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Communication: a Neglected Paradigm in the Study of Christian-Muslim Relations (7th–16th Cent.)[1]

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Abstract. Communication as a paradigm of analysis has so far been neglected in the study of historical relations between Christians and Muslims. Part One demonstrates that previous forms of conceptualizing these relations fail to grasp the wide range of possible forms of interaction. It presents more differentiated recent approaches and points to the problems that still need solving. Part Two proposes a typology of different kinds of primary evidence that allow us to gain a more profound understanding of how interreligious communication is documented and which conclusions we may derive from this documentation. Part Three discusses methods of using such evidence to produce a greater picture of historical Christian-Muslim relations from the perspective of the communicative paradigm. It concludes that cooperation between specialists on different (e.g. diplomatic, economic, social, intellectual) facets of interreligious relations is necessary to formulate new macro-historical models that consider both the synchronic diversity of communicative acts and settings, as well as the diachronic evolution of larger communicative constellations in reaction to greater political, economic, social, and ideological changes.
Keywords: communication; methodology; Christian-Muslim relations; convivencia; interreligious relations; transmediterranean.

[es] Comunicación: un paradigma descuidado en el estudio de las relaciones entre cristianos y musulmanes (siglos VII-XVI)

Resumen. La comunicación como paradigma de análisis se ha descuidado hasta ahora en el estudio de las relaciones históricas entre cristianos y musulmanes. La primera parte demuestra que las formas anteriores de conceptualizar estas relaciones no logran captar el amplio abanico de posibles formas de interacción. Presenta enfoques recientes más diferenciados y señala los problemas que aún deben resolverse. La segunda parte propone una tipología de distintos tipos de fuentes primarias que nos permiten comprender más profundamente cómo se documenta la comunicación interreligiosa y qué conclusiones podemos extraer de esta documentación. En la tercera parte se analizan los métodos de utilización de tales fuentes para obtener una imagen más completa de las relaciones históricas entre cristianos y musulmanes desde la perspectiva del paradigma comunicativo. Se concluye que es necesaria la cooperación entre especialistas en diferentes facetas (por ejemplo, diplomáticas, económicas, sociales, intelectuales) de las relaciones interreligiosas para formular nuevos modelos macrohistóricos que consideren tanto la diversidad sincrónica de los actos y escenarios comunicativos como la evolución diacrónica de constelaciones comunicativas más amplias en reacción a los mayores cambios políticos, económicos, sociales e ideológicos.
Palabras clave: comunicación; metodología; relaciones cristiano-musulmanas; convivencia; relaciones interreligiosas; transmediterráneo.

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Probably between 875 and 880, a North African Muslim (*Agarenus*) sitting on the marketplace of Salerno addressed Prince Guaifar (*Guaiferius*, r. 861–880) passing by on his way to the bath: "Give me, I implore you, the garment you are wearing on your head." Having returned to North Africa, the same Muslim became aware of preparations to attack Salerno. Encountering a group of Amalfitan merchants, he asked one of them: "Have you ever seen Guaifar, the prince of the Salernitans, or do you even know him?" The Amalfitan replied: "I both know him and, when I am there, I often stand before his eyes." "By the son of Mary," the Muslim said, "I beseech you, who venerate God, to faithfully convey my words to him that he may equip his city with fortifications (…). And when he asks you who has confided this message to you, then tell him: 'Because the Muslim (*Agarenus*), whom you presented with the headgear, has said these words.' Then he will believe you immediately."[3]

Historiography from around the premodern Mediterranean is full of such anecdotes, in which members of different religious groups communicate directly with each other. Since the boom in Mediterranean studies, scholarship has addressed all kinds of aspects of interreligious relations. Interreligious communication, however, has not yet received systematic attention although engaging with this topic would allow us to understand much better how members of different religious groups coexisted with each other. This could help to put an end to the one or the other polemic debate about the nature of this coexistence.

Communication is a vast and complex topic. It forms part of every kind of human interaction and takes place on various, mutually interrelated geographical, temporal, and social levels. If not meticulously documented, communication is highly elusive. Consequently, its analysis is particularly difficult for historians working on long-gone periods, whose documentation only provides a very selective insight into how communication actually functioned. This article will approach the topic of interreligious communication predominantly from a methodological perspective. Given the author's specialization, it will focus on Christian-Muslim relations involving "Latin" Christians, i.e. Christians associated in one way or the other with the Latin language, the patriarch of Rome, and the dominant form of Christianity in Western Europe. Part One provides a general definition of communication and demonstrates that previous approaches have tended to ignore or to sideline the communicative facets of Christian-Muslim relations. Against this backdrop, Part Two presents various types of primary source evidence and proposes different methods to extract the communicative facets of Christian-Muslim relations from this material. Part Three discusses methods of using this primary source material to draw a greater picture that may allow us to see the history of Christian-Muslim relations in a new light.

1. State of Research: Communication as a Facet of Historical Christian-Muslim Relations

Efforts to conceptualize communication can be boiled down to two basic models, the "sender–receiver model" and the "network model." The sender–receiver model tries to capture what happens between two interlocutors who exchange messages bearing informational and emotional content that are encoded in speech, writing, and/or material objects. Exchange takes place through channels that cross time, space, and social milieus. The interlocutors stand in a particular, often hierarchical relationship to each other. Their exchange is either direct or facilitated by mediators, brokers, translators, or interpreters. Within this model, the sender is responsible for transmission and adapts the content of the message to the receiver. The receiver, in turn, may ignore or reject, but also receive and accept the message, adapting it to the new context. Although the sender–receiver model helps to identify sub-processes of communicative exchange, it has been criticized as too primitive, since it can only explain situations of bilateral communication.[4]

The network model is geared to representing more complex communicative constellations involving different interlocutors that stand in a hierarchical relationship to each other. The "two-step flow model" explains how media outlets spread messages, which are then diffused by different opinion leaders. It largely ignores how these messages, emitted unilaterally, are received and which communicative reactions they generate. "Multistep flow network models" depict situations of mass communication more adequately in that they regard receivers as part of complex networks of interconnected media outlets and opinion leaders, thus opening up various possible patterns of interaction between senders and receivers. Given that these network models are a product of media studies in an age of mass communication, it remains open to discussion to which degree they can be adapted to pre-modern circumstances.[5]

Connected to these models, we find approximately 160 definitions of communication from the perspective of at least twelve disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, sociology, and media studies. While their large number defies summary, it seems to be consensus that communication equates to the successful mutual understanding of signs.[6] Moreover, it is possible to distinguish four fundamental approaches to communication. At the basic level, communication is seen as a unidirectional process of emitting signals that elicit interpretive responses. On a higher level, communication constitutes a symmetrical process of exchange. Involving

[3] *Chronicon Salernitanum. A Critical Edition with Studies on Literary and Historical Sources and on Language*, ed. Ulla Westerbergh (Stockholm: Almovist & Wiksell, 1956), § 110, 122–123.

[4] Klaus Beck, "Kommunikation," in *Lexikon Kommunikations– und Medienwissenschaft*, ed. Günter Bentele et al. (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2013), 155–156. For an adaption of this model to theories of "cultural transfer," see FranceMed, "Introduction à l'étude des transferts culturels," in *Construire la Méditerranée, penser les transferts culturels*, ed. Rania Abdellatif et al. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 14–44.

[5] Katya Ognyanova, "Multistep Flow of Communication. Network Effects," in *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, ed. P. Roessler, C. Hoffner, L. van Zoonen (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 1–10.

[6] Klaus Merten, *Kommunikation. Eine Begriffs– und Prozeßanalyse* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977).

participation and interaction, it thus builds on a relationship conditioned by various factors. While such a definition reduces communication to rather simple, interactive processes, the study of mass communication leads us into the realm of communicative systems involving larger numbers of interlocutors. On the highest level, communication —the basis of all social systems— can even be regarded as the equivalent of a social system.[7] Since it is not possible to address all facets of communication in this article, the latter will distinguish pragmatically between concrete "acts" of communication, their respective "setting" or "framework," and the larger communicative "constellation" that can be reconstructed on the basis of a synchronic or diachronic serial analysis of many different communicative acts and settings.

1.1. General Approaches: Communication and the Construction of Alterities

Historians have, of course, studied many different facets of communication in the premodern period including the role of envoys, interpreters, chanceries, and specific phenomena such as propaganda, often with a specific focus on interreligious relations and exchange.[8] However, detailed studies on documented milieus of Christian-Muslim communication rarely use the analysed material to generate or correct hypotheses or models of greater purview. Consequently, current debates are still dominated by generalizing hypotheses and models of interaction that fail to do justice to the plethora of documented communicative acts and settings.

Historical research on Christian-Muslim relations has long focused on the mutual documentation and perception of Christians[9] and Muslims.[10] The history of mutual perceptions is generally reconstructed on the basis of what dogmatic religious specialists of the one side observed, heard, said, and eventually wrote about the religious other. These opinions are then often taken as a yard stick to define the general atmosphere of Christian-Muslim relations. The problem is illustrated by the title of the monumental book series *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, which has deservedly become an invaluable tool of reference to all scholars working in the field: although purporting to give an overview on relevant texts describing interreligious *relations*, the series mainly documents what highly dogmatic representatives of one religious group wrote and thought *about* the other.[11] Apart from polemic texts, the series covers a number of legal documents regulating the interaction of Christians and Muslims that have been extensively analysed within the framework of John Tolan's research project on religious minorities (RELMIN).[12] However, it dedicates little attention to trade, thus largely ignoring a huge corpus of sources documenting centuries of most intensive Christian-Muslim interaction across and around the Mediterranean.[13] Readers thus receive a detailed impression of which stereotypes existed on both sides, but can fall prey to believing that clichés and polemics were dominant in Christian-Muslim interaction and communication at all times and in all places. However, how can we be sure that historical Christian-Muslim interaction was fraught with prejudice and negative images if we have never systematically analysed how members of both religious groups actually wrote to, listened to, and spoke with each other?

1.2. Macro-historical Hypotheses and their Generalization

The tendency to consider historical Christian-Muslim interaction and communication as largely dysfunctional

7 Beck, "Kommunikation," 155–156.

8 Sophia Menache, *The Vox Dei. Communication in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Penny J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1991); *Aus der Frühzeit europäischer Diplomatie: zum geistlichen und weltlichen Gesandtschaftswesen vom 12. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Claudia Zey and Claudia Märtl (Zurich: Chronos, 2008); Reinhard Schneider, *Vom Dolmetschen im Mittelalter: sprachliche Vermittlung in weltlichen und kirchlichen Zusammenhängen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2012); *La correspondance entre souverains, princes et cités-états: approches croisées entre l'Orient musulman, l'Occident latin et Byzance (XIIIe–début XVIe siècle)*, ed. Denise Aigle and Stéphane Péquignot (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); Nikolas Jaspert, Sebastian Kolditz, "Christlich-muslimische Außenbeziehungen im Mittelmeerraum: Zur räumlichen und religiösen Dimension mittelalterlicher Diplomatie," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 41 (2014): 1–88; Daniel Potthast, "Diplomatischer Austausch zwischen Muslimen und Christen. Religiöses Formular in mittelalterlichen Briefen arabischer Herrscher," in *Medien der Außenbeziehungen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Peter Hoeres, Anuschka Tischer (Cologne: Böhlau, 2017), 445–467.

9 Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: Norton, 1982); Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades. Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Nizar Hermes, *The [European] other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture, Ninth–Twelfth Century AD* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2021); Daniel G. König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West. Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

10 Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West. The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009 [reprint of 1960]); Richard W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge/MA.: Harvard University Press, 1962); Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "La connaissance de l'Islam en Occident du IXe au milieu du XIIe siècle," *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 12 (1965): 577–602; Maxime Rodinson, *La fascination de l'Islam. Les étapes du regard occidental sur le monde musulman, les études arabes et islamiques en Europe* (Paris: Maspero, 1982); Philippe Sénac, *L'Occident médiéval face à l'Islam. L'image de l'autre* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000 [reprint of 1983]); John Tolan, *Saracens. Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); John Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael. Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008).

