ANGELO AND HIS MANUSCRIPT COPY OF THE *CONTRA LEGEM* FOR ADRIAN VI

While the Turkish encounter of 1525 described in the *Epistola drizata* is presented as the origin of Angelo's interest in the conversion of Muslims, he was involved in the diffusion of the *Contra legem* before that. In 1523, he addressed a manuscript copy of Riccoldo's work in Latin to Pope Adrian VI during his stay in Rome.[4] In his prologue to the copy, Angelo describes how he immediately travelled to Rome after hearing of the pope's election to offer himself at the pontiff's service. He summarizes God's revealed plans for the Church as the victory over Muslims and "false Christians" (i.e., morally corrupt Christians), or in other words, the end of Ottoman expansion and the beginning of Church reform. Certainly, these were pressing matters for Adrian VI from the very beginning of his pontificate.[5] Through the prologue, it becomes clear how Angelo envisions the victory over both Muslims and "false Christians" as part of the same project, but also how the latter was much more important. For instance, in his opinion, even if the spiritual consolation and joy of Jesus Christ was unknown to Muslims, it was unknown too (which was a far worse prospect):

> to … the most bestial, false Christians who corruptedly languish and lie dead in the sins of their utmost infidelity, which the Justice from Heaven, with its inscrutable judgement will very soon begin to strike in this pitiful age of ours, as heavens have already started doing with numerous punishments and disasters, so that angels purge and exterminate this infidelity as they already started doing.[6]

4 Ricc. 3026 is mentioned in the main repertories of Riccoldo's works: Dondaine 1967; Mérigoux 1986; Kaeppeli & Panella 1993. For newly discovered copies, see note 63. The history of the Dutch pope's library is unknown, and one could expect that after his death it would have passed to the Vatican Library: for the latest work on the pope, see Verweij 2009. A ms. belonging to Adrian VI is now kept in Leuven, Bibliothek Godgeleerdheit, Grand Séminaire, 17. I thank M. Verweij and M. Lodone for this information.

5 Ricc. 3026, f. 1v: "Sed Sanctitati tue pro semper me presentem palam atque absentem offero … usque dum queque Deus … predestinauit ac revelavit, totaliter exequta conspitiam et inimicos eius mahumethanos falsosque christianos cervice dura obduratissimos funditus positos … cernere queam." On Adrian and the Ottoman expansion, Setton 1976, pp. 201–203.

6 Ricc. 3026, f. 2r: "Et … brutalissime genti Christiane false languenti corrupte et in peccatis infidelitatis maioris defuncte. Que tandem iustitia de celo prospiciente inscrutabili suo iuditio hac infelici nostra etate, … cito atque brevissime multiplicibus flagellis atque ruinis iam divinitus percutere ceptis ut divinitus per angelos ministratis plurimum conquassandam prout iam ceptum est et expurgandam."

It was the moral corruption and sinful behaviour of Christians that unchained the prophesied punishments, including the Ottoman threat and the many calamities ravishing Italy at the time.[7] Although the prologue to the manuscript dedicated to Adrian VI presents the *Contra legem* as a tool to encourage "those few good Christians still surviving in the lands of the Muslims" to resist in their faith against the Ottomans,[8] Riccoldo's work is also presented as a useful tool to expose the sinful deeds of the "false Christians":

> I wanted to spare no effort and write this to reveal and make clear the most horrible crimes and sins of both the false Christians as well as the false-writing Muslims, which cry out to God; also, to expose the vast floods of all the terrible punishments already appearing and hidden only to the blind. ... I want also to complain against the blind and the leaders of these blind people who deserve to be confounded ... and against those who have less faith than a grain of mustard, who can't even believe that all of these things were done and must be done.[9]

The prologue elaborates on the issues of Church reform and the sinful "false Christians", and Angelo presents himself as a prophet warning Christianity of its errors. Compared to these, the references to the Ottomans are few and, more importantly, very different from future positions that Angelo would take shortly after. For instance, towards the end of the prologue, after a lengthy discussion on the current state of Christianity, Angelo writes a few lines about his desire to see with his own eyes vengeance on the Muslims, in accordance with the well-known medieval anti-Islamic topics

7 He asks in a rhetorical question whether the Church "malorum dierum fedata deturpata vituperata (cum tantum fedari deturpari vituperari nequeat) luxuris et pravis voluntatibus eorum condemnata est ad mortem in peste in fame et omni ruina mali ita ut tandem a spurcissimo apro Turcharum infestissimo nostre patrie hosti exterminanda sit?" (Ricc. 3026, f. 2v).

8 Ricc. 3026, f. 3r: "Interim ne ubi pars Christianorum subiugaretur ab apro machomet praefato forsan ibi et seducantur electi et ut veri christicolae si qui sunt pauci forsitan ut tempore Mathatiae genitoris Machabeorum armati lorica iustitie facultatibus cunctis expositis apprehendere arma et scutum et in adiutorium Ecclesie sancte exurgere animentur praeparentur curent atque festinent."

9 Ricc. 3026, f. 3r: "Volui laboribus parcere nullis istaque conscribere sic ut tam falsorum christianorum quam falsigraphorum sarracenorum crimina atque peccata gravissima ad dominum clamantia de longe diluviaque vasta prefatorum horribilium flagellorum omnium iam implicita occultaque cecis explicita claraque fiant ... Volo insuper querelam magnam facere de cecis ducibusque cecorum confundendorum ... et contra eos qui non habent tantam fidem quantum est granum synapis, qui nec et credere possunt quia omnia istec facta faciendaque."

concerning a *vendetta* on Muslims and the reconquest of Jerusalem.[10] However, Angelo leaves to Riccoldo a more specific account of their sins, saying "in the following book ... the crimes of this cursed pagan sect will be openly exposed as not smaller than those of the false Christians who must be proven wrong."[11] Last, Angelo encourages Adrian VI, both here and in his previous letters to the pope, to celebrate a council to reform the Church and to resume Pius II's project of a crusade against the Ottomans.[12]

10 Ricc. 3026, f. 3v: "multifariam spiritualiter crucifixi accerbiorem durioremque vindictam, quam [*sic*] vindicta supra Hierusalem de qua scribit et Iosephus et sic erit. Nam ipsi pessimi infideles desperati, ligatis manibus et pedibus in conspectu spiritualium hominum fidelium dei, mittentur in clibanum gehenne ignis ardentis sulphure spiritumque procellarum ubi loco petulantium abominabiliumque lasciviarum suarum erit fletus et stridor dentium. Intelligent ne omnia istec animales et brutales hi homines? Nequaquam, sed in sibi suaso honore proprio corripiendo positi, iumentis inscipientibus comparati, similes fient illis. Etenim omnia sancta spernunt, euntes in adinventionibus suis, guadentes ignorantia matre sua que in cunctos errores malitie duplicis eos larvatos adeo vinxit ut numquam redimi dissolvique possint nisi prefatis flagellis penitus destruantur et eorum exosa memoria horribili cum sonitu et odioso pereat super terram penitusque aboleatur."

11 Ricc. 3026, f.

12 Ricc. 3026, f. The letters were published in his *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad sanctissimum in Christo patrem et D. N. D. Clementem divina providentia Papam septimum* (1525) [hereafter *Epistola ad Clementem:* the only copy to my knowledge reporting the printer's name and date is Trieste, Biblioteca Civica Attilio Hortis, codex Petrarca III 942]. His first letter, 'Quoniam lucem ...' (ff. 23r–26r), dated April 1523, presents Angelo in third person as a visionary, inspired by the Holy Spirit and comparing himself to the Apostles, who left home, fame and comfort to follow God and Adrian's project of reformation (most likely implying a request for the permission to preach which would be denied or never granted to him as he would write later, cf. *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 61v: "et dogliomi forte non mi esser al publico parlare concesso"). The second, 'Sapientes seculi ...' (ff. 26v–28v) alludes to a previous letter dated May ("in vigilia Ascensionis") 1523, and elaborates on the expected *diluvium* for 1524, while also requesting from the pope his judgement on the letters he previously had sent to him. That previous letter is found later in the book (ff. 29r–31r) with the *incipit* 'Cum omne ...', where he insists on the need to purify the Church, proposing two tools for it: a new crusade and a general council. While he does not seem to have met Pope Adrian VI in person, there are reasons to believe he was in Rome between 1522 and 1525: on the one hand, the watermark used in the paper of the ms. allegedly sent to Adrian VI locates it in Rome (Briquet 6443, var. Rome 1502–1518); on the other, Angelo's knowledge of the Roman curia (cf. *Epistola ad Clementem*, ff. 26r and 31r) includes information about the bishop of Ávila Francisco Ruiz, cardinal López de Carvajal and his friend the bishop of Antivari Lorenzo Boschetti, which seems to have been acquired from first-hand experience. Note that similar calls for crusade are found in the prologue to the print version of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum* (from Greek to Latin, 1507), dedicated to King Ferdinand of Aragon. Last, on the familiarity of Angelo with Pius II's work, note that his uncle Paolo Angelo senior was close to the Della Rovere pope, who, allegedly, even created him cardinal *in pectore* (cf. below, note 13).

