

Reuven Amitai / Stephan Conermann (eds.)

The Mamluk Sultanate from the Perspective of Regional and World History

Bonn University Press



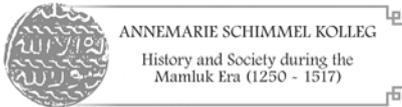


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Volume 17

Edited by Stephan Conermann and Bethany J. Walker



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The Mamluk Sultanate from the Perspective of Regional and World History

Economic, Social and Cultural Development in
an Era of Increasing International Interaction and
Competition

With 14 figures

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The Crown of Aragon and the Mamluk Sultanate: Entanglements of Mediterranean Politics and Piety¹

The Mamluk Empire may be conceived as a sharply contoured physical and political entity, as a geographical territory with borders which were defended or shifted. The Sultanate, however, can (and should) also be envisaged in a more dynamic way as a node of communication and exchange through which commodities – be they material or intellectual – flowed, or it can even be seen as a hub that forcefully attracted and invigorated such processes.² The same holds true for the other polities that are put into relation with the Mamluk Sultanate in this volume, amongst them the medieval Crown of Aragon. In fact, this confederation of several principalities (comprised of the Catalan counties, the kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia and – for the most part of the 13th to 15th centuries – Mallorca) is particularly apt for such an understanding of spatial interaction, because, over the course of the later Middle Ages, it not only rose to a major trade emporium, but in fact to a transmarine Mediterranean empire.³ Within this realm processes

1 Many thanks for suggestions and assistance to Viktor Gottesmann, Elisabeth Luy, Julian Reichert, Rebecca Sauer, Sandra Schieweck and Wolf Zöllner (all Heidelberg), as well as Damien Coulon (Strasbourg) and Jo Van Steenberghe (Ghent).

2 See Stephan Conermann, ed. *Everything is on the Move: The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-)Regional Networks* (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2014) and particularly programmatic: Idem. “Networks and Nodes in Mamluk Times: some introductory remarks.” *Ibidem*, 9–24. On the concept of nodes and hubs see Alex Cowan. “Nodes, Networks and Hinterlands.” In *Cities and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, ed. Donatella Calabi and Stephen Turk Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 28–41; Marc von der Höh, Nikolas Jaspert and Jenny Rahel Oesterle. “Courts, Brokers and Brokerage in the Medieval Mediterranean.” In *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages*, ed. Marc von der Höh, Nikolas Jaspert and Jenny Rahel Oesterle (Paderborn: Fink-Schöningh, 2013), 10–31, particularly 15–18; Nikolas Jaspert. “Mendicants, Jews and Muslims at Court in the Crown of Aragon: Social Practice and Inter-Religious Communication.” *Ibid.*, 107–147, particularly 107–109.

3 General overviews: Thomas Noel Bisson. *The Medieval Crown of Aragon: A Short History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986); María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol and Damien Coulon, ed. *L'Expansió catalana a la Mediterrània a la baixa edat mitjana* (Barcelona: CSIC, 1999); José-Luis Martín. *Historia de la Corona de Aragón* (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2002) and the many volumes of the nineteen “Congresos de Historia de la Corona de Aragón.”

of transculturation took place on many levels and were reinforced by its mobile agents abroad, as a number of recent studies have demonstrated.⁴ Most of these works focus on the realm's military or economic history, highlighting the widespread commercial networks established throughout the Mediterranean, predominantly by Catalan merchants.

The present article will specifically deal with the political and diplomatic relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Crown of Aragon. This by no means represents a new field of research. One need only call to mind the seminal studies by Girolamo Golubovich,⁵ Aziz Atiya,⁶ and more recently Peter Holt.⁷ Frequently overlooked on an international level, yet significant are Spanish contributions to the history of Aragonese diplomatic relations with the Muslim Levant.⁸ A good case in point is the relative neglect of the edition of 166 original

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- 4 Coral Cuadrada. *La Mediterrània, cruïlla de mercaders (segles XIII–XV)* (Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau Editor, 2001); Josefina Mutgé i Vives, Roser Salicrú i Lluch and Carles Vela Aulesa, ed. *La Corona catalano aragonesa, l'islam i el món mediterrani. Estudis d'història medieval en homenatge a la Doctora Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol* (Barcelona: CSIC, 2013). Exemplary: Damien Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient au Moyen Age. Un siècle de relations avec l'Égypte et la Syrie-Palestine (ca. 1330–ca. 1430)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2004), Christian Neumann, *Venedig und Aragon im Spätmittelalter (1280–1410): Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte* (Paderborn: Fink-Schöningh 2017).
- 5 Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Franceseano* (Quaracchi: Tipografia del Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1906–1927), particularly: Idem, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Franceseano. 3: Dal 1300 al 1332* (Quaracchi: Tipografia del Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1919), 73–85, 185–189, 232–237.
- 6 Aziz Suryal Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon: Embassies and Diplomatic Correspondence between 1300 and 1330 A.D.* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1938); idem, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1938).
- 7 Peter Malcolm Holt. "Al-Nasir Muhammad's Letter to a Spanish Ruler in 699/1300." *Al-Masaq* 3 (1990): 23–29; idem. "The Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon: The Treaties of 689/1290 and 692/1293." *Tārīḥ* 2 (1992): 105–118; idem, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy (1260–1290): Treaties of Baybars and Qalawun with Christian Rulers* (Leiden: Brill, 1995). More recently on Mamluk diplomacy with Christian powers Dimitri A. Korobeinikov. "Diplomatic Correspondence between Byzantium and the Mamluk Sultanate in the Fourteenth Century." *Al-Masaq* 16 (2004): 53–74; Anne F. Broadbridge, "Diplomatic Conventions in the Mamluk Sultanate." *Annales Islamologiques* 41 (2007): 97–118; Deborah Howard, "Venice and the Mamluks." In: *Venice and the Islamic World*, ed. Stefano Carboni (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 72–89; Georg Christ, *Trading Conflicts: Venetian Merchants and Mamluk Officials in Late Medieval Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
- 8 Ángeles Masiá de Ros. *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África: política de Jaime II y Alfonso IV en Egipto, Ifriquíya y Tremecén* (Barcelona: Instituto español de estudios mediterráneos, 1951); more recently: Gabriel González Maurazos. "La documentación diplomática entre la Corona de Aragón y el Sultanato Mameluco durante el reinado de Jaime II: un ejemplo de las transformaciones en las relaciones internacionales del ámbito mediterráneo en la Baja Edad Media." In *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante. Historia medieval* 11 (1996): 395–403; Ministerio de Cultura, ed. *El perfume de la amistad: correspondencia diplomática árabe en archivos españoles (siglos XIII–XVII)* (Madrid: Secretaria General Técnica, 2009). On Aragonese-Ifriqiyan and Aragonese-Maghrebi relations see: Charles Emmanuel Dufourcq. *L'*

Arabic documents kept in the *Archivo de la Corona de Aragón* (*Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó*) in Barcelona published by Maximiliano Alarcón Santón and Ramón García de Linares in 1940.⁹ This collection is extremely valuable due to the dearth of extant original documentation in Northern Africa,¹⁰ so much so that a modern, up-to-date edition of the Barcelonese holdings is currently under progress.¹¹ Such an enterprise is all the more necessary, because the archival situation in Barcelona is more complex than the edition by Alarcón and García suggests.

When studying Aragonese administrative sources concerned with the Mamluk Sultanate, a distinction has to be made between at least four different types of texts. First, original Arabic Mamluk documents (mostly letters and treaties). Eleven of the 182 such Arabic documents kept at the *Archivo de la Corona de*

Espagne catalane et le Maghrib aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles: de la bataille de Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) à l'avènement du sultan mérinide Abou-I-Hasan (1331) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966); María Dolores López Pérez. *La Corona de Aragón y el Magreb en el siglo XIV: (1331–1410)* (Barcelona: Institut Milà y Fontanals, 1995); Henri Bresc and Yusuf Rāgīb. *Le sultan mérinide Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī et Jacques III de Majorque: du traité de paix au pacte secret* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale 2011). Cf. the first major contribution: Antoni Capmany y de Montpalau. *Memorias históricas sobre la marina, comercio y artes de la antigua ciudad de Barcelona* (Madrid, 1779–1792), 3 vols.

- 9 Maximiliano A. Alarcón Santón and Ramón García de Linares. *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón: editados y traducidos* (Madrid: Estanislao Maestre, 1940). Earlier references to this archival collection: Wilhelm Heyd. *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge 2* (Leipzig: Hakkert, 1886), 30–32; Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6). All in all, the *Archivo de la Corona de Aragón* holds 182 original Arabic documents: Alberto Torra Pérez. “Las relaciones diplomáticas entre la Corona de Aragón y los países musulmanes (siglos XIII–XV). Las fuentes documentales del *Archivo de la Corona de Aragón*.” In *El perfume de la amistad: correspondencia diplomática árabe en archivos españoles (siglos XIII–XVII)*, ed. Ministerio de Cultura (Madrid: Secretaria General Técnica, 2009), 13–39, here: 17.
- 10 Frédéric Bauden. “Mamluk Era Documentary Studies: The State of the Art.” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9 (2005): 15–60; Nuria Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, María Jesús Viguera Molins and Pascal Buresi, ed. *Documentos y manuscritos árabes del Occidente musulmán medieval* (Madrid, 2010); Frédéric Bauden. “Du destin des archives en Islam. Analyse des données et éléments de réponse.” In *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), 27–49; Lucian Reinfandt. “Mamluk Documentary Studies.” In *Ubi sumus? Quo vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2013), 285–310.
- 11 The project “The diplomatic exchanges between Islamic Mediterranean and Christian European powers in the Middle Ages: New methods for the analysis of documents” is led by Roser Salicrú i Lluch (CSIC, Institut Milà i Fontanals, Barcelona), Maria Mercè Viladrich Grau (Universitat de Barcelona), Mohamed Ouerfelli (Université d'Aix-Marseille) and Frédéric Bauden (Université de Liège). The Barcelonese collection is also being studied in Germany: Daniel Potthast. “Drei Fragmente von arabischen Staatsbriefen (14. Jahrhundert) im *Archivo de la Corona de Aragón/Barcelona*.” *Der Islam*. 92 (2015): 367–412.