11 David Thomas et al. (eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, 19 vols, Leiden: Brill, 2009–2022.

12 For the database, see http://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/index/ (access 7 September 2022). For published volumes, see, for example: *Religious Minorities in Christian, Jewish and Muslim Law (5th–15th Centuries)*, ed. John V. Tolan et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

13 See e.g. Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Romney David Smith, "Calamity and Transition: Re-Imagining Italian Trade in the Eleventh-Century Mediterranean," *Past & Present* 228, no. 1 (2015): 15–56; Dominique Valérian, *Ports et réseaux d'échanges dans le Maghreb médiéval* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2019); Georg Christ, "Weights, Measures, Monies: Venetian Trade in Mamluk Alexandria within an Imperial Framework," in *Merchants, Measures and Money. Understanding Technologies of Early Trade in a Comparative Perspective*, ed. Lorenz Rahmstorf, Gojko Barjamovic, Nicola Ialongo (Kiel: K. Wachholtz Verlag, 2021), 207–223.

is mirrored in works that try to capture essential features of this interreligious relationship. Philippe Sénac, for example, claimed that the earliest encounters between Muslims and Western European Christians during the period of the Arabic-Islamic expansion had been so conflictual that they left an imprint on the latter's collective mentality, thus contributing to the emergence of crusading ideology. A particular variant of communication, in this case the exchange of military blows, is said to have forged patterns of aggressive perception, interaction, and communication between Christians and Muslims for centuries to come.[14]

William Montgomery Watt, in turn, tried to imagine how Western European Christians felt when confronted with the military and economic power, cultural attractivity, and the highly developed self-esteem of the medieval Muslim sphere. According to Watt, "any Christian who had come in contact with Muslims" would have developed a kind of inferiority complex. Western European Christians, he claimed, compensated for the latter by overplaying their religious identity, and reinforced their lacking self-esteem by distorting Islam and by polemicizing against it. Again, a primal encounter is said to have produced patterns of aggressive perception, interaction, and communication that would have long-term effects.[15]

Both hypotheses certainly capture a particular facet of interaction and communication between Western European Christians and Muslims in the medieval period and should not be dismissed easily. They can be criticized, nonetheless, for their strong tendency to generalize. Can one period of military encounter and one imagined variant of collective psychology shoulder responsibility for every manifestation of aggression between Western European Christians and Muslims?[16] Many collectives have begun their relations with hostilities, but then managed to develop alternative forms of interaction! And while a military, economic, and cultural imbalance certainly existed, we cannot claim that it was independent of geography, time, and social milieu. Not every medieval Western European Christian approached Muslims on the basis of an aggressive attitude fed by an inferiority complex.

1.3. Intricate Case Studies versus Sweeping Models

In the past decades and as part of the recent boom in Mediterranean studies, many scholars have engaged with particular settings of Christian-Muslim interaction, thus giving insight into a large variety of documented communicative processes. Corresponding studies allow us to understand that, in the period of Arabic-Islamic expansion, the conquerors could draw on vehicular languages that permeated and connected different parts of the sphere of expansion. This allowed them to successfully communicate with the conquered, which, in turn, facilitated their efforts to establish rule over new populations and territories.[17] Other studies suggest that Muslim-Christian families of the early post-conquest period struggled to harmonize different cultural traditions and world views until new dominant patterns emerged.[18] They demonstrate that diplomacy between European-Christian and Muslim polities involved difficulties in the period of their inception, but became increasingly professionalized the more experience was gained in practice.[19] Enquiries into the functioning of late medieval multilingual chanceries convey an impression of the efforts needed to surmount linguistic barriers, but also introduce us to an important group of bilingual mediators between Arabic, Latin, and Romance languages.[20] Other studies show that these agents facilitated commercial transactions between the maritime powers of Christian Europe and Muslim-ruled North Africa, allowing foreign traders and the local authorities to find arrangements, even in cases of conflict.[21] Thus, many studies describe specific communicative settings, but do not use resulting insights to theorize upon the issue of Christian-Muslim communication from a wider perspective. Because of this, neither the topic of communication nor the enormous efforts to conceptualize the field of Mediterranean history in recent years are represented adequately in the existing models that conceptualize medieval Christian-Muslim relations, some of them rather dated, but still popular.

Currently, we can distinguish between four main models. Among the oldest we find Henri Pirenne's claim that the rise of Islam sounded the death knell for the Mediterranean as a communicative space.[22] The Pirenne-thesis has been reformulated in later publications, some of which

[14] Sénac, *L'Occident médiéval face à l'Islam*, 24.

[15] William Montgomery Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1972), 82–84.

[16] On this discussion, but speaking to a modern Arab and Muslim audience, see Ḥusām ʿĪtānī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-ʿarabiyya fī riwāyāt al-maġlūbīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2011).

[17] Daniel G. König, "Herrschaftsübernahme durch Multilingualismus. Die Sprachen der arabisch-islamischen Expansion nach Westen," *Historische Zeitschrift* 308 (2019): 637–674.

[18] Pierre Guichard, "Les Arabes ont bien envahi l'Espagne. Les structures sociales de l'Espagne musulmane," *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 29, no. 6 (1974): 1483–1513.

[19] Benjamin Kedar, "Religion in Catholic-Muslim Correspondence and Treaties," in: *Diplomatics in the Eastern Mediterranean 1000–1500: Aspects of Cross-Cultural Communication*, ed. Alexander Daniel Beihammer, Maria G. Parani, Christopher David Schabel (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 407–422.

[20] Daniel Potthast, "Translations of Arabic Diplomatic Letters in the Aragonese Chancery," in: *Dasselbe mit anderen Worten? Sprache, Übersetzung und Sprachwissenschaft*, ed. Peter Schrijver and Peter-Arnold Mumm (Bremen: Hempen Verlag 2015), 166–186.

[21] Louis de Mas Latrie, *Traités de paix et de commerce et documents divers concernant les relations des chrétiens avec les Arabes de l'Afrique septentrionale au moyen âge*, 2 vols (Paris: Henri Plon, 1866/1872), vol. 1, 189–190; Dominique Valérian, "Conflits et résolution des conflits dans les communautés européennes au Maghreb (XIIe–XVe siècle)," in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 115 (2003): 543–564; Daniel G. König, "Übersetzungskontrolle. Regulierung von Übersetzungsvorgängen im lateinisch/romanisch-ararabischen Kontext (9.–15. Jahrhundert), in *Abrahams Erbe. Konkurrenz, Konflikt und Koexistenz der Religionen im europäischen Mittelalter* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 470–486; Travis Bruce, "Commercial Conflict Resolution Across the Religious Divide in the Thirteenth-Century Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 30, no. 1 (2015): 19–38.

[22] Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992 [reprint of Brussels 1937]), 215: "La Méditerranée occidentale (…) cesse d'être la voie des échanges et des idées qu'elle n'avait cessé d'être jusqu'alors."

went as far as drawing a "medieval iron curtain between Islam and Christendom" through the Mediterranean, thus implying a state of non-communication between mutually hostile entities.[23] Whereas Pirenne and his epigones focused on relations between Christian and Muslim-led societies, Bat Ye᾿or's concept of *dhimmitude* claims to describe interreligious relations in societies under Muslim rule, which she depicts as having been marked solely by oppression, systematic repression, and the Muslim will to suppress all non-Muslim forms of religious expression.[24] The counter-concept of *convivencia* —introduced by Américo Castro in the 1940s, discussed since the 1970s, and popular among academics since the 1990s[25]— depicts interreligious relations within Muslim-led societies much more favourably, but equally ignores instances of exchange and communication between Christians and Muslims from different societies.[26] Soon, critics claimed that this concept mitigated interreligious tensions and forms of discrimination suffered by non-Muslims under Muslim rule.[27] Debates about the concept of *convivencia* largely ignore the situation of Muslims under the rule of Western European Christians. The latter's approach to their Muslim subjects has recently been described in terms of *conveniencia*, a concept expressing the idea that European Christian rulers tolerated the existence of non-Christian minorities in their societies as long as this seemed useful to them.[28]

None of these concepts of non-communication, *dhimmitude*, *convivencia*, and *conveniencia* can adequately describe the complexities of Christian-Muslim relations in the medieval period. They fail to cover the entire range of historical Christian-Muslim relations and apply to rather different dimensions of the latter. Apart from this, we have plenty of primary source material to invalidate each of them, proving that Christians and Muslims communicated intensively both on an intrasocietal and an intersocietal level, did not only interact within oppressive hierarchies, but neither passed their entire lives in harmonious coexistence nor merely utilized each other to advance their personal or collective gain. The collective psychology inherent in these four concepts is, by and large, rather primitive. They clearly fail in describing several centuries of interreligious interaction and communication in a continuously shifting geopolitical, economic, social, and cultural landscape adequately. Against this backdrop, Jack Tannous and Brian A. Catlos proposed more differentiated models of Christian-Muslim interaction that have important implications for a history of Christian-Muslim communication.

In *The Making of the Middle East*, Jack Tannous delineates the intricacies of Christian-Muslim interaction in early Islamic Western Asia. Notwithstanding the fact that the Muslims' rise to power had restructured pre-existing societies in terms of religious cohabitation, the existence of various "layerings" of dogmatic knowledge among the members of different religious groups generated a plethora of highly variable relations on different levels. Dogmatic-informed elite circles, i.e. those who produced the bulk of the extant primary source material, may have emphasized religious boundaries. Among more "simple" believers, however, religious difference was not necessarily deemed relevant, thus allowing for different forms of religious interaction, crossover, transgression, and even synthesis— in spite of and parallel to existing tensions and conflicts.[29]

An even more differentiating approach was developed by Brian A. Catlos in *Muslims of Latin Christendom* to conceptualize the relationship between Western European Christians and Muslims under Christian rule between 1050 and 1614. Interreligious perception, Catlos claims, existed on three different levels, each of which employed a particular "language." Christians and Muslims could perceive each other on a macro– or ecumenian scale, i.e. on the basis of their dogmatic-informed religious identity with its universalist claims to absolute truth. Characterized by a lack of compromise as well as a rigid, moralizing, and dogmatic stand vis-à-vis the religious other, it is said to have had little impact on concrete policies. Concrete interreligious interaction was rather regulated on the meso– or corporate scale by formal collectives. Informed, but not necessarily driven by the macro– or ecumenian mode of perception, they tended to deal with interreligious relations pragmatically to ensure their institutional survival. On the micro– or local scale, Catlos identifies individuals and informal collectives whose modes of perception cannot really be classified since the potential scope of interreligious relations ranges from syncretism, cross-communal solidarity, friendship, and intermarriage on the one side to stereotyped othering, strong anxieties, and outbursts of communal violence on the other.[30]

1.4. The Problem of Representativity

Tannous's and Catlos's models acknowledge the parallel existence of various kinds of interreligious relations ranging from the rigid imposition of religious boundaries to their gradual dissolution, while pointing to potential conflicts between different modes of interaction and perception. In this sense, they are clearly more advanced than the models of non-communication, *dhimmitude*, *convivencia*, and *conveniencia* presented above. In their

23 Bernard Lewis, "The Muslim Discovery of Europe," *Bulletin of the School for Oriental and African Studies* 20, no. 1/3 (1957): 409–416, here: 411.

24 Bat Ye᾿or, *Le dhimmi: profil de l'opprimé en Orient et en Afrique du nord depuis la conquête arabe* (Paris: Anthropos, 1980).

25 Among the earliest non-Spanish publications to use the concept is Roger Highfield, "Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Same Society: the Fall of Convivencia in Medieval Spain," *Studies in Church History* 15 (1978): 121–146.

26 Daniel G. König, "'Convivencia' als hierarchisierter Religionspluralismus: Regulierung und Rezeption des Zuammenlebens von Juden, Christen und Muslimen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel (7.–17. Jahrhundert), in *Christen und Muslime in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit. Ein Schlüsselthema des Geschichtsunterrichts im transepochalen Fokus*, ed. Peter Geiss, Peter Arnold Heuser, Michael Rohrschneider (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2022), 171–191.

27 See, for example, Dario Fernández-Morera, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic rule in Medieval Spain* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2016).

28 Brian A. Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, 1050–1614* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 522.

29 Jack Tannous, *The Making of the Middle East. Religion, Society, and Simple Believers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

30 Catlos, *Muslims*, 525–527.

models, however, both scholars only differentiate very broadly between different social milieus. And although they both take care to trace long-term processes, their models remain rather static in terms of chronology. Last but not least, both models do not really address the problem of representativity, i.e. the question, where and when which forms of interaction and perception were actually dominant in historical Christian-Muslim relations.

