

# Mamluk Cairo, a Crossroads for Embassies

*Studies on Diplomacy and Diplomatics*

*Edited by*

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# Contents

Preface IX  
Abbreviations XIV  
Charts, Figures, and Tables XVI  
Notes on Contributors XX

- 1 Mamluk Diplomatics: the Present State of Research 1  
*Frédéric Bauden*
- 2 Mamluk Diplomacy: the Present State of Research 105  
*Malika Dekkiche*

## PART 1

### *Diplomatic Conventions*

- 3 Diplomats, or Another Way to See the World 185  
*Malika Dekkiche*
- 4 Strong Letters at the Mamluk Court 214  
*Lucian Reinfandt*
- 5 Embassies and Ambassadors in Mamluk Cairo 238  
*Yehoshua Frenkel*

## PART 2

### *The Mongols and Their Successors*

- 6 Careers in Diplomacy among Mamluks and Mongols,  
658–741/1260–1341 263  
*Anne F. Broadbridge*
- 7 The Golden Horde and the Mamluks: the Birth of a Diplomatic Set-Up  
(660–5/1261–7) 302  
*Marie Favereau*

- 8 Mamluk-Ilkhanid Diplomatic Contacts: Negotiations or Posturing? 327  
*Reuven Amitai*
- 9 Baghdad between Cairo and Tabriz: Emissaries to the Mamluks as Expressions of Local Political Ambition and Ideology during the Seventh/Thirteenth and Eighth/Fourteenth Centuries 340  
*Hend Gilli-Elewy*
- 10 Between Iraq and a Hard Place: Sulṭān Aḥmad Jalāyir's Time as a Refugee in the Mamluk Sultanate 363  
*Patrick Wing*

### PART 3

#### *The Timurids, the Turkmens, and the Ottomans*

- 11 Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmī's Description of the Syrian Campaign of Tīmūr 381  
*Michele Bernardini*
- 12 Diplomatic Entanglements between Tabriz, Cairo, and Herat: a Reconstructed Qara Qoyunlu Letter Datable to 818/1415 410  
*Frédéric Bauden*
- 13 Fixed Rules to a Changing Game? Sultan Meḥmed II's Realignment of Ottoman-Mamluk Diplomatic Conventions 484  
*Kristof D'hulster*

### PART 4

#### *The Western Islamic Lands*

- 14 Diplomatic Correspondence between Nasrid Granada and Mamluk Cairo: the Last Hope for al-Andalus 511  
*Bárbara Boloix Gallardo*
- 15 Entre Ifrīqiya hafside et Égypte mamelouke: Des relations anciennes, continues et consolidées 529  
*Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi*

- 16 Tracking Down the Hafsid Diplomatic Missions All the Way to the Turco-Mamluk Borders (892–6/1487–91) 566  
*Lotfi Ben Miled*

**PART 5**

***Arabia, India, and Africa***

- 17 Diplomatic Networks of Rasulid Yemen in Egypt (Seventh/Thirteenth to Early Ninth/Fifteenth Centuries) 581  
*Éric Vallet*
- 18 “Aggression in the Best of Lands”: Mecca in Egyptian-Indian Diplomacy in the Ninth/Fifteenth Century 604  
*John L. Meloy*
- 19 Some Remarks on the Diplomatic Relations between Cairo, Delhi/Dawlatābād, and Aḥmadābād during the Eighth/Fourteenth and Ninth/Fifteenth Centuries 621  
*Stephan Conermann and Anna Kollatz*
- 20 The *Ḥaṭī* and the Sultan: Letters and Embassies from Abyssinia to the Mamluk Court 638  
*Julien Loiseau*
- 21 “Peace Be upon Those Who Follow the Right Way”: Diplomatic Practices between Mamluk Cairo and the Borno Sultanate at the End of the Eighth/Fourteenth Century 658  
*Rémi Dewièrè*

**PART 6**

***The Latin West***

- 22 The European Embassies to the Court of the Mamluk Sultans in Cairo 685  
*Pierre Moukarzel*