Aragón stem from Egypt.¹² They are particularly valuable for specialists in Mamluk history and diplomatics. Second, there are a number of translations of these documents into Latin or the vernacular, that is Catalan. Around a third of the extant originals were translated and copied into the royal registers, including four Mamluk texts.¹³ Such documents are of particular interest to cultural historians and specialists in international relations, because one can employ them to study which elements of the Arabic formulary were omitted or changed in the translated text.¹⁴ Even more significant than these renditions of existing sources is the third type of sources, namely translations of now lost Arabic documents. They were not included in the edition by Alarcón and García and have therefore often been ignored by later scholars. This group of *deperdita* comprises 80 documents, two of them from Egypt.¹⁵ They are of minor interest to specialists in medieval diplomatics, but nevertheless valuable for Mamlukologists. Fourth and finally, the many hundreds of royal registers still extant in Barcelona contain numerous entries referring to Egypt, usually written in Latin or in the vernacular. They have not been collected systematically and exhaustively, but some important headway has been made since Atiya's ground-breaking study thanks to Spanish historians working on the 14th century. For example, Àngels Masià de Ros identified over 50 relevant documents dating from the 14th century.¹⁶ Some of them refer to the activities of Mamluk ambassadors in Aragon, thus complementing the official documents such as letters and peace treaties.¹⁷

All four types of sources will form the basis for this article. Its approach is admittedly one-sided, for it draws heavily on the above mentioned 14th century royal, that is Christian, registers, and it is written by a historian of Latin and European history, not by an Orientalist. Nevertheless, the very rich Aragonese documentation raises some points which might be of interest to Mamlukologists and to historians of medieval Europe alike.¹⁸ Amongst these is the question of the

12 Torra Pérez. "Las relaciones diplomáticas entre la Corona de Aragón y los países musulmanes" (note 9), 18.

13 Ibid. 32.

14 For this approach see: Pascal Buresi. "Traduttore, traditore. À propos d'une correspondance arabe-latine entre l'Empire almohade et la cité de Pise (début XIIIe siècle)." In *Les relations diplomatiques entre le monde musulman et l'Occident latin: (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)*, ed. Denise Aigle and Pascal Buresi (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 2008), 297-309.

15 Torra Pérez. "Las relaciones diplomáticas entre la Corona de Aragón y los países musulmanes" (note 9), 19.

16 Masià de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8).

17 On the ambassadors see *ibid.*, 100-132; Damien Coulon. "Négociier avec les sultans de Méditerranée orientale à la fin du moyen âge. Un domaine privilégié pour les hommes d'affaires?" In *Negociar en la Edad Media = Négociier au Moyen Âge*, ed. María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005), 503-526.

18 On the trans-disciplinary turn in Mamluk Studies see Stephan Conermann. "Quo vadis,

defining factors that influenced diplomatic relations between Egypt and Aragon. In this article, I will largely disregard the arguably most momentous of these features, namely commerce and economic interests, in order to concentrate on two other fields: piety and domestic affairs.

Mediterranean diplomatic networks

Of late, the historical disciplines of diplomacy and foreign relations, which form the analytical framework of this study, have received vital impulses thanks to new and innovative approaches and studies,¹⁹ some of which focus on the medieval Crown of Aragon.²⁰ Recent works not only deal with the issues that were negotiated, but rather concentrate on the agents of diplomacy and their modes of action. Social history and prosopography have been employed at a profit, and consuls, ambassadors, messengers and other envoys are currently not only considered as political agents, but also as cultural brokers.²¹ The ceremonies,

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- Mamlukology? (A German Perspective).” In *Ubi sumus? Quo vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2013), 7–22.
- 19 Dieter Berg, Martin Kintzinger and Pierre Monnet, ed. *Auswärtige Politik und internationale Beziehungen im Mittelalter: 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert* (Bochum: Winckler, 2002); Claudia Zey and Claudia Märkl, ed. *Aus der Frühzeit europäischer Diplomatie: zum geistlichen und weltlichen Gesandtschaftswesen vom 12. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert* (Zurich: Chronos-Verlag, 2008); John Watkins. “Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe.” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38 (2008): 1–14; Rainer Christoph Schwinges and Klaus Wriedt, ed. *Gesandtschafts- und Botenwesen im spätmittelalterlichen Europa* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2003); Hillard von Thiesen and Christian Windler, ed. *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010); Thierry Kouamé, ed. *Les relations diplomatiques au Moyen Âge: Formes et enjeux* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011); *Le relazioni internazionali nell’alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studio sull’Alto Medioevo, 2011). Cf. the overview by Stéphane Péquignot. “Europäische Diplomatie im Spätmittelalter. Ein historiographischer Überblick.” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 39 (2012): 65–96; Nikolas Jaspert and Sebastian Kolditz. “Christlich-muslimische Außenbeziehungen im Mittelmeerraum: Zur räumlichen und religiösen Dimension mittelalterlicher Diplomatie.” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 41 (2014): 1–88.
- 20 María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, ed. *Negociar en la Edad Media = Négocier au Moyen Âge* (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2005); Stéphane Péquignot. *Au nom du roi: pratique diplomatique et pouvoir durant le règne de Jacques II d’Aragon (1291–1327)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2009); Nikolas Jaspert. “Interreligiöse Diplomatie im Mittelmeerraum. Die Krone Aragón und die islamische Welt im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert.” In *Aus der Frühzeit europäischer Diplomatie. Zum geistlichen und weltlichen Gesandtschaftswesen vom 12. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Claudia Märkl and Claudia Zey (Zurich: Chronos, 2008), 151–190.
- 21 Claudia Moatti and Wolfgang Kaiser, ed. *Gens de passage en Méditerranée de l’Antiquité à l’époque moderne: procédures de contrôle et d’identification* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2007); Michael Borgolte. “Experten der Fremde. Gesandte in interkulturellen Beziehungen

rituals and other forms of symbolic communication employed in foreign relations are beginning to receive the attention they deserve, and Christian-Muslim medieval diplomacy is turning into a vibrant field of research which is being opened up to transcultural approaches.²² Yet dealing with bilateral diplomacy also has its pitfalls. One of them, and this is a first point worth stressing, is the all too often overlooked fact that foreign relations are seldom detached from domestic politics and should be studied accordingly. A second impediment to adequately understanding Christian-Muslim diplomacy is that it was rarely as bilateral a form of communication as historiography is prone to claim – and as medieval sources would make us believe. Rather, Mediterranean diplomacy between Christian and Muslim powers must be understood as a complex and multipolar network.

To give an example: in 1290, Sultan Qalāwūn agreed to a far reaching treaty, even an alliance with King Alfonso III of Aragon and his brothers, which was confirmed the same year by Alfonso's successor James II.²³ The Aragonese ruler promised peace and safety for the sultan's subjects on land and at sea, swore to return the goods of any deceased merchant from the sultanate and assured he would hand over any fugitive arriving to his kingdom from the sultanate to the sultan. The latter pledged similar rights and promised to allow Aragonese pilgrims to access Jerusalem freely. Most surprisingly, both rulers vowed military assistance to each other in case they were to be attacked by third parties. This astonishing document can only be explained adequately by taking its signees' contemporary interests and needs into account. As Peter Holt emphasised correctly some years ago, the Crown of Aragon was under extreme pressure in April 1290: eight years before, Alfonso's brother Peter had seized power over Sicily in a

des frühen und hohen Mittelalters." In *Le relazioni internazionali nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studio sull'Alto Medioevo, 2011), 945–992; Rania Abdellatif, Yassir Benhima et al., ed. *Acteurs des transferts culturel en Méditerranée médiévale* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012); Marc von der Höh, Nikolas Jaspert and Jenny Rahel Oesterle, ed. *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages* (Paderborn: Schöningh-Fink, 2013).

22 Nicolas Drocourt. "Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations. An overview of the main sources and themes of encounter (600–1000)." In *Christian Muslim relations: a bibliographical history Vol. 1: (600–900)*, ed. David Thomas, Barbara Roggema and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 29–72; Denise Aigle and Pascal Buresi, ed. *Les relations diplomatiques entre le monde musulman et l'Occident latin: (XIIe–XVIIe siècle)* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 2008); Jocelyne Dakhli and Wolfgang Kaiser, ed. *Les Musulmans dans l'histoire de l'Europe II: Passages et contacts en Méditerranée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2012); Jaspert und Kolditz. "Christlich-muslimische Außenbeziehungen im Mittelmeerraum" (note 19).

23 Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy* (note 7) 129–140; Linda Stevens Northrup. *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamlūk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689 A.H./1279–1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 155; Albrecht Fuess, *Verbranntes Ufer: Auswirkungen mamlukischer Seepolitik auf Beirut und die syro-palästinensische Küste (1250–1517)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 71–73.

coup de main triggered by the popular uprising known as the Sicilian Vespers, and the resulting enmity of the papacy and French king – a crusade against Aragon was officially launched in 1285 – drove him to an alliance with the Mamluks.²⁴ But Sultan Qalāwūn's interest in this agreement has not been sufficiently realised to date. Several contemporary sources mention that precisely in 1290 the Ilkhanid Sultan Arghun had employed 800 Genoese to build ships in Baghdad for a planned naval attack on Egypt.²⁵ Qalāwūn thus appears to have signed a truce and military alliance with Aragon, the third most potent naval power in the Mediterranean – and one of Genoa's major rivals – to counter the Mongol threat. Tellingly, the Sultanate reached an agreement with Genoa shortly after and thus temporarily averted the danger of a Genoese-Mongol alliance.²⁶ Thus, in order to understand the treaty of 1290 adequately, one should consider both the Egyptian and Aragonese contexts, but also take Genoa, the Mongols, France, Naples, Byzantium and the Papacy into the equation.

