

Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

A Tawdry Crow and an Impending Fall

Islam, Conversion and Crusade in William of Tripoli's
Notitia de Machometo and *De statu Sarracenorum*

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This thesis presents the works and visions on Islam, conversion and crusade ascribed to William of Tripoli, a Dominican friar who lived and worked during the middle of the 13th century in the Holy Land, and the concomitant research on these works and his persona. There are two treatises on his name, *Notitia de Machometo* and *De statu Sarracenorum*, of which the former has served as a model for the latter, which is strongly less polemical, expands on the historiographical aspect and was very popular in the medieval West. Considering its profoundly different approach to the topics discussed in *Notitia*, it is very likely that it is from the hand of another, European author and not of William. This thesis will discuss the historical setting, the persona of William of Tripoli, the contents and the debate on the authorship of the two works ascribed to him.

Keywords: William of Tripoli – Islam and the West – *Notitia de Machometo* – *De statu Sarracenorum* – Dominican – Crusades - Conversion

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Introduction

This thesis will present the works and visions on Islam, conversion and crusade ascribed to William of Tripoli, a Dominican friar who lived and worked during the middle of the 13th century in the Holy Land, and the concomitant research on these works and his persona. There are two treatises on his name, *Notitia de Machometo* and *De statu Sarracenorum*, which treat a series of topics such as the rise of Muḥammad and the origins of Islam, the history of Islam up until the age of the author, the history and contents of the Qur’ān, and comparisons with Christianity. *Notitia* has served as a model for *De statu*, and there exist profound differences between the two texts in terms of tone, approach to the Saracens and propagated messages: where *Notitia* is strongly focused on theology, polemics and the triumph of Christianity, *De statu* demonstrates a strong interest in the Islamic history and preaches a friendlier and less polemical approach to Islam, omitting many of the polemical passages of *Notitia*. Due to these differences, it is very likely that *De statu* is not written by William of Tripoli, but by another, European author at a later date.

Firstly, this thesis will present an historical overview and framework in which William of Tripoli and the works ascribed to him are to be situated. The ideas about and dispositions towards the Crusades, the Saracens and the cause of the Holy Land were changing in the West due to unsuccessful campaigns, and questions and doubts regarding the papal leadership and ruling. Central is the figure of pope Gregory X, to whom both treatises are dedicated, be it to his name before his election to the papacy, Teobaldo Visconti. He was one of the last popes (and rulers) who with honest intent attempted to set up a grand crusade for the Holy Land, and he has tried to effectuate this at the ecumenical council of Lyons II. *De statu* supposedly has answered to his call for informative memoirs on the Saracens and the Holy Land, although, as will be shown, only a part of *De statu* has served this purpose. Next, the life and persona of William of Tripoli will be discussed, most notably the lack of information that complicate an accurate portrayal of his life and aims, and the question regarding the authorship of the two texts. Finally, this thesis will explore the contents of the two treatises, the ideas and messages propagated in them, and the conclusions drawn from these. There is a special attention for *Notitia*’s, and thus William’s position in the polemical tradition and how he relates to it. Though the treatises differ in many aspects, they also share common points of interest that explain their connectivity and their influence.

On the use of the term 'Saracens'

An important remark in understanding the phenomenon of 'Saracens' is its synonymous value to 'Muslims'. This thesis attempts to use the word 'Saracens' when it is in relation to the texts (or the historical perception), but in other instances uses the more neutral 'Muslims' (and by extension 'Islam' instead of 'faith of the Saracens'). 'Saracens' thus is a religious mark and not an ethnical mark.¹ The texts do not strictly distinguish between the two terms at all times, since there are instances in which "Arabes" is a synonym for "Sarraceni", but this thesis does uphold this distinction.²

Historical context

The late medieval times of the 13th century brought forth a range of changes in attitude towards and methods of dealing with the Muslims and their faith. Whilst Crusader campaigns were still being launched in North Africa as well as in the Middle East, the perception of the Crusades had started to change in the 12th century. The mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans took their flight in a different type of warfare: doctrinal instead of military. In Europe, the passion that drove earlier Crusades against the enemies of the Christian faith seemingly started to dwindle, and contact with the 'Saracens' had led to a different approach to the world. It would have appeared, and the many different and strongly varying texts and ideas testify to this, that the world was not to be perceived as black and white as thought before. In order to understand what was changing (in) the European idea of Islam and its believers, it is necessary to briefly mention the historical context of events and ideas that had taken place before the 13th century in which the Dominican friar William of Tripoli has lived and worked.

1. Political context

The historical scene of this thesis compels us to briefly go over one its major occupations for the many political forces at play: the Crusades. For quite some time, the waging of a Crusade was equally important to the secular powers in Europe as it was to the papacy, be it for different reasons. It was a holy, just war that was ought to be fought by every righteous Christian, and it entailed great spiritual benefits. As Baldwin puts it:

"Both the political reality and the conception of the state as an autonomous entity had long since ceased to exist. Instead, there had emerged that politico-religious society peculiar to the Middle Ages wherein the distinction between religious and secular authority was largely lost.

¹ Guilelmus Tripolitanus, *Notitia de Machometo. De statu Sarracenorum*. Translated, edited and commentated by Peter Engels. Corpus Islamo-Christianum. Ser. Latina 4. (Würzburg: Echter, 1992), end note 191, p.402 (hereafter the commentary of Engels will be referred to as Engels, whilst the works will respectively referred to as *Not.* and *De statu*); *Not* 6, 18: "[...] *Meslemin*, quod latine dicitur *Sarracenos*, [...]"

² Cf. Engels end note 268 p.417; *De statu* 13, 2.

If the response of such a society to the challenge of Islam was to be war, it must perform a holy war, because society was religious.”

This new idea of a holy war grew slowly and was not uncontested during its process of accustoming. A dualism between physical warfare and the spiritual ideals had been strong up until the introduction of a holy war against the Saracens. The acceptance and also culmination of this transition from this duality to the merger of the two concepts reached its peak in the 11th century with the Crusades. The principal enemy of Christianity, Islam and its Saracens, could now be fought with expeditions that, more than any other, had the blessing of God.³ But it also provided the pontifical rulers to expand their secular outreach: “Thus the Islamic problem exerted a profound influence on the character of Christian society in the high Middle Ages. As it had helped to fuse the warlike spirit with the Christian ideal, so it contributed in no small degree to the papal preponderance in temporal matters.”⁴

It was due to previous successes and the claim of a holy war that the papacy saw an opportunity to solidify her own political power and unite Christendom under her rule. This became most notably with the popes of the 12th and 13th century. Innocent III (1160-1216) was one of the prominent popes that tried to strengthen the papal secular power, but also to bring peace and unity to Christendom. These were requirements for success against the Saracens, for its own sake, but also in order to guarantee the manpower that can wage a Crusade.⁵ The wars against the Albigensian/Cathar heretics started by Alexander III (ca.1100-1181) in 1179, turned into a Crusade under Innocent and Honorius III (1160-1227). Both popes even considered the heretics worse than the Saracens, a view fuelled by e.g. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* that stated that bodily compulsion of heretics and apostates was allowed, since they had known the true faith and had chosen to turn away from it (contrary to the method of converting Saracens, cf. infra).⁶ The waging of a Crusade became a tool mostly in hands of the papacy, using it for establishing its supremacy in both the temporal as the spiritual realm. This tool was used in both Europe and in the Holy Land, against, as shown, heretical sects such as the Albigensians, but also against emperor Frederick II (1194-1250), who had contacted the Saracens for aid in his struggle with Innocent IV (1195-1254).⁷ By the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, Europe was once again war-torn and the papacy was right in the middle of it: “The holy war flourished in Europe, not in the Orient.” Later Throop notes: “Such Crusades were a dread weapon in the hands of a politically ambitious papacy and those antagonistic to papal aims were always

³ Marshall W. Baldwin, “Western attitudes toward Islam,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 27, no.4 (1942): 404-405.

⁴ Baldwin, “Western attitudes,” 407-408.

⁵ Baldwin, “Western attitudes,” 407.

⁶ Palmer Throop, *A Criticism of the Crusade : A Study of Public Opinion and Crusade Propaganda*. (Amsterdam: Swets En Zeitlinger, 1940), 35-37, 46-47.

⁷ Throop, *A Criticism*, 58.

ready to present the holy war in Europe as a perversion of the crusading motive.”⁸ The division of Europe, the active enmities, and the waging of wars are important factors in understanding the later shifts in attitude towards and thought on the Crusades and the waging of distant wars in exhortation and leadership of a pope.

The Crusades to the Holy Land were not less important for the hegemony that the papacy strived for. Control over these sacred areas in the Middle East was one of the most powerful methods of the popes to exercise their influence in European politics, and losses in the Holy Land meant diminished power for the papal monarchy. As long as crusaders achieved victories or could rule in the prosperous kingdoms that were established, the passion of crusading against the Saracens would thrive and help the papal cause of gaining control: “There was a fundamental agreement between the pope’s duty to save the Holy Land and his claim to universal domination. [...] During a Crusade a pope was the supreme arbiter politically as well as spiritually.”⁹ When these holy wars were not as successful anymore as they had been before, the secular forces in Europe felt less inclined to keep contributing to this cause. The failures of both the Fifth and Sixth Crusade and eventually the fall of Acre in 1291 depicted a decline of enthusiasm for waging battles in a distant land as well as a failing of uniting Europe and establishing a stronger papal authority. In the political aspect, support for the Crusade from secular rulers dwindled as the losses started to cumulate and wars were being fought in Europe itself. That did not mean that the battle with the enemy had stopped: there were still expeditions being launched, blockades were still established. It is the idea of the *crusade*, the holy war propagated by the papacy, that did no longer carry away the enthusiasm of the European rulers.¹⁰ The efforts of various popes to convince them to raise their banners against the enemies of the faith were often met with apathy and accusations due to the deplorable status of progress in the Holy Land as well as to the idea that they would be fighting against fellow Christians:

“[...] the Crusade ideal preached by Urban II in 1095 shifted the center of controversy. Urban insisted that Christian should no longer wage war against Christian: all forces should combine against the Moslem, the enemy of all Christians. This ideal, upheld in general by the popes of the twelfth century, fell into increasing neglect during the thirteenth. Christian crusaded against Christian, whilst the Saracen triumphed in the Holy Land.”¹¹

The final attempt of a grand Crusade against the Saracen made by Gregory X (1210-1276) (cf. *infra*), the lack of support at his ecumenical council and the ultimate failing of organising this Crusade due to his early death, proved the unwillingness of the European ruling class. Europe was tired of distant wars, and the confounding of the

⁸ Throop, *A Criticism*, 48-49.

⁹ Throop, *A Criticism*, 3.

¹⁰ Baldwin, “Western attitudes,” 408; Throop, *A Criticism*, 287.

¹¹ Throop, *A Criticism*, 28.

spiritual and temporal powers into a supreme authority slowly took its former shape of duality again. National interest overtook warfare in the name of faith:

“The new nationalism looked upon the holy war in the Levant as a costly and futile foreign adventure. A people supported its king, not the pope, when the interest of Crusade and country conflicted. Only when the Crusade served national interests [...] did the cross triumph. Then there was no conflict between self-interest and the ideals of the Church.”¹²

It is within these struggles and changing sentiments in regard to the Saracens, a shift would take place and new information brought forth new methods.

2. Western Attitudes towards the Saracens

Before the changes that resulted out of closer contact with the Saracens, be it via the Crusades or in occupied territory such as Spain or Sicily, a very hostile picture of Islam and its believers was painted in Europe, mainly by ecclesiastical authorities.¹³ Very little was known about Islam and the Saracens at the time of the First Crusade, even though Christians had been fighting them for quite some time and many pilgrims visited and returned from the Holy Land, yet these pilgrims had very little to say about Islam, Muslims, their Prophet or their customs. Whilst in general they could conduct their pilgrimage undisturbed in lands occupied by the Saracens, a vivid propaganda existed which claimed that it was unsafe for Christians to undertake such travels. Such propaganda, Munro suggests, was active during the time of Gregory VII (1020/25-1085), one of the first instigators of an armed expedition towards the Holy Land, and probably was spoken about by Pope Urban II (1035/42-1099) at the Council of Clermont in 1095. On very little information, a great movement against the Saracens had been brought up. Other accounts of atrocities existed as well, such as the *Epistola Spuria* of emperor Alexius I, which “presented details of the cruelties and mockery of the victims” and was used as an *excitatorium* to arouse the Christians to take the Cross against the infidels.”¹⁴ In these times, many conceptions and beliefs about Islam and its believers, in theology, morals and rites, were conceived, and these polemics would stubbornly live on for generations to come, in spite of the serious accounts of information on these topics. Hamilton agrees with Kedar who offers a different view in stating that in “a good deal of information about Islam was available in the West before the Crusades, both in written and oral sources, but because there was a general lack of interest in the subject, no attempt had been made to coordinate this knowledge.”¹⁵ Hamilton makes note of the

¹² Throop, *A Criticism*, 286.

¹³ Hans Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte Der Kreuzzüge* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1964), 73.

¹⁴ Dana Carleton Munro, "The Western Attitude toward Islam during the Period of the Crusades," *Speculum* 6, no. 3 (1931): 329-331.