With regard to the issue representativity, Tannous points to the necessity of "dethroning doctrine as the primary prism through which we view cross-confessional and interreligious interaction (…)," and thus asks us to deprivilege one mode of interaction and communication to the advantage of a larger, more complex, and generally less dogmatic range of modes.[31] Catlos, in turn, asserts that the dogmatic ecumenian mode "had relatively little direct impact on policy," that institutions adhering to the pragmatic corporate mode of perception "played the greatest role as actors in shaping the material circumstances, socio-economic potential, and physical experience of religious minorities," whereas the mode of perception on the micro-level was so volatile that it defied any effort at classification.[32] Both authors leave us with the impression that dogmatics played a less dominant role in Christian-Muslim relations than usually imagined, whereas a mixture of pragmatism and volatile feelings ruled supreme. We can assume, however, that both within and beyond their respective terrain of study, historical Christian-Muslim interaction witnessed situations, in which the communicative settings and constellations were different.

The problem of representativity, i.e. the question how to weight and balance between hostile, neutral, and friendly forms of interaction in the history of Christian-Muslim relations, still seems unsolved, although quite a few studies have already attempted to "measure" the evolving atmosphere(s) of interreligious relations both from a synchronic regional and a diachronic transregional perspective. In *Christian Martyrs under Islam*, a study of Muslim violence against Christians under Muslim rule, for example, Christian C. Sahner distinguishes between a rather cooperative phase in the immediate wake of the Arabic-Islamic expansion, a phase of rising tensions in the period that witnessed the establishment of hegemonic Islam, and a phase of regularization and stabilization of interreligious relations within the emerging *ḏimma*-system.[33]

This and comparable studies suggest how we might solve the problem of representativity, which lies at the heart of the highly ideological debate on the applicability of the concept of *convivencia* that has been raging in the past few decades. Focusing on the Iberian Peninsula first under Muslim, then under Christian rule, ardent defenders and harsh critics of this concept tried to define the historical nature of interreligious relations in conclusive and absolute terms: either interreligious cohabitation is said to have created "a culture of tolerance,"[34] or *convivencia* must be regarded as a "myth" propagated by naïve multiculturalists projecting wishful thinking into their historical analysis.[35] The debate has become polarized to such a degree that every historian working on Christian-Muslim relations in the medieval period is forced at some point or another to take a stand in this debate.

To demonstrate what is at stake, it seems helpful to visualize what the one or the other interpretation of the concept *convivencia* would actually imply in terms of communicative atmospheres. We can schematically categorize atmospheric variants of interreligious communication by placing "aggressive and hostile" forms of communication at one end of the scale and by moving via "denigrating and hostile," then "indifferent and neutral" to "friendly" and even "amorous" forms at the other end. To illustrate different schematic understandings of mutual interreligious attitudes and resulting modes of communication, we can experiment with different imaginary percentages that stand for an "aggressive," an "evenly balanced," and a "friendly" interpretation of historical Christian-Muslim relations and communication (figure 1).

An even distribution of aggressive, denigatory, indifferent, friendly, and amorous communication between Christians and Muslims as depicted in the "evenly balanced" variant in the middle does not seem realistic in any time or any space. Critics of the concept of *convivencia* will tend to favour the statistics of the "aggressive" variant on the left side, according to which more than 50% of Christian-Muslim communication was aggressive, denigratory, and hostile. Those sympathizing with the concept will believe that —in line with the "friendly" variant on the right side— more than 50% of Christian-Muslim communication was actually friendly or at least neutral, but often jeopardized by a small, but powerful percentage of denigratory and hostile communication that could trigger violence and oppression. In view of the enormous masses of primary source material that few of us can claim to master fully, we must acknowledge that our macro-historical interpretation of Christian-Muslim relations is not only based on objective criteria, but also on our rather intuitive impression of this relationship that has been formed by various factors, including our respective specialization, previous historical interpretations, and our personal experience in reaction to contemporary events.

1.5. Preliminary Conclusions

If we really wish to gain a better understanding of historical Christian-Muslim relations and to be able

[31] Tannous, *Making of the Middle East*, 497.

[32] Catlos, *Muslims*, 525–527.

[33] Christian C. Sahner, *Christian Martyrs under Islam. Religious Violence and the Making of the Muslim World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 241–251. For a comparable diachronic approach, see Luke Yarbrough, *Friends of the Emir. Non-Muslim State Officials in Premodern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[34] This being the phrasing used in the title of Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Boston: Little, 2002).

[35] Eduardo Manzano Moreno, "Qurtuba. Algunas reflexiones críticas sobre el Califato de Córdoba y el mito de la convivencia," *Awraq: Estudios sobre el mundo árabe e islámico contemporáneo* 7 (2013): 225–246; Christophe Cailleaux, "Chrétiens, juifs et musulmans dans l'Espagne médiévale. La convivencia et autres mythes historiographiques," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 86 (2013): 257–271; Fernández-Morera, *Myth of the Andalusian Paradise*.

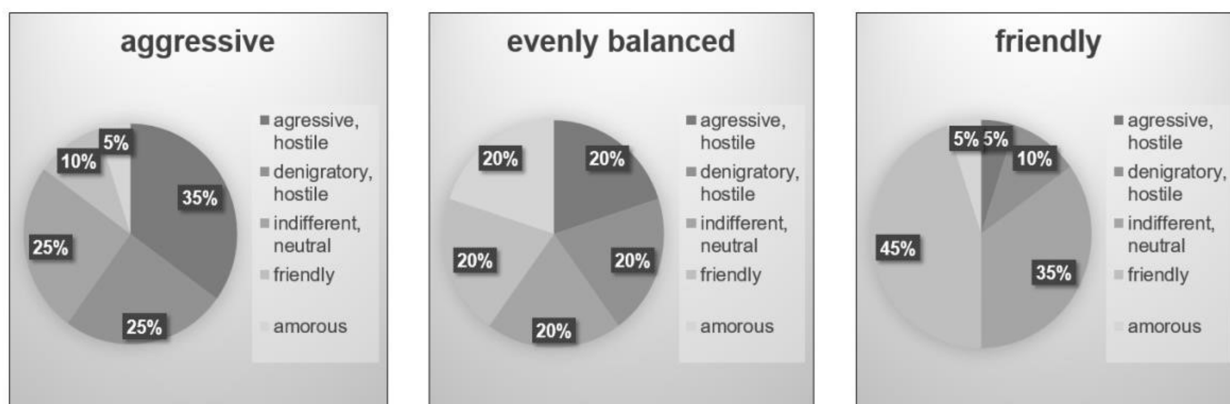

Fig. 1. Imaginary statistics of Christian-Muslim Communication in the Medieval Period

to measure whether these relations were more or less conflictual than, say, communication between Christians and "pagans" in Roman Late Antiquity, between Jews and Christians in medieval, or Catholics and Protestants in early modern Europe, then we will have to discard the most obvious simplifications characteristic of the more dated models discussed above. A focus on interreligious communication, i.e. on direct exchange between religious groups, forces us to re-evaluate the relevance of evidence, in which dogmatically informed members of both religious groups merely communicated *about* rather than *with* the other.

Communication between Christians and Muslims took place simultaneously on different levels and under different circumstances. Since the beginnings of the Arabic-Islamic expansion in the 630s, geopolitical shifts in the wider Mediterranean continuously forged new and sidelined or even destroyed existing communicative settings. Moreover, an analytical approach to the latter must acknowledge that —within these settings— the interlocutors' number, mutual distance, gender, degree of formal education, social status, wealth, age, breadth of interreligious experience, knowledge of languages, and many other factors affected how they exchanged messages. Such nuances are partly considered by Tannous, Catlos, and Sahner, but are still missing in studies that approach interreligious relations from an even wider transregional and macro-historical perspective, e.g. Mark Cohen's *Under Crescent and Cross*, certainly a most comprehensive and impressive effort to comparatively analyse the relations between a religious minority (of Jews) and a dominant religious majority (of Christians or Muslims) over a period of several centuries.[36] By taking into account the large variety of communicative acts, settings, and constellations that evolved in line with geopolitical shifts in the wider Mediterranean, we are able to approach the history of interreligious, in this case of Christian-Muslim relations, from a fresh angle.

[36] Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross. The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

2. Methods of Approaching the Primary Source Material

The article will now turn to reviewing the different kinds of available primary source material that can give an insight into this evolving multiplicity of communicative acts, settings, and constellations. The task at hand is to understand, what kind of primary evidence exists, and how much and which kind of information we can extract from it. The following paragraphs will classify the evidence into the three different groups of "concrete," "implicit," and "narrative" evidence, and then discuss several methods to extract information on Christian–Muslim communication from each group.

2.1. Concrete Evidence: Letters, Treaties, and Documented Communication Specialists

Concrete evidence proves that particular persons interacted and understood each other at a given time and place, and generally provides many details on the preconditions, preliminaries, contents, involved agents, and modalities of communication. Concrete evidence usually takes on the form of letters and treaties. Letters represent the written act, treaties the written result of communication.

Letters exchanged between Christians and Muslims are preserved in archives or are cited in chancery manuals and, occasionally, in historiographical works. A systematic collection of all extant letters exchanged between Christians and Muslims in the premodern period would be highly desirable. The important collections by Michele Amari, Louis de Mas Latrie, Antonio Giménez y Soler, Maximiliano A. Alarcón y Santón and Ramón García de Linares, Karl Ernst Lupprian, Ana Labarta and Anass Benmokhtar, and Roser Salicrú y Lluch, among others, suggest that extant letters generally hail from the sphere of diplomatic and commercial relations between Muslim– and Christian-led societies.[37] The commune of Pisa, for example, exchanged

[37] Michele Amari, *I Diplomi Arabi del R. Archivio Fiorentino* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1863); Michele Amari, *Nuovi ricordi arabici su la storia di Genova* (Genoa: Tipografia del R. Istituto sordomuti, 1873); Louis de Mas Latrie, *Traités de paix et de commerce et documents divers concernant les relations des chrétiens avec les Ara-*

at least thirty-one letters with various Fāṭimid, Almoravid, Almohad, and Ayyūbid rulers and their officials between 1154 and 1227. Dealing with political news, economic negotiations, complaints about non-compliance with agreements, and demands for compensation, these letters bear witness to a wide variety of negotiated topics. In one case, there is even a request from an interpreter for a letter of recommendation. These letters contain largely correct titles and are written in the most polite tone, even when they formulate complaints or threaten sanctions.[38] Within Muslim– and Christian-led societies, Muslims and Christians also exchanged letters on different matters. The Muslim regional lord al-Azraq wrote a letter to the Queen of Aragón in 1250 to improve his position with the king.[39] The *muftī* of Segovia, ʿĪsā b. Ǧābir (fl. 1450s), wrote to Juan de Segovia (d. 1458) after the latter had asked him to assist with a translation of the Qurʾān from Arabic to Castilian around the year 1454.[40]

We cannot automatically consider every letter as part of a communicative process. Sometimes it is unclear whether the letter reached its addressee. This is the case with the correspondence between Bertha, the Carolingian wife of the margrave of Tuscany, and the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Muktafī bi-llāh (r. 289–295/902–908) around 293/906. Not only has the authenticity of Bertha's letter been doubted.[41] The work citing the letter claims that the caliph's reply never reached its destination because the messenger died on the way.[42] In other cases, texts figuring as letters do not really reach out to the named addressee and actually pertain to a different genre. The "letter" addressed by Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny (sed. 1122–1156), to "the Arabs, the sons of Ishmael, who serve the law of whom is called Muḥammad (*Arabibus Hysmahelis filiis, legem illius qui Mahumeth dicitur, seruantibus*)" was probably never dispatched: it stands at the beginning of Peter's polemical treatise *Contra sectam Sarracenorum*. Although it speaks to the "Arab Ishmaelites" throughout the first chapters, it lacks a specific addressee to whom it might have been sent. Since Peter expresses the hope that his treatise might be translated into Arabic and diffused among Muslims,[43] we can assume that he had not yet thought about how to reach a Muslim audience. In any case, the letter's intention to discredit Islam would not have found many Muslim readers. All this suggests that we are not dealing with a real letter, but with a literary device demonstrating Peter's dedication to fight Islam to a Latin-Christian audience.[44]

Whereas letters as written acts of communication can leave us in the dark as to whether their message was sent to and received by an addressee, treaties do not document oral negotiations, but the formalized results of discussions between negotiating parties. Even more than letters, treaties hail from the sphere of diplomatic and commercial relations between Muslim– and Christian-led societies. Pisa's abovementioned correspondence with Muslim authorities, for example, went hand in hand with the emergence of a normative framework of bilateral relations that was negotiated in numerous treaties. A first treaty between Pisa and the Almoravids is documented as early as 1133. This was followed by numerous agreements: in 1150 with the Muslim *taifa*-principality of València, in 1154 with the Fāṭimids in Egypt, in 1157 with the governor of Tunis, in 1166 with the North African Almohads, in 1173 with the Egyptian Ayyūbids, in 1184 with the Banū Ġāniya on the Balearics, in 1186 with the Almohads. Between 1200 and 1215, Pisan merchants were guaranteed compliance with concluded treaties and received letters of safe conduct, privileges, and offers of friendship from Tunis, al-Mahdiyya, Egypt, and Syria. In the very late period of Almohad rule, treaties were concluded with the Ḥafṣids in Tunis in 1234 and 1264.[45]