- 23 In the Name of the Minorities: Lisbon's Muslims as Emissaries from the King of Portugal to the Sultan of Egypt 711  
*Maria Filomena Lopes de Barros*
- 24 Envoys between Lusignan Cyprus and Mamluk Egypt, 838–78/1435–73: the Accounts of Pero Tafur, George Boustronios and Ibn Taghrī Birdī 725  
*Nicholas Coureas*
- 25 Negotiating the Last Mamluk-Venetian Commercial Decree (922–3/1516–7): Commercial Liability from the Sixth/Twelfth to the Early Tenth/Sixteenth Century 741  
*Gladys Frantz-Murphy*
- 26 Three Mamluk Letters Concerning the Florentine Trade in Egypt and Syria: a New Interpretation 782  
*Alessandro Rizzo*

#### PART 7

#### *Material Culture*

- 27 Écritoires: objets fonctionnels et symboliques indissociables des cérémonies officielles à l'époque mamelouke 801  
*Ludvik Kalus*
- 28 Precious Objects for Eminent Guests: the Use of Chinese Ceramics in Mamluk Cairo: the Fustat Ceramic Collection from The Royal Museums of Art and History (Brussels) 823  
*Valentina Vezzoli*
- Index 843

## In the Name of the Minorities: Lisbon's Muslims as Emissaries from the King of Portugal to the Sultan of Egypt

*Maria Filomena Lopes de Barros*

In April 858/1454, the Muslims of Lisbon sent a letter to the Mamluk sultan Īnāl (r. 857–65/1453–61), requesting his intercession on behalf of the Christians of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Allegedly, they had been forced to do this by Afonso V (r. 1438–81), king of Portugal, on pain of religious persecution. They argued that the restrictive measures endured by the Christian minority in Jerusalem should end. This discourse, which naturally assumes a rhetorical and demagogic tone, takes the issue into the realm of psychology, which they used in the hope of influencing the response to their appeal. Aside from its immediate and explicit content, however, this letter expresses above all a political agenda in which minorities on both sides of the Mediterranean play a significant part. The two Muslims from Lisbon, Abū l-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ru‘aynī and Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Wandājī, who were charged with carrying the letter and presenting it to the sultan, exemplify the mediators throughout the Middle Ages who circulated between the western and eastern boundaries of the Mediterranean.

This document exhibits several unprecedented features. The most meaningful may be the fact that it is the only document reflecting a relationship between the Portuguese kingdom and the Mamluk sultanate of Cairo. In effect, and unlike the case of the Crowns of Aragon and Castile,<sup>2</sup> there are no other records of diplomatic contact between the two powers. Thus, to date, the Muslim minority in the Portuguese kingdom, through its Lisbon commune, is the only player involved in a probable dialogue between Lisbon and Cairo, in the name of Portugal's king.

1 CIDEHUS. In the scope of the project UID/HIS/00057/2013.

2 Arié, *Les Relations* 87.

## 1 The Letter: Description

A copy of the letter is preserved, among other documents, in MS Ar. 4440 in the National Library of France (BnF, Paris). Probably the work of a clerk to the Mamluk chancery, active until the beginning of the rule of Sultan Qāyṭbāy (r. 872–901/1468–96), the manuscript is divided into four parts. The second part (39a–86b) contains partial or complete copies of 62 documents which, for the most part, can be classified as letters (*mukātabāt*), either received or issued by that chancery.<sup>3</sup> In this section, occupying fols. 58b–60a, we find this document, partially edited and interpreted by George S. Colin.<sup>4</sup>

This collection, assembled and transcribed by the anonymous Mamluk scribe, displays a singular feature: the letter by the Muslims of Lisbon is the only one not issued by a Muslim sovereign, and furthermore it differs from the diplomatic content of the remaining letters.<sup>5</sup> The motive for this seemingly extemporaneous option probably lies in the formal aspect of the document.

The text proper is preceded by a summary which describes it as a copy of the letter sent to Sultan Īnāl by the Muslims who lived in the “country” of Lisbon (*bi-bilād Lishbūna*).<sup>6</sup> Its transcription starts after a reference to the *basmala*. The letter’s relatively long first part is dedicated to saluting the sultan, making use of formulas of glorification and exaltation of his person and function.<sup>7</sup> Next comes the identification of the letter’s authors, his “slaves” *ghurabā’* (*‘abīdukum al-ghurabā’*)<sup>8</sup> who profess the religion of Muḥammad and live in the city of Lisbon and its surroundings, among nonbelievers and polytheists, a situation which they justify. After the land was conquered by Christians, the Muslims were not allowed to leave, although they were granted religious freedom. Their presence, however, helped other Muslims; they ransomed captives and assisted the poor and the persecuted. In the letter, they insist that, if they could, many of them would move to Muslim lands, even at the cost of leaving all their possessions behind.

