Ottoman rule, Christianity had increasingly come under siege. In his *Journey from Buda to Hadrianopolis in 1553*, Vrančić recorded a number of oral traditions about the decline of Christianity in parts of present-day Bulgaria; Christian monasteries has been destroyed, the older generation of Christians had gradually died and young people preferred to embrace Islam in order to have better prospects.[117]

With Christian communities once again under Muslim control in parts of Europe, the hope of better prospects in the newly-discovered parts of the world were high. However, though some Roman Catholic missions in Africa, Asia and Latin America met with positive responses, Muslim conversion proved difficult beyond Europe and the Mediterranean world. A Jesuit mission to the Moghul court in India initially seemed promising but, despite a courteous reception, the anticipated conversions never materialised.[118] In Bijapur (South India), the only person who converted was the daughter of a Muslim aristocrat.[119] To assist missionary work among Muslims (and others), Jesuits and other missionary orders began the production of missionary material that consisted of both translations of core theological texts and newly written materials for evangelisation purposes. An example of the latter is a text entitled *Muṣaḥaba rūḥāniyya* ('The spiritual conversation'), which seeks to counter the Muslim accusation of *taḥrīf*. The story recounts conversations between two shaykhs, who together discover mistakes in the Qur'an and conclude that only Christians possess authentic scriptures. Whether books like this were

[116] R.G. Păun, 'Abbot Macarie', in *CMR* 7, 311-20, p. 317.

[117] E. Gyulai, 'Antonius Verantius', in *CMR* 7, 362-71; for similar observations about Croatia, see F. Posset, B. Lucin and B. Jozić, 'Marcus Marulus', in *CMR* 7, 91-125, esp. *Evangelistarium*, pp. 111-15. The circulation of polemical materials and conversion narratives by converts to Islam may also have reinforced the feelings of disheartenment; C. Norton, 'Serrâc ibn Abdullah', in *CMR* 7, 673-5; T. Krstić, 'Murad ibn Abdullah', in *CMR* 7, 698-704.

[118] G. Nickel, 'Rodolfo Acquaviva', in *CMR* 7, 889-96.

[119] G. Nickel, 'Luís Fróis', in *CMR* 7, 858-65; G. Nickel, 'Gonçalo Rodrigues', in *CMR* 7, 837-41.

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actually distributed and, if so, what impact they had on Muslims, is uncertain.[120]

In Africa, mission proved no easy task. When in the 1560s the Jesuit Dom Gonçalo da Silva succeeded in converting and baptising the king of Monomotapa (in south-east Africa), some members of his nobility, resident Muslims, convinced the king that da Silva's sprinkling with water indicated that he was a *moroo*, a wizard, who would bring hunger and death to the country. Persuaded by their arguments, the king had da Silva put to death. In Mozambique, a Franciscan monk caused an uproar among the Muslim population when he ordered a mosque to be demolished (c. 1561); during the retaliations, property was destroyed, crosses were burned and a number of Christians were killed, indicating the tensions between Christians and Muslims in the country in the mid-16th-century.[121] Gradually, the words of the old-hand Jesuit missionary Baltasar Barreira (1531-1612) came to represent the missionary stance towards mission to Muslims. Writing from his mission station in 1606, in present-day Sierra Leone, he observed: '[I]t does not appear that there is any cure for those who have already received the sect of Mohammed but one may have more hope for others who have only sniffed at this sect or still have idols they worship.'[122] The disenchantment over the results of Christian mission to Muslims gradually inaugurated an era in Christian mission in which priority was given to the conversion of 'the heathen' over that of 'the infidel'. It was in this mission that, in many parts of the world, Christians and Muslims would once again become rivals, now as competitors for the soul of the 'heathen'.

Conclusion

This chapter has positioned Christian missions to Muslims as part of a larger Christian project in the context of Islam, and has located the development of systematic mission to Muslims in the 13th-century reform movement in western Europe. In areas under Muslim rule, the churches' main 'mission' during the period under discussion seems to have consisted of the safeguarding of the Christian community. Apocalyptic, apologetic and polemical treatises, as well as martyrologies and

120 A. Girard, 'Giovanni Battista Eliano', in *CMR* 7, 724-31.
121 N. Vila-Santa, 'Francisco Coutinho'.
122 M. Frederiks, 'Baltasar Barreira', in *CMR* 11, 492-8, p. 496.

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pastoral decrees, were primarily materials that addressed the Christian community, and they seem to have served the theological (and often teleological) project of understanding and explaining the rise of Islam as well as the pastoral project of ensuring Christianity's survival in terms of numbers, content and distinctiveness.

In Latin Christendom, the notion of mission work among Muslims began to emerge from the 11th century onwards. Systematic missionary endeavours, however, first occurred as an offshoot of the 13th-century reform movement in western Europe; this movement called for the spiritual renewal of Christianity in Europe and the East, the suppression of heresy (Albigensians and Muslims), and the evangelisation of non-Christians. The movement was characterised by a strong apocalyptic awareness; spurred on by the imminent arrival of the end of time, its adepts took to conquering the Holy Land with renewed energy and stressed the urgency of the conversion of 'pagans', Eastern Christians, Jews and Muslims, who it was thought would all play a crucial role in the pending Apocalypse. The spirit that gave rise to the reform movement also brought about the mendicant orders. Franciscans and Dominicans alike aspired towards spiritual renewal through the emulation of apostolic life, and considered mission (and martyrdom) an intrinsic part of this apostolic vocation. The significant advance of the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula during the 13th century, resulting in large numbers of Muslims under Christian rule, brought Muslim conversion into prominence on the theological agenda. Voices that seem to prefer a nascent form of interreligious dialogue over mission (e.g. Nicholas of Cusa) were rare in Europe before 1600.

Mission to Muslims proved an uphill task. Neither preaching, exemplary life or martyrdom (e.g. Franciscans), nor intellectual reasoning (Oliver of Paderborn, the Dominicans), acculturation (Llull, Juan de Segovia, de Talavera and others) or enforced conversion (de Vitry, Jiménez de Cisneros) succeeded in engendering large-scale Muslim conversion. Missionaries to Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well as clergy pursuing Muslim/Morisco conversion on the Iberian Peninsula, tended to underestimate Muslim commitment to their religion. To cite Benjamin Kedar once more:

> [...] when in 1326 Andrea of Perugia, the Franciscan bishop of Zaitun in Mongol China, observed that 'we can preach [here] freely and safety, yet none of the Jews and the Saracens does convert', he must have realized that the Islamic prohibition against Christian missionizing was

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> not the only reason for the missionaries' lack of success among the Saracens.[123]

Gradually, missionary congregations directed their attention to the evangelisation of groups other than Muslims. It would take many more years before Christians began to reflect on the soteriological implications of the fact that Islam seemed to offer its adherents a worldview that could compete with Christianity.

123 Kedar, *Crusade and mission*, p. 202.

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