Official letters and treaties provide insight into the administrative framework, the protocol, and the formalities of bilateral relations between Christian and Muslim powers and allow us to trace the emergence of institutions able to facilitate communication across political and linguistic boundaries. In December 1350, for example, the Ḥafṣīd sultan al-Mustanṣir (r. 750-770/1350-1369) addressed a letter to Peter IV of Aragón (r. 1336-1387) that is extant in its original Arabic version and a contemporary Catalan translation. The letter was written because a man named Simon Porcell had claimed to be the new Aragonese consul in Tunis but had presented a writ lacking the accustomed royal seal. The sultan asked the Aragonese king

bes de l'Afrique septentrionale au moyen âge, 2 vols (Paris: Henri Plon, 1866/1872); Andrés Giménez Soler, "Documentos de Tunez, originales o traducidos, del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón," *Anuari de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans* MCMIX–X (1911): 210–59; Maximiliano A. Alarcón y Santón and Ramón García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón* (Madrid: Imprenta de Estanislao Maestre, 1940); Karl Ernst Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels* (Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1981); Ana Labarta and Anass Benmokhtar, *Los documentos nazaríes en árabe del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón II: Edición* (Valencia: no editor, 2021); Roser Salicrú i Lluch, *Documents per a la Història de Granada del regnat d'Alfons el Magnànim (1416-1458)* (Madrid: CSIC, 1999). Also see Clara Maillard, *Les papes et le Maghreb aux XIIIème et XIVème siècles: étude des lettres pontificales de 1199 à 1419* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

38 See the overviews in Amari, *I Diplomi Arabi*, lxxvix–lxxxv; Mas Latrie, *Traités de paix*, vol. 1, 377–378.

39 Eric Böhme, "1250: A Letter from the Regional Ruler al-Azraq to the Queen of Aragon," *Transmediterranean History* 3, no. 2 (2021), DOI: https://doi.org/10.18148/tmh/2021.3.2.40.

40 Gerard Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado. Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), His Antecedents and Successors* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 236–237.

41 Ann Christys, "The Queen of the Franks Offers Gifts to the Caliph al-Muktafi," in: *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 149–170.

42 Al-Rašīd b. al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Ḏaḫāʾir wa-l-tuḥaf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh (Kuwait: Dāʾirat al-maṭbūʿāt wa-l-našr, 1959), 48–55; Al-Rašīd b. al-Zubayr: *Book of Gifts and Rarities–Kitāb al-Hadāyā wa al-Tuḥaf*, trans. Ghāda al Ḥijjāwī l-Qaddūmī (Princeton: PUP, 1996), 91–98; König, *Arabic-Islamic Views*, 200–201.

43 Petrus Venerabilis, "Contra sectam Saracenorum," ed./trans. Reinhold Glei, *Petrus Venerabilis – Schriften zum Islam* (Altenberge: CIS, 1985), prologus, cap. 18–20, 54–57.

44 Petrus Venerabilis, "Contra sectam Saracenorum,", ed./trans. Glei, lib. 1, cap. 23–30, 62–68.

45 See the overviews in Amari, *I Diplomi Arabi*, lxxvix–lxxxv; Mas Latrie, *Traités de paix*, vol. 1, 377–378.

to confirm this appointment and to respect the protocol of written correspondence in the future to avoid misunderstandings.[46] Such material provides information on the activities of "communication specialists," i.e. secretaries, notaries, and, in particular, translators and interpreters.[47] Since many of the above-mentioned letters and treaties are documented bilingually, we are able to trace how certain concepts and ideas were transferred from one language to the other: two-step processes of translation illustrate how communication between negotiating partners actually functioned. Occasionally, we see how a translator used his mediating capacity to transform the contents of a message.[48] A letter written 667/1259 from Ḥafṣīd Tunis to Pisa in a variant of Aljamiado, i.e. a Romance idiom written in Arabic letters, broadens our register of linguistic categories and provides evidence for original means of transmediterranean communication between societies accustomed to use Latin, Romance, and/or Arabic.[49]

2.2. Implicit Evidence: Coins, Annalistic Entries, Legal Texts, and Pragmatic Documents

Implicit evidence proves that interreligious communication took place, but fails to describe its modalities. Dealt with in chronological order, four examples —a coin, a short entry from an annalistic work, a legal text, and a list specifying the costs of a building project— suggest once again that the category of communicative evidence seems to be closely linked to a particular type or genre of source material. The latter is characterized by its lack of information on the contents and emotional quality of the documented communicative interaction: a coin provides little information on the communicative setting it was produced in, and none on the audience, which received the messages inscribed into its field and legend; annalistic entries fail to flesh out what happened; legal texts generally describe and define the frameworks of interaction, not interaction itself; depending on what they record, pragmatic documents imply, but do not necessarily describe interaction. The following examples will illustrate how such evidence opens up space for speculation.

(1) Coins produced between 89/707 and 96/715 in Muslim North Africa under the governorship of Mūsā b. Nuṣayr contain a Latin version of the Qurʾānic *basmala* (*bi-smi llāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīm*, rendered *in nomine dominis misericordis*) and a Latinized variant of the Islamic declaration of faith (*al-šahāda*), i.e. a rather exact translation of the phrase *lā ilāha illā llāh waḥdahu lā šarīk lahu*, rendered *non est deus nisi unus cui non socius alius similis*. As opposed to coins from a later series, this coin type does not yet contain the second part of the Islamic creed referring to the prophethood of Muḥammad. On the one hand, the coin contains implicit information about processes of communication necessary to produce the coin: the great similarity between the Arabic formulae and the Latin phrases implies that translators had been at work. Translation probably took place in the mint of Carthage, where the coins were produced. It was staffed at least partly by Christians who had still witnessed Byzantine rule. Having received instructions from the new Muslim ruling elite, they probably cooperated with Muslim native speakers of Arabic to produce the new coin type.[50] On the other hand, this bilingual coin clearly conveyed a message from the new rulers to the ruled. Employing the accustomed Latin script side by side with the new and foreign Arabic script and dispensing with a reference to Muḥammad (potentially offensive to Jews and Christians), the Muslim authorities seem to have claimed authority over the Roman and the Arabic population under the auspices of a consensual form of monotheism.[51] All this remains implicit, however: the Muslim elite's measures and motivations to produce the coin remain hidden to us, as do the reactions triggered by the coin.

(2) Annalistic historiography records basic historical events without fleshing them out. Although it offers a filtered version of the past that is certainly not free of bias, its focus on events makes it more reliable than elaborate narratives. By "making a mountain out of a molehill," we are able to spell out the communicative implications of a very short annalistic report. In four sentences, the "Royal Frankish Annals" (*Annales regni Francorum*) report that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān [II], the son of the ruling Andalusian amīr al-Ḥakam I (r. 180–206/796–822), had sent a delegation to the Frankish court in 816 to seek peace. The envoys met Emperor Louis the Pious (r. 814–840) in Compiègne and were then sent ahead to Aachen. After waiting for three months, the entry on the year 817 claims, they despaired of ever returning home and were finally sent back.[52] We can contextualize this

[46] Soler, "Documentos de Túnez," doc. XXX, 253–254; Daniel Potthast, "Diglossia as a Problem in Translating Administrative and Juridical Documents: The Case of Arabic, Latin, and Romance on the Medieval Iberian Peninsula," in *Latin and Arabic. Entangled Histories*, ed. Daniel G. König (Heidelberg: HeiUP, 2019), 125–144, here: 135–137.

[47] On interpreters in this context, see König, "Übersetzungskontrolle," 480–485; Mas Latrie, *Traités de paix*, vol. 1, 64, 100, 107, 115, 150, 173, 174, 186, 189–190, 199–200; Travis Bruce, "Dragomans and the Cultivation and Use of Trust in Thirteenth-Century Mediterranean Commerce," *Journal of Medieval Worlds* (2020) 2, no. 3–4: 57–71. Also see: Ana Echevarría, "Trujamanes and Scribes: Interpreting Mediation in Iberian Royal Courts," in *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages*, ed. Marc von der Höh, Jenny Rahel Oesterle, Nikolas Jaspert (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2013), 73–94.

[48] Daniel G. König, "Latin-Arabic Entanglement. A Short History," in *Latin and Arabic. Entangled Histories*, ed. Daniel G. König (Heidelberg: HeiUP, 2019), 131–121, here: 79–83.

[49] Amari, *I Diplomi arabi*, 119.

[50] Michael L. Bates, "Roman and Early Muslim Coinage in North Africa," in *North Africa from Antiquity to Islam*, ed. Mark Horton, Thomas Wiedemann (Bristol: University of Bristol, 1995), 12–15, here: 13.

[51] The coins pertain to the series NA 2, Phase 2 and 3, according to the classification of Trent Jonson, *A Numismatic History of the Early Islamic Precious Metal Coinage of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula*, 2 vols (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2014), vol. 1, 85, 134– 35.

[52] "Annales Regni Francorum," in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum, vol. 6,* ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz and Friedrich Kurze (Hanover: Hahn, 1895), a. 816, 144: "Ibi [Compendium palatio] commoratus legatos Abodritorum et de Hispania legatos Abdirahman filii Abulaz regis ad se missos suscepit; completisque ibi viginti vel eo amplius diebus Aquasgrani adhiemandum profectus est."; ibid., a. 817, p. 145-46: "Legati Abdirahman, filii Abulaz regis Sarracenorum, de Caesaraugusta missi pacis petendae gratia venerunt, et Compendio ab imperatore auditi Aquasgrani eum praecedere iussi sunt. (…) Legati etiam

mission as part of a series of rather frequent exchanges between Umayyad and Carolingian courts and try to understand which messages ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and Louis the Pious wished to convey to each other.[53] Focusing on the delegation itself, we must first ask whether these envoys were actually Muslims. Contrary to scholarly claims that Muslim rulers only drew on the services of Jewish or Christian envoys,[54] we know that Louis the Pious received a delegation in Diedenhofen in 831, which was staffed by "two Saracens and one Christian."[55] It thus seems possible that some of the envoys of 816–817 were also Muslims. Second, we must deliberate how much contact and exchange the envoys could have had with Frankish society during their sojourn in Frankish territory. The "Royal Frankish Annals" mention Louis's reception of the envoys in Compiègne —i.e. an act of political communication during which the envoys allegedly pleaded for peace, and the permission to return home that was granted after three months of waiting in Aachen— i.e. an act of administrative communication. Moreover, the annals inform us that the envoys spent "twenty or more days" (*viginti vel eo amplius diebus*) in Compiègne and three months (*tribus mensibus*) in Aachen. The report that they already "began to despair of their return" (*iam de reditu desperare coepissent*) suggests that they communicated their frustration to someone responsible at the Frankish court. According to Charlemagne's *Capitulare de villis*, dated between 770 and 813, a count (*comes*) and specialized servants were responsible for the honourable accommodation of foreign visitors and their horses.[56] In his *De ordine palatii*, Hincmar of Reims (d. 882) claims that the queen and the chamberlain (*camerarius*) were responsible for food, drink, and for taking care of the horses. Moreover, he mentions additional court officials who could have been responsible for guests, including the doorkeeper (*ostiarius*) and the keeper of the cellar (*scapoardus*), each with subordinate helpers (*iuniores aut decani*).[57] If we envision the delegation of 816–817, we must thus acknowledge a four-month-period of interaction between these envoys and their retinue on the one side, and various functionaries at the court, ranging from maids and stableboys via particular office holders to the emperor and his wife on the other. Many things, however, lie beyond our knowledge: the linguistic facets of communication, the political negotiations, the topics of daily life including the question of how the Frankish court dealt with Islamic food taboos and ritual obligations, finally the general atmosphere of communication when the envoys began to despair of their return.