The same holds true for subsequent intensifications of Aragonese-Mamluk relations. The peace treaty signed with Aragon in 1292 was not only a bilateral agreement: James II's envoys also acted on behalf of the Kings of Castile and Portugal, as the document clearly states, thus conveying a certain predominance to the Aragonese ruler over the Iberian Christian Monarchs active in the Eastern

24 Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy* (note 7), 25–28, 130–131. On the war of the Vespers see: Santi Correnti, *La Guerra dei novant'anni e le ripercussioni europee della Guerra del Vespro* (Catania: Muglia, 1973); Francesco Giunta, ed. *XI Congresso di Storia della Corona d'Aragona: "La società mediterranea all'epoca del Vespro."* (Palermo: Accad. di Scienze Lettere e Arti, 1983), 4 vols.; Lawrence V. Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Catalan-Aragonese Fleet in the War of the Sicilian Vespers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003). Significantly, when the Crown of Aragon reached an agreement with the papacy in 1295, the Aragonese ruler ordered that the papal ban on travelling to Egypt's be complied; trade however continued: Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient* (note 4), 87–97. Cf. José Trenchs Odena. "De Alexandrinis' (El comercio prohibido con los musulmanes y el Papado de Aviñón durante la primera mitad del siglo XIV)." *Anuario de estudios medievales* 10 (1980): 237–320.

25 Friedrich Baethgen, ed. *Die Chronik Johans von Winterthur* (Berlin: Berolini, 1924), 58; Ernest A. Wallis Budge, ed. and trans. *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus, Being the First Part of his Political History of the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 486; cf. Sylvia Schein, *Fideles Crucis: The Papacy, the West, and the Recovery of the Holy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 43–44, 88; Giles Constable, *William of Adam: How to Defeat the Saracens = Guillelmus Ade: Tractatus quomodo Sarraceni sunt expugnandi* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2012), 105.

26 Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy* (note 7), 141–151; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan* (note 23), 155–156; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), 169–70; Alexander Markus Schilling. "Der Friedens- und Handelsvertrag von 1290 zwischen der Kommune Genua und dem Sultan Qalawun von Ägypten." *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 95 (2015): 63–109.

Mediterranean.²⁷ After a certain lull in diplomatic contacts, new initiatives were undertaken around 1315,²⁸ and not by chance: That year, James II of Aragon married Maria of Lusignan, a possible heiress to the Cypriot throne. This union increased Aragonese political interests in Levantine affairs that had already been kindled due to the Staufeu heritage and the Catalanian merchants' commercial expansion into the eastern Mediterranean.²⁹ Even the extensive peace treaty signed in 1430 can only be explained by considering wider contexts – here the political networks that King Alfonso the Magnanimous's new and active policy in the eastern Mediterranean had created with regional powers such as the Hospitallers of Rhodes.³⁰

That being said, Mamluk-Aragonese diplomacy also needs to be evaluated against the backdrop of Christian Iberian contacts with the entire Dār al-Islām, markedly intensified with the rise of the Crown of Aragon to a major Mediterranean power at the turn of the 13th century. The Crown's widespread political and commercial activities made sure that its diplomatic relations with Muslim powers were certainly not limited to Egypt, but also comprised the Hafsiids, Abdalwadids, Marinids as well as Nasriids. Mamluk-Aragonese diplomacy therefore has to be regarded within a wider Mediterranean framework.

In order to fully appraise the relevance of the Crown of Aragon's diplomatic contacts to the Mamluk Sultanate, it is of great importance to correlate Arago-

27 Antonio de Capmany Surís de Montpaláu, *Antiguos tratados de paces y alianzas entre algunos reyes de Aragón y diferentes príncipes infieles de Asia y Africa, desde el siglo XIII hasta el XV* (Valencia: Anúbar Ed. 1974 – first printed 1786), 26–31; Alarcón Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 335–344 (doc. 153); Ministerio de Cultura, *El perfume de la amistad* (note 8), 105–109. Cf. on Mamluk perceptions of Castile: Pedro Martínez Montávez. “Relaciones castellano-mamelucas 1283–1382.” *Hispania. Revista española de historia* 23 (1963): 505–523.

28 Capmany Surís de Montpaláu, *Antiguos tratados de paces y alianzas* (note 27), 32–35; Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 35, 36–41; Alarcón Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 360–365 (doc. 149); Ministerio de Cultura, *El perfume de la amistad* (note 8), 185–187.

29 Eugenio Sarrablo. “La Reina que vino de Oriente (María de Chipre, esposa de Jaime II, Rey de Aragón).” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 148 (1961): 13–160.

30 Reginaldo Ruiz Orsatti. “Tratado de paz entre Alfonso V de Aragón y el Sultán de Egipto, al-Malik al Ašraf Barsbay.” *Al-Andalus* 4 (1939): 333–390; Constantin Marinescu, *La politique orientale d'Alfonse V d'Aragon, roi de Naples (1416–1458)* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1994); Mercè Viladrich. “Jaque al sultán en el ‘Damero maldito’. Edición y traducción de un tratado diplomático entre los mercaderes catalanes y el sultanato mameluco (1429).” In *L'Expansió catalana a la Mediterrània a la baixa edat mitjana*, ed. María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol and Damien Coulon (Barcelona: CSIC, 1999), 161–206; Damien Coulon. “Un tournant dans les relations de Barcelone avec la Méditerranée orientale: la nouvelle politique d'Alphonse le Magnanime (1415–1442).” In *Atti del XVI Congresso Internazionale di Storia della Corona d'Aragona*, ed. Guido d'Agostino (Napoli: Paparo, 2000), 2: 1055–1079; Maria Mercè Viladrich. “Solving the ‘Accursed Riddle’ of the Diplomatic Relations between Catalonia and Egypt around 1430.” *Al-Masaq* (2002): 25–31.

Egyptian relations with those the Crown upheld with other Muslim realms, for example with Hafsīd Ifriqiya and Marinid Maghreb. One way to do so is by comparing the sheer quantities of documents extant in Aragonese archives referring to each polity. The result of such a survey is telling: of almost 600 documents dating from 1328 to 1386 and referring to the Crown of Aragon's dealings with the Dār al-Islām, one half concern Nasrid Granada. Of the remaining half, around 35% refer to the Marinids and Hafsids, whilst the Abdalwadids and the Mamluks together take up around 15%. In concrete numbers: 51 of ca. 600 documents refer to Mamluk Egypt.³¹ On the field of diplomacy at least, Mamluk Egypt appears to have been of secondary relevance to the Crown of Aragon when compared to the Muslim realms situated in closer proximity to the Iberian coasts. It would be interesting, but hardly feasible, to conduct a similar survey of the Mamluk sultanate's dealings with Latin Europe. Where would the Crown of Aragon stand in such a comparative perspective? We cannot tell precisely, but it is safe to say that the easternmost Iberian realm was deemed a significant regional player by the Mamluks. As late as 1412, al-Qalqashandī elaborated on details of Aragonese history and laid down the quite complaisant wording of documents that were to be sent to the "King of Barcelona," as the Aragonese monarchs were sometimes termed in his handbook on chancery practices.³² One hundred years earlier, the Mamluk Sultan's administration clearly had a very exact notion of the King of Aragon's titles: Arabic letters to James II reflected the Christian King's factual titulature by referring to him as "King of Aragon, Valencia, Sardinia and Corsica, count of Barcelona and standard-bearer of the Roman Church."³³ Some years before, Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Zāhir (d. 1292) had already reported on the Aragonese takeover in Sicily and the

31 Torra Pérez. "Las relaciones diplomáticas entre la Corona de Aragón y los países musulmanes" (note 9), 15–16.

32 Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* 3 (note 5), 73; Henri Lammens. "Correspondances diplomatiques entre les sultans mamluks d'Égypte et les puissances chrétiennes." *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 9 (1904): 151–187, 359–392, especially 163, 166–167. On the author's perception of the Iberian realms: Luis Seco de Lucena Paredes. "Un tratado árabe del siglo XV sobre España extraído del 'Subh al-A'šā' de Al-Qalqasandī." *Boletín de la universidad de Granada* 14 (1942): 87–126; and now: Daniel König. *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West. Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 319–322.

33 Alarcón Santón und García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 362 (doc. 149); Catalán translation: Ministerio de Cultura, *El perfume de la amistad* (note 8), 185. Similarly: Alarcón Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 365 (doc. 150). Cf. Michele Amari. *De' titoli che usava la cancelleria de' Sultani di Egitto nel 14 secolo scrivendo a' reggitori di alcuni stati italiani* (Rome, 1886), especially 25, and the Castilian case: Martínez Montávez, *Relaciones castellano-mamelucas 1283–1382* (note 27). The quite substantial knowledge of Christian polities and people in the middle ages has now been convincingly brought to our attention: König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West* (note 32).