Their situation in Lisbon, however, took on a dangerous turn. The monks and priests of Jerusalem wrote to the Portuguese king (*ṣāhib bilād al-Burtughāl*)<sup>9</sup> complaining about the destruction of pilgrimage sites and the prohibition of

3 Bauden, *Les Relations* 5–6.

4 Colin, *Contribution* 201–3. I thank F. Bauden for sharing with me the document and the bibliography related to it.

5 Cf. Bauden, *Les Relations* 7–9 and appendix A.

6 BnF, Ms. Ar. 4440, fol. 58b.

7 He is called “the caliph of God in [his] land” (*khalīfat Allāh fī arđihi*). BnF, Ms. Ar. 4440, fol. 58b.

8 *Ibid.*, fol. 59a.

9 *Ibid.*

rebuilding or repairing their churches, many of which had even been turned into mosques. They asked that the same treatment be extended to the Muslims of Portugal, that is, that their mosques be destroyed and that they be barred from practicing their religion. These Muslims were thus forced to write to the sultan so that a solution could be found for this problem because, as they argued, they share the same religion and were a part of the same body, and when one organ is ill then the whole body suffers.

To deliver the letter they sent two men learned in the Quran (*min ahl al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīm*) and of noble descent, the *faqīh* Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ruʿaynī and Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Wandāji.<sup>10</sup> Their petition asks the sultan to allow the Christians to rebuild their churches, though not grant them new privileges. Again they justify their mission with the arguments they used before: they stress the fact that such a mission was imposed on them, that they are Muslims despite living under Christian rule, and they mention the many captives they had freed and protected, and finally they declare their fear that their mosques may be destroyed and their religious liberties curtailed. The letter ends with an indication of the date (beg. Rabīʿ II 858/beg. April 1454).

## 2 Emissaries: Muslim Minority

This document raises many questions. Undoubtedly, the first one relates to its authors since, despite the references made to Portugal, they identify themselves only with the city of Lisbon, although other Muslim communities did exist—especially in the southern regions of the land.<sup>11</sup> As they were emissaries of the king, this identification is understandable within the historical context of this minority.

In fact, the privileged relationship between the king and his “Moors” (those from the Lisbon commune) was a feature of great importance that extended from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> Islamic law, comprising mainly fiscal legislation, was produced by lawmakers in that commune and then applied by the king to all the other communities; thus, the Lisbon *foro* became the institutional paradigm to be embraced by all the Muslims’ communes in the kingdom. This trend began in the seventh/thirteenth century, after the Chris-

10 Ibid. Colin interprets this as *al-Wandāhī*: Colin, Contribution 203.

11 Barros, *Tempos e Espaços* 137–45.

12 From the grant of the charter (*carta de foral*), in March 1170, to the Edict of Expulsion, in December 1496.

tian conquest of the Portuguese territory was completed. But from the reign of King John I (r. 1385–1433) onwards it acquired a global dimension, when royal jurisdiction was effectively imposed on the kingdom's Muslim minority, despite protests by several of those communities who wished to defend their custom-based singularities.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the Lisbon commune boasted, to the end of the ninth/fifteenth century, its own prison building, a symbol of its own jurisdiction. In contrast, the other communes progressively lost their juridical autonomy, because of competing Christian systems.<sup>14</sup>

This relationship, through which Lisbon's Muslims became the preferred interlocutors and servants of the monarch, was also projected onto diplomatic approaches to the *dār al-Islām*, such that the Muslim minority appears to play an essential role. In fact, possibly in 737/1337 one of its members, Master 'Alī, was sent forth as an emissary from Afonso IV to the Merinids of Morocco, in an effort to form an alliance with the Merinids against the Castilians. Although the sultan refused, explaining that he was in a truce with Castile, our Muslim emissary received from the king a farm on which to raise his horses, mules, and asses, and also the privilege of exemption from some services.<sup>15</sup> The documentation says nothing about the emissary's origins, but in 799/1397 another Muslim, Mafamede (Muḥammad) de Avis, named as a servant to the king and living in Lisbon's Muslim quarter, was charged by King John I to take two captive Muslims, both Granadines, to the sultan of Granada, "for his service." Given the chronology of this assignment, in the middle of war with Castile, we should consider the hypothesis that his intention was similar to that of Master 'Alī, that is, it was an attempt to reach a deal between the Portuguese crown and the Granadine sultan.<sup>16</sup>