¹⁵ Hamilton, Bernard, "Knowing the Enemy: Western Understanding of Islam at the Time of the Crusades." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 7, no. 3 (1997): 373, based on Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission. European Approaches towards the Muslims* (Princeton, 1984), 3-41.

difference between intentional misleading works and those that are not, for which the *Chanson de Roland* is an example of the former, since it portrays the Saracens as idolaters: “But such statements, intended to inflame hostility to Islam at a time of war, should not be taken seriously as evidence of what the West knew about Islam.”¹⁶ Engels reports that up until the 12th century, most information in the West about Muslims or their Prophet came from legends.¹⁷ Also, there existed a problem in considering Islam as a religion or anything more than a sect or heresy: within the Christian teleology of salvation, there was no room left for further exegesis because paganism was destroyed, Judaism was marginalised, every new religion or prophet was to be considered as pseudo or (a precursor of) the Antichrist. The life of Muḥammad and a variety of elements in the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth were used as evidence of the heretical nature of Islam.¹⁸

3. Contact and Scrutiny

The following part will discuss the changes that took place within the attitudes towards and methods of treating Islam and the Saracens. The West came to know the Saracens better and more profoundly through prolonged contact with the believers of Islam. An increased interest in the practices of the enemy and a desire for a deeper understanding of their book and faith (whilst proving the supremacy of Christianity) drove a series of Christians to study Arabic, next to Hebrew and Chaldean, and to read or ‘sift’ through the Qur’ān. In the Holy Land, exchanges between the Franks and the Saracens led to an ameliorated situation between the two peoples. From the position of the Franks, Munro reports that “not only did the Franks learn to admire the valor of their foes but contact with them dispelled many prejudices. [...] As the Crusaders were few in number, they had to rely on the natives for agriculture, in building the churches and castles, and even used them as soldiers. They made little distinction between the Christian heretics and the Muslims.” When captured and held in captivity, close relations between captor and captive were sometimes established; trade was a necessity; the Franks preferred Muslim doctors over their own due to their greater knowledge of medicine; they would sometimes share places of worship; and frequently alliances between different factions were sought “in aid of the other against a rival of his own faith.” Some of the hostility of the Latins now was transferred to the Greeks, in Europe, because of the Greeks’ continuous refusal to unite with the Latin Church, as well in East, with the strained relations between the Latin kings and the emperors in Constantinople. This hostile approach reached its peak when the Latins turned their Crusade to take the Byzantine capital.¹⁹ This does not mean that the West regarded the Saracens any less as

¹⁶ Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 374.

¹⁷ Engels 42.

¹⁸ Michelina Di Cesare, *The Pseudo-Historical Image of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medieval Latin Literature: A Repertory*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients 26 (Berlin/Boston, 2012), 1.

¹⁹ Munro, “The Western Attitude,” 335-337.

one of the principal enemies of the faith, but contact and interaction gradually led to better understanding who exactly these enemies were.

One of the main sources to become more familiar with Islam naturally lay in studying its central book, the Qur'ān. Not only would reading and analysing the Qur'ān improve Western understanding and knowledge of Islam's foundations, it also provided many opportunities for Christian scholars to exercise polemics and apologetics. In order to do so, some studied the Arabic language to read the Qur'ān, but also to make translations of it. Peter the Venerable (1092/94-1156) and his concerns for the conversion of the Moors who were conquered by Christians in Spain, "engaged two of the most skilled academic translators of Arabic texts, Robert of Ketton and Herman of Carinthia, to produce a corpus of works about Islam."²⁰ The learning of Arabic and other oriental languages became more profound mainly due to missionary aims (cf. *infra*).

One particular method of reading the Qur'ān was 'sifting' through it, a term later coined by Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464) as *cribratio*. This reading could either serve as a refutation of Islam as a religion or to prove the superiority of Christianity in comparing it with Islam. It was a widespread practice to use the Qur'ān both for attack as for defence purposes.²¹ In comparing passages and phrases to Christian elements, scholars could search for the *laudabilia de deo*, which Burman considers a defence of Christianity, but which Mossman sees more as a method of conversion (cf. *infra*).²² One of the main points of comparison and to a certain extent also surprise and admiration of Christians, was the reverence of Christ and Mary in the Qur'ān (as will be shown with William of Tripoli as well). But it did not change the idea of Islam as a pseudo-religion, it was still regarded as a perversion of Christianity.²³ It was important to find out what the Qur'ān had to say and taught its faithful, because the refutation of Islam could thus become more effective and profound. This too was one of the main concerns of Peter the Venerable, who "could not decide whether the Mohammadans were pagans or heretics, but in either case their teachings ought to be refuted and ridiculed," and his ideas not only became quite popular in the West, but also "persisted in spite of the fact that more accurate information was given by Christians of approved faith even as early as the time of Saladin."²⁴

It should be noted that not all reading was (purely) polemical. Burman in his article argues that in order to use the Qur'ān as an polemical or apologetical tool, a philological approach to the text was often employed. This was a similar approach to how Christians

²⁰ Hamilton, "Knowing the Enemy," 375.

²¹ Thomas E. Burman, "Polemic, Philology, and Ambivalence: Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15 (2004): 182-183.

²² Burman, "Polemic," 204; Stephen Mossman, "The Western Understanding of Islamic Theology in the Later Middle Ages. Mendicant Responses to Islam from Riccoldo Da Monte Di Croce to Marquard Von Lindau," *Recherches De Theologie Et Philosophie Medievales* 74, no. 1 (2007): 194.

²³ Hamilton, "Knowing the Enemy," 378.

²⁴ Munro, "The Western Attitude," 337-338.

had been treating Jewish works, which also had been the topic of debate and polemics for quite some time, but in order to understand them and effectively refute its teachings, Christians scholars learned Hebrew and Aramaic to use the teachings of the Jews against them from the inside-out. Burman argues that the same method has been used against Islam (e.g. Ketton in his translation of the Qur'ān turned directly to Islamic sources of Qur'ān exegesis), since this one-dimensional approach of polemics “seems out of step with how Latin-Christian scholars read Jewish books,” adding that the ambivalence with which the West regarded the Arab-Islamic world must have compelled them to not just treat their literature in a polemical way.²⁵ Since the late 11th century, a translation movement of scientific and philosophical treaties had begun, on which many Christian scholars build their own corpora and which increased the respect and admiration Western intellectuals felt for Islamic knowledge. The same goes for Peter Alfonsi's (1060-1140) *Disciplina Clericalis*, which featured a collection of stories translated from Arabic. This is to be seen next to the general admiration many Latins felt for the piety of Muslims and the heroic image of Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn.²⁶

The image of the Saracens and their faith both changed and did not change during the increase of information. Closer contact with them had brought the faiths of Christians and Muslims closer together, but it did not stop the idea that these were the infidels who needed to be fought. In spite of a strong increase of knowledge on Islam and the Saracens, both in experience as in literature, it did not lead to a better understanding or an ameliorated relation between the two faiths: “Yet although by the end of the thirteenth century some Catholic scholars possessed a very full range of information about the faith of Sunnite Islam and a more limited and imperfect knowledge of some of the Shi'ite schools, this did not add up to an understanding of Islam as a religion.” But, as often happened, closer contact and personal experience with the enemy of which a horrifying image has been made, together with popular literature and the manifested knowledge of Islamic scholars, led many Christians to change their perspective towards the Saracens:

“An imaginative awareness of the Islamic world made it more difficult to think of Muslims in the black and white terms which the logic of the twelfth-century Christian theology required. Western Christians who lived in frontier societies like Spain, Sicily and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, came to know Muslims as human beings, and to feel affection and respect for some of them.”²⁷

Hamilton continues to describe the difficult situation in which those who had dealt with the Saracens found themselves: personal experience clashed with the theology of the

²⁵ Burman, “Polemic,” 184-185.

²⁶ Burman, “Polemic,” 185-187; Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 378-379; Munro, “The Western Attitude,” 338-339.

²⁷ Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 377-379.

12th century that Muslims were on the wrong side of history, and led to some Christians being “disquieted by the place assigned to Muslims in it (*i.e. the Apocalypse of St John and the coming of the Antichrist*), because their experience of individual Muslims [...] was non consonant with the belief that they were minions of antichrist” (brackets are mine).²⁸ Yet the battle against the infidels continued, be it that the choice of combat started to change. In light of the dwindling support for the Crusades and now armed with more knowledge about Islam and the polemical products that come out scrutinizing its principal sources, converting the Saracens now seemed like a more effective practice in battling the infidels.

4. Missionary and Conversion

Within the framework of contact with the Saracens and increased knowledge about them, missionaries were to thrive in the East. Prutz argued that: “In dieser Weise haben namentlich einige Missionaren den Islam kennen gelernt, welche, der arabischen Sprache vollkommen mächtig, nicht bloß den Koran selbst studieren, sondern auch mit den Gläubigen, welchen derselbe die göttliche Offenbarung war, wie mit ihresgleichen leben konnten.”²⁹ The idea of missionary action, or a more peaceful approach towards the Saracens, had been brewing for quite some time: different popes, under which Gregory VII and Urban II, who were at the foundation of the crusading movement, had already preached and undertaken efforts of conversion of the Saracens.³⁰ Since the beginning of the Crusades, the question whether an armed struggle with the infidels was conform with Christians ideas had been raised, and it never really left Christian thought. Throop speaks of a “revision of Christian values which brought forth a new monasticism, a new peace movement, and a new ardour for the spread of Christianity,” which was strongly connected to the lack of enthusiasm for more crusades and the ideas which the Church preached, whilst in practice doing the opposite.³¹ Missionary action was a new weapon in the waging of a holy war, though not all agreed on the compatibility of this method with the method of physical warfare (cf. *infra*).³² The idea especially knew great popularity during the 13th century, even though there were very little results to show for it.³³ The missionary ideal was fuelled by very popular apocalyptic currents within Latin Christendom, both in the West as in the Holy Land (most notably the Joachimite belief, a millenarian current that predicted 1260 as the beginning of a new millennium and was convinced that the Saracens, or at least a great

²⁸ Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 380; *De statu* 5, 30: “ministris Antichristi”.

²⁹ Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte*, 73.

³⁰ Burns, Robert I. S.J., “Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West: The Thirteenth-Century Dream of Conversion,” *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 5 (1971): 1389; Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 373.

³¹ Throop, *A Criticism*, 27, 288.

³² Baldwin, “Western attitudes,” 409-410.

³³ Throop, *A Criticism*, 125.

number of them, were to be converted before the end of the world, which was near (cf. *infra*)).

One of the first scholars who actively tried to pursue the conversion of the Saracens, was the aforementioned Peter the Venerable, “not as our people [so] often do, by weapons, not by force, but by reason, not by hate but by love.”³⁴ The idea of converting the infidels especially took flight with the founding and growth of the mendicant orders at the beginning of the 13th century.³⁵ Though their techniques were quite different, the Dominicans and the Franciscans started a movement in which Islam was not met with contempt but with appreciation, “a new phase of encounter between Muslims and Christians [...] one of debate based not on mutual ignorance but on information and argumentation.”³⁶ The Franciscans preached directly and openly, and preferred the method of confrontation. This method was aimed at the common man, whom the preacher hoped to convert by directly speaking to him even in mosques. The result that was very probable in this scenario was death, regarded as martyrdom, because of the restrictions Islamic states installed: religious discussions and debates were allowed, but any offence or insult against the Prophet or the teachings of Islam were not (though this changed after the Mongol conquests and the fall of Baghdad in 1258).³⁷ The Dominican friars, more careful in their approach, combined rationalist argumentation with a profound knowledge of foreign, in this case oriental languages, for which schools had been erected.³⁸ This allowed them to converse and dispute with the Saracens and mainly their target audience, the local establishment. In converting them, they hoped to achieve a top-down conversion of society.³⁹ The works of William of Tripoli and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce can give an impression of “the impressive range of Arabic books that circulated among these learned Dominican missionary-Arabists.”⁴⁰ It were the mendicant orders who during the 13th century “stood to the forefront” in trying to convert the Saracens in Spain, North Africa and the Holy Land: they were the “mobile and main missionary force of a Christendom grown too suddenly complex and expanded. They combined the zeal of freshly founded orders with the new learning of the universities, and because they fitted their times so aptly they drew into membership some of the most promising spirits of the day.” They were organised, international,

³⁴ Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1390.

³⁵ Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 376.

³⁶ Thomas F. O’Meara, “The Theology and Times of William of Tripoli, O.P.: A Different View of Islam,” *Theological Studies* 69, no. 1 (February 2008): 81, with the quote from Ludwig Hagemann, *Christentum und Islam: Zwischen Konfrontation und Begegnung* (Altenberg: Verlag für Christlich-Islamisches Schrifttum, 1983) 73-74.

³⁷ Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1395-1396; Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 376.

³⁸ Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1402; O’Meara, “The Theology,” 81; Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 376; Munro, “The Western Attitude,” 339.

³⁹ O’Meara, “The Theology,” 81; Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 376; Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1398.

⁴⁰ Thomas E. Burman in John Chesworth, Alexander Mallett, Barbara Roggema, and David Thomas, *Christian-Muslim Relations: Bibliographical History*, The History of Christian-Muslim Relations Vol. 4 (1200-1350) (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 389.

enthusiastic and present at all scenes, be it at the war councils of the Crusaders or on the battle ground once the fighting had ended. They found access to Islamic courts and preached in the streets full of Saracens.⁴¹ What Burns considered critical for successful polemics was “a metaphysical theology with which to meet the Muslim savant on his home grounds, and if possible some handbooks to facilitate its deployment.”⁴² Many scholars and friars, including William of Tripoli, were convinced that showing the Saracens the falsehood of their faith and the truth of Christianity was an effective method of converting.

Different popes also had expressed views for converting the infidels, as well as undertaken efforts to actualise these ideas. As mentioned, Gregory VII and Urban II had concerns for converting the Saracens instead of completely annihilating them. The Crusade of Innocent III was motivated by the idea that the end of the world would come in 1284 and therefore, mass conversions of Jews and Muslims were to be accomplished. Honorius III, Gregory IX and Innocent IV also saw opportunity and a chance of success in converting Muslims by persuasion (usually by trying to convert noblemen such as princes, once again to convert in a top-down manner).⁴³ Honorius allowed missionaries to dress appropriately to the customs of the Saracens in order to effectuate better relations, and Alexander IV (1199-1261) set up education in oriental languages and apologetics, in which Dominicans were to train specialists.⁴⁴ Innocent IV explicitly wanted to use the Crusade “to open up the way for Christian preachers among the Muslims.”⁴⁵

Ultimately, this massive project for conversion failed. The Saracens proved to be too stubbornly attached to their faith and could not be persuaded to become Christians. On top of that, the political changes in the East seemed only to strengthen them, whilst crippling the Latins and their kingdom: the Mamluk caliphate was strong, Acre fell in 1291, the Mongols converted to Islam in 1295. The prophesised fall of the faith of the Saracens and the triumph of Christianity expired and the outcome seemed to favour anyone but the Christians.⁴⁶ With the end of a Christian future in the East came also the end of the dream of conversion. Not only did it seem impossible to convert Muslims *en*

⁴¹ Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1395. Burns also describes the five methods which medieval missionaries could apply in their conversion attempts: “secret conversions, via commercial, chaplain, or other contacts; fanatic confrontation, designed to precipitate a dramatic response; infiltration via metaphysical dialogue with whatever Islamic savants came to hand; diplomatic manoeuvres toward winning a potentate, in whose footsteps many subjects could drift into Christianity; or finally, cracking the military carapace by conquest, to expose an Islamic region to public proselytism.”