Angelo describes how the antigraph used to produce the copy sent to Adrian VI belonged to his uncle, Paolo Angelo senior, archbishop of Drisht in Albania.[13] After his death, it passed to Angelo's father, Pietro, but it was lost after the fall of Drisht to the Ottomans: then, according to Angelo's account, many of his family's belongings were taken to Constantinople as spoils of war, some of which his father managed to ransom for a high price. While the account of the antigraph's provenance is most likely included simply to increase the rarity of Angelo's gift to Adrian VI, other passages of the prologue are concerned with much more practical matters. According to it, God had wanted the *Contra legem* to remain hidden from the common people until the present, when He used Angelo to bring Riccoldo's work to the pope, as "not even the smallest leaf in a tree moves" without God's will.[14] He therefore asks the pope to commission translations of the *Contra legem* into "Spanish, French, German and other Catholic languages" to be then printed by experts, promising to translate it himself into *volgare* as a matter of divine will.[15] "If you do so", Angelo writes, "I do not doubt that as soon as it is known by the Christian people, everyone will be rallied to stand and fight against the treacherous sect of the Muslims".[16]

The manuscript is briefly described by Mérigoux, and while only a critical edition of the transmission of the *Contra legem* could reveal what additions and interventions in the text should be attributed to Angelo, there are some features in the manuscript worth discussing.[17] First, the text is close to Riccoldo's autograph in terms of textual variants, but with minor humanist and graphic interventions.[18] Secondly, a small body

13 Also known as Pal Engjëll in Albanese or Paulus Angelus in Latin (whenever confusion may arise, I'll call him Paolo Angelo senior). His appointment as cardinal *in pectore* is mentioned by Angelo in the *Epistola ad Saracenos,* f. [12v]: "quel homo ... etiam cardenal eletto per il q. Summo Pontefice Pio Secondo. E si chiamava Paulo Angelo arcivescovo di Durazzo." See on him Laporta 2004.

14 Ricc. 3026, f. 3v: "Non ignoret insuper S. T. quod ille forte qui terribilis est in consiliis super filios hominum sine cuius voluntate nec folium quidem arboris movetur minimum usque nunc a vulgo christianorum prefatum libellum occcultare voluit et per me ... electum forsitan ad confundendam fortia queque ad sanctitatis tue manus perducere."

15 Ricc. 3026, f. 4r: "obsecro ipsam ... ut ... indulgens in Hispana, Gallica, Theuthonica et aliis catholicorum linguis transferri per peritos faciat et imprimi per expertos, nam ego in vulgarem sive maternam linguam curabo trasferre latinam sive italicam."

16 Ricc. 3026, f.

17 Mérigoux 1986, pp. 38–39. The dissertation by Katharine G. Waggoner Karchner (2019b), p. 240, provides a potential stemma of the tradition of the *Contra legem* based on her study of 29 copies that seemingly relates Angelo's copy to five others on the grounds of their *explicit* or the absence of Riccoldo's marginal notes in the main text.

18 The copy examined by Riccoldo himself, which was edited by Mérigoux (1986), can be found in Conv. Soppr. C8.1173, ff. 185r–218r. Such interventions, for instance, replace the word 'mun-

of short marginal notes summarizing the contents of the text was copied together with the text by the copyist in the first two folios, while two other hands (M2 and M3) added and corrected the text throughout the whole manuscript.[19] Signs of reading and usage by the two different readers are found in the manuscript such as brackets, *maniculae* or "nota", although they are not many.[20] Finally, the entire text is copied by the same hand, bound in red goatskin, with gauffered edges and covers gilded with vegetal designs, the front of which bears an inscription claiming the book for Pope Adrian VI.[21]

This manuscript reveals some key features of Angelo's thought about Islam. Some, like its association with false Christians, Church reform and prophesized punishments, would remain present in his future dealings with the *Contra legem*.[22] Others, such as the call for a crusade, would be replaced, as we shall see, with an alleged "conversion" approach in his later writings.[23]

THE *EPISTOLA AD SARACENOS* AND THE TRANSLATION OF THE *CONTRA LEGEM*

Shortly before describing his encounter with the Turks in Venice, Angelo states that the *Epistola drizata* was not the first letter that he addressed to the sultan:

---

dum' from Riccoldo's original with 'orbem', 'michi' with 'mihi' or 'ypocrisi' with "hypocrisi", (f. 5r), among others. These, however, cannot be attributed to Angelo's quill as they also appear in other witnesses.

19 See, for instance, the corrections by a reader (M2) of 'dilectionis' with 'delectationis' (f. 23r), 'vaccationis' with 'vetationis' (f. 15 v) or by another reader (M3), what seems a correction: 'Mahometus', related by a cross sign to the word in the text 'Machometus' (f. 5v).

20 M3 writes 'nota' to the section that starts "Nominat enim ipsum, verbum Dei ..." (f. 6v), "sine patre et de virgine natus" (f. 6v) and "Haec fuit tota sua intentio" (f. 7r). The single manicule appears to point to "Nam Abrae facte sunt repromissiones ..." (f. 12r); the brackets contain from "quod si dixerint" to "monarchiam mundi" (f. 14v) and from "Divisimus et dedimus ..." to "de spiritu nostro" (f. 29r).

21 "Di·Adr·VI·Pô·M". Whether the book belonged or not to Adrian VI, however, is unclear, as there are no studies about his library (cf. note 4).

22 Cf. note 3.

23 Angelo's relative knowledge of contemporary politics is clear from the careful manufacture of his letters to gain influence among religious and political leaders, discussing even the *tehditnameler* or letters of threat sent by Suleiman to the king of Hungary (cf. note 30). Less than two months before Angelo dedicated his copy of the *Contra legem* to him, Adrian VI had promulgated the bull *Monet nos veritas*, declaring a three-year truce among the Christian kingdoms to allow them to launch a crusade against the Ottomans. Cf. Setton 1976, p. 218.

> It will not be a surprise to you (sir Sultan) if previously with almost the same zeal and spirit that spoke to the Apostle Paul and to the aforementioned Saint Gregory I wrote to you my persuasive epistle dedicating to you this roughly the book of the blessed friar Riccoldo against the Qur'an.[24]

This previous letter was his *Epistola ad Saracenos* containing his translation of the *Contra legem* "per la promessa fatta a Papa Hadr. TI [*sic*]".[25] It was printed in Venice between late 1523 and *c*. 1525, and contained, along with the translation, a prologue presented as a letter to encourage Suleiman to convert to Christianity, together with other minor texts, both original and borrowed from different sources.[26] Although the Latin prologue in the manuscript copy dedicated to the Dutch pope was relatively short, the new Italian prologue to the print translation published in the *Epistola ad Saracenos* contains much more information about the Venetian priest's thought. He continues to associate false Christians with Muslims and he insists that his mission was ordained by God by "certa, anzi expressa comissione et comandamento". Christ, Angelo writes, "has spoken several times in my heart and in my mind in his traditional spiritual way", instructing him to "to urgently warn on his behalf all of the unbelieving false Christians, Muslims and Jews" about their need to convert.[27] He declares that God has explicitly designated his age to be the time of reform and renovation of the universal Church and outlined this process, which consists of penitence, abandoning their infidelity and bad costums, and inducing a final conversion of the heart. Otherwise, he warns the sultan, the impending punishment and destruction would be worse than the seven Egyptian plagues.[28]

---

24 *Epistola drizata*, 1v: "impero non para a te (Sultanem effendi) si altre volte quasi con quel medemo zelo et spitio che parlaua nello apostolo Paulo et nel prefato Diuo Gregorio io te habi scritta la epistola suasoria dedicandote el sacrato libello cosi rozzamente del beato frate Ricoldo contra lo alcorano."