Both the letter of the Lisbon Muslims and the act of sending the two emissaries from that community should be viewed in this light. The complaints voiced by the Jerusalem churchmen to the Portuguese king, Afonso V, might have triggered an attempt by the king to intervene in the most symbolic city for Christianity. The ideology of Catholic monarchy, embraced by the sovereigns of the Iberian Peninsula, was already projected in this royal initiative which, as in later periods, was connoted with the protection of the holy sites of Jerusalem. It is possible that, as a result of this diplomatic mission, a representative of St. Francis traveled from Jerusalem to the Portuguese kingdom. In fact, already in the next year, in 1455, the warden of the monastery of St. Francis, to whom

13 Ibid. 299 ff.

14 Ibid. 283.

15 Barros, *Os Láparos* 324.

16 Ibid., 324–5.

Afonso v granted a dole, was received at the court of the king.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, his successor John II favored the same institution, just as the Catholic kings became its committed protectors.<sup>18</sup>

The text of the missive insists repeatedly on the coercive character of the mediation by the Lisbon Muslims, as well as on the threat they allegedly faced, that is, the end of their religious freedom and the destruction of their mosques. Nevertheless, nothing in the documentation of the period hints at any disturbance in the relations between the monarch and the kingdom's Muslim minority.<sup>19</sup> It is therefore a consciously demagogic discourse, exploring an overblown status of minority and the asymmetry of power associated with it. The very sensitivity of these emissaries' mission—they are requesting the alteration of a decision made by the sultan of Cairo<sup>20</sup>—implies the use of carefully worded language. The Muslims are “slaves” to the sultan and, even living among “infidels,” they still practice their religion conscientiously and help fellow Muslims, especially captives, within the framework of Islam's rules. And all references to Christians are usually accompanied by derogatory qualifiers, in contrast with the formulas of praise and exaltation used when Muslims are mentioned.

Placing themselves in the context of the *dār al-Islām* and consequently invoking the sultan of Egypt as their *natural* protector, these emissaries call themselves their “*ghurabā'* slaves,” as mentioned already. The term *gharīb* (pl. *ghurabā'*), meaning “stranger,” or “foreign,” nevertheless in this period acquired a specific meaning as a word that described a Muslim minority under Christian rule. In an auto- or hetero-perception, apparently common to the western Mediterranean, this term is used again in a later document, dated 14 August 1486. The Arabic translation of a letter sent by King John II to the inhabitants of Azemmour concludes with a reference to its author: “This text was written by the servant of our lord, upon his orders, your sincere *gharīb* brother Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Ru'aynī, *khatīb* from your brethren *ghurabā'* [sic]—may God forgive and better their lot—who salutes you.”<sup>21</sup>

17 Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe* 228 note 28.

18 Ibid. 228.

19 In December 1454, the same year as this letter, King Afonso v granted a charter of privileges to the Lisbon commune. Torre do Tombo (TT), Chancelaria de D. Afonso v, Livro 10, fol. 19b.

20 According to Colin, it is in fact the predecessor of Ināl, al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (r. 842–57/1438–53), who adopted restrictive measures on Christian and Jewish sacred spaces. Colin, *Contribution* 203 note 2. About these measures see Little, *Communal strife*.

21 Cénival, *Les Sources inédites* 14 (Arabic version). In the French version, the term is translated as an adjective, “who live(s) far away” (ibid. 23).