(3) The thirteenth-century Castilian law code *Siete Partidas* obliges merchants to draw on the help of interpreters if they do not understand each other because the one speaks *arabigo*, the other *ladino*. While this regulation obviously serves to ensure the legal validity of commercial contracts concluded between representatives of different speech communities, we cannot be sure whether concrete problems prompted this legislation, whether such problems occurred repeatedly in thirteenth-century Castile, and whether interpreters were readily available. The text formulates a legal framework and corresponding norms applicable to a particular communicative setting, but neither spells out if, nor when, how, how much, and what kind of communication actually took place. We can only speculate that, in the course of the so-called *Reconquista*, northern groups of Christians lacking previous contact to Arabic were confronted with Arabic-speakers with no or only little knowledge of Latin or one of its Romance derivates. This seems to be the communicative problem to which this legislation responded.[58]

(4) A list specifying the costs of a building project was written between 3 June and 3 July 1510 somewhere in Aragón. The document is in *Aljamiado*, i.e. Castilian written in Arabic letters. Around fifteen years before the Muslims of this region would be forced to decide between formal conversion or emigration, Christian-Muslim hierarchies must have been clearly marked. This did not impede a certain Mūsā Calavera (*Mūsā Kalabāra*) from buying a house from Martina Alvarez (*Martina Albars*). He purchased building materials from Christian and Muslim vendors called Francisco Picado (*Fransiskuh Bbikaḏu*), Pero Díaz (*Bbāru Diyaz*), and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik. He bought water from Yaḥyā al-Ašqar and "some Christians" (*unuškrištyanuš*). Mūsā employed Muslims called Muʾmin, Farağ el Rubio (*Farağ al-Rūbiyyuh*), Muḥammad of Ariza (*Muḥammad dā Harīz*), Aḥmad Abī Naṣr, the latter a labourer of Ibrāhīm de Dueñas (*Ibrāhīm dā Ḏuwannaš*), and ʿAbd Allāh el Bueno (*al-Bwanuh*). But Christians, including Juan Tornero

Abdirahman, cum tribus mensibus detenti essent et iam de reditu desperare coepissent, remissi sunt." Astronomus, "Vita Hludowici imperatoris," in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum, vol. 64,* ed. Ernst Tremp (Hanover: Hahn, 1995), 279–555, here: cap. 27, 368: "Iusserat sane imperator missos Sarracenorum regis semet illuc praecedere venturum. Quo cum pervenissent, ferme tribus detenti sunt mensibus; post haec autem, cum eos iam taederet adventus sui, permissu imperatoris redierunt."

53 Philippe Sénac, *Les Carolingiens et al-Andalus* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2002), 87–90; Sebastian Kolditz, "Some Thoughts on the Carolingians and the Mediterranean–Theories, Terminology, and Realities," in Multiple Mediterranean Realities: Current Approaches to Spaces, Resources, and Connectivities, ed. Achim Lichtenberger, Constance von Rüden (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2015), 223–258.

54 Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 91–92.

55 Astronomus, "Vita Hludowici," ed./trans. Tremp, cap. 46, 466: "In quo loco tres legati Sarracenorum a transmarinis venere partibus, quorum duo Sarraceni, unus Christianus fuit, ac deferentes suae grandia munera patrię, odorum scilicet diversa genera et pannorum; qui pace petita et accepta remissi sunt."

56 "Capitulare de villis," in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges: Capitularia 1*, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hanover: Hahn, 1883), no. 32, 83–91, here: cap. 27, 85. On the date see "Capitulare de villis" [BK 32], in *Capitularia. Edition der fränkischen Herrschererlasse*, ed. Karl Ubl et al., URL: https://capitularia.uni-koeln.de/capit/pre814/bk-nr-032/ (access: 5 September 2022).

57 Hinkmar Remensis, "De ordine palatii," in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges: Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui in usum scholarum 3*, ed./trans. Thomas Gross and Rudolf Schieffer (Hanover: Hahn, 1980), cap. IV (cap. 18), 65–65; cap. V (cap. 22–23), 72–75.

58 *Siete Partidas del rey Don Alfonso el Sabio*, ed. La Real Academia de Historia, 3 vols (Madrid: Real Academia, 1807), vol. 3, partida quinta, capitulo XI, ley I, 255.

(*Ǧuwan Turnāru*), the maid of Juan Vizcaino (*Ǧuwan Bizkaʾinuh*), Guillén (*Ġilām*), and Diego Martínez (*Ḍiyāġuh Martināṣ*) also participated in construction works. According to his list of expenses, Mūsā bought wine for Juan Tornero; on Sundays, only he and other Muslims continued working. Thus, religious differences existed. But while the wider geopolitical and sociopolitical context may have been aggravating from a Muslim perspective, daily communication between the Muslims and Christians mentioned in this document obviously revolved around other topics and was characterized by friendly compromise. More, we cannot say.[59]

These sources document four settings, in which much communication between Christians and Muslims took place —between Muslim authorities on the one side and the Latinate population of North Africa, including the workers of a late Roman mint, on the other; between the different members of the Frankish court and an Umayyad delegation; between merchants of different faith not sharing a common language; between male and female, Muslim and Christian vendors and construction workers. Although concrete acts of communication are not documented explicitly, we can observe particular communicative settings involving political and administrative communication in the first and second, commercial negotiations and concomitant legal disputes in the third, and the daily business of a construction site in the fourth example. Four snapshots imply, but do not detail a plethora of smaller, interrelated communicative acts between different interlocutors.

2.3. Narrative Evidence: Staged, Imagined, and Embellished Communication

Notwithstanding the difficulties of fleshing out communicative settings alluded to in implicit evidence, the latter often provides us with a better picture of what was actually communicated than narrative evidence. Narrative evidence often purports to give full insight into a particular communicative setting and related acts of communication, often in the form of fully written-out dialogues, but is difficult to evaluate. In the case of religious disputations, we are often dealing with real events whose documentation, however, is highly partisan, in that it manipulates arguments to the advantage of the one or the other side. When dealing with literary texts, we cannot be sure to which degree literary fantasy drew on real examples. In hagiographic texts, we are confronted with narratives that often fit Christian-Muslim interaction into certain patterns, e.g. of Christian martyrdom. In connection with elaborate historiography, it is difficult to decide to which extent authors enriched historical exchanges with the fruits of their imagination.

Treatises documenting theological disputations, i.e. staged forms of interfaith dialogue, contain summaries of the opponents' arguments or even quote the disputants.[60] We only have few examples for staged Christian-Muslim interfaith dialogue, most of them, it seems, from Western Asia of the ʿAbbāsid period,[61] whereas many examples for Jewish–Christian disputations hail from the late medieval western Mediterranean, famous examples being the disputations of Paris 1240, Barcelona 1263, and Tortosa 1413–1414.[62] Although these disputations always took place in a highly hierarchical setting and were marked by a clear power asymmetry, they were not only documented by the dominant party. Rather, both parties produced summaries often interspersed with dialogues. To which degree such texts can be regarded as documents of communication remains debatable. They certainly point to dogmatic tensions that were discussed in front of an audience in a highly staged hierarchical setting imposed by the dominant religious group. The objective of communication was not necessarily to reach an understanding, but to affirm one's own and to discredit the other's position. The extant documentation, in turn, is generally so biased, that it is difficult to know what was actually said and how it was received.[63]

Literary texts, both poetry and prose, also stage Christian-Muslim communication, both in Arabic and in the Romance and Germanic literatures of Western Europe. Early examples hail from al-Andalus, where, from the tenth century onwards, Arabic *muwaššaḥ*-poetry features stanzas in a form of Ibero-Romance written in Arabic letters, in which Christian female lovers bewail being parted from their male Muslim lover.[64] Christian Europe

[59] Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Spanisch-islamische Urkunden aus der Zeit der Naṣriden und Moriscos* (Bonn: Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars, 1965), doc. 16, 203–220. While Hoenerbach focuses on deeds, the field of *Aljamiado* texts is, of course, much wider. See Gerard Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado. Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), His Antecedents and Successors* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Luís F. Bernabé Pons, "Los manuscritos aljamiados como textos islámicos," in *Memoria de los moriscos. Escritos y relatos de una diáspora cultural*, ed. Alfredo Mateos Paramio (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2010), 27–44.

[60] Brian A. Catlos and Alex J. Novikoff, "Interfaith Dialogue and Disputation in the Medieval Mediterranean," *Medieval Encounters* 24 (2018): 503–509.

[61] Martin Tamcke, ed., *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2007), in particular pp. 19–72, which deal with documented interfaith dialogues, not with written polemics as an indirect form of Christian-Muslim "conversation." Check the database "Christian-Muslim Relations 600–1500," URL: https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/christian-muslim-relations-i (access: 5 September 2022), for further examples using the keyword "disputation." Most of the 48 results are from the eastern Mediterranean and many texts actually do not necessarily document staged disputations, but consist of polemics against the other faith containing some dialogical element.

[62] Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (London and Toronto: Associate Presses, 1982), with English translations of the Christian and Jewish documentation of all three disputations. On earlier Jewish–Christian theological disputations, see Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens dans le monde occidental, 430-1096* (Paris: Mouton, 1960), 46–47, 68–75, 162–164.

[63] Britta Müller-Schauenburg, Marcel Müllerburg, and Henrik Wels, "'Und warum glaubst du dann nicht?' Zur ambivalenten Funktion der Vernunft in Religionsdialogen des 12. Jahrhunderts," in: *Integration und Desintegration der Kulturen im europäischen Mittelalter*, ed. Michael Borgolte et al. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2011), 261–324, here: 262.

[64] Daniel G. König, "Die arabisch-romanische ḫarǧa: Zwei hierarchisierte Sprachen – eine Schrift," in *Transkulturelle Verflechtungen. Mediävistische Perspektiven*, ed. Netzwerk Transkulturelle Verflech-

began producing literature featuring Christian-Muslim communication from around the twelfth century onwards. Although its timeframe may reach back as far as the period of Charlemagne, this literature was often written against the backdrop of a collective atmosphere inspired by crusading ideology and the ideals of chivalry.[65] Depicted Christian-Muslim communication often takes on the form of violence and polemic,[66] but also features situations of interreligious intimacy that can often, but do not have to result in conversion. Focusing on the Saracen princess who eventually marries a Christian knight after having converted to Christianity, specialists in Romance and Germanic literatures have highlighted these narratives' racial topoi, their tendency to "whiten" and "demonize" Muslim women, and a literary framework that incorporates the Muslim female through subjugation and sexual possession.[67] Arabic folk epic, in turn, also demonizes the so-called Franks[68] and features Christian women who convert to Islam.[69]Within this parallel framework, however, these narratives also portray lively scenes of Christian-Muslim communication, as the following example shows.

One of the tales from "One Thousand and One Nights" relates the story of a Muslim merchant in Acre who became impassioned for a Frankish woman, but was forced to leave the city because of imminent Christian–Muslim hostilities. After the Battle of Ḥaṭṭīn (1187), he was able to buy the woman as a prisoner of war. Although married to a Frankish knight, she spontaneously converted to Islam and married the merchant. When Saladin promised the Franks an extradition of Frankish prisoners of war, the woman, now pregnant, insisted on staying with her new Muslim husband. The anecdote, related from the perspective of the merchant, contains several Christian-Muslim conversations: the Muslim merchant negotiating with the woman's governess to be able to spend the night with her for an agreed sum; the Christian herald announcing the end of the truce and asking all Muslims to leave the city within eight days; the merchant revealing himself to the captive woman; the woman's explanation why she prefers to stay with her Muslim husband rather than return to the Frankish knight in front of Saladin and the Christian commissioner responsible for redeeming Frankish prisoners of war; finally a letter and a chest sent by the commissioner to the Muslim merchant, informing him that the woman's mother would like her to have her personal belongings now that she would not return home anymore.[70]

It is clear that such stories cannot necessarily be taken at face value. However, they do provide insight into how contemporaries could imagine Christian-Muslim interaction and often lead us into social milieus that are rarely, if at all mentioned in concrete or implicit evidence. While these stories generally follow narrative patterns of religious dominance that exalt the doctrinal norms of the author's religious group, they also describe behaviour that transgresses these norms. In fact, many of these narratives contain elements described by Sharon Kinoshita as producing, at least temporarily, a "disturbing destabilization of fundamental categories of faith, class, and gender."[71] In this way, they allow us to envision a wider range of possible forms of interreligious interaction and communication as the following example illustrates.