Mamluk-Aragonese alliance of 1290, and al-ʿUmārī (d. 1349) even spoke of the Catalans as the “Arabs amongst the Franks,” praising them as vigorous people active on land and sea who were obedient to their King and who “do not commit evil as long as they are not aroused.”³⁴ On both sides, rulers went to pains to furnish their embassies with extravagant gifts.³⁵ Lists of the presents given to James II by Egyptian ambassadors in 1306, 1315, and 1319 are still extant³⁶ – they comprise valuable cloths such as linen and silk, bows, crossbows, sables, balsam, incense, ginger marmalade, honey etc. On the Aragonese side, the rulers sent falcons, textiles and furs.³⁷ Thus, by analysing the Mamluk and Aragonese chancery records not only with respect to the sheer number of documents issued, but also with regard to the language and symbolism of communicative measures employed, we may cross the line from quantitative to qualitative research. In order to further pursue this line of study the following remarks aim at highlighting particularities of Mamluk-Aragonese relations by scrutinizing the diplomatic issues dealt with as well as the cultural brokers that conducted negotiations between both powers.

On a purely quantitative level, a statistical overview of the extant documentation reveals that there were periods of intensified contact and others of relative diplomatic lull. During the years 1290–1293, 1300–1306, 1315, 1323–1330, 1353–1356, 1373–1374, 1429–1430, the rulers of Aragon and Egypt appear to have maintained closer relations than in other periods. This means that diplomatic exchanges were particularly lively during the second and third reins of al-Nāṣir

34 *Kitāb tashrīf al-ayyām wal-uṣūr fī sirat al-malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Michele Amari, Leipzig 1857, 546–68; Michele Amari. *Condizioni degli stati cristiani dell'occidente secondo una relazione di Domenichino Doria da Genova: testo arabo con versione italiana* (Rome: Salviucci, 1883), 17; see König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West* (note 32), 321.

35 In general on gift exchange see: Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen, ed. *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-modern Figurations of Exchange* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); Anthony Cutler. “Significant Gift: Patterns of Exchange in Late Antique, Byzantine, and Early Islamic Diplomacy.” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38 (2008): 79–101; Elias I. Muhanna. “The Sultan’s New Clothes: Ottoman-Mamluk Gift Exchange in the Fifteenth Century.” *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 189–207; Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli and Gerhard Wolf, ed. *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World: Trade, Gift Exchange and Artistic Transfer* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010); Michael Grünbart, ed. *Geschenke erhalten die Freundschaft. Gabentausch und Netzwerkpflege im europäischen Mittelalter* (Berlin: LIT-Verlag, 2011).

36 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 29–32; Alarcón Santón and García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 360–365 (doc. 149); Ministerio de Cultura, *El perfume de la amistad* (note 8), 185–187; Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 114, 117, 314–315 (doc. 42). Cf. Coulon. “Négociar avec les sultans de Méditerranée orientale à la fin du moyen âge” (note 17), 518.

37 Alarcón Santón und García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 370–371 (doc. 152); Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 62–64; Ministerio de Cultura, *El perfume de la amistad* (note 8), 193; Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 112, 116, 119, 304–307 (doc. 37), 311–313 (doc. 41), 322–325 (doc. 51).

Muḥammad (ruled 1293–1341) and the reign of James II (1291–1327).³⁸ Needless to say, commercial interaction and also diplomacy on the part of economic urban agents such as the town council of Barcelona (the *Consell de Cent* and other urban institutions) continued notwithstanding the waning or even stagnation of royal political contacts. Indeed, Iberian trade interests were so strong that the agents chosen by the King to represent his interests before the Sultan were frequently merchants. For example, Ramon Alemany (1292), Gerart Olivera (1322), Pere Mitjavila (1327) or Francesc Saclosa (1373, 1379), Rafael Ferrer and Lluís Sirvent (1429/30) combined their short-term activities as diplomats with their long-term profession as traders.³⁹ When the King sent an embassy to the Sultan, the ship to Egypt not only carried the King's ambassador. Rather, it was loaded with goods and transported many merchants chosen under the strict supervision of the ambassador and the King's officials, as the documents preparing the embassies sent in 1305 and 1318 reveal.⁴⁰ Tellingly, Aragonese monarchs requested papal permission before despatching such "embassies" to the East: these major commercial-diplomatic trips threatened to undermine the papal ban on strategic material.⁴¹

38 On both rulers see: Heinrich Finke. *Acta Aragonensia. Quellen zur deutschen, italienischen, französischen und spanischen, zur Kirchen- und Kulturgeschichte aus der diplomatischen Korrespondenz Jaumes II. (1291–1327)* (Berlin: Rotschild, 1908–1922), 3 vols.; Amalia Levanon. *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); see Hayat Nasser al-Hajji. *The Internal Affairs in Egypt during the Third Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad B. Qalawun 709–741/1309–1341* (Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam, 1995); José Hinojosa Montalvo. *Jaime II y el esplendor de la Corona de Aragón* (San Sebastián: Nerea, 2006); Juan Manuel del Estal. *Itinerario de Jaime II de Aragón (1291–1327)* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2009); Stéphane Péquignot. *Au nom du roi: pratique diplomatique et pouvoir durant le règne de Jacques II d'Aragon (1291–1327)* (Paris: Casa de Velázquez, 2009).

39 Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 110–132; See the list in Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun. *Historia de la diplomacia española. Apéndice 1: Repertorio diplomático, listas cronológicas de representantes, desde la Alta Edad Media hasta el año 2000* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 2002), 59–60; Jaspert. "Interreligiöse Diplomatie im Mittelmeerraum" (note 20), 174–177, 186–189; Coulon. "Négocié avec les sultans de Méditerranée orientale à la fin du moyen âge" (note 17), particularly 511–518.

40 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 26–34; similarly in 1327: *ibid.*, S. 54–60; Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 104, 116; Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun. *Historia de la diplomacia española*, vol. 3 (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1991), S. 223–225; Coulon. "Négocié avec les sultans de Méditerranée orientale à la fin du moyen âge" (note 17); Damien Coulon. "Lluís Sirvent, homme d'affaires et ambassadeur barcelonais (vers 1385–1444)." In *Les échanges en Méditerranée médiévale: marqueurs, réseaux, circulations, contacts*, ed. Élisabeth Malamut and Mohamed Ouerfelli (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2012), 215–242.

41 Francisco Javier Miquel Rosell. *Regesta de letras pontificias del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón: sección Cancillería Real (pergamino)* (Madrid: Góngora 1948), doc. 398, 414, 444; Trenchs Odena, "De Alexandrinis" (note 24); Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la diplomacia española* (note 40), 221–222; Damien Coulon. "La documentation pontificale et le commerce avec les

Sometimes, the envoy's concurrency between economic and political tasks could prove detrimental to the King's interests: In 1327, the Aragonese ambassador cum merchant Pere Mitjavila caused a major international outrage, because his economic concerns resulted in a clash with the French envoy in Alexandria, Guillaume de Bonnesmains, he too a merchant. The quarrel escalated to such a degree that Pere de Mitjavila accused Guillaume de Bonnesmains of being an imposter who carried false credentials and officially slandered the French King at the Court in Cairo claiming he was a heretic whose marriage was void. Significantly, and this throws a light on the functioning of the Mamluk chancery, pertinent French credentials could not be found in the archives, and Guillaume was expelled from Egypt, which in turn had serious diplomatic repercussions on Franco-Aragonese relations.⁴²

Complications such as these could and did affect diplomacy with Muslim powers. There were setbacks to Aragonese trade with the Mamluk Levant due to military conflicts between both polities – for example the incursion organized by Alfonso V (the Magnanimous) against Alexandria as retribution for the ill-treatment of a Catalan consul in 1416.⁴³ From time to time, minor irritations had detrimental consequences – see for example the scandal caused by the Aragonese ambassador Pere Dusay in 1306 when he forced his Egyptian counterpart and all Muslims accompanying him to disembark from his vessel in mid-voyage,⁴⁴ or the naval battle between Catalan and Genoese merchant ships fought in the port of Alexandria in Summer 1409.⁴⁵ Yet despite political tensions, trade continued throughout the 14th and 15th centuries. Between 1349 and 1408, no less than 224 Catalan ships anchored in the harbour of Beirut, third only to the number of

musulmans.” In *Les territoires de la Méditerranée VIe–XVIIe siècle*, ed. Annliese Nef (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013), 161–192.

42 Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* 3 (note 5), 320; Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), S. 54–60; Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 124–126, 333–334 (doc. 58–59); Josep Maria Madurell Marimón. “Les activitats diplomàtiques i mercantils de Pere de Mitjavila.” In *La corona de Aragon en el siglo XIV. VIII Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragón* (Valencia, 1973), 3: 177–188.

43 Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient* (note 4), 54–62. See in general Damien Coulon. “Formas de violencia entre la Corona de Aragón y el sultanato Mameluco en los siglos XIV y XV.” *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante. Historia medieval* 16 (2009/10): 277–288.

44 Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* 3 (note 5), 80–85; Finke, *Acta Aragonensia* (note 38), 2: 744–745 (doc. 461); Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 105–110, 296–302 (doc. 31).

45 Pierre-Herman Dopp. “Les relations égypto-catalanes et les corsaires au commencement du quinzième siècle.” *Bulletin de la Faculté des Arts. Fouad I University* 11/1 (1949): 1–14; María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. “Incidència dels cors en les relacions catalanes amb l'Orient (segles XIII–XV).” In *Els catalans a la Mediterrània oriental a l'edat mitjana*, ed. María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2003), 259–307, especially 294–300.