25 Cf. note 3. *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 17r.

26 These are *Articuli sanctissime Christiane fidei … sive rethia preparata* (ff. [2]r–[2]v, a comparison chart of citations from both First and Second Testament about a series of topics), the *Ultima prophetia consumata a giorni nostri sopra li inimici tutti de Cristo* (ff. 60r–61r, a prophecy explaining Muslim expansion as a result of Christians' sins), followed by an epilogue by Angelo (ff. 61r–57[i.e., 64]r), and a prayer entitled *Christicole omnes veraces pro Ecclesie sancte universalis reformatione supplicantes ita orant ad Dominum* (f. 57[i.e., 64]v). Cf. notes 36–38.

27 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]r.

28 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]v.: "Dio ha expressamente sententiato senza revocatione che vol reformare et renovare tutta la universal Ecclesia sua et destruggere tutti gli inimici de quella con ogni specie de mali penali et acerbissime tremebunde ruine perche loro sono asssai piu obdurati che non furono li pessimi egiptii al tempo dela grande oppressione del populo de

Angelo describes a generalized state of unparalleled moral corruption and sin that, he says, is too long to be described in detail.[29] Instead, out of love and hopes for the conversion of Islam, Angelo decides to mention only one sin, committed by the sultan: the *tehditname* sent to the king of Hungary threatening to destroy Christianity.[30] For his repentance, and to open "li occhi del inteletto" to God's grace, Angelo proposes the sultan a prayer:

> Allah true God, Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Virgin Mary, mother of God, forgive me for I am a sinner who feels more compunction and pain for my sins than most of your Christians ... I beg you show me the way through which I must go, for I have lifted my soul to you, my God, I will not be ashamed of trusting in you but I will have faith in you and will never be confounded.[31]

However, Angelo is certain that the sultan will not immediately convert, for God's plans are different: like a lion tied to a chain, the Ottomans will ravage and punish Christians only as far as it is God's will, and only after serving this purifying purpose will the sultan's miraculous conversion take place. Again, the reason for this is solely the sinful state of Christianity. As Angelo writes, Christians

> have their most bold sins conglomerated on earthly matters, and they are much bigger and more vast than those of your poisonous sect of Muhammad because in truth there is as much difference between Muhammad's sin and

Israel in Egypto ... non meno, anzi assai piu fara de brevi esso Iesu Christo contra li inimici dela sua croce."

29 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]v: "non mi affatichero in particular nominarli ... et cosi nel grasso suo lasserolli insestessi defrigere."

30 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [5]v.: "El qual pecato lhai forsi scordato et drieto le spalle fora buttato. Ma Dio ... se ha dignato che io ... lhabbi non gia in terra veduto esser scritto ma registrato indelebilmente (fin al pentire et tua conversione) nel folio stellato et excelso throno del Maximo Dio immortale aman dextra dove el nome de Machometto non fu scritto mai ne comendato. Ma ben si contiene che tu blasfemante temerariamente scrivesti al Sacro Re de Ungharia et la tua bocca in celo mettendo minaciasti voler destruggere la indestruttibile et inexpugnabil secta del glorioso signor Iesu Christo." The *tehditnameler* or "letters of threat" were a consolidated genre of diplomatic correspondence that developed in the Ottoman court, meant to provoke the enemy to force them to appear in the battlefield.

31 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [6]r.

> that of the heretics as between the sin of ignorance and the sin of boastful and manifold malice.[32]

Angelo describes the moral corruption stopping the sultan from conversion in strong terms:

> those who are now baptized and raised in the rite of the faith of baptism are in such way in the religion and cloisters whence light should come out that in this plagued world full of diabolical poison they observe none of the commandments or laws of God, they do not obey the holy gospel and they respect no vows; what is more, they do no good deeds with their heart but rather they strive to perform with their mouth and exterior acts those beautiful ceremonies from which they may detract some advantage, honour or pleasure for themselves and not for Jesus Christ, whom they rather angrily hate with their dark, petulant and most horrible heart … And thus you could not find any clearly good example nor any spiritual help, for charity is already fully extinct.[33]

If Suleiman converted in such a context, he would be forced to hide, like Angelo himself and all good true Christians.[34] Instead, he encourages the sultan to wait until the time comes: only then will Angelo fully reveal the Christian faith to him. This anticipated moment is nothing else but the destruction of false Christians, or at least their true conversion. He further explains to Suleiman that, since everything is vain in this world, he should not believe much in his victories, for their only reason was the sinfulness of Christians and their lack of concord: should they repent and fall back to God's grace, they would easily defeat the Muslims.[35] Therefore, while waiting for this time to come, Angelo presents the sultan with a much-needed gift, something that will serve him and his sect as a preparation and introduction to Christianity: "that angelical and divine opuscule compiled by the former reverend father Riccoldo", i.e., the *Contra legem*.[36]

---

32 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [6]v.

33 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. [6]v–[7]r.

34 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. [6]r–[7]v: "Verum a nasconderte astritto seresti … giache per rabida sua invidentia della gran forma[?] non lassano ben vivere i proximi suoi, neanche te sultanem effendi lasseriano con tua setta salvarte … seresti constritto deventar con tua setta quel certo proselito de antiqui farisei falsi et de Christo capital hosti et ne linferno aspetaristi dopia pena."

35 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. [7]v–[8]r. Cf. note 36.

36 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [9]r. The last sections of the prologue elaborate on Angelo's vision of

It may be worth noting, before discussing the text of the *Contra legem*, that Riccoldo's work is not the last text in the *Epistola ad Saracenos*. Immediately after, Angelo introduced a fragment from John Mandeville's travel book, titled *Ultima prophetia consumata a giorni nostri sopra li inimici tutti de Cristo* and elaborating on the idea of Christian sin and moral corruption as the ultimate cause of Muslim power.[37] This prophecy is followed by an epilogue written by Angelo, where he further explains the reasons that led him to writing this book and focuses on the specific sins of false Christians and their preachers, whom he describes as worse than the Muslims themselves.[38] Lastly, the book ends with a prayer in Latin for the reformation of the Church, vaguely modelled on the Lord's prayer, with important allusions to conciliarism, universal conversion of infidels and the arrival of an Angelic Pope.[39]

Islam, the need of free will for conversion, and the need of moral and spiritual reform from both false Christians and Muslims. He proves to have read the *Contra legem* as he quotes Qur'anic passages cited by Riccoldo, some of which he presents as introduced by the Holy Spirit as a "safety device" that would allow Muslims to realize the errors of their faith. It is particularly indicative of Angelo's readiness to change discourse to see no mentions made to a crusade, as in the prologue to Adrian VI, but rather expression of fraternal love towards the sultan. Angelo also seizes the occasion to extensively present his family, his descendance and deeds.

37 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. 60r–61r: "Il soldano … domandolo a che modo se governavano li christiani … lui li rispose che per la gratia de Dio se governavano bene et lui [i.e., the Sultan] gli disse che esso Ioanne errava … perche veramente loro bene non fanno … perche gli prelati de christiani a Dio servire non stimano. Essi … vanno tutto el giorno per le taverne, giocando, bevendo, mangiando a modo de bestie … cosi gli altri christiani se sforzano luno et laltro baratarse … Et cosi per gli peccati loro hanno questa terra perduta quale tenemo nui … perche nui de certo sapiamo che quando voi christiani al vostro Dio servirete bene esso vi vora aiutare et nui contra voi nulla potremo. Et bene sapiamo per prophetia che in questa terra regneranno gli christiani quando loro serviranno al suo Dio …" Angelo's interventions are mostly to turn Mandeville's account into indirect speech and to expand some epithets. Mandeville's book of travel was printed in Venice twice in the ten years before Angelo composed his *Epistola ad Saracenos*, both of which match the numeration of chapters used by Angelo to quote Mandeville (ch. 120): John Mandeville, *Ioanne de Mandauila, qual tracta de le piu marauegliose cose …* (1521) and John Mandeville, *Joanne de Mandauilla: qual tracta delle più marauegliose cose …* (1515).

38 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. 61r–57 [i.e., 64]r. On the question of preaching, cf. note 12. Angelo's bad opinion of current preachers (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 63r): "Item … fanno predicar la dottrina non sana per pessimi predicatori et carnalissimi peggio che Turchi et Mori quali solamente recitano quello fa a loro proposito de pigliare credito alcuuo [*sic*]." Of false Christians he says (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 63r): "palesemente piu vergogna nulla hanno vivere a modo de bestie piu inordinati et lascivi che non fanno gli anteditti figlioli del pravo Alcorano." The description of their sins focuses on luxury, gluttony, arrogance, and material vanity.