⁴² Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1408.

⁴³ Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1390-1391.

⁴⁴ O’Meara, “The Theology,” 81.

⁴⁵ Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 198 (based on Kedar, *Crusade and Mission* p.159-61 and p.202-203).

⁴⁶ Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 205.

masse, many Christians had gone over to the other side instead. The Saracens did not see the truth that Christianity proclaimed and Islam had hidden away, and there was no end of the world that would effectuate this or would make them perish. The scholars who actively had been against physical warfare with the hope and conviction that the Saracens had to be overcome by showing them the true faith and thus converting them, now had to readjust their beliefs and had to admit that a Crusade of steel instead of doctrine was needed (cf. *infra*).⁴⁷

5. Second Council of Lyons

Approaching the historical setting in which William of Tripoli lived and worked, a closer look is needed to be had at the Second Council of Lyons (1274), an ecumenical council organised by Gregory X, the pope whose name was Teobaldo Visconti, to which both *Notitia* as *De statu* are dedicated. A part of *De statu* (chapters 17-22) likely was part of one of writings that was submitted for the Second Council of Lyons, on Gregory's request for information on the Holy Land.⁴⁸ In studying the council and the sentiments expressed there, a more accurate image of the historical setting can be drawn, one that is important for understanding William of Tripoli's work(s).

In preparation for the council, Gregory X issued two bulls, *Salvator noster* (1272) and *Dudum super generalis* (1273), the former to announce the new ecumenical council, the aims the pope wished to achieve and the request for information on the Holy Land, the latter to request information on non-Christians in order to understand how the enemies of the faith could "corrupt or stir up against feeling the Christian religion", without mentioning the Holy Land.⁴⁹ At the council, Gregory wanted three topics discussed and resolved: the situation in the Holy Land, the reunion with the Greek Church, and the reform of the clergy. As Innocent III had done before him during his Fourth Lateran Council (1215), Gregory requested information on the Holy Land in order to receive topical and more accurate information. Teobaldo had received the message of his papal election whilst being in East, joining the Ninth Crusade (1271-1272) of lord Edward (1239-1307, the future king of England), and before this participation he had been the archdeacon of Liège. He was well-aware of both the European context of politics as of the situation in the Holy Land.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, a general request for information was issued and it was met mostly by memoirs writing by mendicant friars, possibly including one by the author of *De statu*. Another aim of the pope was to feel out the anti-Crusade sentiment that had been rising in Europe, says Throop. Gregory felt that "the most

⁴⁷ Munro, "The Western Attitude," 343; Burns, "Christian-Islamic Confrontation," 1434.

⁴⁸ Engels 66 (cf. *infra*); Throop, *A Criticism*, 115 (although Throop also considers that William may have received a special commission for writing the report); Sylvia Schein, *Fideles Crucis: The Papacy, the West, and the Recovery of the Holy Land 1274-1314* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 35-36.

⁴⁹ Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 91; Throop, *A Criticism*, 17, 20.

⁵⁰ Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 91.

dangerous opponent of the new Crusade was not the Saracen in the Holy Land. There was a yet more powerful (*sic*) enemy at home – a bitterly hostile public opinion.” The problem arose that in attempting to measure this hostility, the opinions of the clergy, and especially those of the mendicant orders, did not represent public opinion.⁵¹ To combat anti-Crusade sentiment as well as the aversion many secular rulers felt for the Church because of the aforementioned grievances, Gregory certainly wanted to win the churchmen over to his side and “thought nothing less than an ecumenical council could convince the clergy”, even though it provided the dangerous opportunity that they could unite against the pope’s proposals.⁵²

An analysis of the anti-Crusade sentiments was made in 1273 by the Dominican Humbert of Romans (1190/1200-1277), who had been the Master General of the Order of Preachers between 1254 and 1263, in his *Opus tripartitum*, together with his own argumentation that a Crusade was of the utmost necessity and that physical warfare indeed was consonant with the Christian faith.⁵³ There was quite some division between the clergy on the topic of the use of force, as well as within the mendicant orders. Thomas Aquinas thought that the infidels should not be forced to adhere Christianity (whilst heretics and apostates did, cf. *supra*), but that a Crusade as a defence tactic was necessary, whilst Ramon Lull (1232/33-1315/16) and Roger Bacon (ca.1214-ca.1294), both Franciscans, were strong opponents of any use of force, for they thought it would only incite the Saracens further to resist and fight against Christianity.⁵⁴ Not only that, but there were also “some doubts as to the compatibility of the crusading idea with the teaching of Christian orthodoxy [...]. Moreover, they reveal the conviction that the crusades, far from being a divinely inspired movement, were actually against the will of Providence.”⁵⁵ Both William of Tripoli and the author of *De statu* thought violence to be an ineffective method of converting the infidels, but, as Schein argues, not because he (i.e. *De statu* for Schein) was against the use of force: he simply was convinced, due to his belief in prophecies and confronting the Saracens with their own truths, that they were at the brink of converting (cf. *infra*, though this mostly pertains to William of Tripoli and not to the author of *De statu*).⁵⁶ The pope himself did not “wholeheartedly believe in the readiness of the Moslems to abandon their faith,” whilst he did undertake the effort (successfully) to convert the Tatar representatives at the council.⁵⁷ It appears that the use of force was not the biggest problem many had with a Crusade:

⁵¹ Throop, *A Criticism*, 23-25; Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 35-36.

⁵² Throop, *A Criticism*, 214.

⁵³ O’Meara, “The Theology,” 92; Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 35; Throop, *A Criticism*, 138.

⁵⁴ Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 386; Throop, *A Criticism*, 47, 138; Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 25; Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1391.

⁵⁵ Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 35.

⁵⁶ O’Meara, “The Theology,” 92-93.

⁵⁷ Throop, *A Criticism*, 145.

“[...] even though, on the whole, the Second Council of Lyons was the gold age of peaceful missions to the infidels, only a few of their protagonists rejected the Crusade altogether. Moreover, even those who opposed the Crusade per se, were [...] to modify their views after the disaster of 1291. From then on, the belief in a peaceful conversion of the infidels, as opposed to a forced one, as a means of recovering the Holy Land, would be in decline.”⁵⁸

During the course of the council, the three aims of Gregory were discussed. Regarding the situation in the Holy Land, the ideological and financial sides were discussed (more than actual military strategies).⁵⁹ The pope pleaded for European peace and unity (as recollected in his *Constitutiones pro zelo fidei*), the same ideal as Urban II had preached but which many felt had been an empty plea considering the wars that Christians had been waging amongst themselves for decades. Christendom had to unite against the Saracens, both politically as economically, since Gregory wanted to declare merchants who continued their trade with the Saracens as traitors of the faith, a measure which had little to no effect.⁶⁰

The pope did conclude a formal unification with the Greek Church, an agreement that was made with the Greek representatives attending the council. Michael VIII Paleologos promised substantial aid to the Crusaders with food, money and men. As regards to the pope's third goal, the reform of the clergy, “Gregory could only exhort his clergy to mend their ways and deplore their sinful conduct. He, however, promised to concern himself with the unsolved problem in the future.”⁶¹

Gregory had tried to invoke the spirit of Innocent III and Gregory IX (1170-1241, who had called the mendicant orders to preach in the Holy Land in the papal bull *Rachel suum videns*) in order to convince both laymen and clergy of a new, grand Crusade to the East. Throop emphasises the true and honest conviction and intention of Gregory X for a Crusade which was meant for relieving the Holy Land and repelling the Saracens, and not one in favour of strengthening papal power: from his crusader experience in the Holy Land, he knew how dire the situation was and wanted to aid the Christians in the East with honest intention. He knew of the failures and futility of “an inadequately prepared Crusade based upon haphazard plans and information.”⁶² His untimely death in 1276 annulled all plans and agreements made: the union with the Greek Church did not stand and a Crusade was never organised, which Throop considers a testimony of the “importance and truth of the criticisms, both requested and unrequested, which Gregory received.” The fragile union of Christendom which Gregory had tried to forge

⁵⁸ Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 27-28.

⁵⁹ Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 22; Throop, *A Criticism*, 237.

⁶⁰ Throop, *A Criticism*, 246, 250-251.

⁶¹ Throop, *A Criticism*, 220, 257, 260; O'Meara, “The Theology,” 91.

⁶² Throop, *A Criticism*, 12, 15, 225, 237, 251.

shattered at his death.⁶³ This was both the final blow to the waging of a Crusade, at least for some time, as for the holy war as a tool of reinforcing papal hegemony.

William of Tripoli

The following paragraphs will give an overview of the life of William of Tripoli and the problems that exist regarding the authorship of the two works and the consequences these have (had) for academic research. As will be discussed, it is only since Engels' publication (1992) of the two texts as well as his thorough and extensive commentary, that the debate on the authorship of *De statu* has started. This debate has strong implications for the research around William of Tripoli and the two treatises ascribed to him. This overview will follow to a certain extent the same order as Engels has set in his publication and commentary of the texts.

1. Biographical information

In spite of his work(s) knowing quite the popularity and spread throughout the contemporary European scholar field, little is known about the life of William of Tripoli. He was a Dominican friar living in the 13th century in Tripoli, Syria. Engels points out that up until 1264, only speculations about his life exists. He then is mentioned in three bulls of pope Urban IV (1195-1264) as a papal *nuntius* (although it is disputed, or rather unknown, if he carried out the tasks in the bull, such as a meeting with Louis IX).⁶⁴ O'Meara states that it is possible that he was of French or Italian origin, of a family that had settled in Palestine. He was then born in the Crusader city of Tripoli, in modern-day Lebanon. It is uncertain whether he was part of the Dominican priory of Tripoli or of Acre, since *Notitia* opens with "frater G. Acconensis conventus", whilst *De statu* opens with "Guillelmus Tripolitanus Aconensis conventus Ordinis Predicatorum".⁶⁵ The Dominicans had been present in the Latin Kingdom since 1226, whilst the priory in Acre, the largest in the region, was instituted in 1228. As stated before, the Dominicans, in the whole region of the Latin Kingdom and the Holy Land, had the primary goal of converting infidels of all kinds (Jews, Muslims, schismatic Christians). Acre, being the capital of the Latin Kingdom since Jerusalem had fallen, was a cultural crossroads in which people of the different faiths must have crossed paths constantly.⁶⁶ It was not besieged by sultan Baibars in his reconquests in the Holy Land (even though he desired

⁶³ Throop, *A Criticism*, 283-284, 289.

⁶⁴ Engels 24-25, 27; O'Meara, "The Theology," 86-87; Thomas Kaeppli, and Panella, Emilio. *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, (Romae: Ex Curia Generalitia O.p. Ad S. Sabinam, 1970), 170-171, although Kaeppli notes that William was at the curia of Urban IV in 1263, after which he became a papal *nuntius* in 1264 for Louis IX.

⁶⁵ O'Meara, "The Theology," 82-83; *Not.* 0, 6; *De statu* 0, 5-6.

⁶⁶ Engels endnote 2 p.374 ; O'Meara, "The Theology," 83.

it greatly, according to *De statu* ⁶⁷), but it fell in 1291 by the hands of sultan al-Ashraf, after which all the friars were killed. There is also a legend involving the brothers Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, whom William would have guided in the East, but which is not seen as biographical information by Engels, and this conclusion is shared by most researchers.⁶⁸

In *De statu* 55,11-12, the author concludes his treatise with “Hoc dixit et scripsit, qui auctore Deo plus quam mille iam baptizavit.” This is seen by Throop and Engels as an exaggeration. Throop considers it either an expression of the medieval desire for round numbers, or a historical setting of Muslim parents baptizing their children in hope for a better life for them.⁶⁹ Engels considers the claim to be untrue and finds by extension the missionary activities of the late 13th century as a whole quite unsuccessful, and questions their effectiveness or necessity:

“Mag Wilhelm auch innerhalb der Kreuzfahrerstaaten, in denen Missionare unter dem Schutz der fränkischen Waffen günstige Voraussetzungen für ihre Arbeit fanden, in irgendeiner Weise tätig gewesen sein, so ist es doch fraglich, ob unter deren muslimischer Bevölkerung, zum großen Teil Sklaven, Kriegsgefangene, desertierte Soldaten und andere Bewohner, die sich von einem Übertritt zum Christentum materielle und soziale Besserstellung versprochen, überhaupt echte Missionsarbeit notwendig war.”⁷⁰

With the exception of *De statu*, there are no sources of substantial missionary activity. In fact, says Engels, chapters 53 and 54 of *De statu*, which describe the Saracen reactions to the mystery of the Trinity and the Incarnation, show that the author is naïve and has a lack of true experience with believers of another faith, “und deuten auf alles andere als eine langjährige Tätigkeit im Dienst der Mission hin.”⁷¹ Engels emphasises the difficulties and even impossibilities of missionary activities in the East, due to the unsuccessful attempts at converting the Saracens, aside from those who had done so in order to gain security and a better social standing. In fact, a recurring problem was that Saracens would convert to Christianity (due to societal pressure or needs), but after some time would return to their old habits which were embedded in Islam.⁷² The missionary activity was based on the belief, of which William testifies, that through showing the truths and dogmas of Christianity and the Gospel, the Muslims would understand the falsity of their faith, relinquish it and convert to Christianity. The similarities between the two faiths, especially in the recognition of the tradition of the prophets and the

⁶⁷ *De statu* 2, 9-16.

⁶⁸ Engels 28-31; O’Meara, “The Theology,” 86; Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 195 ; Burman in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, 514.

⁶⁹ Throop, *A Criticism*, 142-143. Throop considers that, seeing that William spoke Arabic, such requests might have been made to him.

⁷⁰ Engels 36.

⁷¹ Engels 35-37.