The middle high German poet Wolfram of Eschenbach (d. *c.* 1220) went as far as creating a kind of transracial figure in his romance *Parcival*. In his younger years, Parcival's father Gahmuret sets out for the Moorish country Zazamanc, where he falls in love with the dark-skinned queen Belkane. Seeking new adventures, he leaves behind a pregnant woman and a letter claiming that he would have loved her even more, had she converted to Christianity. Belkane gives birth to a child that is chequered black and white. This child, Feirefiz, sets out on his own adventures, moves into Christian lands and eventually meets his brother Parcival. In the end, Feirefiz converts to Christianity, but only to be able to marry Repanse, a Christian woman. Feirefiz raises the following question: "If I receive baptism, will I receive her love?"[72] Parcival explains: "If you bond yourself to my cousin, you will have to abjure all false gods, you must forsake them and hate the evil one, who speaks out against the highest God, whose commandments you must faithfully fulfil."[73] Feirefiz answers: "Whatever helps me to attain her, shall be done, and loyally carried out until the end."[74] In this fictional account of a conversation between a "pagan" and his Christian environ-

tung (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 2016), 177–180, with further literature.

65 William Wistar Comfort, "The Literary Rôle of the Saracens in the French Epic," *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 55, no. 3 (1940): 628–659, here: 628–629, 659; Harris T. Norris, "Arabic Folk Epic and Western Chansons de Geste," in: *Oral Tradition*, no. 4/1-2 (1989): 125–150, here: 129.

66 Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries. Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 15–45.

67 Jacqueline de Weever, *Sheeba's Daughters. Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic*, New York: Routledge, 1998; Anne Le, "Reconsidering Medieval Orientalism: Religion and Gender in *Le Conte de Floire et Blanchefleur,*" *Paroles gelées* 31.1 (2018): 3–12, here: 5; M. Ailes, "Desiring the Other: Subjugation and Resistance of the Female Saracen in the Chanson de Geste," *French Studies* (2020): 173–188. But also see: Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries*, 46–104.

68 E.g. in the Sīrat Baybars, see Ana Ruth Vidal Luengo, "Conflict Resolution in the 'Sīrat Baybars.' A Peace Research Approach," *Oriente Moderno* 83, no. 2 (2003): 465–484, here: 474–480.

69 Niall Christie, "Noble Betrayers of their Faith, Families and Folk: Some Non-Muslim Women in Mediaeval Arabic Popular Literature," *Folklore* 123 (2012): 84–98; Robert Irwin, "The Image of the Byzantine and the Frank in Arab Popular Literature of the Late Middle Ages," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4 (1989): 226–242, here: 231.

70 Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries*, 104.

71 Jean Varsy, "Anecdote des croisades," *Journal Asiatique, quatrième série* 16 (1850): 75–92. See Irwin, "Image," 232–233. 71 Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries*, 104.

72 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Karl Lachmann (Berlin: Reimer, 1854), Book XVI, v. 814,1–2, 382: "Ob ich durch iuch ze toufe kum, ist mir der touf ze minnen frum?"

73 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Lachmann, Book XVI, v. 816,26–30, 383: "wiltu die muomen mîn haben, al die gote dîn muostu durch si versprechen unt immer gerne rechen den widersatz des hôhsten gots und mit triwen schônen sîns gebots."

74 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Lachmann, Book XVI, v. 817,1-3, 383–384: "Swâ von ich sol die maget hân (…) daz wirt gar getân und mit triwen an mir rezeiget."

ment, the latter demands conversion to be able to integrate this pagan friend into their community. In spite of the Christians' insistence on the opposition of Christian truth and pagan error, neither they nor the author Wolfram of Eschenbach condemn Feirefiz for accepting the Christian faith for the opportunistic reason of wedding his beloved-one. The literary framework reproduces the normative system, but portrays a situation, in which a pagan moves effortlessly among a circle of friendly disposed Christians in spite of his religious alterity —all this written in a work produced around the time of the fourth crusade![75]

Although historians tend to draw a clear boundary between literature and historiography, certain genres contain elements of both. Christian hagiography generally has a paraenetic function and depicts the respective saint in a way that he or she conforms to contemporary ideals of Christian sanctity.[76] In the context of Christian–Muslim relations, Christian hagiography often fits historical evidence for concrete interreligious interaction into narrative patterns of Christian martyrdom reminiscent of the Roman period,[77] or exalts the virtues of a saint, e.g. Francis of Assisi, to such a degree that it becomes almost impossible to discern a plausible historical setting.[78] Whereas Christian hagiography thus calls for the use of specific methods to be able to use such texts as historical sources,[79] historiography often confronts us with comparable challenges. Some historiographers embellish their narrative with scenes of encounter and dialogues that seem to have sprung from the author's mind rather than from empirical observation. In his depiction of the preliminaries to Louis's IX (r. 1226–1270) crusade to Tunis, for example, the North African historiographer Ibn Ḫaldūn (d. 808/1406) describes the following scene: to avert the crusade, the Ḥafṣid sultan al-Mustanṣir (r. 647–675/1249–1277) has sent an envoy to Louis with 80,000 gold pieces. When Louis IX cashes in the money, only to confirm that he will attack Tunis, an envoy from Mamlūk Egypt arrives. He recites parts of a poem, written by the Mamlūk poet Ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 649/1251), that holds Louis IX responsible for the death, mutilation, and captivity of thousands of Christians, prophesies that the king will end in hell, and reminds him of his earlier captivity in Egypt. Although the poem is in Arabic and there is no mention of an interpreter, Louis IX is said to have reacted to the poem by justifying his attack on Tunis in the most insolent and arrogant manner.[80] It is difficult to accept this narrative without raising questions: according to Ibn Ḫaldūn, the sultan of Tunis sent his envoy to Louis before the latter began preparing his fleet. How could he have guessed that Louis was going to attack Tunis if this decision was only announced in Cagliari, only few days before the crusaders' arrival in North Africa?[81] Did a Mamlūk envoy really arrive at the king's court? Would Louis have understood a highly intricate poem in an elevated register of classical Arabic? Although Ibn Ḫaldūn counts among the most respected historiographers of the pre-modern period, it is difficult to accept his version of events without qualms.[82]

Historians seeking to reconstruct the large variety of Christian-Muslim communication are naturally tempted to accept much evidence as documentation of "authentic" acts of inter-religious communication. However, they should be wary of considering as authentic documented acts of interreligious communication which clearly serve to convey a particular message to the author's fellow believers. In the case of Ibn Ḫaldūn's narrative, a scant dozen of parallel Latin, French, and Arabic sources enable us to question his version of events and to reconstruct alternative scenarios. The latter allow us to speculate whether the Egyptian envoy's poetical intervention can be read as a literary embellishment designed to allow Ibn Ḫaldūn's readers to indulge in a bit of *Schadenfreude* vis-àvis a king who had broken his promise and had attacked Muslim societies twice. What to do, however, if no parallel evidence is available as is the case with the scene described at the very beginning of this article —a Muslim on the market of Salerno entering into a friendly relationship with the city's duke and later warning him of an impending Aġlabid attack with the help of Amalfitan merchants? Must we discard this scene as unrealistic because we lack parallel evidence, because we cannot imagine a Muslim helping a Christian community merely because he received a small gift from a local Christian leader? Would references to other sources describing Muslims acting in the interest of Western European Christians and to the detriment of their coreligionaries bolster the anecdote's claim to authenticity, e.g. the Muslim collaborator who, according to Ibn al-Aṯīr (d. 630/1233), carried a messenger pigeon to King Baldwin I of Jerusalem (r. 1100–1118), thus triggering measures that eventually ended in the massacre of Muslim troops?[83]

We cannot be sure whether a described act of interreligious communication really took place or whether its narration was intended to convey a particular message to the work's audience. If we cannot detect any sign

75 Julia Zimmermann, "Schaffung einer literarischen Figur: Die gescheckte Haut des Feirefiz," in *Transkulturelle Verflechtungen. Mediävistische Perspektiven*, ed. Netzwerk Transkulturelle Verflechtung (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 2016), 105–106.

76 See, e.g. Ghazzal Dabiri, ed., *Narrating Power and Authority in Late Antique and Medieval Hagiography across East and West* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021).

77 Sahner, *Christian Martyrs*, 167.

78 John V. Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan. The Curious History of a Christian-Muslim Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

79 Friedrich Lotter, "Methodisches zur Gewinnung historischer Erkenntnisse aus hagiographischen Quellen," *Historische Zeitschrift* 229, no. 2 (1979): 298–356; Friedrich Prinz, "Der Heilige und seine Lebenswelt. Überlegungen zum gesellschafts– und kulturgeschichtlichen Aussagewert von Viten und Wundererzählungen," in *Mönchtum, Kultur und Gesellschaft*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp, Alfred Heit (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1989), 251–268.

80 Ibn Ḫaldūn, *Tārīḫ*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Ḫalīl Šaḥāda, 8 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2000–2001), vol. 6, 425–426.

81 Michael Lower, *The Tunis Crusade of 1270. A Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 98, 107.

82 Daniel G. König, "1270: Ibn Ḫaldūn über das Vorspiel zum tunesischen Kreuzzug Ludwigs IX.," *Transmediterrane Geschichte* 2.1 (2020), DOI: https://doi.org/10.18148/tmh/2020.2.1.27.

83 Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīḫ*, ed. Carolus Tornberg (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965–1967), 12 vols, AH 505, vol. 10, 489; *The Chronicle of Ibn alAthir*, transl. Donald S. Richards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), vol. 1, 158.

suggesting that the author constructed or even invented a particular communicative act or setting, if we cannot find any argument that would question the setting's plausibility, then we should give it the benefit of the doubt and use it to enlarge our range of recorded communicative acts and settings. Why shouldn't a Muslim, who had spent a good time in Christian Salerno, take measures to avert its destruction? We must acknowledge, however, that this way of working is methodologically precarious. Consequently, we must reflect upon how to insert concrete, implicit, and narrative evidence into the greater picture.

3. The Greater Picture

Having discussed different kinds of evidence, the following paragraphs discuss two methods that allow us to gain a wider, macro-historical understanding of Christian-Muslim communication.

The first method aims at understanding the full range of possible communicative acts within one particular setting by collecting and juxtaposing related material regardless of time and space. What is regarded as a communicative setting in this context is not defined by the primary source evidence as was the case above. Here, a communicative setting can be defined arbitrarily as long as it allows us to see the varieties of a particular type of Christian-Muslim communication: a setting can be defined by the relationship between specified actors (e.g. men and women, conquerors and conquered, lords and serfs, inn-keepers and guests, etc.), by patterns of behaviour (e.g. norm-compliant vs transgressive, friendly vs hostile, etc.), by particular events or atmospheres (e.g. war, political turmoil, economic crisis, etc.), and the like.

The second method consists of acquiring an overview over the existing range of communicative settings within one particular period of time with the aim of describing the larger communicative constellation characteristic of this period. Such a description must accept a large variety of communicative settings and acts, but also identify, which of them seem relevant or dominant and thus characteristic for this period. Having defined such a communicative constellation, it is then possible to investigate how it was subject to change. This entails reflecting upon how larger political, economic, social, or ideological shifts transformed existing and produced new communicative constellations, which then affected the range of dominant communicative settings and the dependent variety of communicative acts on a lower scale.

3.1. Defining the Range of Communicative Acts and Settings through Phenomenological Analysis and Comparison

Intimate relations between men and women are usually highly communicative and can thus be regarded as a particular setting of interreligious communication. In a pre-modern Christian-Muslim context, interreligious gender relations were generally regulated by religiously sanctioned norms of sexual behaviour. Roughly speaking, Muslim norms allowed Muslim men to engage with women from subdominant religious groups of monotheists, claimed resulting children for Islam, and prohibited Muslim women from having intimate relations with nonMuslims. Christian norms, in turn, often proscribed any kind of intimate interaction between Christians and non-Christians under Christian rule, but acknowledged that marriages with non-Christians could potentially lead to the non-Christian partner's conversion.[84] In the contact zones between Latin Christianity and Islam, we find many examples of interreligious gender relations that both conformed to and transgressed these norms, thus pointing to a large variety of communicative acts within this particular setting.[85]

Early examples for gender relations between European Christians and Muslims generally hail from the western Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula in particular. The first governor of Muslim al-Andalus, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Mūsā, is said to have taken advantage of several noble women of Seville. When he married the daughter or wife of the former Visigothic king Roderic shortly after 92/711, she allegedly counselled him to crown himself king of al-Andalus.[86] Around 732, the duke Eudo of Aquitaine forged an alliance with the Berber leader Munnuz or Munuza, which he sealed by giving his daughter in marriage. After Munuza died a rebel during the great Berber revolt, she was sent to the caliph in Damascus.[87] Between 785 and 791, pope Hadrian complained to the bishops of Spain that many marriages occurred between Christian women and "pagans," whose children were lost to the church.[88] Eulogius of Córdoba (d. *c.* 860) mentions the case of a Christian man who fled to Christian-ruled territory with a Muslim woman.[89] Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076) tells us that Ǧamīla, sister of the Umayyad rebel Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār, became the ancestor of an archbishop of Santiago de Compostela, after her brother had been killed by the retinue of Alfonso II of

[84] Wiebke Deimann, "Zu den Gesetzen über gemischtreligiöse Sexualkontakte in den 'Siete Partidas' Alfons des Weisen," in *Mittelalter im Labor. Die Mediävistik testet Wege zu einer transkulturellen Europawissenschaft*, ed. Michael Borgolte et al. (Berlin: Akademie, 2008), 445–446; Theresa Jäckh, "973: Ibn Ḥawqal on Christian-Muslim Marriages in Sicily," *Transmediterranean History* 2, no. 1 (2020), DOI: https://doi.org/10.18148/tmh/2020.2.1.28.