Venetian and Genoese vessels,⁴⁶ and recent studies have shown the intensity of Barcelona's trade with Egypt during this period.⁴⁷

Therefore, on a qualitative level and perhaps not surprisingly, a comparative analysis of the topics that Muslim and Christian envoys were ordered to negotiate shows a clear bias towards matters of commerce and war. The resolution of individual cases of maritime violence, but also more general negotiations designed at curbing naval assaults and raids, repeatedly emerge in the documentation. Time and again the containment of maritime marauding figures prominently in diplomatic correspondence and treaties. These negotiations should make us wary of the use of terms like Mediterranean "piracy." Precisely the fact that these occurrences were the object of political intervention shows that more often than not they were acts of "corsairing" rather than of "piracy."⁴⁸ For the Aragonese and the Mamluk rulers, semi-official forms of maritime violence were just another political instrument that complemented acts of overt warfare. These too, that is official conflicts in the central and western Mediterranean, frequently appear as issues of diplomacy. Even more numerous were initiatives undertaken in order to liberate groups of captives or individual prisoners.⁴⁹ Both

46 Federigo Melis. "Nota sul movimento del porto di Beirut secondo la documentazione fiorentina intorno al 1400." In *Idem: I trasporti e le comunicazioni nel medioevo* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1984), 77–79.

47 Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient* (note 4). Still valuable: Francesco Giunta, *Aragonesi e Catalani nel Mediterraneo. II: La presenza catalana nel Levante dalle origini a Giacomo II* (Palermo: U. Manfredi, 1959), especially 68–78, 107–122.

48 For discussions on these issues and related questions see: Nikolas Jaspert and Sebastian Kolditz, ed. *Seeraub im Mittelmeerraum. Piraterie, Korsarentum und maritime Gewalt von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit* (Munich-Paderborn: Fink-Schöningh, 2013). In general on piracy in the Mediterranean: Emilio Sola Castaño, *Un mediterráneo de piratas: corsarios, renegados y cautivos* (Madrid: Ediciones Tecnos, 1988); López Pérez, *La Corona de Aragón y el Magreb en el siglo XIV* (note 8), 577–812; Antonello Savaglio, ed. *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi su "Guerra di Corsa e Pirateria nel Mediterraneo"* (Cosenza: Orizzonti Meridionali, 1999); Anna Unali, *Marineros, piratas y corsarios catalanes en la Baja Edad Media* (Sevilla: Renacimiento, 2007); Ferrer i Mallol. "Incidència dels cors en les relacions catalanes amb l'Orient" (note 45); Gérard Chastagnaret, ed. *Les sociétés méditerranéennes face au risque: disciplines, temps, espaces* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2008); Vito Piergiorganni, ed. *Corsari e riscatto dei captivi: garanzia notarile tra le due sponde del Mediterraneo* (Milano: Giuffrè, 2010).

49 José María Ramos Loscertales, *El Cautiverio en la corona de Aragón durante los siglos XIII, XIV, y XV* (Zaragoza, 1915); María Teresa Ferrer Mallol. "Els redemptors de captius: mostolafs eixees o alfaquecs (segles XII–XIII)." *Medievalia* 9 (1990): 85–106; Jarbel Rodríguez, *Captives and their saviors in the medieval crown of Aragon* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Wolfgang Kaiser, ed. *Le commerce des captifs: les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe–XVIIIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2008); Georg Christ. "Transkulturelle Pirateriebekämpfung? Venezianisch-Mamlukische Kooperation und Gefangenenbefreiung im östlichen Mittelmeerraum im Spätmittelalter." In *Seeraub im Mittelmeerraum. Piraterie, Korsarentum und maritime Gewalt von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, ed. Nikolas Jaspert and Sebastian Kolditz

in Islam and Christianity, commitment and efforts to free imprisoned subjects were charitable assignments a good ruler was expected to fulfil, which is why these formed part of practically every case of official diplomatic exchange between Cairo and Barcelona studied in this article. Men and women captured during coastal raids, at high sea or during battle are sometimes individually named in the documents, in other cases prisoners are only referred to generically.

By and large, economic interests played a major role for Mamluk-Aragonese relations. Considering the intense commercial activities of Catalonian merchants in the Levant, this, too, comes as no surprise. Indeed, long-distance trade and its agents have traditionally been a primary objective of historical research when dealing with the Crown of Aragon in the late Middle Ages. But merchants were by no means the only cultural brokers that crossed the religious border between the Dār al-Islām and the Christian Iberian realms. A comparative survey of a lesser known group of agents – mercenaries – might help to highlight particularities of Mamluk-Aragonese diplomacy. For many reasons, medieval mercenaries are an especially intriguing group of cultural brokers; not least because many of them might be termed “trans-imperial subjects” in that they rendered service to foreign rulers while maintaining ties to their motherland.⁵⁰ Christian mercenaries took on military expatriation to other realms within Latin Europe,⁵¹ but they also crossed the Mediterranean: nearly every North African power from the 12th to 15th century employed Christian mercenaries, and Aragon was one of their prime suppliers.⁵²

(Munich-Paderborn: Fink-Schöningh, 2013), 363–375; Nikolas Jaspert. “Gefangenensverkauf in der Krone Aragon und die Anfänge des Mercedarierordens: Institutionelle Diversität, religiöse Kontexte, mediterrane Verflechtungen.” In *Gefangenensverkauf im Mittelmeerraum. Ein interreligiöser Vergleich*, ed. Heike Grieser and Nicole Priesching (Hildesheim: Olms, 2015), 99–121.

50 Stephen Morillo. “Mercenaries, Mamluks and Militia: towards a Crosscultural Typology of Military Service.” In *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. John France, HW (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 243–259 and the titles named in footnote 52. The term “trans-imperial subject” was coined by Ella Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

51 Kenneth Alan Fowler. *Medieval Mercenaries 1: The Great Companies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); Stephan Selzer. *Deutsche Söldner im Italien des Trecento* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001); John France, ed. *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Hunt Janin and Ursula Carlson. *Mercenaries in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013).

52 Simon Barton. “Traitors to the Faith? Christian Mercenaries in al-Andalus and the Maghreb, c. 1100–1300.” In *Medieval Spain. Culture, Conflict and Coexistence. Studies in Honour of Angus MacKay*, ed. Roger Collins and Anthony Goodman (Basingstoke, 2002), 23–45; María Dolores López Pérez. “Marchands, esclaves et mercenaires: les transferts de populations dans le Maghreb médiéval.” In *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (Xe–XVIe siècles)*, ed. Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), 399–415; Roser Salicrú Lluch. “Mercenaires castillans au Maroc au début du XVe siècle.”; *ibid.*, 417–434; María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. “Marruecos y la Corona catalano-aragonesa: mercenarios cat-

Paid warriors were contracted in conflicts against competing Muslim powers, but they were also hired as a protective force for tax collectors in Northern Africa. Muslim sources relate that several sultans in Ifriqiya and the Maghreb maintained foreign soldiers under the leadership of Castilian and Arago-Catalan captains. From the little we know about such Christian militias of the Almoravid and Almohad periods, their activities were confined to an intra-religious, that is inner-Islamic context. Just as other praetorians before and after, these foreign fighters stabilised the power of local potentates since they were less easily won for court intrigues and dynastic struggles. Due to their particular military and tactical training, these foreign warriors could effectively strengthen local forces on the battlefield. Such were the reasons why Christian rulers on the Iberian Peninsula in turn contracted Muslim corps during the Middle Ages.⁵³ The practice of employing Christian militiamen to defend the interests of Muslim rulers against internal and external threats continued until the end of the Middle Ages.

As intriguing as such Christian mercenaries are: what needs to be stressed is the fact that from a perspective of Mamluk-Aragonese relations things were different: No Aragonese mercenaries appear to have been employed in the Mamluk Sultanate, rather understandably considering the very nature of this polity and its ruling class. This, however, does not mean that Catalans, Aragonese or other Iberian Christians did not convert to Islam and become Mamluks. We know that North African rulers also employed former Christians as mercenaries, and such converts have also been attested in the Mamluk Sultanate.⁵⁴ But it

alanes al servicio de Marruecos (1396–1410).” In *Homenaje al profesor Eloy Benito Ruano* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2010), 251–272; Javier Albarrán Iruela. “De la conversión y expulsión al mercenariado: los cristianos en las fuentes almohades.” In *La Península Ibérica en tiempos de Las Navas de Tolosa*, ed. Carlos Estepa and María Antonia Carmona Ruiz (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales, 2014), 79–91; Michael Lower. “The Papacy and Christian Mercenaries of Thirteenth-Century North Africa.” *Speculum* 89 (2014): 601–631; Nikolas Jaspert. “Zur Loyalität interkultureller Makler im Mittelmeerraum: Christliche Söldnerführer (alcajts) im Dienste muslimischer Sultane.” In *Loyalty in the Middle Ages. Ideal and Practice of a Cross-Social Value*, ed. Jörg Sonntag and Coralie Zermatten (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 235–274.

53 Brian Aivars Catlos. “Mahomet Abenadalill: A Muslim Mercenary in the Service of the Kings of Aragon (1290–1291).” In *Jews, Muslims, and Christians in and around the Crown of Aragon: Essays in Honour of Professor Elena Lourie*, ed. Harvey J. Hames (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 257–302; Ana Echevarría. *Knights in the Frontier: The Moorish Guard of the Kings of Castile (1410–1467)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Hussein Fancy. *The Mercenary Mediterranean: Sovereignty, Religion, and Violence in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

54 François Clément. “Reverter et son fils, deux officiers catalans au service des sultans de Marrakech.” *Medieval Encounters* 9 (2003): 79–107, 82. On apostasy see Robert Ignatius Burns. “Renegades, Adventurers, and Sharp Businessmen: The Thirteenth Century Spaniard in the Cause of Islam.” *The Catholic Historical Review* 58 (1972): 341–366; José Vicente Cabezuelo Pliego. “Cristiano de Alá, renegado de Cristo. El caso de Abdalla, fill d’en Domingo

remains an open question, how many of these apostates might have heralded from the Iberian Peninsula. As the subject of Christian mercenaries in Muslim service shows, the specific character of the Mamluk state had a marked impact on the Sultanate's diplomatic relations with the Crown of Aragon. But what else made Egypt special? There was one particularly relevant factor which, for Christian powers, singled out the Mamluk sultanate from amongst the Muslim realms: its possession of Jerusalem. I will elaborate on this point in the second part of my article.