⁷² Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1390-1391.

reverence of Christ and Mary, was emphasised in order to facilitate conversion (cf. *infra* regarding *Notitia* and *De statu*). *De statu* by many scholars was considered a handbook for missionaries and as a consequence, William of Tripoli was mentioned alongside names such as his Dominican brother Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (who did in fact report on his dealing with Muslims and heretical Christians, unlike William), but Engels refutes this interpretation of the treatise (cf. *infra*).⁷³

O'Meara does not agree with Engels that the missionary activity was futile and that William had not been so successful as he claims. He argues that Engels does not take into consideration the varied society in which William of Tripoli was active. To understand this society, a closer look into the Islamic population of Tripoli or Acre is necessary:

“Who were the Muslims to which he was preaching? Some have suggested that it was not the indigenous people fixed in their religion who became Christians, but slaves, prisoners of wars, and refugees from hostile Islamic rulers, all living in a somewhat European and Christian realm. For Altaner, William was describing an Islam in occupied areas where it lacked social and religious stability. Benjamin Kedar discusses at length the problems of local churches in cities where refugees (some Muslims) from oppressive religious occupational forces sought membership in the church. Indeed, the pastoral and social problems introduced by caring for converts were burdensome. Pope Urban IV ordered that poor Saracens in Acre and needy converts in Bethlehem be given sustenance. “Saracen conversion continued to occur at the lower levels of crusader society.” For not a few, conversion could have meant social and economic improvement. In light of that variety of social strata among Muslims, what William wrote at the end of the *De statu Sarracenorum* is not fantastic: “The one who says and writes this has baptized more than a thousand.” This claim exists not to emphasize an evangelical program but to support the practical and theoretical view of the relationship of Christianity to Islam which he had developed.”⁷⁴

According to O'Meara, *De statu* is not handbook for evangelisation, but a presentation of Islam in its relation to Christianity and its conviction that the “shallowness of some Muslim beliefs and practices might arouse interest in the firm and full Christian faiths [...]”⁷⁵ William did not write *De statu* to facilitate conversion in the East, but to change the view on conversion and crusade in the West.

Daniel is conflicted on this topic and offers different interpretations of this claim, of which he considers none convincing (brackets are mine): “Adults may have sought a

⁷³ Engels 37-39.

⁷⁴ O'Meara, “The Theology,” 96, with references to Berthold Altaner, *Die Dominikanermissionen des 13. Jahrhunderts: Forschungen Zur Geschichte Der Kirchlichen Unionen Und Der Mohammedaner- Und Heidenmission Des Mittelalters*, Breslauer Studien Zur Historischen Theologie 3 (Habelschwerdt: Franke, 1924), 86; Kedar, *Crusade*, 152; *De statu* 55.

⁷⁵ O'Meara, “The Theology,” 95.

magical protection for themselves or their children; there may have been baptisms of dissident Christians under some misapprehension; neither of these is a very convincing explanation, and yet the fact asserted (*i.e. the baptisms of thousands*) is nearly as impossible to believe as the idea that Tripoli might be a liar.”⁷⁶ Daniel does however only discuss *De statu* in his book and therefore does not mention the debate on the authorship of the two works (cf. *infra*). He thinks it unlikely that such a number of converts had been possible seeing the decay the Latin Kingdom was in, and considers it safer to conclude nothing out of it “until his background and intentions have been elucidated by future research.”⁷⁷

Finally, Kedar remarks: “Since the laws of the Crusading Kingdom stipulated that the baptism of a Muslim slave entailed his liberation, crusader lords hampered Mendicant efforts at converting their servile Muslims.” The conversions of Muslims thus indeed offered great social advantages, leading to the probability that, in spite of the attempts of the ruling lords, many Muslims were converted, perhaps simply with the outlook of being freed from slavery. Kedar also considers the ‘1000 baptisms’ of William of Tripoli an expression of medieval negligence for exact numbers.⁷⁸

Whilst Engels’ argument is valid, it also could prove that Williams’ claim could be true. It depends on how “baptizavit” is to be interpreted, for this could either mean that indeed, many Muslims had sought to be baptized in order to gain a better social standing in the Latin Kingdom, due to their position as slave, prisoner, or even common citizen who was being discriminated against, or it could mean that William actively *converted* Muslims, who wanted to accept the Christian faith out of religious reasons. The former seems much more likely than the latter. O’Meara therefore also argues correctly that the ‘1000’ baptisms of William of Tripoli are a testimony to the practical side of missionary activity as well of the social situation in the Latin Kingdom (cf. Saracens ‘relapsing’ into their old habits). This, however, neglects the fact that the claim of the baptisms only appears in *De statu* and is complete absent from *Notitia*, in which no indication of William’s personal missionary activity is presented. This could argue both in favour and disfavour to the question of the authorship of *De statu*, for it could prove its authenticity or merely be an invention from the author of *De statu* (but it is unclear on what grounds he would have done this).

There is an ongoing discussion whether William was knowledgeable in Arabic. Whilst Engels claims William did not speak Arabic, O’Meara is convinced of the opposite. Engels critiques the information of Prutz and Altaner that William could speak

⁷⁶ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*. 2nd, Revised ed. (Oxford: Oneworld, 1993), endnote 30 p.380.

⁷⁷ Daniel, *Islam*, 402-403.

⁷⁸ Kedar, *Crusade*, 146, 154 (cf. p.19 in this thesis).

Arabic, could read the Qur'ān and its commentaries.⁷⁹ The proof that William could, is quite unstable, even contradictory. In both *Notitia* and *De statu*, many quotations or phrases can be found that state “ut narrant Sarraceni”, “ut dicunt Sarraceni” ... According to Engels, these do not prove the author's knowledge of Arabic, but the opposite: the author had to rely on secondary sources to communicate this information. If he had known Arabic, he could have referred directly to his Arabic sources from which he had gathered his commentaries on the Qur'ān and the Tradition (like e.g. Martí had done). In regards to *De statu*, the translations of the Qur'ān that can be found in this text are copied out of its model *Notitia*. Engels therefore does not believe that the author of *De statu* could speak or understand Arabic, and neither does he think the author of *Notitia* could (with the exception of chapters 7 and 10, which he could have written with help). Engels considers it probable that parts of the information about Islam were known to the Christians in Acre via Jewish sources, since during the second part of the 13th century, it was the centre of Palestinian Judaism.⁸⁰ The translations of many of the Qur'ān verses are, however, quite accurate and Engels states that they were even better than Ketton's translation.⁸¹

O'Meara counterargues in stating: “Did the future Dominican grow up and live in an Arabic-speaking society without being fluent from childhood in the language around him? This seems unlikely in a medieval city with a cosmopolitan society and in light of the Dominican project reaching from Spain to Antioch to master Arabic.” William has utilized written sources in Latin as well as in Arabic that were available in Acre. O'Meara concludes in stating that: “Regardless of his fluency, William reports that his studies of Islamic culture and language made his ministry to Muslims possible.”⁸²

Engels sets William's death after 1273, since no traces of him are to be found past this year. O'Meara assumes his death to be in 1280, since the list of active friars in Acre of that year does not mention William's name anymore.⁸³

2. The authorship of *De statu Sarracenorum*

Whilst *De statu* is William's most studied work, and most research describe his persona, his aims and his views based on this work, it is uncertain if the authorship of

⁷⁹ Altaner, *Die Dominikanermissionen*, 236; Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte*, 404.

⁸⁰ Engels 84-89.

⁸¹ Engels 100.

⁸² O'Meara, “The Theology,” 83, 90. O'Meara bases this argument on *De statu* 24 and 51-55 (cf. *infra*, overview of the chapters).

⁸³ Engels 31; O'Meara, “The Theology,” 82-84.

the treatise should be ascribed to William of Tripoli. Engels is one of the first to question this authorship extensively, based on a series of arguments. First of all, the *intitulatio* of *De statu* is dated in 1271, whilst the treatise itself deals with events that happened at a later date (most notably *De statu* 21, 19-20, which explicitly mentions the date 1273).⁸⁴ Earlier research has often overlooked this, except for Altaner and Throop, who both notice the peculiarity and concluded that the writing of the text had started in 1271 and was finished in 1273 (Voerzio, states Engels, came to the same conclusion, independently of Throop).⁸⁵ Engels does not agree with this conclusion, mainly because of a second argument, this being the opening of the work that both in *Notitia* and in *De statu* dedicates the treatise to Teobaldo Visconti, whilst in 1273, Visconti already had become pope Gregory X. Engels considers it “eine unmögliche Vorstellung” that William would have addressed the pope by his former name.⁸⁶ *De statu* therefore is a compilation of two works: one which is based on *Notitia*, and another which is ‘new’. The latter part would be chapter 17-23, which treats the contemporary problems with the Saracens (chapter 17 is called *De statu Sarracenorum post destructionem Damiate*), mostly sultan Baibars. These chapters, according to Engels, would have come out of an independent treatise, possibly a letter, and the advice memoir that was sent to the Second Council of Lyons. Because of the nature and the contents of the letter, which called for peaceful conversion of the Saracens and spoke out against an armed crusade, the letter was not mentioned in the writings of the council. Whilst *Notitia* had been brought to Europe and was conserved by the papal curia, an editor in Europe, possibly Italy, used it as a model to create *De statu*.⁸⁷ After pope Gregory had passed away in 1276, the author could then safely publish the work, so the contradictions in salutation and dating would be less noticed. Throop, even though he considers William to be the author of *De statu*, does point out that there is no mention of the Second Council of Lyons in the treatise, but, as stated before, resolves this issue by arguing that the treatise simply was started in 1271, before Visconti even was pope, and simply finished on a later date.⁸⁸ Engels therefore concludes the *terminus post quem* for *De statu* in 1273.⁸⁹

O’Meara has counterargued against Engels in this also. He considers the insights of Engels not convincing considering that “the history of the manuscripts finds both works being kept together at the papal curia, most likely their first destination, and both

⁸⁴ Engels 71-72.

⁸⁵ Engels 63, with reference to P. Marco Voerzio, “Fr. Guglielmo Da Tripoli: Orientalista Domenicano Del Sec. XIII,” *Memorie Domenicane* 71 (1954): 107.

⁸⁶ Engels 64; Throop, *A Criticism*, 63, 115-119.

⁸⁷ Engels 56-61.

⁸⁸ Throop, *A Criticism*, 116; also Altaner, *Die Dominikanermissionen*, 85.

⁸⁹ Engels 61-74. Engels also adds a small number of textual arguments, such as the agreement of *De statu* 16, 24-25 (“de egressu [...] progressu [...] dilatatione (of the Saracens) with the threefold aim in the prologue, but the addition of another aim in *De statu* 24, 2-4 (“de egressu [...] progressu [...] occasu [...] quid sentiendum sit de eorum lege seu libro [...]”), cf. Engels 64-65.

writings have the same opening paragraph mentioning William and Teobaldo.”⁹⁰ Other scholars on William of Tripoli have agreed with Engels’ theory on the authorship of *De statu*.⁹¹

This thesis agrees with the arguments offered by Engels, that William of Tripoli is not the author of *De statu*, insofar that it would appear peculiar if William of Tripoli had sent in a new work, based on his own previous work which was dedicated personally to Teobaldo Visconti during his stay in the Holy Land, whilst addressing the newly elected pope by his former name. Building on the remark of Throop that there is no mention of the Second Council of Lyons, it does seem peculiar that such an indication is absent, especially since *Notitia* already had been written for Visconti. Why would there be a need for a second, similar treatise dedicated personally to Teobaldo Visconti and not Gregory X, if he had already received the information enclosed in *De statu*? If *De statu* indeed had served as a memoir for the council, surely Gregory must have noticed not only the similarities or even copied chapters of *Notitia* that William had given to him years before, he may also have been surprised that he was addressed by his former name. Also, the treatise is nowhere mentioned in the writings of the council, as Engels had pointed out.

Another point of interest which Throop has noticed, is that *De statu* does not seem to answer the call for information of Gregory X in the right way: “There is nothing in the bull *Dudum super generalis* which indicates that Gregory X had any curiosity concerning the Christian elements in the religion of the infidels.”⁹² The bull asked for information on what elements with the non-Christians would be problematic against the Christian faith. *De statu* does in fact offer little information on this, and only chapters 17-23, as stated before, deal with contemporary events. Chapter 15 of *Notitia*, which describes the manners of prayer in Islamic *oratoria*, is completely left out of *De statu*, whilst this would seem, and also is, one of the core elements of the Islamic faith and of interest as a response to the request of Gregory. Engels’ theory that *De statu* is an edited compilation of *Notitia* and (parts of) an advisory memoir for the Second Council of Lyons therefore seems as a valid explanation for these peculiarities. This leaves the question of ‘why’ *Notitia* was made still unresolved. Engels and Daniel both refrain from answering this question since the aims of William of Tripoli remain unclear.⁹³

As will be discussed and demonstrated throughout this thesis, the differences in approach, style and tone between the two treatises will contribute to the hypothesis of different authors. The most distinguishing argument for this is the difference in the

⁹⁰ O’Meara, “The Theology,” 93.

⁹¹ Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 194-195; Burman in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, 519; John Victor Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York (N.Y.): Columbia UP, 2002), 204.

⁹² Throop, *A Criticism*, 116.

⁹³ Engels 73; Daniel, *Islam*, 226.

polemics, which *Notitia* employs more often and more directly than *De statu*, which has omitted or mitigated many of these passages. Engels also notes that in *Notitia* 11-12, there is little to be found which enhances the theory that a friendly approach or reconciliation is propagated in the treatise (cf. *infra*).⁹⁴ Combined with the arguments above, this thesis will assume a different authorship for both works.

3. The research on William of Tripoli thus far

In the research on William of Tripoli and the works ascribed to him, he has often appeared as a monk who stood very positively and beneficially to Islam and the Muslims. This portrayal has been the result of research which was conducted mostly (if not exclusively) based on *De statu*.⁹⁵ It is only fairly recently, since Engels' publication in 1995, that scholars also have taken an interest in *Notitia*.⁹⁶ Engels notes this faulty image of William of Tripoli, especially the aspect that he had been an influential and exemplary missionary.⁹⁷ The missionary activity was far from successful, and neither was William of Tripoli (the author of *Notitia* and not *De statu*) of such importance or popularity, at least as far as his biographical elements allow to assume. This faulty portrayal of William as the beneficial missionary, who in fact shows himself to be a polemical writer and child of his time, will also be discussed throughout this thesis, and it will be shown that this positive attitude should rather be attributed to *De statu* and its anonymous author than to *Notitia* and the name of William of Tripoli.

Notitia de Machometo and De statu Sarracenorum

1. Table of contents of *Notitia de Machometo* and *De statu Sarracenorum*

⁹⁴ Engels 49.

⁹⁵ Prutz, *Kulturgeschichte*; Altaner, *Die Dominikanermmissionen*; Daniel, *Islam*; Throop, *A Criticism*; Schein, *Fideles Crucis*; Kedar, *Crusade*; Hamilton, "Knowing the Enemy"; R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard U.).