Another al-Ru‘aynī, thus, very likely a relative of the emissary of the 858/1454 letter, introduces himself, at the beginning of that same translation, as an interpreter and servant of the Portuguese king, a position he held at least until 909/1504. His connection with the city of Lisbon (*Lishbūna*) was expressed in the last of the letters he translated, dated from that city on 22 April 1504 (*fi 22 min Abrīl ‘ām 1504*).<sup>22</sup> The term is no longer used in this document, his identification became simply “al-Ru‘aynī.” For a very important reason, too: the *ghurabā’*, defined as the Muslim minority, ceased to exist in Portugal as of the publication of the edict King Emmanuel I (r. 1495–1521), in December 1496. Those members of the community who remained in Portugal were forcefully converted to Catholicism, with some rare exceptions duly sanctioned by royal privilege.

The word was still used in the year 909/1504, in a broader context that involved those Muslims in the kingdoms of Granada and Castile that were forced to convert, in the famous *fatwā* by the *muftī* of Oran.<sup>23</sup> This juridical consultation, solicited by the communities involved, was addressed to the *algharibosh*, in the *aljamiado* version (Castilian written in Arabic characters) and to the *ghurabā’*, in the Arabic version.<sup>24</sup>

These Muslims’ double inscription is thus embodied in a double terminology: that of their respective kingdoms—as *mouro forro* in the Portuguese case—and, as *gharīb*, in relation to the Islamic *umma*. This last feature apparently pointed to a reality that was exclusive to the western Mediterranean, as already mentioned. The letter in MS Ar. 4440 of the National Library of France only uses the term once, when identifying its authors; in the remaining text it adopts the more universal term “Muslim.”

### 3 Lisbon-Cairo Relations: Granadine Model

Throughout the ninth/fifteenth century, royal policy seemed to ignore Mamluk power altogether. The letter from Lisbon’s Muslims is the only evidence known to date of a relationship, however indirect, between Lisbon and Cairo.

The interests of King Afonso v, however, were not limited to conquests in North Africa; his interests there earned him the nickname “the African.” In effect, the monarch enthusiastically adhered to the proposal of a crusade against the Turks in order to free Constantinople; the monarch’s public vows

22 Ibid. 98 (Arabic version) and 99 (French translation).

23 Harvey, *Muslims in Spain* 60–4.

24 Cf. for this question Barros, Christians and Mudejars 142–3.

were proclaimed in Lisbon, on 25 July 1456.<sup>25</sup> However, when the movement failed to receive the intended reception among other European rulers, he redirected his military apparatus to North African conquests, starting with al-Qaṣr al-Ṣaghīr in 1458.<sup>26</sup> In 1477, at the end of his unsuccessful stay in France (he had gone there to request the help of Louis XI in his designs on the Castilian crown), Afonso V gave up the crown of Portugal and escaped from Honfleur, with the intention of reaching Jerusalem and ending his days there in obscurity. Caught by the emissaries of the French king and later sent on to Portugal—thereby averting a serious diplomatic incident<sup>27</sup>—the king eventually died in Lisbon, in 1481.

These various elements of Afonso V's life suggest that his actions were driven by the idea of holy war and by a spirituality that projected itself onto a symbolic Jerusalem, where he desired to be forgotten and see the end of his days. In fact, in the year of his death he spent some time in the Franciscan monastery of Varatojo (outside Torres Vedras), which he had founded, and where he also apparently disclosed his intention to resign and remain.<sup>28</sup> The relationship with the Franciscan order<sup>29</sup> is thus of special significance in the life of this king, and this may account for the contact he kept with the Franciscan convent of Mount Sion, founded in the 1330s.<sup>30</sup> The Portuguese monarch may not have been its only protector, but the 858/1454 letter from Lisbon's Muslims, and in the following year the sojourn of a Franciscan monk from that monastery in the Portuguese court, both reveal his strong intention to pursue that relationship.

The real scope of the Portuguese Muslims' mission, however, is more problematic to assess. In effect, they probably would not have ventured to ask for a change in the Mamluk sultan's policies toward the Christian minority unless they had the support of the king himself. Contacts between Portugal and Granada (which have not been systematically studied by Portuguese historiography) reveal, as mentioned before, the use of Muslims from Lisbon, a choice that was kept secret from the other peninsular crowns. And in any case, the experience of that chancery with contacts from the *dār al-Islām*, and in particular with the Mamluks,<sup>31</sup> turned out to be the most functional, at a time when

25 Gomes, *Afonso V* 178.

26 Ibid. 179.

27 Ibid. 227–9.

28 Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe* 223.