Christian and Muslim Pilgrimage

During the entire Middle Ages, men and women from Eastern Iberia undertook pilgrimages to Jerusalem. From the 11th century onwards, the number of Christians who took sail for the Holy Land grew considerably,⁵⁵ and even after the demise of the Crusader States at the end of the 13th century, Catalano-Aragonese pilgrimage to Jerusalem continued, as sources of the 14th and 15th centuries corroborate.⁵⁶ For example, the Royal registers contain late medieval requests for safe conducts presented to the Chancery by Christian pilgrims.⁵⁷ Admittedly, medieval Jerusalem pilgrimage was not confined to the Iberian Peninsula. Yet the Crown of Aragon showed one marked characteristic that distinguished it from most other Christian realms: two kingdoms within this confederation – Aragon proper and Valencia – were home to substantial Muslim populations. Nowhere in Latin medieval Europe did as many Muslims live in as large communities and for

Vallés, un valenciano al servicio del islam.” *Sharq al-Andalus* 13 (1996): 27–46; Roser Salicrú Lluch. “En busca de una liberación alternativa: fugas y apostasía en la Corona de Aragón bajomedieval.” In *La liberazione dei “captive” tra Cristianità e Islam: oltre la crociata e il Gihad: tolleranza e servizio umanitario*, ed. Giulio Cipollone (Città del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2000), 703–713; Ulrich Haarmann. “The Mamluk System of Rule in the Eyes of Western Travelers.” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 1–24, particularly 6–16.

55 Josep Gudiol. “De peregrins i peregrinatges religiosos catalans.” *Analecta sacra tarracoen-sia* 3 (1927): 93–120; Pierre-Vincent Claverie. “La dévotion envers les Lieux saints dans la Catalogne médiévale.” In *Chemins d’outre-mer. Études d’histoire sur la Méditerranée médi-évale offertes à Michel Balard*, ed. Damien Coulon (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004), 127–137; Nikolas Jaspert. “Eleventh-Century Pilgrimage from Catalonia to Jerusalem: New Sources on the Foundations of the First Crusade.” *Crusades* 14 (2015): 1–48.

56 Josep M. Marquès. “Sis-cents pidolaires (1368–1540). Captius, esclaus i pelegrins.” *Estudis del Baix Empordà* 13 (1994): 137–165; María T. Ferrer i Mallol. *Els catalans a la Mediterrània oriental a l’edat mitjana* (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 2003).

57 Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 118, 123; María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. “Els viatges piadosos de cristians, jueus i musulmans per la Medi-terrània medieval.” In *Un mar de lleis, de Jaume I a Lepant, catàleg de l’exposició*, ed. María Teresa Ferrer and Josep Giral (Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània, 2008), 101–118, particularly 101–109.

as long a period of time as in the Iberian realms. This also had effects on pilgrimage in this area.

The *mudéjares* or *sarraïns* (as they are termed in Catalan documents) have been the object of much research, past as well as present, and lately, archaeological findings are teaching us even more about the everyday life of these politically and socially underprivileged minorities.⁵⁸ Usually, studies as these centre on the legal and social aspects of Mudéjar life, while recent years have shown a marked interest in interfaith contacts.⁵⁹ The following deliberations aim at contributing to this lively field of research by paying special attention to aspects of religious mobility.

The subjected *mudéjares* were not free to move wherever they wanted. Muslims who intended to leave the country were obliged to ask local authorities for permission to do so. Most of these requests referred to Muslim men, women or even entire families who wanted to emigrate to the Dār al-Islām, usually either to the Kingdom of Granada or to Northern Africa.⁶⁰ Scholarship on the deterioration of Muslim life in the Iberian realms has focused on this phenomenon of

58 Overviews of the abundant bibliography and syntheses: David Nirenberg, "The Current State of Mudejar Studies," *Journal of Medieval History* 24 (1998): 381–389; María Blanca Basáñez Villaluenga, *Las morerías aragonesas durante el reinado de Jaime II: catálogo de la documentación de la Cancillería Real* (Teruel: Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, Instituto de Estudios Turoloenses, 1999); José Hinojosa Montalvo, *Los mudéjares: la voz del Islam en la España cristiana* (Teruel: Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, Instituto de Estudios Turoloenses, 2002), 2 vols.; Manuel Ruzafa, ed. *Los mudéjares valencianos y peninsulares* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2003); Ana Echevarría Arsuaga, *Biografías mudéjares o La experiencia de ser minoría: biografías islámicas en la España cristiana* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2008); José Hinojosa Montalvo, "Mudejaren im Königreich Aragón: Integration und Segregation." In *Integration – Segregation – Vertreibung: Religiöse Minderheiten und Randgruppen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel (7.–17. Jh.)*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Nikolas Jaspert (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2011), 293–336 and the volumes of the – so far – twelve "Simposio Internacional de Mudejarismo."

59 Besides the studies cited in footnote 58, see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence. Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Brian A. Catlos, *The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims of Catalonia and Aragon, 1050–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

60 David Romano, "Musulmanes residentes y emigrantes en la Barcelona de los siglos xiv–xv." *Al-Andalus* 40 (1976): 49–86; José Enrique López de Coca Castañer, "Sobre la emigración mudéjar al reino de Granada." *Revista d'Història Medieval* 12 (2001/2002): 241–258; Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, "Les phénomènes migratoires entre les musulmans soumis à la couronne catalo-aragonaise pendant le Moyen Âge." In *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (Xe–XVIIe siècles)*, ed. Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), 259–284; Vaca Lorenzo and Jean-Pierre Molénat, ed. *Minorías y migraciones en la historia: XV Jornadas de Estudios Históricos* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2004); Isabel O'Connor, "Mudejars Helping Other Mudejars in the Kingdom of Valencia." *Al-Masaq* 17 (2005): 99–108; Alan Verskin, *Islamic Law and the Crisis of the Reconquista: The Debate on the Status of Muslim Communities in Christendom* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

flight and emigration (often enough to Egypt). Specifically addressing pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca by Iberian Muslims might help to complement the picture while necessarily directing the analytical focus towards Mamluk territories.

Even though subjected *mudéjares* developed regional centres of pilgrimage, the *hajj* certainly remained a paramount obligation for Iberian Muslims.⁶¹ Generally, permission to conduct the *hajj* was issued on a regional or even local level by royal officers, which means that only few references to safe conducts and travel authorizations have come down to us. Consequently there is no way of acquiring trustworthy, let alone statistically relevant quantitative information.⁶² In some cases, however, royal permits survive. Several decades ago, David Romano identified several such instances from the middle of the 14th century,⁶³ and María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, who has done outstanding work on editing relevant source material on the *sarraïns* in the Crown of Aragon, collected many more documents relating to Muslim pilgrimages, mostly from the Royal Treasury (*llibres de Batllia*) and from the series *Gratiarum* of the Chancery.⁶⁴ These records contain references to almost 600 pilgrims, sometimes with very concrete personal information about the travellers in question. For example, on 1 June 1375 Peter IV, the Ceremonious, of Aragon allowed seven Muslims from Lleida – Acer Abenferre and his wife Azize, Acer’s daughter Fatima and her husband Azmet Abenferre, Juce Alcodi and his wife Aziz as well as Moferric Alguaxqui – to “travel over the sea in order to visit the house of Mecca” (*apud partes ultramarinas pro visitando domum de Mecha*). The pilgrims were allowed to bear arms

61 Olivia Remie Constable. “Regulating Religious Noise: The Council of Vienne, the Mosque Call and Muslim Pilgrimage in the Late Medieval Mediterranean World.” *Medieval Encounters* 16 (2010): 64–95, particularly 81–90; Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV: segregació i discriminació* (Barcelona: Consell Superior d’Investigacions Científiques, 1987), 95–99, 144–146; Josef W. Meri. “The Etiquette of Devotion in the Islamic Cult of Saints.” In *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, ed. James Howard-Johnston and Paul Antony Hayward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 263–286; idem. *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Michael Alan Ryan. “Power and Pilgrimage: The Restriction of Mudéjares’ Pilgrimage in the Kingdom of Valencia.” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 25 (2008): 115–128; Xavier Casassas Canals. “La Rihla de Omar Patún: el viaje de peregrinación a la Meca de un musulmán de Ávila a finales del siglo XV (1491–1495).” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 3–28 (2015): 221–254.

62 On the composition of the archival holdings see María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. “Documentación sobre mudéjares del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón.” In *Fuentes documentales para el estudio de los mudéjares*, ed. María Teresa Ferrer i Mallol, Isabel Romero Camacho et al. (Teruel: Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, Instituto de Estudios Turolenses, 2005), 9–53.

63 Romano. “Musulmanes residentes y emigrantes en la Barcelona” (note 60), 63, 74: Seven free mudéjars from Saragossa who left for Mecca in 1358.