⁹⁶ Mossman, "The Western Understanding"; Tolan, "Saracens"; Burman in *Christian-Muslim Relations*; O'Meara, "The Theology".

⁹⁷ Engels 37-39.

It would prove useful to the reader to have an overview of the chapters that are presented in both texts, in order to understand the various topics that are being brought forth. Considering that the chapters will be referred to regularly in this discussion, the reader can relate the referral to the name of the chapter:

*Notitia de Machometo et de libro legis qui dicitur Alcoran et de continentia eius et quid dicat de fide Domini nostri Iesu Christu (1271)*⁹⁸

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. De ortu Machometi et suorum | 9. Testimonia legis Sarracenorum de Iesu Christo et beata Maria et de imitatoribus Christi |
| 2. Quomodo Machometus fuit revelatus | 10. Testimonia libri Alcoran legis Sarracenorum de Christo et matre eius et fidelibus Christi |
| 3. Quomodo cepit crescere societas Machometi | 11. Responsio Sarracenorum quando invitantur ad fidem Christi per predicta sui libri testimonio |
| 4. Quomodo Sarraceni querunt Hispaniam et acquirunt | 12. Christianorum responio ad iam dicta |
| 5. Unde et quomodo venit Lex Machometi | 13. De dominis Sarracenorum |
| 6. Quinque libri doctrine Dei descenderunt de cela; dicunt Sarraceni, ut eorum liber habeat locum inter sanctos libros | 14. De spiritualibus principibus Sarracenorum et eorum officiiis |
| 7. Quomodo sit prefatio libri Alcoran | 15. De oratoria Sarracenorum et quomodo intrant et morantur |
| 8. De paradyso Sarracenorum | |

*De statu Sarracenorum et de Machometo pseudopropheta eorum et de ipsa gente et eorum lege (1273 TPQ)*⁹⁹

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Quis fuerit Machometus et unde et quando surrexit | 7. Quomodo capta est Damascus caput Syrie |
| 2. Quomodo ad notitiam hominum venit Machometus | 8. De exaltatione Arabum et Christianorum deiectione |
| 3. De prosperitate Machometi et quomodo crevit | 9. Quomodo capta est Ierusalem quam tenebant Greci |
| 4. Quando mortuus est Machometus | 10. Quomodo capta est Halapia et regnum Moab et filiorum Amon ultra Iordanem |
| 5. Quomodo Arabes et exercitus Machometi ceperunt Alexandrium et Egyptum | 11. De dominio caliphe quem reputant Sarraceni papam et quot fuerent |
| 6. Quomodo ceperunt Arabes Gazam civitatem Christianorum | 12. Quomodo acquisiverunt regnum Persidem sive Mesopotamiam regnum Chaldeorum |

⁹⁸ Engels 191-259.

⁹⁹ Engels 263-371.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>13. Quomodo Barbari in Affrica facti sunt Sarraceni</p> <p>14. In tribus locis habuerunt caliphe et modo nullum habent nec possunt ultra habere</p> <p>15. Quomodo Sarraceni Barbari de Affrica transierunt in Europam et ceperunt fere totam Yspaniam</p> <p>16. Quomodo intraverunt Rodanum et ceperunt comitatum Provincie usque Arelatum</p> <p>17. De statu Sarracenorum post destructionem Damiate</p> <p>18. De prosperitate soldani qui nunc est et eius nomine</p> <p>19. De militia quam fecit contra dominum Odoarum</p> <p>20. De his que bene facit soldanus</p> <p>21. Quod peiora posset facere</p> <p>22. De morte soldani</p> <p>23. De fine Sarracenorum</p> <p>24. Quomodo fuit compilatus liber Alcorani</p> <p>25. De continentia Alcorani</p> <p>26. Ratio Sarracenorum quare post Legem et Evangelium Deus dedit Alcoranum</p> <p>27. De laudibus Christi et beate Marie Virginis et imitatorum eius</p> <p>28. Quomodo Maria concepta fuit et nata</p> <p>29. Quomodo beata Maria fuit nutrita</p> <p>30. Quomodo beata Maria fuit erudita</p> <p>31. Quomodo conception fuit revelata sibi</p> <p>32. Quomodo colloquebatur cum Deo</p> | <p>33. De laude Marie virginis et quomodo concepit</p> <p>34. Quomodo peperit et natus eam consolatur</p> <p>35. Quomodo fuit reprehensa et filius eam excusat</p> <p>36. De castitate beate Marie</p> <p>37. Quomodo casta concepit</p> <p>38. De auctoritate quam Deus dedit filio Marie</p> <p>39. De laudibus Christi et eorum qui eum imitantur</p> <p>40. Item de eodem</p> <p>41. Quod Christus excellit omnes nuntios et misos Dei</p> <p>42. Laudatur Christus et suum Evangelium</p> <p>43. De militia Iudeorum in Christum et de eius ascensione</p> <p>44. De falsa opinion mortis Christi</p> <p>45. De infidelitate Iudeorum et laudibus Christi</p> <p>46. Laudantur credentes Christi</p> <p>47. Commendatio mense Christi quod est altare et cibus eius</p> <p>48. Demonstratur quod Sarracenorum litterati et sapientes vicini sunt fidei christiane</p> <p>49. Quod attrahit Sarracenos ad fidem Christi</p> <p>50. De fide Sarracenorum</p> <p>51. De disciplina eorum seu doctrina</p> <p>52. De spe eorum et paradiso quem spirant</p> <p>53. De divina Trinitate</p> <p>54. De sacramento Incarnationis</p> <p>55. De doctrina Christi</p> |
|---|---|

2. Discussions of both texts

The following chapter will treat the differences and similarities of both texts, and the general perception that is ascribed to William of Tripoli deduced from these texts. Firstly, a short mention should be made of what possible sources for both works could have been. Secondly, an overview of similarities and differences in the contents the two treatises will be presented, followed by a general discussion on both treatises. Finally, the findings of this thesis in how William looks at Islam and the conclusion will be discussed.

2.1 Sources

There is not much certainty regarding the sources that functioned as models for both texts. On the one hand, Engels has identified these (possible) sources: for *Notitia*, the Qur'ān is the only identifiable source that Engels could discern, whilst *De statu* leans on *Notitia*, the *Gesta orientaliū principū* of William of Tyre (ca. 1130-1186), and the Annals (*Nazm al-Jawhar*) of Eutychius of Alexandria (Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq, 877-940, (melkite) patriarch of Cairo).¹⁰⁰ These annals were based on Arabic sources (since Eutychius did not know how to read or write Greek) and were later edited and published in and around Antioch. According to Engels, the author of *De statu* has consulted one of these edited annals, but, since he did not speak Arabic, he did this in translation and in quite a chaotic fashion.¹⁰¹ For the historical descriptions, Engels presumes an oral tradition, whilst the prophecies that William of Tripoli narrates come from Christian apocalyptic texts, and Muslim Ḥadīth and astrological works (which William then interpreted apocalyptically). One important historical source, which will be discussed more extensively later, is the *Chanson de Roland*, out of which some parallels and descriptions have been taken into both treatises (most notably, naturally, the battles in the Southern France and Northern Spain). On the contemporary information, such as *Not.* 13 and *De statu* chapters 11, 14, and 17-22, Engels states that the those of the *Notitia* “besitzen als Quelle keinen großen Wert”, but that the information in *De statu* originates from “hohen Ranges”. Especially the information (and the concomitant character description) of sultan Baibars is striking. The many polemical stances taken in both books rest on the strong polemical current that was flowing through medieval Christendom (cf. *infra*). Engels emphasises that the exact sources cannot be determined with certainty and that these aforementioned sources all are to be presumed, and considers the sources for both works more “ein Sammlung von Notizen und kurzen Mitteilungen, die an verschiedenen Stellen und zu verschiedenen Zeiten aufgenommen wurden”, adding that this is how one should imagine the average inhabitant of the Crusader state: with a limited knowledge of the world around him.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Engels 89-99. The use of the *Gesta* is plausible but very doubtful. Engels notes that there is no proof for his, cf. Engels 99; Daniel was not able to discern any clear sources for *De statu*, except for its version of the Baḥrā legend. He states: “His biography of Muhammad is very patchy in its reflection of reality; his knowledge of the Qur'ān, equally individual but immeasurably superior, suggests that he knew and rejected better material about Muhammad's life than he actually used. Tripoli's historical polemic followed traditional lines, although he made use of stories authentically Islamic in origin,” cf. Daniel, *Islam*, 264.

¹⁰¹ Engels 89-99. The influence of Eutychius' *Annals* is to be found in *De statu* 4-10, cf. Engels 92. This is most notable in the difference in use of calendar (cf. *infra*) as well in certain phrases e.g. *De statu* 10, 13-14: “Filius vero LXIII annorum erat, quando interfectus est,” which according to Engels is a translation (not by the author of *De statu*) of Eutychius' سنن ثلاثين و هو بن ثلاثين و سنن سنن, cf. Engels endnote 244 p.412-413.

¹⁰² Engels 81-83.

2.2 *Similarities and differences between Notitia de Machometo and De statu Sarracenorum*

This overview of similarities and differences between the two treatises will roughly follow Engels' chapter on their compared contents.¹⁰³ *De statu*, being the longer work of the two, expands on many topics that were treated in *Notitia*, next to expanding on more historical passages, most notably on sultan Baibars. Nevertheless, it also leaves out a number of elements that were present in *Notitia*, showing that it is not just an expansion of the earlier text, but also an edited work.

2.2.1 Prologues

The prologues of both works are dedicated to Teobaldo Visconti, who in *Notitia* is implied by “venerabili domino Leodiensis ecclesie archidiacono Terre Sancte peregrino sancto” and in *De statu* is addressed explicitly by “venerabili patri ac domino Thealdo Leodiensis ecclesie archidiacono digno Sancte Terre peregrino sancto”. It is then followed by the statement that he, William of Tripoli, has understood that Visconti wanted to know more about the Saracens, their book and what it says about Christianity. The aim of the treatises is therefore threefold (same in content but in different wording in both texts): who was Muḥammad and how did his people become so powerful; what is the Qur'ān and who was its compiler; and what does this book teach and which elements of Christianity does it contain.

2.2.2 Muhammad and the expansion of the Islamic territory

As can be seen in the overview, both treatises then describe the rise of Muḥammad and the Arab conquests that happened after his death (*Not.* 1-4, *De statu* 1-16). The life of Muḥammad involves the story of the monk Baḥīrā, who according to the Islamic tradition foretold the coming of the Prophet. The image of the monk in both treatises is quite the same and not as negative as in the Western tradition of the heretic, Nestorian monk Sergius or Nestorius. Baḥīrā is a “vir quidam religious austere vite” or “vir christianus simplex”, the ideal of a monk “reclusus” in the same Egypt were holy fathers such as Antonius and Arsenius once lived.¹⁰⁴ Engels and Daniel find no trace here of the Western polemical tradition that portrays Baḥīrā as an apostatised monk or Muḥammad as having a corrupted character already as a young man.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Baḥīrā is a guide and mentor in righteous and honest morals for the young Muḥammad. He plucked, as it were, the “vilis infirmus et pauper puer Arabs”, a poor orphan from a caravan that passed by his place of residence in the Sinai desert.¹⁰⁶ He educates Muḥammad, whom he

¹⁰³ Engels 45-52

¹⁰⁴ *Not.* 1, 4-7; *De statu* 1, 9-10; Daniel notes that “some Christians preferred the story of Bahira, told by Muslims, over the Greek story of Sergius, cf. Daniel, *Islam*, 109.

¹⁰⁵ Engels footnote 222 p.77; 76, 78; Daniel, *Islam*, 110.

¹⁰⁶ *Not.* 2, 8-9. *De statu* has a similar wording: “puer videlicet orphanus egrotativus pauper et vilis,” *De statu* 2, 6-7.

treated like son, for quite some time (at least according to the text) in full Christian manner i.e. unlearning idolatry and believing in God, Christ and Mary. Thus far, the story is based on the version of the Islamic tradition. But in stating that Baḥīrā also assisted Muḥammad in his later leadership, the texts no longer follow the tradition and it is unclear where this information comes from. Equally interesting is the meeting place between the Prophet and the monk. Whilst Western sources usually remain silent over this detail, Muslim authors such as Ibn Ishāq, aṭ-Ṭabarī and the Ḥadīth say that the meeting took place in Buṣrā (in modern-day Syria). *Notitia* and *De statu* state that it took place in Egypt, in the Sinai desert, and this is in accordance with two Armenian sources from the 13th century.¹⁰⁷ Both texts ascribed to William of Tripoli are, in this aspect at least, quite in contrast with the polemics of that time. Neither is the death of Baḥīrā mentioned in most other Christian works, of which the blame in *Notitia* and *De statu* is put on Muḥammad by his companions (who in fact killed the monk, but deceived Muḥammad that he would have killed his teacher whilst he was drunk, thus explaining the prohibition of drinking wine in Islam).¹⁰⁸ Engels presumes this part of the story to have come from an oral tradition in the East. The entire story of Baḥīrā he considers to be oriental in origin, be it from a Latin source (which Engels considers a possible source for *Notitia*) or an Egyptian one.¹⁰⁹

Overall, the depiction of Muḥammad in both works in these chapters can be considered as quite positive, as is also attested by the secondary literature, at least in contrast with the image of Muḥammad that Christian authors usually had of the Prophet.¹¹⁰ The young Muḥammad was a poor orphan who was raised by a pious monk and it is only after his death that the true avarice of the Saracens started. In *De statu* it is told that the vision Baḥīrā had had of the boy who would bring great pains to the Church was revealed to Muḥammad since his future could not be kept hidden.¹¹¹ He left the company of the monk and turned to more earthly matters, in which he forgot his former teachings. When the master of his caravan (Abū Ṭālib) died, he inherited a fortune and married the merchant's widow (Khadīdja). Then follows a period of moral decline: “Mutatus est famulus in dominum et impinguatus est, incrassatus, dilatatus est;

¹⁰⁷ Engels 77-78. These sources would be Vardan the Great (ca. 1200-1270), who tells the story of Sergius the Arianist, and Kirakos of Gantzac (1200-1272). Engels further mentions that both authors might have gotten their information from Thomas Ardzroumi (d. after 910).