29 Gomes, *Afonso V* 260–68.

30 Goiten and Grabar, *Jerusalem* 240.

31 Arié, *Les Relations*.

the Portuguese chancery still seemed to lack the means, and/or the interest, to formalize relations with the Islamic world. As far as we can glimpse from available documentation, the letter translated by Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Ruʿaynī, in 890/1486, marks the beginning of the Portuguese chancery's output in Arabic; this output later developed and expanded into other languages, especially after the Portuguese arrived in India.

Therefore, it is likely that Afonso v's ideological interpretation of Catholicism was either complemented by more pragmatic policies, for example, using the two Muslim emissaries from Lisbon to approach the Mamluk sultan,<sup>32</sup> or reinforced by a crusader ideal stemming from the personality of the king himself. In fact, the symbology of Jerusalem overrides that of Constantinople, conquered by the Ottomans in August 857/1453, although the monarch embraced the crusade against the Turks, preached by Callixtus III. However, that city, which embodied a whole ideological program throughout the Middle Ages, was very much alive in the king's mind, as we have said. The purely rhetorical threats in the letter might have been used to catalyze the possible justification of a Christian intervention, similar to those used in the past, namely, acts of violence committed against Christians.

Nevertheless, there is nothing on which to base this hypothesis. We do not know the outcome of this mission or, for that matter, its political and personal consequences for the two emissaries, or a possible continuation of contacts between Lisbon and Cairo. However, the crusader ideal of the conquest of Jerusalem reappeared at a later period, in the reign of Manuel I (r. 1495–1521),<sup>33</sup> through a move made by this king in 1505. He approached the king of England, Henry VII, and his father-in-law, the Catholic king Ferdinand (r. 1479–1507), and he also meant to extend the idea to other European monarchies. But there were no results. The Portuguese king abandoned his project in 1508, due to the embarrassments he suffered in Morocco. For the Spanish king Ferdinand, the desire to enter Jerusalem, as the high point of his reign, only ended with his death in January 1516.<sup>34</sup>

32 Which is possible, considering Mamluk ceremonial, according to the text by al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAbbāsī, completed in 709/1309, which mentions that it was possible for the emissaries of letters to transmit secrets to the sultan, in private. Bauden, *Les Relations* 12.

33 Costa, *Manuel I* 177–9; Thomaz, *De Ceuta* 166–7.

34 Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe* 230–42.

#### 4 Christian-Muslim Relations: the Role of Minorities

Mediation carried out by, or through, minorities is a fundamental feature of the medieval Mediterranean's social and political complexity. As Pahlitzsch says in the article he devoted to the networks of eastern Christians,

they were moving between the cultures as though this were a matter of course and they could do so because of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character of the individual states in the Eastern Mediterranean. The close interconnection between these numerous ethnic and confessional groups created a certain unity of space regardless of political boundaries.<sup>35</sup>

Actually, multi-ethnicity and multi-confessionality were not confined to eastern states, as the Lisbon Muslims' mission proves. The Iberian monarchies shared this same reality, although the logic of the majoritarian religion is here inverted: Muslims, as well as Jews, were in this case the lawfully included minorities, until the end of the ninth/fifteenth and the beginning of the tenth/sixteenth centuries.<sup>36</sup>

But it was the Muslim kingdom of Granada, eventually conquered by the Catholic monarchs in 1492, which brought about the first intervention of the Mamluk sultan in the Iberian political context, although this was of an epistolary nature only. In a mirror image of the case of the letter from Lisbon, the intermediaries were Franciscans from Jerusalem. In 1489 two of these, from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, met with King Ferdinand, who was about to attack Baza, in Granada. They brought letters from the Mamluk sultan Qāyṭbāy, from Pope Innocent VIII, and from King Ferdinand of Naples, all urging him to end the war in Granada. The Egyptian chronicler Ibn Iyās specifies the origin of this mission. Pressured by the Granadine sultan, and responding to his plea for help against the Christian advances and conquest of his land, Qāyṭbāy wrote to the clerics of the Church of the Resurrection, in Jerusalem, requesting that one of its members carry a letter to the king of Naples. In this letter, the king was asked to intercede with his Castilian counterpart to stop the attacks and evac-

<sup>35</sup> Pahlitzsch, *Mediators* 47.