39 *Epistola ad Saracenos*, ff. 57 [i.e., 64]v–59 [i.e., 65]r: "ad sanctum tam clamatum tamque expectatum generale concilium unanimiter convocentur … fiat vera pax in virtute, fiat omnibus cor

While it is hard to make any claims about Angelo's interventions in the Latin text of the *Contra legem* in the absence of a critical edition, we can however compare his manuscript version to its translation. First, it seems clear that Angelo followed the apograph of the manuscript version of the *Contra legem* for Adrian VI, as the corrections and additions made to it after its copy are clearly not present in the Latin text of Riccoldo's work used for the translation.[40] The text combines a tendency to a *verbum de verbo* translation, often using words from the same Latin lexical root, with frequent amplifications from Angelo's own pen, mostly denigrating Islam but also introducing proverbs.[41] Both the manuscript version and its translation skip some small sections.[42] The text also provides an interesting picture of Angelo's intellectual profile: he does not seem to know any Greek or Arabic, despite the sporadic use of Ottoman Turkish words, and he might have known Riccoldo's *Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem*.[43]

---

unum, fiat Angelicum unum ovile, fiat divinus et unus pastor adveniens ad regnum tuum … Aperi portam tue sancte fidei gentibus universis que christianis in virtutibus dominentur." For the interest of Angelo on Church reform, cf. Fernández Guerrero 2018.

40 For instance, in Ricc. 3026, f. 7v, the words "et dixit quod filius Israel" are cancelled, but they still appear in translation in *Epistola ad Saracenos* f. 20v: "dixe cosi videlicet che il figliolo de Israel…"; or f. 15v, where 'vacationis' is later corrected by a reader with 'vetationis' while the translation retains the previous reading, f. 32v: "che nel capitulo vacationis consequita …" It is clear from its notes that the ms. was confronted with another copy or copies of the *Contra legem* to correct the text.

41 For example, in Ricc. 3026, f. 15r: "Octavo considerandum est quod etiam sine omni miraculo lex Mahometi posset acceptari a mundo", translated in *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 32r: "Ottavo e da considerare che anchora senza ogni miraculo la lege de Machomet potria esser acceptata dal mondo." Amplifications, or the translation of a word with two or more words, can be found in the translation of the original "confutare principales obscenitates tam perfidae legis" (Ricc. 3026, f. 6r), translated by Angelo in *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 18v as "le principal obscenita et errori de tanta perfida lege plenamente convincendo confutare, prosternere et annihilare." Regarding his denigratory additions, he continues the description of Muhammad by Riccoldo in Ricc. 3026, f. 18r as 'lubrico dracone' with the words "dissoluto, et ali atti de ogni venera abominabil volupta dato tutto" claiming that he had, other than 'sedutto' as Riccoldo writes, "decetto, in abyssato, destrutto, et ale tartaree pene deducendo condutto" the biggest part of the world. In some cases, Angelo opts for a discrete translation of a graphic passage, such as the list of body parts to be washed before prayer in *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 34r.

42 This suggests that the textual tradition of the *Contra legem* may not be necessarily uniform. Both the ms. and the print text are missing the fragments edited in Mérigoux 1986, p. 93, ll. 71–76 and p. 99, ll. 250–252.

43 He either wrongly transcribes Greek lexical loans or fails to notice the errors present in his antigraph, which he then perpetuates through the translation: for instance, he writes "Atropomofortis" (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 20r) for "antropomorphositis", while he translates the name of the sura 'Elmearem' (i.e., At-Taḥrīm) as "vetatione over avaterina" (*Epistola ad Saracenos*,

THE *EPISTOLA DRIZATA*

Likely printed nine years after the *Epistola ad Saracenos*, the *Epistola drizata* is a short booklet that, with the addition of a new prologue, recapitulates the contents of the *Epistola ad Saracenos*. This is openly stated by Angelo when he describes Jesus compelling him to write this new book:

> that same spirit of the lord … Jesus Christ … who taught me to write to you inside and outside has compelled me, or even forced to enucleate out of the salutary epistle aforementioned some brief conclusive chapters, in which most of its contents are found.[44]

---

f. 32v), i.e., "anathema" (ἀνάθεμα). For the Arabic, the many mistakes in the translation of the sura's names prove this beyond doubt: see, for instance, *Epistola ad Saracenos* f. 20r, where about the sura 'Elhagar' (i.e., Al-Hijr) he writes "che se interpreta Bap", likely a poor reading of the abbreviation of the original "lapis", or *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 34v, where the original "Elrahman quod interpretatur miserator" is translated as "nel capitolo Alharamen che se expone se [*sic*]", a mistake that is present already in Ricc. 3026, f. 17r. Other mistakes, however, were added as the type text was prepared at print, where the sura 'Arrahamen' (i.e., ar-Raḥmān) became 'Alharamen' (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 34v). His knowledge of Ottoman Turkish does not go beyond a few words such as titles of the sultan ("Urumelden, Stambuliden, Naduliden, Caramaneliden, Sultan Sulamani", *Epistola ad Saracenos* f. [III]r), some formulas ("sultanem cis effendi", *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [III]v, an egregious mistake in terms of Ottoman courtly etiquette), or the word 'caur' (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [IV]r). Regarding his knowledge of Riccoldo's *Epistole*, Angelo seems to know more than just the title of the text as he translates the reference to them made by Riccoldo himself in his prologue to the *Contra legem* (Ricc. 3026, f. 5v: "scripsi quasdam epistolas ad ecclesiam triumphantem") adding a reference to the militant Church (*Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. 18r: "scrissi alcune epistole ala militante et anchor di sopra ala triumphante ecclesia") which features prominently in the third letter. On this light, the line from *Epistola drizata*, f. [6r] where he writes that Islam "piu alli boni et veri che a rei et falsi christiani procura nocere" could likely be linked to the description of the martyrdom of Oriental Christians in Riccoldo's fourth letter.

44 *Epistola drizata*, f. [3r]. See note 1 for the full title. The copy is kept in the Cambridge (Massachusetts), Houghton Library, Ott.195.3. The type, woodcuts and frontispieces are the same as those in books printed by Bernardino Viani at the expense of the bookseller Comino da Lovere, such as Pietro da Lucca, *Opusculo de trenta documenti, del reuerendo padre don Pietro da Luca canonico regulare* (1525) or Gerardus de Zutphania, *Libro de le ascensione spirituale, necessario a qualunque vole far profecto ne la vita religiosa* (1526). Da Lovere had printed Angelo's edition of the prophecies attributed to Vicente Ferrer under the title *Mirabilis prophetiarum interpretatio de fine mundi* in 1527 while Viani produced the copies of his *Epistola ad Clementem* in 1525. The frontispiece of the *Epistola drizata* includes a woodcut depicting a European king seemingly giving audience inside a pavilion.

Its prologue elaborates on the issues of Church reform, discussing Angelo's divine mandate to write to the sultan and prepare him for conversion, as well as the divine punishments for Christians' sins and the final conversion of Muslims which "tutta presto presto sara".[45] After this prologue, the main body of text is divided in 66 chapters which vary in length but are mostly one sentence long each, summarizing the contents of the *Epistola ad Saracenos*. Most of these chapters summarize, however, the prologue of the *Epistola ad Saracenos* and not the translation of the *Contra legem*, focusing on Angelo himself, the corrupted state of the Christendom and the need for moral and spiritual reform. Only about a quarter of them deal with the conversion of the sultan, and the difficulties arising from Suleiman's own pride and the bad example of false Christians.

This focus on the moral and spiritual reform of Christianity, where Angelo's descriptions of himself provide the image of what true Christians are like (i.e., persecuted and suffering), fits well with the handful of chapters from the *Contra legem* that are actually summarized in the *Epistola drizata*. For instance, chapter 35 (*Epistola drizata*, f. [6r] "The felicity, happiness and true good of man is not in the things of this world, nor in the exterior senses of the afterlife, as the Qur'an states. It consists instead of the other, eternal life after the first one and gathering all things in Christ, the most glorious and greatest good") repeats the topics from chapter five of the *Contra legem*. Equally, chapters 55 and 57 condemn gluttony and sodomy in terms similar to those of chapters six and eight of Riccoldo's polemical treatise. On the other hand, shorter references, for example, to Muhammad's ignorance and lies (*Epistola drizata*, f. [8r]) can be found in chapter nine while the condemnation to Hell of all Muslims (*Epistola drizata*, f. [5v]) can be found in chapter five.