[85] On interreligious sexual relations, see Simon Barton: "Marriage across Frontiers: Sexual Mixing, Power and Identity in Medieval Iberia," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 3 (2011): 1–25; Simon Barton, *Conquerors, Brides, and Concubines: Interfaith Relations and Social Power in Medieval Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Rabea Kohnen, *Die Braut des Königs: Zur interreligiösen Dynamik der mittelhochdeutschen Brautwerbungserzählungen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013). Also see the numerous entries in the RELMIN database, using the keywords "adultère," "couples mixtes," "femmes," "fornication." URL: http://telma.irht.cnrs.fr/outils/relmin/recherche/ (access 6 February 2023).

[86] "Chronica muzarabica," in *Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum*, ed. Juan Gil (Madrid: CSIC, 1973), vol. 1, 15–54, here: §51, 35–36.

[87] "Chronica muzarabica," ed. Gil, § 65, 41–42.

[88] "Codex Carolinus (ep. 95: Hadrianus papa ad episcopos Hispaniae)," *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae, vol. 3*: *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi 1*, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), 636–637, 643.

[89] Eulogius Cordubensis, "Memoriale Sanctorum," in *Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum*, ed. Juan Gil (Madrid: CSIC, 1973), vol. 2, 363–458, here: cap. 9, 412.

Asturias (r. 791–842) around 225/840.[90] Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 378/988) reports that couples of Christian women and Muslim men in the Sicilian countryside agreed upon raising their daughters as Christians and their sons as Muslims.[91] According to Ekkehard of Saint Gall (d. after 1056), the "Saracens" of Fraxinetum, a tenth-century Muslim raiding outpost in what is today southern France, married "the daughters of the [local] people."[92] From the tenth century onwards, *muwaššaḥ*-poetry from the Iberian Peninsula features poems, whose final stanza (*ḫarǧa*) contains verses, in which a Christian woman bewails the loss of her Muslim lover.[93] Notarial forms compiled by Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār at the end of the tenth century explain the legal framework for the purchase of female Galician and Frankish slaves and detail the legal implications of sexual relations between these slaves and their masters.[94] Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb (d. 776/1375) claims that the Christian wife of the *ṭaʾifa*-lord Muǧāhid of Denia was taken captive during hostilities between Denia and Pisa around 406/1015–1016, but chose to remain in Pisa when her husband tried to ransom her.[95]

With the beginning of the crusading period, the eastern Mediterranean also began to witness gender relations between Latin Christians and Muslims. Albert of Aachen (d. after 1119) relates that a nun accompanying the people's crusade led by Peter the Hermit became impassioned for a Turk and eventually left to live with him.[96] After the establishment of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, the council of Nablus (1120) threatened to severely punish any kind of sexual relations between Christians and Muslims.[97] Fulcher of Chartres (d. after 1127) informs us that many former crusaders had married "Saracen" women after the latter had been baptized.[98] Usāma b. Munqiḏ (d. 584/1188) mentions a female Frankish captive married to a Syrian nobleman who eventually returned to Frankish territory to marry a humble Frankish shoemaker.[99] Already mentioned above, Wolfram of Eschenbach describes the affair between the Christian knight Gahmuret and the Moorish queen Belkane as well as Feirefiz's conversion to Christianity to marry a Christian woman,[100] while one story from the compilation of "One Thousand and One Nights" describes the story of an Egyptian Muslim merchant who wooed a Frankish woman from Acre.[101]

In spite of strong normative frameworks complicating certain forms of intimate relations between European Christians and Muslim, sources until the seventeenth century point to the fact that they occurred nonetheless: the thirteenth-century Castilian law code *Siete Partidas* threatens to punish sexual relations between Muslim men and Christian women,[102] whereas a papal response (1235) to a query by Franciscans from Tunis mentions male Christian converts to Islam who had married Muslim women in the environs of the European-Christian *fondachi* in the city.[103] In his *Don Quijote*, Miguel de Cervantes (d. 1616) included a long story of Christian captives in Barbary saved by the Muslim women Zoraida who fled to Spain with these captives and eventually married one of them.[104]

Although arbitrarily selected, this array of primary sources proves that intimate relations between Christians and Muslims existed in many variants ranging from rape via compulsory sex with female slaves to forms of passion and love. The number of documented interreligious marriages is actually quite high. Most of these marriages conformed to the norms of the dominant religious group, the one or the other exception notwithstanding. Whereas most sources do not give much insight into concrete acts of communication, some suggest that legally sanctioned relationships involved negotiations about the (religious) education of children, whereas illegal intimacies often forced couples to take necessary precautions and exposed them to punishments. Conversion to the other religion took place to conform to dominant norms and to escape the dangers of illegality and could produce tensions, e.g. with representatives of the former religious establishment and one's own family of origin. Thus, focusing on a particular kind of Christian-Muslim relationship allows us to envision a large range of possible communicative acts within one particular communicative setting.

Another method to enlarge our understanding of the range of possible communicative acts is to collect source material on one particular type of behaviour, e.g. when members of one religious group sided with members of the other religious group against their coreligion-

[90] Ibn Ḥayyān, *Al-Sifr al-ṯānī min kitāb al-muqtabis [al-Muqtabis II-1]*, ed. Maḥmūd ʿAlī Makkī (Riyad: Markaz al-malik Fayṣal li-l-buḥūṯ wa-ldirāsāt al-islāmiyya, 2003), fol. 184r, AH 225, 445; *Crónica de los emires Alḥakam I y ʿAbdarraḥmān II* [*al-Muqtabis II-1*], trans. Maḥmūd ʿAlī Makkī and Federico Corriente (Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo, 2001), 306.

[91] Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. Johannes H. Kramers (Leiden: Brill, 1938), 129.

[92] Ekkehard IV, *Casus Sancti Galli / St. Galler Klostergeschichten*, ed./transl. Hans F. Haefele (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002), casus 65, 138–141.

[93] König, "Die arabisch-romanische ḫarǧa," 177–180, with further literature.

[94] Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār, *Kitāb al-Waṯāʾiq wa-l-siǧillāt*, ed. Pedro Chalmeta, Federico Corriente (Madrid: Academia Matritense del Notariado, Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1983), 238, 254, 259, 265, 296, 420.

[95] Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb, *Kitāb Aʿmāl al-aʿlām*, ed. Évariste Lévi-Provençal (Beirut: Dār al-Makšūf, 1956), 217–221.

[96] Albertus Aquensis, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed./trans. Susan Edgington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), lib. 2, cap. 37, 126–129.

[97] Benjamin Kedar, "On the Origins of the Earliest Laws of Frankish Jerusalem. The Canons of the Council of Nablus, 1120," *Speculum* 74, no. 2 (1999): 310–355.

[98] Fulcherus Carnotensis, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Winter, 1913), lib. III, cap. 37,3–5, 748.

[99] Usāma b. Munqiḏ, *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*, ed. Philip Kh. Hitti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), 130.

[100] Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Lachmann, Book XVI, v. 814–817, 382–384.

[101] Varsy, "Anecdote," 75–92.

[102] Deimann, "Zu den Gesetzen," 445–446.

[103] John V. Tolan, "Ramon de Penyafort's Responses to Questions Concerning Relations Between Christians and Saracens: Critical Edition and Translation," in *Convivencia and Medieval Spain: Essays in Honor of Thomas F. Glick*, ed. Mark T. Abate (Cham: Springer, 2018), 159–192, here: 175.

[104] Edith Cameron, "Woman in Don Quijote," *Hispania* 9, no. 3 (1926): 137–157, here: 146.

ists.[105] This was already the case in the source presented at the beginning of the article, i.e. the story of a Muslim who preferred saving the Christian-ruled city of Salerno to supporting the military success of his Muslim coreligionists.[106] Some of the examples on gender relations given above also point to instances, in which Christians and Muslims of both sexes engaged in a relationship that was forbidden according to the prevailing norms of their religious group. Many sources provide additional examples: already mentioned was Ibn al-Aṯīr's reference to a Muslim providing his Frankish overlords with information that eventually led to the death of many of his coreligionists in a crusading context.[107] A letter of complaint written by the director of the *dīwān* in Tunis to the commune in Pisa in 597/1201 mentions Pisan scribes and interpreters working in the city who severely reprimanded their Pisan compatriots who had attacked a Muslim ship in the harbour of Tunis and killed several Muslims.[108] Jehan de Joinville (d. 1317), the biographer of King Louis IX of France, describes the king's and his own conversation with a French renegade to Islam during the crusade to Egypt who, reprimanded by the king, explained why he would not return to Christianity or the Latin-Christian orbit.[109] Such material shows that Christian-Muslim communication was characterized both by norm-compliant and transgressive behaviour. Against this backdrop, we can regard very different kinds of communicative acts as historically plausible.

3.2. Describing a Larger Communicative Constellation and its Dynamics

As soon as we take a closer look at the extant documentation of specific periods of Christian-Muslim interaction, we will notice that very different communicative settings existed side by side, thus adding up to form larger communicative constellations. In the late ninth century, the *Agarenus* mentioned at the beginning of this article came to the aid of the duke of Salerno in approximately the same period (c. 875–880), in which pope John VIII (sed. 872–882) was forced to pay 25.000 *mancusi* to Saracen marauders to save Rome and its environs from further plundering (878).[110] Saladin's (r. 567–589/1171–1193) conquest of Jerusalem after the Battle of Ḥaṭṭīn coincided with the death of the Arabic–Latin translator Gerald of Cremona (1187). Saladin's victory provoked a diplomatic mission by Frederick I to the Ayyūbid court that travelled to Egypt while the Genoese were concluding a commercial peace treaty with the Banū Ġāniya on the Balearics (1188).[111] These and other synchronicities of different communicative settings and dependent communicative acts as they took place in different regions, on different social levels, and on different themes, should make us wary of trying to subsume the general atmosphere of Christian-Muslim communication in a particular period under one single conceptual keyword. However, the systematic analysis of such synchronicities should also allow us to identify communicative settings characteristic of particular periods, e.g. the period during and in the wake of the Arabic-Islamic expansion, i.e. the seventh to tenth centuries, or the period during and in the wake of Latin-Christian or European-Christian expansion into (former) Muslim-ruled territory in the centuries postdating the eleventh.

Turning away from synchronicity to phenomena of dynamic change, we must acknowledge that communicative constellations changed over the centuries. Although it is not possible to bolster the following propositions with empirical evidence, a short, necessarily superficial and selective look at the development of Christian-Muslim relations on the Iberian Peninsula on the basis of selected studies reveals that larger geopolitical shifts transformed existing communicative constellations by transforming or destroying existing and by producing new communicative settings.

On the Iberian Peninsula, Christian-Muslim communication began in the early eighth century within a clearly asymmetrical relationship between conquering Muslims and conquered Christians. First encounters took place within the framework of hostilities. They involved captivity, negotiations of submission, and the establishment of a new ruling administration that demanded tribute, and slowly but surely established a new fiscal and judicial system.[112] In this context, Christian-Muslim communication mainly served finding an arrangement between the conquerors and the conquered.

From the beginning, however, the establishment of Muslim rule also involved encounters which led to more intensive engagement with the other. In the course of the eighth to tenth centuries, an increasing number of mixed Christian-Muslim family structures emerged, in which members of both religious groups presumably interacted on a more intimate level than, for example, in the Muslim administration, which involved an increasing number of Christians, but also Christian converts to Islam. Christian-Muslim relations were not necessarily free of tension, not even within the more intimate circle of the family, which had to negotiate different and sometimes clashing norms of co-existence.[113] The phenomenon of the so-called "martyrs of Córdoba" (*c.* 850–859) proves

[105] On this topic, see Steven A. Epstein, *Purity Lost. Transgressing Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean,1000–1400* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 137–172.