¹⁰⁸ *Not.* 2, 41-54; *De statu* 3, 28-40.

¹⁰⁹ Engels 79-81. The Latin source Engels derives from a manuscript in Trier that knows its origins in the Holy Land, whilst the Egyptian source is from the hand of a merchant called Emmanuel Piloti (ca. 1371- after 1441), though be it that *Notitia* and *De statu* are independent of the latter.

¹¹⁰ Engels 78, “Wie Baḥīrā erfährt auch Muḥammad selbst eine für lateinisch und griechisch schreibende Autoren ungewöhnlich wohlwollende Darstellung, die frei von den meisten enstellenden Zügen ist.”; O’Meara, “The Theology,” 94-95; Daniel, *Islam*, 109-110, 264.

¹¹¹ *Not.* 1, 9-11; *De statu* 1, 16-18; 2, 25-27, though be it that Baḥīrā’s “fratres monasterii” told Muḥammad of the prophecy, a contradiction with the earlier mentioned solitary seclusion of the monk, cf. Engels endnote 197 p.403.

dereliquit Deum factorem suum [...].”¹¹² Due to his wealth, he attracts many friends and companions (elaborated by a quote from Ovid’s *Tristia* 1.9, 5-6, on having many friends when one is wealthy, but being alone *tempora si fuerint nubila*) and thus he secured power. *Notitia* states that these first followers grew to be a *turma* and the *turma* became an *exercitus*, whilst Muḥammad was called the messenger of God by all and honoured as a prophet.¹¹³ Then follows a closer look to what Muḥammad was preaching, which again sounds surprisingly positive:

“Invitabat Ydolatras, ut unum Deum colerent, Christianos, ut Christum diligerent et honorarent, Iudeos, ut ad Deum se converterent et ipsum omnes reciperent in Dei nuntium et prophetam et in hoc convenirent, ut dicerent universaliter omnes: *Unus est Deus et Machometus eius est nuntius.*”¹¹⁴

The *shahāda* is mentioned once again in *Not.* 3, 50-51, with a transcription of the Arabic, as can be found in *De statu* 8, 18-19. The difference between these two later mentions are that in *Notitia*, this is told as the formula by which one becomes Muslim, whilst *De statu* compares it to the Christian Trinitarian formula of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that one says when one is baptized.¹¹⁵ But there is also the context in which the formula is mentioned. In *Notitia*, Christians and Jews, conquered during the Saracens’ expansion, are practically forced to become Muslims: “[...] timore mortis, malentes profiteri et dicere formam datam promissionis et vivere, quam mori et perire.” *De statu* strongly reduces this hostile element and brings it down to: “Multi igitur decepti errore effecti sunt Sarraceni, non solum Iudei, sed magni et mediocres Christiani.”¹¹⁶

Both texts then tell the story of the murder of Baḥīrā, committed by Muḥammad’s companions out of jealousy and anger with the Christian monk in whom the Prophet so confided. They put the blame on Muḥammad, who had been drinking the night before and in his inebriation killed his mentor. Muḥammad then prohibited all consumption, production and trade of wine.¹¹⁷ After the ethical guide and mentor of the leader of the Saracens had deceased, they started, “freno soluto”, their illicit behaviour of “expoliare, infringere vias et campestras villas invadere et rapere, que volebant.”¹¹⁸ It is noteworthy that this plundering and banditry is strongly presented as a group effort and not as the leadership of Muḥammad. The use of “freno soluto” emphasises that even Muḥammad

¹¹² *Not.* 2, 23-25; similar in *De statu* 3, 4-6.

¹¹³ *Not.* 2, 31-35; more extensively in *De statu* 3, 12-23.

¹¹⁴ *Not.* 2; 36-40. All better informed Christian authors knew that Muḥammad rejected idolatry, cf. Engels endnote 13, p.377.

¹¹⁵ *Not.* 15, 49-51 equalises the ‘Sūra al-Fātiḥa’ with the Christian prayers of ‘Our Father’ and the Credo.

¹¹⁶ *Not.* 3, 46-48; *De statu* 8, 20-21. Engels mentions that the *shahāda* is a *topos* with Western Christians authors, cf. Engels endnotes 14 p.377; 28 p.379.

¹¹⁷ *Not.* 2, 41-53; *De statu* 3, 23-40.

¹¹⁸ *Not.* 3, 4-5; similar in *De statu* 3, 41-44.

did no longer have control over the band of renegades who had now become conquerors. The overall image of Muḥammad and Baḥīrā therefore puts the origins of Islam in a positive light, whilst the history of the Arab conquests is one initiated by rapacious brigands.

It is clear that *De statu* pays much more attention to the history of the Arab conquests than *Notitia* does. *Notitia* (chapters 3-4) gives a short description of the expansion of the Islamic realm, except for the taking of Alexandria and the conquest of North Africa, which is described more extensively (*Not.* 3, 14-30 in which the struggle between the “Egypti indigenas” and the “alienigenas Grecos mercatores” is described, resulting in the taking of Alexandria by the Saracens and the subjugation of the Copts. *Not.* 3, 59-80, after a short mentioning of the conquests eastwards in *Not.* 3, 31-44, then treats the conquests of North Africa by the “Barbari” (Berbers)). *Notitia* then continues with the conquests in Spain and in Southern France (*Not.* 4). The narration as presented is not fully historical or chronological, as Engels remarks (the conquest of Mesopotamia was simultaneous to the conquest of Syria and Palestine). Equally confusing is the distinction between “regnum Persarum” and “regnum Chaldeorum”, which in fact covers the same territory, whilst Susa (capital of Persia, at the Tigris) is mistaken for Babylon (capital of the Neo-Babylonian empire, at the Euphrates), and later also for Baghdad (“in qua civitate Sarraceni victores unum [...] nomine Helmas (‘Abbās) prefecerunt [...]. ‘Al-Abbās ibn Abd al-Muttalibin (ca. 568-ca. 653) in fact ruled from Damascus, whilst later al-Manṣūr (714-775) started to rule out of Baghdad).¹¹⁹ In *De statu* 12, the confusion around the *regna* is somewhat preserved (cf. title) and the same goes for the entanglement of the cities.¹²⁰

De statu’s description of the military expeditions (chapters 5-16) is remarkably more extensive, as well in the conquests already mentioned in *Notitia* as in the addition of the conquests of Sicily and the Balears.¹²¹ The different stages and regions of the conquests are discussed more deeply and extensively, as can be seen in the overview. The text does inconsistently switch between a ‘correct’ calendar and a ‘wrong’ calendar, which is based on Eutychius’ counting (Eutychius starts counting from the year of the *hijra* (622) and not according to the Byzantine calendar (since he did not know how to read Greek). He places the rise to power of Muḥammad (in 622) in the same year as the beginning of the reign of Heraclius (610-642), and Muḥammad’s death in the 11th year of Heraclius’ reign).¹²² The historical narration then continues with the war between Charlemagne and

¹¹⁹ *Not.* 3, 31-42; Engels endnotes 23 p.378; 260 p.416; 25 p.379.

¹²⁰ *De statu* 12, 9-20.

¹²¹ Although *Notitia* does present this towards the end of the treatise, chapter 13 treats the more contemporary history of the Holy Land more eclectically. *De statu* has many similar passages which it copied (cf. apparatus with the texts), it very much expands on them and fits them into a historical overview.

¹²² Engels endnote 208 p.405. The date count in *De statu* 6,4 is correct whilst in *De statu* 4, 4-5 and 10, 12-17 is wrong i.e. following Eutychius.

the Saracens at Roncesvalles, but is interrupted by a leap forward in time towards the reign of Frederick II. This episode of the deception of the Sicilian Saracens by emperor Frederick II is a very interesting addition, since it is completely absent in *Notitia*. The treatise tells the story of the strength of the Saracens in Sicily, who had held their ground in the mountains after numerous attempts of driving them of the island. The author of *De statu* shows himself in support of the papal vision of Innocent IV on Frederick II, “qui dolose et fraudulenter factus est ita eorum (*i.e. the Saracens*) amicus, quod ipsum crederent esse Sarracenum potius quam Christianum, cernentes ipsum ecclesiam quo poterat conamine persequi seque ab eo diligi ut domesticos et amicos”.¹²³ Then follows a unique passage, which according to Engels is not testified anywhere else, on how Frederick organises a *convivium imperiale* to which he invites the Saracens. After a happy gathering and dining, the Saracens were suddenly taken prisoner, whilst the emperor ordered them to pack their belongings and return to Africa so he could be the only ruler on Sicily. Ready for departure, Frederick changes his mind and calls back the captain of the Saracen fleet, saying: “Diligo vos nec me decet dimittere sic amicos,” followed by a new plan to settle the Saracens in the region of Apulia, in the city of Lucera.¹²⁴ Thus the presence of the Saracens ended by the hand of the friend of the Saracens, Frederick II. The historical overview of the Arab conquests continues again and ends with a lengthy narration of the invasion in Southern France and the final battles fought between Charlemagne and the Saracens.

Both *Notitia* and *De statu* have based the narration of the battles of Charlemagne in Northern Spain and Southern France on the *Chanson de Roland*, a popular *chanson de geste* and exemplary in its expulsion of the Saracens from Europe for later polemics. Though there are some confusions between the source material and the treatises (e.g. *Not.* 4, 1-16 on the battles at Roncesvalles is based on the battle of Baligant in Zaragoza, cf. 3346-3675), some passages in *De statu*, have been copied directly from the *chanson*: 15, 27 “dictos montes conscendens”, cf. 3125 (transl.) “ils passent ces montagnes/ils passent ces hautes roches; 15, 27-28 “ad plana hostes petens”, cf. 3128-29 (transl.) “Les voilà dans la Marche d’Espagne/Ils y font halte au milieu d’une plaine; 15, 28 “bellum ita forte et durum”, cf. 1460 “Bataille avrum e forte e adurée.”¹²⁵

2.2.3 *De statu* and sultan Baibars

Important for the discussion on the vision of the Saracens that *De statu* propagates are the next chapters on sultan Baibars or al-Malik al-Zāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Bunduqdārī (1223/28-1277), the Mamluk sultan of Egypt. His rule is only mentioned

¹²³ Engels endnote 291 p.424; *De statu*, 15, 46-49.

¹²⁴ Engels endnote 295 p.425; *De statu* 15, 64-73.

¹²⁵ Engels 82; endnotes 36 p.380; 287 p.423. The battle of the Provence in *De statu* is based on a number of medieval legends, cf. Engels endnote 302 p.427.

once and very briefly in *Notitia*, whilst *De statu* attempts at a much greater illustration of the sultan.¹²⁶ Chapters 17-22 narrate the rise, rule and death of the sultan, with a special focus to his benefactions and his ill-deeds. His initial portrayal is not very positive: as an emir he rebels against his sultan al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Saif al-Dīn Qutuz (d. 1260), who had protected the Christians (and Saracens) in Galilea against the Tatars. Baibars wanted the sultan to go back to Acre, “ut [...] de Christianis sicut de Tataris reportaret triumphum”. Qutuz, however, wanted to honour his pact with the Christians and thus was killed by Baibars.¹²⁷ In chapter 18, the author of *De statu* presents his temporary new protagonist in almost classical terms: “Hic igitur soldanus in militia, ut liceat dicere, Iuliano Cesare non videtur inferior nec in militia Nerone minor [...],” thus also introducing the balance in the judgement of character that will follow.¹²⁸ On the one hand Baibars is considered to be an evil and paranoid ruler (chapters 18-19). He killed hundreds of his subordinates under the suspicion that they wanted to kill him (18, 11-13), ruled with such terror that people were afraid to speak to each other (18, 13-15), was always on the move to conceal his whereabouts (18, 15-23) and killed those who dared to ‘look into his secrets’ (18, 24-35). Though he wants to find truth in others, he is not ashamed that falsity rules within him (18, 37-28). He likes to surpass all in everything and whilst claiming that Muḥammad was a great man, he himself has done greater things and will continue to do so (18, 38-40). In chapter 19, special attention is paid to the assassination attempt on lord Edward of England, the future king of England, who was conducting the infamous Ninth Crusade in the Holy Land (1271-1272). Baibars had sent one of his emirs to Edward to feign hostility towards his sultan and friendship for the Christian. When such a relationship was established after some time, and the two had become good friends, the emir stabbed Edward in his sleep. *Divina virtute*, the wounded future king could get up and swung back at his unmasked enemy with a poisoned knife. The emir then died, whilst Edward fully recovered.¹²⁹ Finally, Baibars also complains that the Christians of his days “non servare fidem et veritatem ut antique Christiani famosi, qui fuerunt potentes.” For this, the author judges that he blames the Christians for many vices and shortcomings, whilst “festucam in aliorum oculis videns et minime trabem, que est in suo [...]”¹³⁰

This portrayal is balanced by the two following chapters (20-21) that treat his benefactions and ‘what he could have done worse’. These show another side of Baibars, such as a moral chastity in the rejection of wine and prostitutes, for him and for his entourage (20, 1-10), his praise for marriage (he had four wives of which one was a

¹²⁶ *Not.* 13, 58-62: “Et hic, qui nunc est et regnat, hostis noster, suum dominum interfecit et ei successit. Unde Dei iudicio factum est, ut totum genus nobilium Sarracenorum et soldanorum deletum est nec est verus rex nec soldanus nec kaliphe, qui here interpretatur, nex exurgere de cetero potest. Amputet Deus, que remansit, caudam, qua flagellamur.”; Engels endnote 159 p.252.

¹²⁷ *De statu* 17, 34-44.

¹²⁸ *De statu* 18, 2-3.

¹²⁹ *De statu* 19, 1-15.

¹³⁰ *De statu* 19, 16-19; Mt. 7, 3-5; Lk. 6, 41-42.

Christian) and repudiation of concubines (20, 11-13), his goodwill towards the subjugated Christians and especially their monks, whose problems he tried to solve and disputes he tried to settle (20, 14-17). In chapter 21, the author of *De statu* explains that the sultan could have oppressed the Christians much harder, “sed suam potentiam refrenat omnipotens Deus [...]”. Baibars could have taken many more Christian cities and caused much more harm, but he did not do so “pro munere et sua clementia”, even though the Christians deserved it. For every Christian knows that if there is one place that the sultan ardently desires to capture, then it is Acre, and that he pretends to keep the Christians as friends in his waiting for when the time is right to strike.¹³¹ Chapter 22, finally, discusses the prophesized death of sultan Baibars “hoc etiam anno” (cf. chapter on prophecies infra).