EARLY MODERN READINGS OF THE *CONTRA LEGEM*

While it does not contain a full summary of the *Contra legem*, the *Epistola drizata* shows extensive knowledge and careful usage of Riccoldo's polemical treatise, focusing on Christianity as well as moral and spiritual reform. Such usage becomes more meaningful, however, when briefly compared to some other ways early modern Christian readers engaged with the *Contra legem*.[46]

45 *Epistola drizata*, f. [3v].

46 A topic yet to be fully addressed: while fragmentary, see Piemontese 1996b; Cavallero 2016; also George-Tvrtković 2012. See also the conclusions to this essay.

Humanist readings

Renaissance Florence was an important centre for the circulation of the *Contra legem,* both in Greek and in Latin.[47] While Riccoldo's autograph was available for consultation at the library of the Dominican convent of Santa Maria Novella, his treatise was also read in Florence beyond the Order of Preachers.[48] Marsilio Ficino relied on Riccoldo's account in the *Contra legem* as his source on the prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an for the composition of his *De Christiana religione*, which focused on the supernaturality of Christian revelation.[49] While Ficino still claimed the superiority of Christianity over Islam, his tone is far from that of medieval religious polemics: in fact, his usage of Riccoldo's treatise concentrates on historical events, the origins of Muhammad and of Islamic religion.[50] These topics were also the focus of Bartolomeo Fonzio, a 15th-century Florentine poet who was able to borrow Marsilio Ficino's copy of the *Contra legem*, bound together with other texts from the *Corpus Cluniacense*,

47 Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. gr. 706 contains a copy of Demetrius Kydones' translation of the *Contra legem* with notes by Isidore of Kiev added during his stay in Florence for the continuation of the Council of Basel between 1439 and 1445, which took place in Santa Maria Novella. This ms. would later join the library of Pope Sixtus IV: cf. Müntz & Fabre 1887, p. 226.

48 See, for instance, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Acq. e doni 431 (hereafter Acq. e doni 431), assembled and partly copied in 1439 at the Florentine Augustine convent of Santa Maria Regina Coeli: on it, see Fratini & Zamponi 2004, p. 48. As Mérigoux (1986, p. 6) notes, the first inventory from Santa Maria Novella's library made in 1489 provides the shelf-mark ("in nono bancho") of the autograph *Contra legem*: that it (or copies close to it) was used by readers to collate their own copies of the *Contra legem* is seen precisely in Acq. e doni 431, where readers collated their manuscript, copied from the first *recensio* of Riccoldo's treatise, with the later redactional stages of the autograph and corrected mistakes, according to Mérigoux (1986, p. 38), in the transcription of Arabic words.

49 Vasoli 1988; Piemontese 1996b, p. 242. For a recent edition of *De Christiana religione*, see Marsilio Ficino, *De christiana religione* ed. Guido Bartolucci 2019. In these same years Girolamo Savonarola also used the *Contra legem* for his *Triumphus crucis* (among other works), in a less conciliatory tone than Ficino. Cf. Mérigoux 1986, pp. 50–51. Ficino owned a ms. containing the *Corpus Cluniacense*, with minor additions including Riccoldo's *Contra legem* and *Itinerarium*: Piemontese (1996b, pp. 245–246) suggests that Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, ms. H.II.33 (*c.* 1525), may be a direct copy of Ficino's ms., now lost. I believe, following Vasoli 1997, that his letters to the king of Hungary Matthias Corvinus regarding his role as defender of the faith against Islam are more to be read as an attempt to secure a position at the king's court than as a heartfelt call to crusade.

50 A summary of these can be found in Katinis 2014.

to read and take notes regarding the genealogy and life of Muhammad.[51] Fonzio combined in his notes Riccoldo's account with other more modern sources such as Bartolomeo Platina's *Vitae Romanorum pontificum* in his quest for the reconstruction of the origins of Islam, in a manuscript that, for the rest, contains mostly notes and fragments of historical works.[52] This interest of Florentine humanists in Riccoldo as a historiographical source is reinforced by the presence of a full copy of the *Contra legem* in the preparatory notebooks of Sigismondo Tizio for his lost *Historia barbarica*, devoted to Islamic expansion and the lives of Muhammad, Saladin and Bayezid II up to the wars between the Ottoman sultan and the Safavid sophy.[53]

Polemics against Islam—and Protestants

Riccoldo's treatise against the Qur'an was also crucial for early modern polemical literature as a source of information regarding Islam: if Alonso de Espina is to be considered the first Western theologian to follow Riccoldo's arguments about the superiority of Christianity over Islam in his *Fortalitium fidei*, Juan de Torquemada took entire passages from the *Contra legem* for his *Contra principales errores perfidi Machometi*, most likely through Petrus de Pennis' work.[54] Together with these, both the *editio princeps* of the *Contra legem* printed in Seville in 1500 and its translation

51 Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 673 (hereafter Ricc. 673), f. 122v: "Riccoldus ebron theologus occidentalis in eo libro quem scripsit contra legem sarracenorum dicit Christum et apostolos fuisse ante Maumethum sexcentis annis. Maumethus enim surrexit tempore Eraclii qui incipiit regnare anno secentessimo decimo", taken from ch. 9 of the *Contra legem*. Fonzio adds in the margin a reference to Riccoldo's *Itinerarium*: "Ideo ante tempora nostra circiter an. 259 fuit et Papae instituto multas prouincias peregrinavit et brevem hystoriam itineris sui edidit quam habet Marsilius Ficinus una cum hoc volumine contra Saracenos et Alchoran." In f. 123r, a note by Fonzio reads: "De Maumetho ex libro Marsilii Ficini in quo Alchoran est." These notes occur in ff. 122v–123v in the ms.

52 On Platina and Islam, see Meserve 2008, pp. 79, 95, 120–122. For Fonzio's ms. see de Robertis & Miriello 1997, pp. 51–52.

53 The copy of the *Contra legem* among his preparatory notebooks for the *Historia barbarica* is now in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat. 9374, ff. 241r–75v. See Piemontese 1996a, p. 222, for a description of the texts contained in this ms. and a discussion of Tizio's sources. More recently, see Mahmoud Helmy 2013. I thank M. Lodone for this information.

54 Echevarria 2012. Such a claim regarding Torquemada is advanced by Adeva Martín 2007, based on the copied passages and the presence of de Pennis' treatise in one ms. copy of Torquemada's *Contra errores*. They are actually two: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Barb. lat. 856 and Vat. lat. 976. Against this, see Waggoner Karchner 2019b, pp. 156–178. For the library of Torquemada, see Izbicki 1981.

printed in Toledo and Seville the following year bear witness to the interest in Riccoldo's work in Spain after the fall of the kingdom of Granada.[55] However, its readership went beyond mere theological confutations of Islam: some, like Gonzalo Arredondo y Alvarado or Martin Luther, used Riccoldo's treatise moved by the pressing need to articulate a response to the Ottoman expansion, while others, such as the Dominican Giovanmaria Tolosani, relied on Riccoldo's account of Islam as a heresy in his *De conflictu et pugna inter catholicos doctores et haereticos, ex Apochalipsi* for a treatise broadly devoted to the Protestant heresy.[56]

Polemics against Christians: Angelo's case

Angelo's interest in the *Contra legem* can hardly be compared to those previously mentioned: far from the case of some of its models, such as the *Epistola ad Mahumetum* by Pius II, the conversion of Muslims was for Angelo a rhetorical trope to articulate its main idea, i.e., the need for reform in the Church and in the heart of Christians.[57]

During his prolific editorial career, Angelo cultivated a wide array of interests: from prophetical anthologies to exegetical treatises, historical chronicles and religious polemics.[58] He addressed them to important recipients, showing a significant knowledge of ecclesiastical and lay politics, and urged his readers to support him. This latter aspect, has regrettably led many scholars to portray Angelo as an eccentric, desperate

55 Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Improbatio Alcorani* (1500); *Reprobacion del Alcoran* (1501); *Reprobacion del Alcoran* (1502). Before, however, copies seem to have circulated in Iberian Dominican convents, e.g., Santo Domingo de Silos, as registered in the 1770 catalogue studied by Boylan (1992). This copy does not appear in the later catalogue in Whitehill & Pérez de Urbel 1929, suggesting that it was lost between that period, as no other extant copy seems to match its description.

56 For Gonzalo Arredondo, cf. de Bunes Ibarra 2014. See instead the contribution by Ehmann in this volume for Luther's translation of the *Contra legem*. Tolosani's work was edited by Camporeale (1986), later reprinted in Camporeale 2002. Note that Tolosani was a friar at the Dominican convent of San Marco in Florence in the same years as another reader of Riccoldo, Girolamo Savonarola.