64 Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (note 61), 144–146; idem. “Els viatges piadosos de cristians, jueus i musulmans” (note 57), particularly 112–117. See also Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d’Orient* (note 4), 90–97.

and carry certain goods (*cum armis et bonis mobilibus*).⁶⁵ A document from 1431 reveals that pilgrims appear to have left their real estate as a surety on departure in order to pledge their return. Moreover, this text demonstrates that pilgrimage could well be connected with commerce, because Alí Benxarnit, a Valencian Muslim, was allowed to take bales of cloth and silk worth 1500 Valencian pounds to Bejaia in present-day Algeria on his way to Mecca, thus combining a commercial trip with a religious one.⁶⁶

Certain, albeit few, permits appear to reflect processes of religious transfer in that some royal permits applied standard Christian imagery or wording – for example when Muslims were allowed to travel “due to the devotion they feel towards the Holy Land and Jerusalem” (*ob devotionem quam habent ad Terram Sanctam et Iherusalem*) as stated in a document from 1362.⁶⁷ Muslim pilgrimage was set into a Christian context even more glaringly in a document from 1361, when Peter the Ceremonious extended a safe conduct in favour of a group of twelve Muslims so they might conduct a “pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre” as the document states quite clearly: *Per faciendo peregrinagium apud Sanctum Sepulchrum*.⁶⁸ Of course, we cannot say for certain if these *sarraïns* really visited Christ’s tomb in Mamluk Jerusalem.⁶⁹ Possibly they wanted to pray at the Dome of the Rock, or only used Jerusalem as a cover-up on their way to Mecca. In any way it is telling that the scribes noted the Sepulchre as the Pilgrims’ destination, possibly echoing the words the Muslims used when pleading permission to leave. Either the scribes or the travellers themselves must have presented Muslim voyages to the East as pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre. Thus, Jerusalem figured as a goal of pilgrimage for Aragonese Christians and Muslims alike – at least it was depicted as such. Mudéjar pilgrims to the Mamluk Sultanate thus seem to have been able to count on the support of their Christian lord, if only by paying him money for permits to travel abroad. Mamluk sultans in contrast are not known to have put themselves out on behalf of foreign Muslim pilgrims when dealing with the Aragonese monarchs. However, this does not mean that the

65 Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (note 61), 319–320 (doc. 104); see also Josefa Mutgé Vives, *L’aljama sarraïna de Lleida a l’Edat Mitjana: aproximació a la seva història* (Barcelona: Consell Superior d’Investigacions Científiques, Institut Milà i Fontanals, 1992), 98.

66 José Hinojosa Montalvo, *Los mudéjares: la voz del Islam en la España Cristiana* (Teruel: Centro de Estudios Mudéjares), 2: 320–321 (doc. 253).

67 Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Cancillería, Reg. 1183, fol. 127v; Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (note 61), 145.

68 Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Cancillería, Reg. 950, fol. 220r-v; Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (note 61), 145.

69 Yehoshua Frenkel, “Muslim Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Mamluk Period.” *Studies in Jewish Civilization* 7 (1996): 63–87; for early Islam see Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden and Cologne: Brill, 1995).

Mamluks did not back coreligionists at certain periods in time, as the final part of this article will try to underscore.

Piety as an Element of Aragonese-Mamluke Diplomacy: Minority Rights

Since the extensive peace treaty of 1290 between King Alfonso III of Aragon and Sultan Qalāwūn, diplomatic relations between both realms had been maintained on a constant basis. During the reign of James II of Aragon, embassies were sent from Catalonia to Cairo in 1293, 1303, 1305, 1314 and 1319.⁷⁰ The Crown Archive in Barcelona still contains Arabic letters sent from Egypt dating to 1300, 1304, 1306, and 1315 relating to bilateral diplomatic negotiations. As stated above, most of these revolved around topics such as commercial rights, the liberation of captives and the freedom of Christian pilgrims. The Kings of Aragon repeatedly put themselves out in favour of short term visitors (pilgrims) and even strove to stabilise the situation of Christians permanently living under Muslim rule.⁷¹ In 1303 they championed the Copts and other oriental Christians, successfully pleading for the reopening of their churches.⁷² Later initiatives in 1305 and 1314/1315 equally attempted to achieve free access to Jerusalem for Aragonese pilgrims, combined with efforts to improve the situation of all Christians in the Levant.⁷³

Eight years later, in 1322/23, King James for the first time sought to gain the sultan's permission to establish a house of religious brethren in Jerusalem in

70 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6); Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8); Giunta, *Aragonesi e Catalani nel Mediterraneo* (note 47), 114–115.

71 On the situation of the Christian minority in Egypt during these years see Nasser al-Hajji, *The Internal Affairs* (note 38), 112–147.

72 Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* 3 (note 5), 73–77; Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 20–24. Al-Maqrīzī relates that the churches were reopened thanks to diplomatic initiatives by the “King of Barcelona”: Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 102; al-Hajji, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt* (note 38), 124–127. On the situation of the Copts also see Johannes Pahlitzsch. “Mediators between East and West: Christians under Mamluk Rule.” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9/2 (2005): 32–47; Tamer El-Leithy. “Sufis, Copts and the Politics of Piety: Moral Regulation in Fourteenth-Century Upper Egypt.” In *Le développement du soufisme en Égypte à l'époque mamelouke*, ed. Richard J. A. McGregor and Adam Abdelhamid Sabra (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2006), 75–119; hopefully soon in print: Tamer El-Leithy. *Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo: 1293–1524 A.D.* (PhD Diss., Princeton University, 2005).

73 Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese* 3 (note 5), 77–85, 185–187; Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 27–41; Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 304–307, doc. 37.

order to permanently provide spiritual care to the Christian pilgrims who visited the town and the holy sites.⁷⁴ The backdrop for this initiative might have been anti-Christian violence that had broken out in Cairo in May 1321.⁷⁵ In the subsequent embassy, James invested a good deal of diplomatic energy on behalf of establishing a mendicant convent at the Holy Sepulchre. In 1322/23 he approached the sultan in favour of the Dominicans,⁷⁶ only to champion the Franciscans four years later.⁷⁷ The Minorites in fact finally achieved permission to maintain a house in Jerusalem – the nucleus of their guard of the holy places later to be known as the “Custodia di Terra Sancta” that exists to this very day.⁷⁸ The Aragonese King’s commitment to the holy places of Christianity and his initiatives to secure their administrative and spiritual maintenance by Latin clerics were not driven by religious zeal alone. Here, too, the complex power relations between Christian realms in the Mediterranean need to be taken into account. For the backdrop to the Aragonese diplomatic enterprise was without a doubt the rivalry between the house of Barcelona and the Capetians that had reached new heights since the Sicilian Vesper of 1282. It is no coincidence that the nominal King of Sicily and member of a side-line of the Capetian dynasty, Robert of

74 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 45, 47–52; Alarcón Santón und García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 365–367 (doc. 150).

75 Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge* (note 9), 2: 385; Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 119; al-Hajji, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt* (note 38), 131–139. On attacks and reprisals against Christian merchants in Egypt in general and Cairo in particular see: Denis Gril. “Une émeute anti-chrétienne à Quş au début du VIIIe/ XIve siècle.” *Annales islamologiques* 16 (1980): 241–274; Mohamed Tahar Mansouri. “Les communautés marchandes occidentales dans l’espace mamlouk (XIIIe–XVe siècle).” In *Coloniser au moyen âge*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Colin, 1995), 89–114, especially, 92–95; Pierre Moukarzel. “Les marchands européens dans l’espace urbain mamelouk: un groupe minoritaire privilégié?” In *Minorités et régulations sociales en Méditerranée médiévale*, ed. Stéphane Boissellier, François Clément and John Tolan (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 181–206.

76 Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell’Oriente Francescano* 3 (note 5), 232–237; Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 44–52.

77 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 53–54.

78 Samuel Eijan. *El Real Patronato de los Santos Lugares en la historia de la Tierra Santa* (Madrid, 1945–1946), 2 vols.; Kaspar Elm. “La Custodia di Terra Santa. Franziskanisches Ordensleben in der Tradition der lateinischen Kirche Palästinas.” In *I Francescani nel Trecento: Assisi 16–17–18 ottobre 1986* (Assisi: Univ. degli Studi di Perugia, Centro di Studi Francescani, 1988), 127–166; Sabino De Sandoli. *The Peaceful Liberation of the Holy Places in the XIV Century: the third return of the Frankish or Latin clergy to the custody and service of the holy places through official negotiations in 1333* (Cairo: Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies, 1990); Eugenio Alliata. “Evoluzione delle memorie storiche in Terra Santa tra la fine del Regno Crociato e l’insediamento dei Francescani a Gerusalemme (1292–1332).” In *Il cammino di Gerusalemme: atti del 2. Convegno internazionale di studio (Bari-Brindisi-Trani, 18–22 maggio 1999)*, ed. María S. Calò Mariani (Bari: Adda, 2002), 211–222; Félix del Buey and Cristóforo Alvi. “Orígenes de la custodia de Tierra Santa: ayuda de los Reinos de Aragón, Nápoles y Castilla.” *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 65 (2005): 7–96.

Anjou, simultaneously launched a competing initiative in order to establish the Franciscans at the Holy Sepulchre. Indeed, the creation of the “Custodia di Terra Sancta” was finally brought about by the Angevin ruler rather than by James II of Aragon. Religious diversity in Mamluk Egypt thus provided Christian rulers – here the Aragonese and the Angevin monarchs – with a base for fashioning their own identity as champions of subdued coreligionist minorities in distant lands.⁷⁹ *En passant*, the kings’ religious zeal could be put to use in order to acquire relics which, too, heightened the monarchs’ prestige at home. During the course of the 14th century, several Aragonese rulers negotiated the surrender of relics – of the True Cross, St Barbara, St Simon and Christ’s chalice – with Cairo.⁸⁰

These activities are not unknown to historians of medieval Latin Europe. But what needs to be stressed is that similar forms of “political piety” can also be observed on the part of the Mamluk sultans. A careful reading of their correspondence kept in the Barcelonense archives shows to which extent they, too, advocated the interests of subdued coreligionists, in this case those of Muslims in Aragon. In September 1314, King James promised that *mudéjares* in his realm (or *sarraïns*, as he put it) would be able to conduct their prayers in their mosques as they were accustomed to and without any impediment.⁸¹ Nine years later, this right was no longer a matter of course. In February 1323, Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad officially requested that King James of Aragon respect the customs of the Muslims living in his realm, just as the Sultan himself claimed to respect those of the Christians in the Mamluk Empire. He explicitly singled out the difficulties the *mudéjares* were encountering in reciting the *adhān*:

We inform him, however, that it has come to our knowledge that a community of Muslims who have remained in his territories after the disturbance of their conditions

79 See King Peter the Ceremonious’ donation to restore the Coenaculum in Jerusalem in 1366: Eiján, *El Real Patronato de los Santos Lugares* (note 78), 62. On the political implications of pilgrimage see – with references to prior scholarship: Sebastian Kolditz. “Der Herrscher als Pilger im westlichen und östlichen Mittelalter. Eine Skizze.” In *Transkulturelle Komparatistik. Beiträge zu einer Globalgeschichte der Vormoderne*, ed. Wolfram Drews and Jenny Rahel Oesterle, *Comparativ* 18 (Leipzig, 2008), 73–94.