The character description of sultan Baibars can be a distinct guideline in how to interpret the perception of the author of *De statu* on Islam or the Saracens. As mentioned, the chapters present a peculiar balance in judgement of the sultan. Engels notes that the regime of terror that is described in chapter 18 is not in accordance with reality, since the sultan wanted to resolve conflicts and disputes with gifts instead of violence, and imprisoned in 1261 some rebellious emirs, but did not kill them. On the other hand, the unknown location of the sultan due to his continuous travelling (which he did to control his territory) does stroke with history. His friendly disposition towards Christians is attested in three charters of the Sinai monastery (between 1260-1272).¹³² It is quite difficult to assess the intentions of the author in this rather bizarre balance between the enhanced cruelty of the sultan and his friendly attitude towards the Christians, combined with some of his better morals and his claim to surpass the Prophet, without knowing more about the author himself, yet it can contribute to the overall consideration of *De statu* in the later discussion.

2.2.4 The compilation and contents of the Qur’ān

a. *Compilation*

Chapter 5-7 in *Notitia* and 24-26 in *De statu* are dedicated to a short overview of the history of the Qur’ān. These would prove interesting mostly in discussing the differences between the two texts and the remarkable passage of the ‘colourful crow’. Firstly, it should be noted that the Qur’ān is considered a *liber legis* for it is the *Lex Machometi*. Both texts mention the predicament the companions of Muḥammad found themselves in when the Prophet had deceased but had not left any writing behind. They only had his sayings and practices to which they had been witnesses.¹³³ *Notitia* states that they needed legitimation of their rule in the form of a “doctrina et docma”, which

¹³¹ *De statu* 21, 2-15.

¹³² Engels endnotes 316 p.429-430; 317 p.430; 327 p.431.

¹³³ *Not.* 5, 2-7; *De statu* 24, 1-10.

they would call *Lex Machometi*, “sicut videbant ceteros cultores Dei habere Thoram Moysi et Ewangelium Christi.”¹³⁴ Among the companions “Hesman filius Effran” (‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān) is appointed as the one to compose the *lex*. But he also was unable to do so properly (“non erat sufficiens ad hoc opus”), so he turned to certain Christians and Jews, who had converted to Islam, to compile the book for him. But they did not find “in factis et dictis dicti prophete ullam sapientiam, prudentiam sive virtutem laude dignam aut probitatem”, so they added elements of their own.¹³⁵ In what follows, *Notitia* differs from what *De statu* says: *Notitia* states that they compiled the book in such a way that it praised Muḥammad implicitly, without naming the Prophet anywhere, except in one place where they warn for him: “Non est Machometus nisi nuntius Dei. Caveant sibi, qui credunt in eum, quoniam si moriatur aut occidatur et aliquis a fide avertatur, iniquitas sua nocebit Deo.”¹³⁶ They let the book praise Moses and Jesus in such way that the Saracens believe in the Verbum Dei and those who speak against, shall be punished with death. *Notitia* continues by mentioning the long period of dispute among the Saracens about the different versions of the Qur’ān that existed, which were settled after 200 years with the Qur’ān of Uthmān being declared the official one.¹³⁷ *De statu* calls these compilers “doctores erroris et falsitatis, ignorantes artem dictatorie facultatis, non sequentes in dictando vestigia philosophi, ystoriographi aut prophete, sed phitonici potius [...]”, leaving out the aforementioned passage of *Notitia*, thus reducing the polemical tone of this narration.¹³⁸

It is in the discussion on the contents of the Qur’ān that the two texts seem to have taken different paths. The polemics of *Notitia* reach their full potential, whilst demonstrating some inconsistencies in the views of William of Tripoli. For in chapter 5 he explained that the Qur’ān was compiled by converted Christians and Jews, who had their own agenda since the life of Muḥammad was not worthy of any praise. Yet in chapter 6 *Notitia* explains that the same Qur’ān tells of the *tahrīf*, the corruption of the Law of Moses and the Gospels by Christians and Jews, and that it was sent to renew the truths of the other four holy books (the Law of Moses, the Gospels, the Psalters of David and the book of Prophets). The very compilers of the book thus spoke out against their (former) faith, which they had abandoned most likely “timore mortis” as *Notitia* has stated before.¹³⁹ The Qur’ān “multa pueriliter dicit de Iudeis ostendens eos impios et

¹³⁴ *Not.* 5, 8-9.

¹³⁵ *Not.* 5, 20-22; similar in *De statu* 24, 20-22.

¹³⁶ *Not.* 5, 25-27. This is a perversion of s.3, 144: وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ “Muhammad is merely a Messenger, before whom many Messengers have come and gone. If then he dies or gets killed, you will turn on your heels? Should any man turn on his heels, he will not cause Allah any harm; and Allah will reward the thankful,” Majid Fakhry, *An Interpretation of the Qur’an: English Translation of the Meanings*, A Bilingual ed. (2004); Engels endnote 44 p.382-383. Muḥammad in fact is mentioned in more places than just this one e.g. s.33, 40; 47,2; 48,29, cf. Engels endnote 351 p.435.

¹³⁷ *Not.* 5, 37-45.

¹³⁸ *De statu* 24, 23-25.

¹³⁹ Cf. *Not.* 3, 45-51, and p. 31 in this thesis.

Deo indignos” and tells stories of many Biblical characters. William even remarks inconsistencies in the *liber*: “Et omnes sanctos et iustos dicit eos fuisse *Meslemin*, quod latine dicitur *Sarracenos*, quia *sola*, inquit, *fides Sarracenorum facit fideles*. Et tamen dicitur in eodem libro eos esse infideles, qui non credunt in Christo.”¹⁴⁰

Chapter 25 of *De statu* steers clear of this message and simply states that the Qur’ān praises a God with Christian values: “[...] multam laudem Creatoris laudando eius potentiam, scientiam, bonitatem, misericordiam, iustitiam et equitatem.” It commends those who believe in Christ, Mary and all the holy fathers of the Old Testament and proclaims nothing but praise for Christ and Mary itself (cf. *infra*). The only thing the Qur’ān lacks is a clear teaching on “quid sit fides nec, qui sint fideles aut infideles” (whilst *Notitia* does state how this latter difference is made i.e. “sola fides Sarracenorum”).¹⁴¹ It only in passing mentions the *tahrīf* and this is to contrast the common descendance from Abraham that Muslims, Jews and Christians share.¹⁴²

b. Colourful crow

Before continuing, the famous comparison of the Qur’ān with the ‘colourful crow’ should be discussed. This comparison is made in both texts and is based on Horace Ep. 1, 3.18-20, on the poet who steals his words and phrases from other poets.¹⁴³ In *Notitia* it follows after the aforementioned passage (6, 24-33), in *De statu* it comes after the history of the compilation of the Qur’ān (24, 27-35). The passage is similarly worded in *De statu*, but reads as follows in *Notitia*:

“Unde sic dictum est pluries Sarracenis: *Liber vester est sicut cornicula avis nigra volens venire ad conventum avium, sibi plumis diversorum colorum accomodatis; quam cum vidissent aves, que mutuaverant ei plumas varias, indignate sunt et accipientibus singulis suas plumas cornicula nudata movit risum*. Eodem modo, si quis accipit (*abcipit*) auctoritates divinatorum librorum in eo Alcoran insertas, nec unica sententia remaneret continens honestatem, cum iste propheta iuxta illud poeticum *Iuppiter esse pium statuit quodcumque iuvaret concesserit suis auctoritate Dei, ut eis liceret, quicquid liberet*.”¹⁴⁴

It shows Islam as a variegated bird that enters the historical scene of faiths and religions, colourful with stolen feathers. If every religion then claims back what belongs to her, the blackness of the crow is visible and is ridiculed for its attempt to fit in. If the Qur’ān is stripped from all she has stolen, not a sentence remains that contains any honesty, such as her prophet simply calls in the authority of God to do what he wants. This latter comment is explained by two quotes ascribed to Muḥammad: one on the ‘use of

¹⁴⁰ *Not.* 6, 17-20. This also was a *topos* among Christian authors, to say that the Qur’ān knows inconsistencies and is chaotic cf. Engels endnote 69, p.38. There also is no corresponding Qur’ānic verse to this italicized quote, cf. Engels endnote 54 p.384.

¹⁴¹ *De statu* 25, 2-11.

¹⁴² *De statu* 26, 11-21.

¹⁴³ “ne, si forte suas repetitum venerit olim / grex avium plumas, moveat cornicula risum / furtivis nudata coloribus, ipse quid audes,” Horace Ep. 1.3, 18-20; Engels endnote 56 p.384.

¹⁴⁴ *Iuppiter esse* etc.: Ovid, Ep. Her. 4, 133.

women', in whom all should take delight ("habeat quisquis duas uxores et tres et quatuor", and take as many concubines as one can buy) and whom all should use "sicut equo et iumento et rebus emptis"¹⁴⁵; another on deceiving and killing infidels.¹⁴⁶ In the last lines of chapter 6, William states how corrupt and dangerous the Qur'ān is, since it is a "corruptio fidei et morum piorum" and all who question or dispute its contents, will die.¹⁴⁷ This shows the strong polemical position in which William of Tripoli positions himself towards Islam (cf. *infra*).

De statu, copying this comparison, also adds to it and reveals just how much it negates these polemics. Though the bird is black underneath its feathers, it shines bright because of the ornaments of the Holy Scriptures:

"Sic predictus liber cornicula nigra est, in se nichil habens de Machometo nisi nigradinem et deformitatem, ornatus tamen formosis et luminosis auctoritatibus divinarum scripturarum in eo insertis, quibus videtur esse divinus et cum admiratione laudatur."

It is because of this addition that Daniel felt that *De statu* was very beneficially disposed towards Islam: "It was Tripoli's fortunate faculty to dwell more upon the brightness of the 'borrowed' plumage than upon the blackness of the crow that wore it [...]"¹⁴⁸ Whilst this may be true for *De statu*, this certainly is not the case for *Notitia* and the differences between the two texts are very distinct in these passages.

c. *Sūra al-Fātiḥa*

Chapter 7 of *Notitia* treats the 'Sūra al-Fātiḥa', which in Latin becomes a *praefatio*.¹⁴⁹ The translation is, according to William himself, correct and if the reader were to find a different one, he should know that that is an unofficial translation of the Qur'ān.¹⁵⁰ The opening sūra is followed by 'Sūra al-Baqara' ("capitulum de vacca"), that opens with the letters A L E M (*sic*), which William quite possibly ridicules in stating that the reader should pay attention that these three letters contain "ineffabile Dei sacramentum", but there is none who knows what that means or what it is. In bringing the letters together, one gets "*Alem*, quod interpretatur *passio*", which none dares to say for they will burn

¹⁴⁵ *Not.* 6, 33-38. This is a perversion of s.4, 3: وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِسُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَنِّي ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا - 4:3, "وَتِلْكَاتُ وَرُبَاعٌ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاجِدَةٌ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا - 4:3", "If you fear that you cannot deal justly with the orphans, then marry such of the women as appeal to you, two, three or four; but if you fear that you cannot be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands own. That is more likely to enable you to avoid unfairness," Fakhry, *An interpretation*. There is no mention of 'using women as cattle or worthless objects' in the Qur'ān, cf. Engels 87-88.

¹⁴⁶ *Not.* 6, 39-40.

¹⁴⁷ *Not.* 6, 40-43.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel, *Islam*, 190, 193. Daniel takes William of Tripoli as the author of *De statu*.

¹⁴⁹ The translation to *praefatio* is the one used in Ketton's wide-spread translation of the Qur'ān, cf. Engels endnote 62 p.385.

¹⁵⁰ There is a minor error in William's translation here: he translated "اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ" to "offer nos strate vie directe", which according to Engels is a confusion between "اهْدِ" (I., imp., 'guide') and "أَهْدِ" (IV., imp., 'give'), cf. Engels endnote 61 p.385.

in Hell for it.¹⁵¹ This latter interpretation is erroneous and according to Engels is part of a Christian interpretation which equals the “طريق العالم” with the concept of “via dolorosa”.¹⁵² Chapter 7 of *Notitia* is also completely omitted from *De statu*.

d. *Saracen Paradise*

Notitia also speaks very polemically about the ‘paradise’ of the Saracens (*Not.* 8), since “felicitas illius est, (dicunt), in summa delectatione cibi et potus et coitus.” It is a land of milk and honey, but also of ‘99 virgins’, which were promised to Muḥammad by the archangel Gabriel, and now are promised to all.¹⁵³ These elements of Saracen paradise are “nephandas demonum et hominum mente corruptorum inventiones et errores”, but as soon as the Qur’ān speaks about divine elements, “continet ita pia et devota, quod ad lacrimas excitat devotionem et fidem”, and the same goes for the elements about Christ.¹⁵⁴

De statu picks up on the matter of the Saracen paradise in chapter 52 and copies most of the descriptive elements of *Notitia* (four rivers of milk, honey, wine and water; 99 virgins (but it leaves out the 99 virgins of Muḥammad); branches of trees laying fruit in one’s mouth). It adds the presence of great and small houses, build out of precious stones and gold and the enormous size of it (“maior, quam sit spatium celi et terre”).¹⁵⁵ This description of an material and sinful paradise was common among Christian authors.¹⁵⁶

e. *Reverence for Christ and Mary, praise for Christians and the Gospels, their wrong opinion on the crucifixion of Christ, and the infidelity of the Jews*

In chapter 9-10 of *Notitia* and chapter 27-47 of *De statu*, the reverence for Christ and Mary in the Qur’ān is discussed. These 19 points of interest and comparison that both texts make can be seen in the overview above, since *De statu*, which copied the translations for these passages from *Notitia*, dedicates a whole ‘chapter’ to each element or Qur’ānic passage of veneration. In reading these passages the reader would almost assume that he/she is reading Christian theology, whilst in fact these are all passages translated from the Qur’ān (which was part of William’s aim: in *Not.* 8, 32-40, he states that he does not want to describe the contents of the Qur’ān on Jesus and Mary in any other way than in the wording in which they are written in the Qur’ān and that he merely wishes to translate those exact words from Arabic into Latin). The translations done by William of Tripoli in *Notitia* are quite accurate and have simply been copied into *De*

¹⁵¹ *Not.* 7, 12-19.