57 Angelo knew of Pius II's letter, as he mentioned it in the *Epistola ad Saracenos*, f. [4r] ("Perche etiam olim ultra li altri la felice me Pio secondo al qual tuo bisavo Sultan Machomet scrisse ne tamen alcun frutto dal scriver piissimo suo podete sequire"). On the circulation of Pius II's *Epistola*, see Aenea Silvio Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), *Epistola ad Mahumetem*, ed. Glei & Kobusch 2001, pp. 98–114. For the similarities and differences between the Senese pope's letter and Angelo's *Epistola ad Saracenos*, see the conclusions to this essay.

58 Some of his works are mentioned by McGinn 1992; Rhodes 1993; and Fernández Guerrero 2018.

character of scant intellectual means.[59] However, despite this variety of themes and addressees, a common thread runs across his work: the concern for spiritual and moral reform in the Church on the eve of imminent divine punishments. This, together with his constant efforts to gain support from the high circles of religious hierarchies and the careful adaptation and rebranding of his discourse according to its recipients, suggests that Angelo's interest in the *Contra legem* was not necessarily motivated by a genuine interest in Islam. For Angelo, who had called for a harsh vengeance against Muslims in the form of a crusade when addressing Adrian VI a few years earlier, the hopes for the conversion of Sultan Suleiman were a flag under which rally his own co-religionists and encourage them to convert "false Christians" into true believers: for him this was the only way to put a stop to Christian defeats, Ottoman expansion and the impending threats of floods, plagues and divine punishments. While the conversion of Muslims had an important place in the imaginary of Christian millenarianism, for Angelo the focus was set on the reformation of Christianity as a *conditio sine qua non* for the end of Ottoman expansion and the conversion of Muslims.

The different texts assembled with the translation of the *Contra legem* in his *Epistola ad Saracenos*, together with the passages chosen from it for the later summary in the *Epostola drizata*, show a consistent effort by Angelo to connect Riccoldo's work with his concerns about the Church's moral and spiritual reform. Unlike many humanists of his time, Angelo was not interested in a history of Islam nor did he show an intellectual or historical interest in Islamic faith.[60] He presented the work of Riccoldo as a tool to compel Christians to fight against Islam in a crusade, but also as a mirror for Christians to see their own sins, as he himself wrote in the prologue for the *Contra legem* prepared for Adrian VI: "in the following book by fr. Riccoldo the crimes of this cursed pagan sect will be openly exposed as not smaller than those of the false Christians … and both opposites against each other will appear more clearly in contrast".[61] Angelo sets this very opposition of false Christians and Muslims in a more rhetorical fashion by declaring in the prologue of the *Contra legem* for Adrian VI that his goal is nothing but to expose the sins and crimes of "tam falsorum christianorum quam falsigraphorum sarracenorum", in a polyptoton that equates the falseness and moral corruption of both.[62]

59 Tognetti 1970; McGinn 1992.

60 61 While the *Epistola ad Saracenos* does report some of the marginal notes present in Ricc. 3026, most others are new, note Arabic words or suras, and were most likely added by the printers themselves and not by Angelo.

61 Cf. note 12.

62 Cf. note 9.

CONCLUSIONS

Angelo continued an epistolary model, i.e., a letter addressed to the Ottoman sultan encouraging him to convert to Christianity, that had been used shortly before him by Pius II. The latter's *Epistola ad Mahumetem,* however, has been the object of many scholarly interpretations, from those who saw in it a genuine attempt to convert Mehmet II "in a mood of despair and within a well-established missionary tradition"[63] to others who considered it a self-promotional exercise with prophetic undertones.[64] Yet, both addressed the sultan as a potential second Constantine, and both had in mind rather a Christian audience than an Ottoman ruler:[65] but while Piccolomini's discussion of Mehmet II's conversion seems to be ultimately focused on political matters, Angelo calls for a different type of conversion; a Christian conversion more in line with Riccoldo's original mindset.[66]

Riccoldo's treatise against the Qur'an enjoyed a wider circulation from its composition in the 14th century onwards than previously thought, as recently surfaced witnesses have demonstrated in the last few years.[67] It is worth noting, however, that such

63 Hankins 1995, p. 129. Similar remarks by e.g. Kenneth Setton or Franco Gaeta are discussed in Özden Mercan 2017, pp. 72–73. I thank F. Özden Mercan for kindly sharing her essay with me.

64 Viallon 2011.

65 A position first advanced by Schwoebel 1967, p. 66 and later taken up by Bisaha 2002 and Özden Mercan 2017.

66 On this, cf. Scotto 2021.

67 Waggoner Karchner 2019a; González Muñoz 2020. An important note on this matter is the disappearance (most likely a theft) of one copy, Pistoia, Biblioteca Leoniana, ms. 31, dated 1442, which resurfaced first in an auction catalogue *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures, London Tuesday 18th June 1991* (Sotheby's 1991, p. 84, lot 82) and last in Kaeppeli & Panella 1993, p. 264, being now lost. Waggoner Karchner reports its existence in her dissertation as "an unverifiable citation" (2019b, p. 231) and González Muñoz wrongly reports this ms. as still extant in the Pistoiese library (2020). The theft of manuscripts and miniatures in Pistoia between 1980 and 1990 is discussed by Murano 2009, p. 768, n. 54. Note too that Ricc. 673, described by Dondaine 1967 as containing a copy of the *Contra legem* contains only some references to it and not the actual text: for more on this ms., see note 51. Last, a copy of the *Contra legem* was found among the sources compiled by Sigismondo Tizio for his lost *Historia barbarorum* by Piemontese (1996a, p. 222). A later, 18th-century copy in Rome, Archivum Generale Ordinis Predicatorum, ms. XIV. 181, mentioned by Kaeppeli & Panella (1993), has not been mentioned in the other inventories of the *Contra legem,* perhaps due to its later composition. Murano (2009) discusses a copy of the *Contra legem* made and owned by Giordano de Michele Giordani, most likely a translation into Italian, as the vast majority of his books were in Italian: I have been unable to identify any ms. of the *Contra legem* that could match the description by Giordano, i.e., a "libro di mia mano in cartta mezana non legato". Murano implies that the lost copy from Pistoia could be this; however, its early composition date (1442) suggests otherwise.

circulation did not just take place in manuscript form, in Latin or under the name of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce: 18 print editions from the early 16th to the early 17th centuries appeared in Latin, Spanish, German, Greek, and in Angelo's case, Italian; together with these print translations, over 20 manuscript copies in Greek circulated, while Riccoldo's treatise also appeared in Latin manuscript copies under different names such as Mattheus de Remago or through reworkings such as Petrus de Pennis' *Tractatus contra Alchoranum*.[68] Beyond the question of circulation, tracing such reception and active readings of the *Contra legem* requires first to acknowledge the complex, subtle and unique ways in which literary contacts occur.[69] And while an exhaustive history of Riccoldo's treatise and its influence in early modern Europe is well beyond the scope of this essay, the case of Angelo constitutes a unique part of its intricated circulation, being more than simply anti-Islamic or historiographical and erudite.

It is not hard to imagine the reasons for Angelo's interest in the *Contra legem*. As the first generation of his family born in Venice, Angelo was not unfamiliar with puzzling news of Islamic expansion similar to that which Riccoldo heard during his travels; he surely knew of the fall of Drisht, his family hometown, and the modern episodes of the Ottoman expansion through the family oral tradition. If Riccoldo believed to have found a theoretical answer for the conundrum of Muslim prosperity in Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*,[70] Angelo's more practical and contradictory rationale explained it as the result of the sinful and corrupt state of modern Christianity. On the one hand, and away from a retributive logic, Angelo's deeply eschatological views posited suffering as the quintessential deed of a good Christian, only to be overcome by the final conversion of false Christians and, with them, Muslims, triggering thus a golden age of peace, grace and justice for all. On the other, he explained Ottoman expansion and other events such as the expected *diluvium* of 1524 as the necessary punishment for Christianity's corrupted state.

Both Angelo and Riccoldo, however, would turn their eyes to Christianity in order to cope with the crisis of Islamic puissance: Angelo, urging Christians to spiritual,

68 Panella (1988) discusses many of these. Moreover, he mentions a 17th-century manuscript copy of the print Latin translation by Bartolomeo Picerno from Demetrius Cydones' Greek version kept in Rome, Archivio della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione delle Genti, ms. Miscellanee varie XIa. While Emilio Panella and John Tolan have pointed out the strong parallels between the two works, Fernando González Muñoz is preparing a critical edition of Petrus de Pennis' treatise, which sheds light on the extent to which de Pennis reused, most often verbatim Riccoldo's *Contra legem*.