<sup>36</sup> In 1492, the Catholic monarchs decreed the expulsion or, as an option, the forced conversion, of Jews; in 1496, Manuel I of Portugal established the same measure both for Jews and Muslims; in Castile from 1501 to 1502, and in the 1530s, in Aragon, similar measures were imposed on the Muslims of those kingdoms.

uate the conquered land; otherwise the sultan would carry out reprisals on the members of that church, interdicting the sanctuary to Christians or even going so far as to demolish it.<sup>37</sup>

Ferdinand gave a negative reply, obviously, so the two Franciscans approached the queen, who was in Jaén. Isabella repeated her husband's reasons for continuing to the final conquest of the Muslim kingdom. However, she granted the Church of the Resurrection a pension of one thousand ducats, perpetually, and offered them a veil, richly embroidered by her own hand, to be placed over the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>38</sup> As in the Lisbon letter, the Mamluk sultan's threats were purely verbal and rhetorical, considering the friendly diplomatic relations he had with the Catholic monarchs.<sup>39</sup>

A different context permeates the second mission, at the start of the year 1504. Granada had already been conquered, and its inhabitants forced to convert; meanwhile, the Portuguese tried to eliminate Mamluk influence in the Indian Ocean.<sup>40</sup> These are the two situations that Sultan Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 906–22/1501–16) complained of in a letter sent through Maurus Hispanus, a Franciscan who had left the Levant at the end of his three-year term as superior general of the Convent of Mount Sion in Jerusalem. His mission was twofold, in Spain and in Portugal. In the first, he protested against the forced conversion and other aggressions against the Granadines; in the second, he brought an end to the abuses suffered by Egyptian traders whom the Portuguese intended to exclude from Indian Ocean traffic. If his requirements were not met, the sultan once again threatened to destroy the Holy Sepulchre and all the other Christian sites under his sway.<sup>41</sup>

On his journey from the East, Fr. Mauro was to contact the Venetian Republic and the Pope, in order to obtain their support. In both cases, the responses were ambiguous. The Council of Ten denied the mission any diplomatic cooperation, but secretly incited the sultan to resist the Portuguese. The Roman Curia postponed its decision, awaiting effective contacts with the Iberian rulers.<sup>42</sup> The idea behind this journey was somehow conveyed by the gift carried by Fr. Mauro: a marble slab, supposedly from Christ's tomb, divided into pieces; these were to be offered to Cardinal Bernardino López de Carvajal, head of the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, in Rome; to the Catholic Queen Isabella;

37 Arié, *Les Relations* 95.

38 *Ibid.* 96.

39 *Ibid.* 96–7.

40 Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe* 465.

41 Thomaz, *De Ceuta* 444.

42 *Ibid.* 445.

to the Archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros; and finally to King Manuel of Portugal. Nevertheless, nothing is known of Fr. Mauro's stay in the Iberian kingdoms. We can only speculate that he was in Portugal before 12 June 1505, on which day King Manuel replied to a papal brief by Julius II, dated 26 August 1504.<sup>43</sup>

This reply, printed in Latin in the form of a leaflet,<sup>44</sup> so it could circulate in Europe, was imbued with clear propagandistic intent. The Portuguese king set out by taking apart the arguments of the "Sultan of Babylon." The threat of destruction of the Holy Sepulchre, he says, is out of proportion with reality and would be justifiable only if the Portuguese armies went to Mecca and tore it the ground—which by the way he believed, with God's mercy, would happen very soon. He then proceeded with the offenses attributed to the Catholic monarch,<sup>45</sup> "my father," for which he assumed shared responsibility. Indeed, he was the one who had demanded the destruction of Castile's mosques and the conversion of Muslim children, who were to be taken away from their families, as the "blessed dowry" of his second marriage, with D. Maria. The contract was fulfilled, to the glory of God and great pleasure and advantage of the Portuguese ruler. The last part of the text is directly dedicated to the highest representatives of Europe: King Manuel regrets the infidels' daring nerve, implicitly criticizes the Pope but explicitly addresses the Christian princes. These he accuses of negligence for, "busy with human affairs and their own interests," they failed to remember the offenses received from the "enemies of God."<sup>46</sup>