[106] *Chronicon Salernitanum*, ed. Westerbergh, § 110, 122–123.

[107] Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīḫ*, ed. Tornberg, vol. 10, AH 505, 489; *Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir*, transl. Richards, vol. 1, 158.

[108] Amari, *I Diplomi Arabi*, 39

[109] Jean de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis suivie du Credo et de la lettre à Louis X*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1868), cap. 77, 140–141.

[110] Iohannis VIII papa, "ep. 89," in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae in Quart, vol. 7*, ed. Erich Caspar (Berlin: Weidmann, 1928), 85–86.

[111] Karl Sudhoff, "Die kurze 'Vita' und das Verzeichnis der Arbeiten Gerhards von Cremona, von seinen Schülern und Studiengenossen kurz nach dem Tode des Meisters (1187) in Toledo verfasst," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 8, no. 2–3 (1914): 73–82; "Chronica regia Coloniensis," in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores in rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum, vol. 18*, ed. Georg Waitz (Hanover: Hahn, 1880), a. 1188, 140.

[112] Pedro Chalmeta Gendrón, *Invasión e islamización. La sumisión de Hispania y la formación de al-Andalus* (Jaén: Universidad de Jaén, 2003).

[113] Guichard, "Les Arabes ont bien envahi l'Espagne," 1483–1513.

that the normative frameworks of Christianity and Islam created difficulties for those moving between the boundaries of both religious systems.[114] Religious authorities on both sides tended to mark religious boundaries more clearly,[115] while proliferating conversion to Islam put increasing pressure on the remaining Christian communities. The latter either turned away from Muslim society or chose to adapt to dominant Muslim culture, also in linguistic terms.[116]

New forms of Christian-Muslim communication not only came into being on an intrasocietal, but also on an intersocietal level. Emerging Muslim al-Andalus initially only maintained hostile relations to neighbouring Christian societies on the Iberian Peninsula and in the Frankish realm. The eighth century, however, witnessed the establishment of diplomatic relations, which stabilized over the following centuries in spite of regular raiding activities from both sides.[117] The emergence of diplomatic relations was accompanied by interreligious commerce in and beyond the border regions.[118]

From the eleventh century onwards, both the religious demographics and the balance of power slowly shifted. Conversion to Islam had begun to change the religious makeup of Muslim-ruled society.[119] Due to increasing Christian pressure from the north and increasing political instability in the Muslim south, Arabicized Christians began to move to the Christian north,[120] whereas Muslims increasingly moved from conquered territories to the Muslim-ruled south. With new Christian groups from the north entering former Muslim territory, the demographic basis of Christian-Muslim encounter and communication changed. The latter now often took place within a new asymmetrical relationship, which forced Muslims into captivity, peace negotiations, and interreligious relations dominated by Christian norms.[121] Until the fifteenth century, Muslim-ruled territory on the Iberian Peninsula became smaller and religiously more homogeneous. Christian-Muslim communication on an intrasocietal level was increasingly substituted by communication on an intersocietal level, the more so as Muslims were pressured to either convert to Christianity or to leave the Iberian Peninsula at the beginning of the sixteenth century. From this time onwards, and from a formal point of view, Christian-Muslim communication on the Iberian Peninsula only existed between Christian authorities and foreign Muslim envoys or between Christian masters and Muslim slaves, if we exclude the interaction of crypto-Muslim Moriscos and Iberian Christians from the Iberian panoply of interreligious communication.[122]

Although this rapid overview would have to be nuanced considerably in a more focused study, it clearly demonstrates that the changes produced by the Muslim invasion in the eighth and increasing Iberian-Christian expansionism from the eleventh century onwards resulted in new communicative constellations both on an intra– and an intersocietal level. These, in turn, had decisive effects on the array of dominant communicative settings and the dependent variety of communicative acts. Each expansionist drive produced new milieus of intensified communication. However, while the Muslim invasion initiated a period of religious mixing, Iberian-Christian expansionism eventually led to a reduction of interreligious communication: it increasingly polarized the demographic situation on the Iberian Peninsula and, as an effect of forced conversion and expulsion, ultimately sought to abolish Christian-Muslim communication on an intrasocietal level, thus "outsourcing" interreligious communication to the sphere of "foreign relations."

4. Conclusions

The objective of this article was to discuss the prospects and methodological intricacies of engaging with a neglected paradigm in the study of historical Christian-Muslim relations, i.e. concrete and direct communication between members of both religious groups. A very complex phenomenon, communication cannot be reduced to a bilateral sender–receiver model. Network models from the field of media studies show that it has to be regarded as a collective phenomenon that involves humans as individuals, but also as members and representatives of collectives. Because of the fact that communication is an ubiquitous, fleeting phenomenon that is often only poorly or ambiguously documented, its analysis challenges historians in different ways.

Some of these challenges are particular to the field of interreligious communication and have not yet been adequately addressed in this article. One concerns the difficulty of imposing fixed religious identities on

[114] Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Jessica A. Coope, *The Martyrs of Córdoba. Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

[115] Janina M. Safran, *Defining Boundaries in al-Andalus: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Islamic Iberia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

[116] Cyrille Aillet, *Les Mozarabes. Christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en péninsule ibérique (IXe–XIIe siècle)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010).

[117] Philippe Sénac, *Les Carolingiens et al-Andalus* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2002).

[118] Olivia Remie Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain. The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 16–51.

[119] Richard W. *Bulliet*, *Conversion* to *Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in. Quantitative History* (Cambridge/MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 109, assumed that conversion had probably passed the benchmark of 50% in the tenth century. However, see the criticism formulated by Mayte Penelas, "Some Remarks on Conversion in al-Andalus," *Al-Qantara* 23, no. 1 (2002): 193–200, and Bulliet's more recent statements on the topic in Richard W. Bulliet, "The Conversion Curve Revisited," in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 69–80.

[120] Jean-Pierre Molénat, "Los mozárabes, entre al-Andalus y el norte peninsular," in *Minorías y migraciones en la historia*, ed. Ángel Vaca Lorenzo (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2004), 11–24.

[121] Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom.*

[122] Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, ed., *De mudéjares a moriscos. Una conversión forzada* (Teruel: Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, 2003); Mercedes Garcia-Arenal and Gerard A. Wiegers, eds., *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain. A Mediterranean Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

"Jews," "Christians," and "Muslims," by positioning them clearly as interlocutors on the one or the other side of bi– or multilateral exchange. Even in a period marked by dogmatic boundaries, *ǧihād*-and crusading ideology, and occasional pogroms, some individuals at least did not conform to an "ideal" religious type, but moved or had moved between different religious systems and their communities. Another related challenge concerns the question when to define relations as "intra-" or "intersocietal." This article implicitly classified all instances of interreligious communication under one political authority as "intrasocietal," communicative flows between members of different political entities as "intersocietal." We can come across historical situations, however, in which a religious minority is so absorbed with its own affairs that it seems to constitute an independent society within a larger sociopolitical entity. In such cases it could seem expedient to define the relations between majority and minority as "intersocietal" rather than "intrasocietal."

Engagement with the macro-history of Christian-Muslim communication must begin by collecting, analysing, and evaluating scholarly theories on the subject. Intending to show that the theme of Christian-Muslim communication has not yet received the attention it deserves, the article demonstrated that the study of interreligious communication is still strongly influenced by research perspectives deemed problematic. They either stress the construction of alterities, formulate generalizing macro-historical hypotheses and sweeping models, or fail to use the results of intricate case studies to differentiate existing models. Recent research has made efforts to do so, but still lacks convincing solutions for the problem of representativity.

The overview on existing research has made clear that a macro-history of Christian-Muslim communication cannot be written from the point of view of political or ideological history alone. Writing such a history, we must try to break through to the sphere of everyday history with the help of material used by economic historians and specialists of literature, and find fresh ways of integrating the findings of micro-history into a greater picture. Emphasizing all kinds of multiplicity, the recent boom in Mediterranean studies seems to have provided an adequate conceptual framework for this kind of endeavour. However, we should beware of substituting religious or cultural essentialisms with a new form of geography-bound essentialism.

Whereas the analysis of the state of research yielded some results, a truly systematic approach to existing research on interreligious communication should distinguish between different types of communication theories.

A preliminary taxonomy could distinguish between

(1) theories dealing with all linguistic facets of communication, both between religious groups that use different languages (language learning, bi– and multilingualism, translation, etc.) and between religious groups that belong to the same speech community (diglossia, sociolects, terminology particular to specific religious groups),
(2) theories that explain the functioning and roles of specialized sites and agents (chanceries, translators, interpreters, etc.),
(3) theories addressing the mechanisms and atmospheres of communication in specific areas of social activity (diplomacy, trade, religious controversy, family life, everyday life, etc.), and
(4) theories that formulate a systemic model of interreligious communication, e.g. by regarding the lack of communication, processes of alterisation, or long-lasting aggression resulting from initial trauma or feelings of inferiority as the defining feature of interreligious relations between particular groups. Alternatively, such systemic models resort to concepts such as *dhimmitude*, *convivencia*, or *conveniencia* to describe a systemic relationship between religious groups that is ultimately ahistorical.

Having collected these theories, one can highlight the insights they produce, but also expose their contradictions and (in)congruities. By positioning those theories considered valid into a chronological context, we are able to develop a more dynamic understanding of the history of Christian-Muslim communication.

A thorough evaluation of this history cannot ignore the plethora of sources at our disposal. The article distinguished between concrete, implicit, and narrative evidence and suggested that the documentary value of each type of evidence is closely linked to issues of genre. Paying attention to this close link between evidence and genre enabled us to gain a more concrete idea of what kind of communication certainly took place, what kind of communication could have taken place, and what has to be relegated to the realm of imagination. All in all, the evidence reveals a large range of themes and provides insight into a huge variety of communicative acts and settings, which defy being subsumed under a single conceptual keyword. To understand whether these communicative acts and settings can be regarded as historically plausible, we must contextualize them as part of larger communicative constellations. The latter were subject to large-scale political, economic, social, and in the widest sense cultural transformations that produced new, modified, or even destroyed existing communicative settings, each associated with a dependent variety of possible communicative acts. It is against this backdrop that we are able to evaluate the historical plausibility of communicative acts and settings documented or depicted by our primary source evidence in connection with a particular place and time.

To be able to describe larger communicative constellations, we must subject primary sources documenting or depicting communicative acts and settings to serial analysis. In a first step, we subject specific types of relationships and communicative settings to phenomenological analysis and comparison. This will reveal the historical range of available communicative options in a particular field of interreligious interaction, both in and

beyond one single period of time. In a second step, we compile evidence on different communicative acts and settings that took place contemporaneously, but in distinct geographical and social environments. Systematic attention to their synchronicity will not only prevent us from oversimplifying, but will allow us to sketch out the atmosphere of the communicative constellation characteristic of a particular period of time and thus to compare different constellations with each other.

Forced to acknowledge that such constellations (and, in fact, the macro-history of Christian-Muslim communication as such) were highly variable and dynamic, we must ask ourselves to which extent it is actually possible to formulate a model that can successfully replace the existing systemic depictions of interreligious communication criticized above. A model of interreligious communication that has to consider both synchronic variety and diachronic dynamics on a local, regional, and transregional scale while taking into account that distance, gender, degree of formal education, social status, wealth, age, breadth of interreligious experience, knowledge of languages, and many other factors add additional variants, will not be able to provide a very concise alternative to these models.

Notwithstanding this, the systematic analysis of communicative acts, settings, and constellations will allow us to draw a much more differentiated macro-historical picture of interreligious relations and communication than has been done so far. This does not only have to do with the fact that communication —the essence or even equivalent of sociality— seems to represent one of our best keys to understand the historical dimensions of human interaction in and beyond the field of interreligious relations. Rather, the methodology proposed in this article seems to promise tangible results: systematic analysis of concrete, implicit, and narrative evidence will allow to display the variety of documented communicative acts and settings with their respective atmosphere. In a first step, this evidence can be used to question the general applicability of reductionist models of Christian-Muslim interaction and to assign an adequate place to them within the larger history of Christian-Muslim communication. In a second step, the same evidence can be used to sketch out larger communicative constellations, in which synchronic variety created atmospheres that were subject to larger transformative dynamics. All this will allow us to evaluate the relevance of particular types of communication within an evolving interreligious relationship that has often been and is still often considered problematic or at least dysfunctional. It will enable us to draw a more nuanced picture of the evolution of historical Christian-Muslim relations, a picture that can then be compared to our image of relations between other historical collectives whose relations are also known to have oscillated between hostility and cooperation.

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