69 A great example for the necessary attention to this issue remains Drory 1993.

70 Cf. on Riccoldo's interpretation of the Book of Job in light of Gregory's *Moralia*, see Davide Scotto's chapter in this book.

doctrinal and even intellectual reform; and Riccoldo, encouraging Oriental Christians to resist while reprimanding those in the West for their lack of religious zeal. Perhaps the greatest divergence between the two authors lies in their intellectual methods and backgrounds: while Riccoldo sets forth a rebuttal of the Qur'an following medieval Aristotelian scholastics, focused on its inconsistencies and perceived lack of logic, Angelo is closer to Savonarola's positions, highlighting Islam's lack of *lumen naturale* and *supernaturale* and relying overall on revelation as a source of knowledge for the majority of his intellectual endeavours.[71]

The entanglement of Church reform and prophecy in the first half of the 16th century is well known; less so, perhaps, are the ways in which perceived religious crises such as Ottoman expansion or even the Protestant Reformation were read not as divine punishments, but as a time inciting Christians to introspection and self-assessment, following the exegesis of Gregory the Great of the story of Job. Even readers of the *Contra legem* devoted to a thorough confutation of the Qur'an, such as Guillaume Postel, envisioned their ultimate project as a spiritual, intellectual (and therefore political) reform of Christianity.[72] For many other early modern readers of Riccoldo, such as Paolo Angelo or Girolamo Savonarola, this implied not just the conversion of Muslims or Jews but first and foremost the true conversion of Christians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources

Manuscripts

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenzisana, ms. Acq. e doni 431.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, ms. Conv. Soppr. C8.1173.
Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 673.
Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 3026.
Leuven, Bibliothek Godgeleerdheit, Grand Séminaire, 17.
Rome, Archivio della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione delle Genti, ms. Miscellanee varie Xia.
Rome, Archivum Generale Ordinis Predicatorum, ms. XIV. 181.
Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, ms. H.II.33.

71 See, for instance, *Epistola drizata,* f. [4v]. On Angelo and revelation, cf. Fernández Guerrero 2018.

72 Secret 1957. See also the contribution of Rita George-Tvrtković in this volume.

Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. gr. 706.
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Barb. lat. 856.
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat. 976.
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat. 9374.

Printed

Angelo, Paolo. *Epistola drizata per un servo de Dio alla setta delli Agareni ditti Saraceni, annontiandoli el gran mysterio che lo omnipotente Dio Iesu Christo vero Signore tene a punir le iniquita de falsi christiani per reformare, & cõfortare li boni a far bene, & patir male, & per conterire prestamente, & convertire le Mahumetice genti alla sua fede orthodoxa Santissima*, Venice: Bernardino de Viani, Comino da Lovere, *c.* 1534.

Angelo, Paolo. *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad sanctissimum in Christo patrem et D. N. D. Clementem divina providentia Papam septimum*, Venice: Bernardinum de Vianis, 1525.

Angelo, Paolo. *Epistola Pauli Angeli ad Saracenos: cum libello contra Alcoranum pro provida previaque dispositione conversion infidelium omnium mirabiliter et fere repente ad Iesum Christum Dominum Deum nostrum, viam, veritatem et vitam plene satietatis, cui soli sit semper omnis laus honor et gloria nobis autem obedientia fidelis et pura tantum. Amen*, Venice: Agostino and Benedetto Bindoni, 1523–1525.

Angelo, Paolo. *Mirabilis prophetiarum interpretatio de fine mundi*, Venice: Comino da Lovere, 1527.

da Lucca, Pietro. *Opusculo de trenta documenti, del reuerendo padre don Pietro da Luca canonico regulare*, Venice: Bernardino de Viano, Comino de Louere, 1525.

de Zutphania, Gerardus. *Libro de le ascensione spirituale, necessario a qualunque vole far profecto ne la vita religiosa*, Venice: Comino de Louere, 1526.

Ficino, Marsilio. *De Christiana religione* (Clavis 8), ed. Guido Bartolucci, Pisa & Florence: Edizioni della Normale & Istituto nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 2019.

Mandeville, John. *Ioanne de Mandauila, qual tracta de le piu marauegliose cose...* Venice: Marchio & Piero de Rauani, 1521.

Mandeville, John. *Joanne de Mandauilla: qual tracta delle più marauegliose cose...* Venice: Marchio Sessa, 1515.

Piccolomini, Aenea Silvio. *Epistola ad Mahumetem*, introduction, critical ed. & trans. Reinhold F. Glei & Beate Kobusch, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2001.

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. *Confutatio Alcorani seu legis Saracenorum ex graeco nuper in latinum traducta*, Basel: Nikolaus Kessler, *c.* 1507.

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. *Improbatio Alcorani*, Hispali: Stanislau[m] polonu[m], 1500.

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. *Reprobacion del Alcoran*, Sevilla: Dos alemanes compañeros [i.e., Magno Herbst & Juan Pegnitzer], 1501.

Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. *Reprobacion del Alcoran*, Toledo: Pedro Hagembach, 1502.

Studies

Adeva Martín, Ildefonso 2007. 'Juan de Torquemada y su *Tractatus contra principales errores perfidi Machometi et turcorum sive saracenorum* (1459)', *Anuario de historia de la Iglesia* 16, pp. 195–208.

Bisaha, Nancy 2002. 'Pius II's letter to Sultan Mehmed II: A reexamination', *Crusades* 1, pp. 183–200.

Boylan, Ann 1992. 'The library at Santo Domingo de Silos and its catalogues, XIth–XVIIIth centuries', *Revue Mabillon* 3, pp. 59–102, https://doi.org/10.1484/J.RM.2.305505.

Burman, Thomas E. 2012. 'Riccoldo da Monte di Croce', in David Thomas & Alex Mallet eds, *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 4, Leiden: Brill, pp. 678–691.

Camporeale, Salvatore 1986. 'Giovanmaria Dei Tolosani O.P.: 1530–1546. Umanesimo, Riforma e Teologia Controversista', *Memorie domenicane* 17, 1986, pp. 145–252.

Camporeale, Salvatore 2002. *Lorenzo Valla: umanesimo, riforma e controriforma. Studi e testi*, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.

Cavallero, Constanza 2016. 'Entre el reino y el imperio: Representaciones de la Cristiandad en los discursos castellanos contra "la secta de Mahoma" (1460–1530)', in Verónica Aldazábal *et al.* eds, *Territorios, memoria e identidades*, Buenos Aires: Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas, pp. 165–180.

de Bunes Ibarra, Miguel Ángel 2014. 'Gonzalo Arredondo y Alvarado', in David Thomas & John Chesworth eds, *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 6, Leiden, Brill, pp. 96–99.

de Robertis, Teresa & Rosanna Miriello eds 1997. *I manoscritti datati della Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze*, Florence: SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo.

Dondaine, Antoine 1967. 'Ricoldiana. Notes sur les oeuvres de Riccoldo da Montecroce', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 37, pp. 119–179.

Drory, Rina 1993. 'Literary contacts and where to find them: On Arabic literary models in medieval Jewish literature', *Poetics Today* 14, pp. 277–302.

Echevarría, Ana 2012. 'Alonso de Espina', in David Thomas & Alex Mallet eds, *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 4, Leiden: Brill, pp. 451–455.

Fernández Guerrero, Eduardo 2018. 'Profetizar la reforma. Paolo Angelo y el Apocalypsis Nova', in Stefania Pastore & Mercedes García-Arenal Rodríguez eds, *Visiones imperiales y profecía: Roma, España, Muevo Mundo*, Madrid: Abada, pp. 103–126.

Fratini, Lisa & Stefano Zamponi 2004. *I manoscritti datati del fondo Acquisti e doni e dei fondi minori della Biblioteca medicea laurenziana di Firenze*, Florence: SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo.

George-Tvrtković, Rita 2012. 'After the fall: Riccoldo da Montecroce and Nicholas of Cusa on religious diversity', *Theological Studies* 73, pp. 641–662.

González Muñoz, Fernando 2020. 'Latin texts on Islam in a manuscript at Yale University', in Cándida Ferrero Hernández & Linda G. Jones eds, *Propaganda and (Un)Covered Identities in Treatises and Sermons: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Premodern Mediterranean*, Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, pp. 23–40.

Hankins, James 1995. 'Renaissance crusaders: Humanist crusade literature in the age of Mehmed II', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49, pp. 111–207.