Preparations for the crusade, significantly, started less than two months later, thereby he assumed his ideal—clearly mirrored in this propagandistic discourse—of becoming a leader of Christendom. The Portuguese Muslim minority was not mentioned here, although in December 1496 the king had published the edict of expulsion, or alternatively of conversion to Catholicism, of the kingdom's Jews and Muslims.<sup>47</sup> The destruction of their mosques—a strongly evocative image often repeated since the letter of 1454—cannot claim, in effect, the same political meaning as the conquest of the peninsula's last Muslim kingdom and the conversion of its inhabitants. This fact led Manuel

43 Ibid. 445–6.

44 *Epistola serenissimi principis Hemanuelis primi dei gratia Portugallie Regis excelentissimi ad summum Roannum Pontificem*, Lisboa: Valentim Fernandes, 1505, Biblioteca Nacional (Lisbon), Res. 75 // 2 v, fols. 5–8v. The letter is translated by the chronicler Damião de Góis: Góis, *Crónica* 204–5.

45 Queen Isabella died on 26 November 1504.

46 Góis, *Crónica* i, 204–5.

47 Soyer, *The persecution* 246–7; Barros, *Tempos e Espaços* 598–603.

to associate himself with the Catholic monarchs' policies, claiming a fundamental role in the extinction of Islam in Granada, whereas he kept silent about the Portuguese reality, which the Mamluk sultan ignored anyway.

The imposition of expelling the Jews, at the time of his first marriage to Isabella of Aragon, daughter of the Catholic monarchs, was thus compensated by Manuel in the negotiation of his second marriage—to Maria of Aragon, the sister of his first wife—ratified by the Catholic monarchs on 22 April 1500.<sup>48</sup> In both cases the minorities were treated as contractual objects, although in his political action the Portuguese king went beyond the conditions imposed on him to marry Isabella: Muslims, in addition to Jews, were to be expelled from the kingdom. The relation between the measures of forced conversion in Granada and the impositions of the Portuguese king are not so clear. In fact, they were rather an outcome of the revolt that lasted from 1499 to 1500, which happened precisely because the pact agreed upon at surrender was not respected,<sup>49</sup> rather than as a result of King Manuel's political action. His claim of shared responsibility in this matter thus seems merely ideological, and is without a basis in reality.

This policy of religious homogenization, which the Portuguese king pioneered, played a part in the reinterpretation of Catholic monarchy which, beginning at the close of the fifteenth century, came into full expression in the following century.<sup>50</sup> The imperial ideals of the Iberian kingdoms embraced this new ideology, confronting each other in diverse spaces, in a rivalry which endured in spite of the matrimonial alliances between the two powers. In this sense, minorities were fundamental in materializing the discourse of "being Catholic," a discourse which their forced conversion rendered legitimate and well-known.

The context here, however, was not exclusively Iberian. A wider understanding of Mediterranean geostrategy emerges from the official discourse of the humanist Damião de Góis (d. 1574), who wrote the chronicle of Manuel in the reign of his son, John III (1521–57), and completed it in 1566. Referring to the capture of the children of those Jews who left the kingdom in the wake of the edict of expulsion, he argues that such was not the case with Muslims, because these occupied "the greater part of Asia and Africa, and a large part of Europe," so that there could be vengeance "on the Christians who lived in the lands of other Moors." And he concludes, "this is why they were allowed

48 Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe* 25–6.

49 Harvey, *Muslims in Spain* 15–31.

50 Cf. Harvey, *When Portugal*.

to leave the kingdom with their children, unlike the Jews.<sup>51</sup> The unstable equilibrium between minorities in the East and West of the Mediterranean—an implicit relationship involving Christians under Islamic rule and Muslims under Christian rule—therefore exerted an influence on political decision-making, although of course it did not determine it. The Catholic King Manuel continued to assume his role as protector of Christian minorities, just as his predecessor Afonso V had.

However, some time later (in 1510), European powers were unable to avert either the torture of the Convent of Mount Zion's Franciscans or their expulsion from Jerusalem (along with the Greeks and Latins of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre)—events that constituted an extreme reaction to the naval defeat and destruction of the Mamluk fleet in Bayās.<sup>52</sup> Sultan Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī finally moved from rhetoric to action in his repression of the Christians of Jerusalem.

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51 Góis, *Crónica* 60; Barros, La primera expulsión.

52 Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe* 479–82.

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