80 Heinrich Finke. *Acta Aragonensia: Quellen zur deutschen, italienischen, französischen, spanischen, zur Kirchen- und Kulturgeschichte aus der diplomatischen Korrespondenz Jaymes II; 1291–1327* (Leipzig: Rothschild, 1908), 2: 756; Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 45; Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 124, 322–325 (doc. 51). Cf. Johannes Vincke. “Die Gesandtschaften der aragonesischen Könige um die Reliquien der heiligen Barbara (1322–1337).” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 60 (1940): 115–124; Amada López de Meneses. “Pedro el Ceremonioso y las reliquias de Santa Bárbara.” *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón* 7 (1962): 299–357; Vicent Baydal Sala. “Santa Tecla, San Jorge y Santa Bárbara: los monarcas de la Corona de Aragón a la búsqueda de reliquias en Oriente (siglos XIV–XV).” *Anaquel de estudios árabes* 21 (2010): 153–162.

81 Masiá de Ros, *La corona de Aragón y los estados del norte de África* (note 8), 304–307, doc. 37 (here 306).

have been accustomed of old to honour, protection and non-aggression in the mosques where they abide. Now these customs have often changed for the worse, and they are no longer able to call for and hold prayers in their mosques. It is desired of his [i. e. King James'] true affection that he should issue a comprehensive order regarding all Muslims residents in his country so that they might be allowed to enjoy the practice of all their customs and their tenets undiminished, that no aggressor might attack them in their mosques, that they might proclaim their prayers, and that they might be secured from harm and remain under protection. He [i. e. King James] is aware that God the High has entrusted us with the management of the affairs of all the people of Islam in whatever place they may be. So wherever any of the Muslims is to be found, he has held himself to be dependent on us and it is therefore our duty to provide him with protection. Let him [i. e. King James] therefore deal with them in a way that will secure for him our fullest affection and best friendship. His zeal, however, saves us further emphasis in this respect; and may the Almighty repay his friendliness and ensure the success of his endeavour, by the grace of God!⁸²

Clearly then, the Mamluk Sultan used his connections to Aragon to claim a special link to the subjected Muslims of the Crown of Aragon and position himself as champion of Islam, just as the Aragonese King did concerning the holy sites in Jerusalem. Aziz Atiya phrased it many years ago: "Hegemony over the rest of the Muhammedan world is here re-claimed for Egypt,"⁸³ because the Mamluk rulers now were not only the Lords of Mecca and Medina and defenders of Islam against the Mongols, but also protectors of subdued Muslims in Christian lands. This was only possible due to the intensive commercial, trans-Mediterranean ties between Aragon and Egypt that facilitated information about the living conditions and environments of coreligionists abroad and thus intensified trans-local interaction on different levels, including that of political and religious ideas.

Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's initiative of 1323 raises the question why none of his predecessors used this opportunity to strengthen their position within the Dār al-Islām. Perhaps domestic policy, that is inner-Islamic developments, might have been influential in this respect,⁸⁴ but arguably, so were the dynamics of diplomacy between the Mamluk Sultanate and its Christian neighbours.

In the Medieval Crown of Aragon, surrender treaties and other pacts between the rulers and subdued Muslims expressly allowed the latter to practice their religion, as long as they did not belittle the Christian faith.⁸⁵ Praying was per-

82 Alarcón Santón und García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 367 (doc. 150); Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 51; Ministerio de Cultura, *El perfume de la amistad* (note 8), 189–190.

83 Atiya, *Egypt and Aragon* (note 6), 52.

84 Tellingly, in these very years the rivalling dynasty of the Nasrids also claimed patronage over Aragonese Muslims – Alarcón Santón und García de Linares, *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo* (note 9), 35 (doc. 15), 58 (doc. 27); cf. López de Coca Castañer, *Sobre la emigración mudéjar* (note 60), 243–246.

85 See the syntheses: Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV*

mitted, even though particularly loud calls to prayer – for example by sounding horns – was prohibited in 1303.⁸⁶ At the Church Council of Vienne celebrated in 1311, however, the assembled Christian prelates issued a canon forbidding Muslims living under Christian rule to recite the *adhān*, the call to prayer.⁸⁷ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s reference to freedom of Muslim prayer in 1314 might already have been a reaction to these rulings. Some years after the Council of Vienne, this prohibition was widely proclaimed in the Crown of Aragon by order of King James II, who in 1318 officially announced that any perpetrator would be condemned to death.⁸⁸ Apparently, the situation of subjected Muslims indeed experienced a marked deterioration during these years.

Yet, this prohibition was not heeded by all Muslims. In the summer of 1322, in the region of Xàtiva,⁸⁹ a man by the name of *Abdala Abenxando* (‘Abd Allāh Ibn Khandū/ō?) publicly and loudly proclaimed the Prophet’s name despite the royal prohibition: on 20 July 1322, king James II wrote to Bernat Sanou, a royal officer of the Kingdom of Valencia. He acknowledged receipt of a letter in which Bernat had reported the arrest of a certain Muslim named *Abdala Abenxando*, who was now imprisoned in the town of Xàtiva. This Muslim had “loudly proclaimed in the name of Mohammad in spite of the King’s prohibition and contrary to his orders” (*contra inhibitionem et ordinationem nostrum alta voce nomine Mafo-meti clamavit*), an offence he had confessed to having committed. The king ordered that if indeed *Abdala Abenxando* admitted to having loudly proclaimed the name of Mohammed, he was to be sentenced to death according to the aforementioned rulings and as a warning to other Muslims.⁹⁰

This case has gone practically unnoticed in modern research. If mentioned at all, it is simply read as a sign of Christian oppression of Muslims in the Crown of Aragon. But what if we suppose that *Abdala Abenxando* was acting in full knowledge of the consequences? The royal ruling left no doubt: whoever broke it was to die. *Abdala Abenxando* might in fact have been seeking religious martyrdom by knowingly and voluntarily provoking his death by the hands of

(note 61), 85–101; Basáñez Villaluenga, *Las morerías aragonesas* (note 58); Hinojosa Montalvo, *Los mudéjares: la voz del Islam en la España Cristiana* (note 58), 1: 115–126.

86 Constable. “Regulating Religious Noise” (note 61), 73.

87 Giuseppe Alberigo et al., ed. *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta II/1* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 438–439 (do. 25). Constable. “Regulating Religious Noise” (note 61), particularly 74–76.

88 Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (note 61), 88, 233 (doc. 24).

89 On the mudéjars of Xàtiva see Isabel A. O’Connor. *A Forgotten Community: The Mudejar Aljama of Xàtiva, 1240–1327* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

90 Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (note 61), 236 (doc. 27). The issue continued to be dealt with at court and at church Councils: Constable. “Regulating Religious Noise” (note 61), 77–81; Ferrer i Mallol, *Els sarraïns de la corona catalano-aragonesa en el segle XIV* (note 61), 92–95.

Christians. In a recent scholarly overview on Muslim martyrdom, the author states that on the Iberian Peninsula there was “no galvanising action to rally the believers to stand firm. Probably the reason for this lies in the close identification of martyrdom with fighting in Islam that left few practical examples as to how martyrdom in such circumstances could be best utilised or whether it should even be carried out.”⁹¹ But perhaps the events surrounding *Abdala Abenxando* of Xàtiva were precisely such a galvanising action. Seen from this perspective, his behaviour would have been a deliberate attempt to rally coreligionists, knowing full well that by publically calling the prophet’s name he was in fact calling death upon himself. Whatever *Abdala Abenxando*’s motives, his case seems to have had stark effects on Aragonese-Mamluk relations, because immediately after the crisis of 1322 triggered by the Valencian *mudéjar*’s infringement of royal rulings, communication between both powers was suddenly marked by the novel diplomatic issue of the *adhān*. We are probably not wrong in assuming that the case of *Abdala Abenxando* of Xàtiva – and possible similar cases that have not come down to us – lay at the heart of this diplomatic initiative discussed on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to substantiate three points: first, that Mamluk-Aragonese relations were in no ways bipolar, instead forming part of complex and dynamic trans-regional networks. Second, that competition between powers of one and the same religious affiliation was a basic motive behind the engagement for religious minorities in foreign lands on the part of Christian and Muslim rulers alike. And finally, that domestic issues related to the situation of Christian minorities in Egypt and Muslim minorities in the Crown of Aragon had profound effects on foreign affairs. The unusually concrete information provided by the documents kept in Catalonian archives allows us to uncover these correlations with much greater detail than anywhere else in Latin Europe. The discussed episodes of the Muslim pilgrims to Jerusalem and the religious zealot *Abdala Abenxando* disclose an interrelated international as well as domestic dimension. Domestic affairs and intra-religious rivalry therefore have to be employed as helpful tools capable of shedding new light on the traditional research field of Mamluk-Christian relations.

91 David Cook. *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 86.

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