Izbicki, Thomas M. 1981. 'Notes on the manuscript library of Cardinal Johannes de Turrecremata', *Scriptorium* 35, pp. 306–311.

Kaeppeli, Thomas & Emilio Panella 1993. 'Riccoldus de Monte Crucis', in *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, vol. 4, Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, pp. 262–265.

Katinis, Teodoro 2014. 'Marsilio Ficino', in David Thomas & John Chesworth eds, *Christian–Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 6, Leiden: Brill, pp. 397–404.

Laporta, Alessandro 2004. *La vita di Scanderbeg di Paolo Angelo (Venezia, 1539): Un libro anonimo restituito al suo autore* (Biblioteca Di Cultura Pugliese, Serie seconda 152), Galatina: M. Congedo.

Mahmoud Helmy, Nelly 2013. *Tra Siena, l'Oriente e la curia: Beltramo di Leonardo Mignanelli e le sue opere*, Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo.

McGinn, Bernard 1992. 'Notes on a forgotten prophet: Paulus Angelus and Rome', in Marjorie Reeves ed., *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 189–199.

Mérigoux, Jean-Marie 1986. 'L'ouvrage d'un frère prêcheur floretin en Orient a la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le *Contra legem Sarracenorum* de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce', *Memorie domenicane* 17, pp. 1–144.

Meserve, Margaret 2008. *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Harvard Historical Studies 158), Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Müntz, Eugène & Paul Fabre 1887. *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au XVe siècle d'après des documents inédits*, Paris: E. Thorin.

Murano, Giovanna 2009. 'Memoria e richordo. I libri di Giordano di Michele Giordani (a. 1508)', *Aevum* 83, pp. 755–826.

Özden Mercan, Fatma 2017. 'Constructing a self-image in the image of the Other: Pope Pius II's letter to Sultan Mehmed II', in Marianna D. Birnbaum & Marcell Sebők eds, *Practices of Coexistence. Constructions of the Other in Early Modern Perception*, Budapest & New York: CEU Press, pp. 71–102.

Panella, Emilio 1988. 'Ricerche su Riccoldo da Monte di Croce', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 58, pp. 5–85.

Piemontese, Angelo Michele 1996a. 'Beltramo Mignanelli senese biografo di Tamerlano', *Oriente Moderno* 15 [Nuova serie], pp. 213–226.

Piemontese, Angelo Michele 1996b. 'Il Corano latino di Ficino e i corani arabi di Pico e Monchates', *Rinascimento* 36, pp. 227–275.

Rhodes, Dennis E. 1993. 'The works of Paolo Angelo', *The British Library Journal* 19, pp. 109–112.

Schwoebel, Robert 1967. *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453–1517)*, Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf.

Scotto, Davide 2021. 'Riccoldo da Monte di Croce deliberating on God's judgements. Exegesis, intercession, Islam', in David Olszynski & Ulli Roth eds, *Soteriologie in der hochmittelalterlichen Theologie* (Archa Verbi, Yearbook for the Study of Medieval Theology, Subsidia 19), Münster: Aschendorff, pp. 255–291.

Secret, François 1957. 'Guillaume Postel et les courants prophetiques à la Renaissance', *Studi francesi* 3, pp. 375–395.

Setton, Kenneth Meyer 1976. *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204–1571*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.

Sotheby's 1991. *Western Manuscripts and Miniatures. London Tuesday 18th June 1991*, London: Sotheby's.

Tognetti, Giampaolo 1970. 'Note sul profetismo nel Rinascimento e la letteratura relativa', *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio muratoriano* 82, pp. 129–157.

Vasoli, Cesare 1988. 'Per le fonti del *De christiana religione* di Marsilio Ficino', *Rinascimento* 28, pp. 135–233.

Vasoli, Cesare 1997. 'Marsilio Ficino', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 47, Rome: Treccani, 378–395.

Verweij, Michiel ed. 2009. *De Paus Uit de Lage Landen: Adrianus VI, 1459–1523: Catalogus Bij de Tentoonstelling Ter Gelegenheid van Het 550ste Geboortejaar van Adriaan van Utrecht* (Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia 27), Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Viallon, Marie 2011. 'La lettre à Mehmet II ou le loup et l'agneau', *Cahiers d'études italiennes* 13, pp. 129–139.

Waggoner Karchner, Kate 2019a. 'Two new manuscript copies of Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*', *Manuscripta* 63, pp. 79–94.

Waggoner Karchner, Katharine G. 2019b. 'Europe, Islam, and the role of the Church in the afterlife of a medieval polemic, 1301–1543', Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan.

Whitehill, Walter Muir & Justo Pérez de Urbel 1929. 'Los manuscritos del Real Monasterio de Santo Domingo de Silos', *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 95, pp. 521–601.

Zappella, Giuseppina 1986. *Le marche dei tipografi e degli editori italiani del Cinquecento. Repertorio di figure, simboli e soggetti e dei relativi motti*, Milan: Editrice Bibliografica.

JOHANNES EHMANN

Luther's Translation of Riccoldo

A Specific Protestant Reception of a Medieval Tradition of Islam

HISTORICAL APPROACH AND SOME DISTINCTIONS[1]

For almost his entire life, the reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546) had an interest in the Ottoman Turks and Islam. His interest stemmed from the expansion of the Turks, which saw as its preliminary culmination the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Their expansion would lead them into the Orient and into the Mediterranean area. The political and military situation came to a head when Hungary was defeated in the Battle of Mohács in 1526 and Vienna came under siege in 1529. The year 1529 also saw the publication of Luther's two major works on the Turks, in which he attempted to comfort occidental Christianity and to encourage legitimate military resistance.

By 1529, a decade had passed since Luther's most essential reformatory insights. His theological convictions, which he had developed in the 1520s, showed an obvious connection to the threat of the Turks. In his theology of repentance (1517/1518) for instance, Luther rejected the war against the Turks as a religiously motivated crusade. Between 1523 and 1526 he drafted his positions on questions of holy authority and on the ethics of war and peace. Luther would hold onto the following positions his entire life: that the war against the Turks was not a holy war against non-believers and that it was both necessary and legitimate. In his 1528 *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony*,[2] he states: "The authority must protect its people from illegitimate violence, whether that violence stems from questions of faith or from other

1 Cf., in general, Francisco 2007; Ehmann 2008.
2 Cf. Ehmann 2017b.

reasons." Thus, the Turks must be fought for reasons of legitimate self-defence, not because they are non-believers.

In 1529, a new reasoning emerges. Ethical questions (the military conflict with the Turks) are supplemented by the theological question of the conflict with Islam—not as an inquiry into religious history, but as an inquiry into the religious ideology of the Turks. Luther presupposes a reciprocal dynamic between religion and politics. Subsequently, he extends his attention from the Ottoman Turks to Islam, from the sphere of politics to faith and from faith back to politics.

Essential to Luther's approach to the Turks and Islam is his differentiation of "two regiments". This differentiation rules out a religious war against the Muslim Turks, but allows for military resistance. The latter does not serve the purpose of yielding merit in the eyes of God, but is divinely ordained obedience before the earthly authority tasked with maintaining peace and order. Thus, one of Luther's most essential approaches in his occupation with Muslim Turks becomes obvious: to fill in the missing pieces of information as regards the "Turkish predisposition in worldly and clerical (!) spheres."[3]

SOURCES OF LUTHER'S ISLAMIC STUDIES

This raises the question of from where Luther's knowledge of Islam stemmed. It must not be underestimated that all through his life Luther tried to grow more knowledgeable about Islam. More than enough tales and horror stories, spread via pamphlets, were floating around, but finding authentic, reliable information proved difficult. Three basic sources need to be distinguished:

1. Luther used a work that he later edited and published, adding his own preface: *The Book of the Rites and Customs of the Turks*, originally titled *Tractatus de moribus, condictionibus et nequicia turcorum*, first published in 1481 by George of Hungary. Luther published a reissue of the book in 1530 with a new preface. The reissue is an attempt to portray one's political enemy in a certain light, but it also shows a willingness to move beyond mere horror stories. Many of Luther's favourable statements about the Turks probably have their basis in this tract. He certainly considered it "current"—the tract had been written about 30 years after the conquest of Constantinople—because it dealt with an issue that once again under consideration: Christian life under Islamic rule, i.e., preservation of one's faith, on the one hand, and the surprising phenomenon of Islamic toleration of Christians, on the other. The Habsburgs had had an eye on Hung-

3 Cf. Martin Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (1883–2009) [= WA]; WA 30/2, p. 121.