¹⁵² Engels endnote 66 p.385-386.

¹⁵³ *Not.* 8, 14-24. The description of ‘milk and honey’ is indeed in accordance with s.47, 15.

It is, however, unclear how William has come to the statement of ‘99 virgins’ since there is no mention of this in the Qur’ān. There is one mention of ‘99 ewes’ in the Qur’ān (s.38, 23-25) (also in Mt. 18,12 and Lk. 15,4) and of the ‘99 names of Allah’, but none of ‘99 virgins’, Engels 68 p.386.

¹⁵⁴ *Not.* 8, 25-31.

¹⁵⁵ *De statu* 52, 2-11, though it is not “maior quam celi et terre” but equal in size, cf. e.g. s.3, 133; 57, 21.

¹⁵⁶ Engels endnote 374 p.438.

statu (there are some minor mistakes in translation, which can be found in Engels' endnotes for the passages). Since this a mere presentation of Qur'ān verses that express the reverence for Christ and Mary, and some other theological points such as the crucifixion of Christ and the infidelity of the Jews, meant as a demonstration of some of the core Christian elements of the Qur'ān and thus Islam, it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these passages. They contribute to the general idea of both works of the proximity of Islam to Christianity and how Christians truths lie buried in Islamic central elements. Daniel considers the demonstration of Muslim reverence for Christ and Mary "an effective display of those borrow plumes, 'beautiful and luminous', which concealed the dark deformity of the crow beneath it; it amounted to an anthology in praise of Christ, His Mother and Apostles, to contrast with the absence of praise of Muhammad or Muslims."¹⁵⁷ Though this can be applied to *De statu*'s intention of presenting the Qur'ān verses that expressed this reverence (and perhaps to some degree even appreciation of the presence of these in Islam), in *Notitia* the passages and translation are clearly meant as demonstration of the Christian truth that is buried underneath Islamic falsehood.¹⁵⁸

2.2.5 The rhetoric of *Notitia*

The final chapters of both works differ somewhat in message and order. Where *De statu* picks up on a small number of Islamic elements (cf. infra), *Notitia* presents in chapter 11-12 a fictional dialogue between a Saracen and a Christian.¹⁵⁹ Chapter 11 offers a *responsio* of a Saracen who is confronted with the Christian elements that are core to his faith. Chapter 12 then offers a counter-response from 'the Christians', which can be interpreted as from William himself. The response of the Saracen is quite generic and treats the *tahrīf*, which leads to the announcement of the Paraclete by Christ. This Paraclete would carry the name of Muḥammad and would be the highest prophet of the Saracens, after whose arrival the Saracens would perish.¹⁶⁰ God thus has sent the Prophet, who is of the genealogy of Ismael, son of Abraham, to the sons of Ismael who had not accepted Moses nor Christ, with the Qur'ān which contains all truths pertinent to God. Only those who believe in it shall be saved, for the Jews and the Christians will

¹⁵⁷ Daniel, *Islam*, 193.

¹⁵⁸ Daniel notes that it is peculiar that in *De statu*, there is no mention of Christ's miracles, which is "highly inconsistent", whilst William's aim was to make the Christian truths in the Qur'ān apparent, cf. Daniel endnote 18 388.

¹⁵⁹ Engels 49.

¹⁶⁰ This passage is a representation of the Islamic connection between s.61, 6, in which Christ announces another prophet by the name of "Aḥmad" (which has the same radicals as "Muḥammad") and the announcement of the Paraclete in John.14, 26. Muslim theologians would have seen the proof of the Prophethood of Muḥammad in this connection. The reproach towards the Christians was that they had corrupted the divine texts and erased the announcement of Muḥammad from them, cf. Engels endnote 116 p.392.

remain in their errors and lies, such as the crucifixion of Christ, who did not die but lives with God in heaven.¹⁶¹

The difference with chapter 12, the *Christianorum responsio*, can already be seen in the much greater length of the answer of the Christian: 142 lines vs. the 31 lines of the response of the Saracen. It is in this chapter many of William's rhetorical skills, polemical writing and perhaps even preaching experience come to light. This chapter is both a *refutatio* and an apologetical passage, in 17 counterarguments, demonstrating the ineptitude of the Saracens to understand their own faith whilst bringing forth all the corrupted elements in it and in the Qur'ān. As Engels notes the profound change of tone in this chapter: "[...] die ausführliche, polemisch gehaltene Antwort eines Christen, in der nichts von persönlicher Stimmung oder Gemeinsamkeiten der beiden Religionen zu spüren ist."¹⁶² The chapter begins by addressing the Saracen (by 'the Christians') and stating that one could easily give belief to "essentiam fidei tue in summa continentia", a summary which of course William devised himself, if one was not informed on the holy books of which the Saracen speaks (i.e. the 'four holy books', cf. supra).¹⁶³ According to the Saracens, the Qur'ān is the fifth holy book, which William refutes in a tricolon (one of many): "In cuius additione graviter erras, Sarracene, et a veritate devias et ideo, ut ostendo, peccas."¹⁶⁴ For, if it truly was a divine book, it would have been sent to all nations and in all tongues and God would not have allowed his Wisdom to "sic occultari, ignorari, sic sperni et reprobari", as had been done for the other four holy books.¹⁶⁵ This answer is supported by a rhetorical device commonly used by Christians in which they employ Biblical passages as a demonstration of their own truth, in this case Lk. 11, 33.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, none of the four holy books have foretold another prophet whilst "veritas Dei in illis patet et in tuo, si aliqua est, latet atque occulta est." Not only that, but these books "in nullo discordant. Iste autem tuus liber ab omnibus discordat et contrarius est et contraria docet [...]", such as the denial of the Trinity which all other books agree upon.¹⁶⁷

Regarding the morals of Islam, the text contrasts "continentiam, munditiam et sanctimoniam" with the aforementioned passage of the number of wives and concubines

¹⁶¹ The crucifixion was one of the main points of controversy between Muslims and Christians, for Islam believed that Christ did not die on the cross (but Judas did, cf. *Not.* 10, 101-110; *De statu* 44; though there is no consensus over this cf. Engels endnote 105, p.390), since this was in contradiction with the justice of God who would let none suffer for the sins of others, Engels endnote 364 p.437; Engels endnote 115 p.392.

¹⁶² Engels 49.

¹⁶³ *Not.* 12, 4.

¹⁶⁴ *Not.* 12, 11-12.

¹⁶⁵ *Not.* 12, 17-31.

¹⁶⁶ "Nemo accendit lucernam et ponit eam sub modio, sed super candelabrum, ut, qui ingrediuntur, lumen videant," cf. Mt.5, 15; Mc. 4,21; Lk. 8,16; Engels apparatus 240.

¹⁶⁷ *Not.* 12, 39, 42-49; the argument of the non-announcement of the Prophet is repeated some lines later, in this case that all prophets have come from Jewish descent whilst Muḥammad did not, cf. *Not.* 12, 77-86.

and ‘how to use them’.¹⁶⁸ The Qur’ān also does not contain any clear doctrine or commands such as the four holy books have. It merely says: “Qui crediderit et fecerit bona, erit de felicibus.”¹⁶⁹ The refutation of the Saracen paradise, with all its profane delights and sinful rewards (cf. supra), concludes reproachfully, and serves as one of the clearest phrases that illustrates the vision of William of Tripoli on Islam: “Quomodo igitur quis sani capitis dicere potest, quod talis propheta et tale docma sit a Deo et non potius ab homine et demone.”¹⁷⁰ Some lines later, the portrayal of Muḥammad that has been made in the opening chapters, which was at the least neutral and not as polemical as others have described him, is now countered by a strong denunciation of the Prophet and an illustration of a sinner, a power addict and a warmonger: “Item omnes prophete fuerunt sancti et iusti; nullus fuit fornicator, ebriosus, homicida, predo, oppressor sicut iste, qui cogebat omnes, ut vocarent eum prophetam aut suo gladio morerentur.” The faith of the Saracens, “si fides dicenda est et non magis timor”, has risen through violence and the sword of Muḥammad, and by the sword it must perish (cf. infra on prophecies and on William’s supposed anti-crusade sentiment).¹⁷¹ A short mention is also made of Muḥammad’s illiteracy, with the question how he could have made a book with his doctrine if he could not read or write? This is somewhat contradictory to what William has stated previously as to the next passage, on the compilation of the Qur’ān by ‘Uthmān and converted Christians and Jews.¹⁷²

Further refutations regard the confusion of Mary, mother of Christ, and Maryam, daughter of Amram and sister of Aaron and Moses (a common polemic among Christians authors), and the perception that through the strong reverence the Qur’ān shows for Christ, Mary and the Christians, God has sent this book merely for the praise of Christianity.¹⁷³ In the final passages of this chapter, some of William’s preaching and conversion techniques seem to manifest themselves clearly, for he (or the Christians in the dialogue) uses the Qur’ān more directly to convince the Saracen of the truth of Christianity and to convert in order to be saved:

¹⁶⁸ *Not.* 12, 50-54; cf. p.38 in this thesis.

¹⁶⁹ *Not.* 12, 55-66; 65: This verse is not found in the Qur’ān, but likely is based on s.40,40: مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً , فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْتَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ “Whoever does an evil deed will only be rewarded its like; but whoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, being a believer – those shall enter Paradise receiving therein provision without measure,” Fakhyr, *An interpretation*, cf. s.39,10; 41,33.46; 45,15; 53,51; Engels endnote 127 p.394.

¹⁷⁰ *Not.* 12, 67-76.

¹⁷¹ *Not.* 12, 87-94.

¹⁷² *Not.* 12, 95-104. William’s commentary in *Not.* 12 on the compilation of the Qur’ān concludes: “[...] quomodo potestis dicere, quod iste liber sit Machometi et non sodalis eius Hesman?”

¹⁷³ *Not.* 12, 105-112; 113-125. The confusion between Mary and Maryam (whose name is the same in Islam) is a common polemic against Islam among Christian authors, cf. Engels endnote 135 p.395.

“Item, cum liber tuus dicat in auctoritatibus memoratis de Christo, quod imitatores Christi erunt in futuro supra et alii homines subtus, quare non appetis et satagis fieri de superioribus, qui dicuntur victores et testes Dei, et iam non de inferioribus, qui sunt eius hostes?”¹⁷⁴

This is followed by a final addressing of the Saracen on the topic of Christ who lives in Heaven with God, whilst Muḥammad is dead and none knows where his spirit is, and the prophecy that Islam will be split into 70 parts of which only one will be saved, yet none knows which part that will be. And thus the *responsio* concludes: “[...] quare non times esse discipulus tam ignari magistri, qui magis perditionem docebat quam salute, et non potius queris Christum vivum et vitam sequacibus suis promittentem?”¹⁷⁵

2.2.6 Remaining chapters of *Notitia*

The two remaining chapters of *Notitia*, 14 and 15, will not be discussed extensively due to the absence of any pertinent information for this thesis. Chapter 14 treats the subject of the spiritual leaders in Islam, called “Ravi”, which is a possible confusion between “qāḍī” and “rabbi” and his *officia* (including some polemics that regarding the sword (by which Islam will perish), and the supposed Qur’ānic verse that those who do good, will be allowed to enter Paradise (cf. supra).¹⁷⁶ Chapter 15 describes how the collective prayer inside the mosques takes place. This chapter is heavily detailed and puts emphasis on how pious the Saracens practice their faith.¹⁷⁷ Further descriptions tell of the clothing and conduct of the imām, the comparison between the ‘Sūra al-Fātiḥa’ and ‘Our Father’ or the Credo, and the contents of the imām’s prayer. According to Engels, the information of these chapters originates from Jewish sources and not from directly consulting Arabic sources, or from experience (which William notes one cannot do because one will die, cf. *Not.* 15, 2: “alienus, qui intrat, moritur”). The confusion between “qāḍī” and “rabbi”, the mention that Muslims pray towards Mecca like Jews pray towards Jerusalem and the 613 commands that the holy books prescribe in *Not.* 12, 55-59 lead Engels to believe that William consulted Jewish sources to write important parts of this treatise.¹⁷⁸

2.2.7 Remaining chapters of *De statu*

In chapters 48-55, a number of passages from *Notitia* have been combined whilst demonstrating a mitigated perception of and more positive message towards Islam. The passages copied from *Notitia* can be found in the apparatus in Engels’ edition of the texts. The titles of each of these short chapters indicate their contents and the reader will find that many of these topics have already been discussed. Nevertheless, these chapters

¹⁷⁴ *Not.* 12, 132-135.

¹⁷⁵ *Not.* 12, 136-142.

¹⁷⁶ *Not.* 14; Engels endnote 161 p.398-399

¹⁷⁷ *Not.* 15, 12-26.

¹⁷⁸ Engels 88-89; endnote 126 p.394; 161 p.398; 174 p.401.

articulate a different aim than *Notitia*, clearly shown in chapter 48, which demonstrates the proximity of Islam to Christianity explicitly:

“Demonstratis igitur predictis, que Sarraceni corde credunt esse vera et profitentur ore utpote Dei verba scripta in eorum Alcorano de laudibus et preconiiis Iesu Christi, de doctrina eius et suo sancto Evangelio, de beata Maria matre eius et imitatoribus, [...], licet multis sint involute mendaciis et decorate figmentis, tamen, quoniam pia, satis manifeste apparet, quod ipsi sint fidei christiani vicini et ad viam salutis propinqui.”¹⁷⁹

This feeling of proximity is according to chapter 49 “in cordibus omnium”, just as the knowledge that Islam will shortly come to fall and Christianity will endure. Chapter 50 and 51 are both very brief (resp. 4 and 9 lines): on the essence of the faith (chapter 50)¹⁸⁰ and on the ‘doctrine’ of Islam (which consist of the aforementioned passage on wives, concubines and how to use them, and the Day of Judgment). Chapter 52 on the Saracen paradise has been discussed above. Chapters 53-55 finally discuss core elements of Christianity (resp. the Trinity, the Incarnation and the teachings of Christ), to which Saracens would agree, with the implication that they fundamentally already take the Christian faith to heart.¹⁸¹

2.2.7 Conclusions of both works

The conclusions of both texts demonstrate the differences in messages and aims for which the treatises were written. *Notitia* concludes in twofold: firstly there is the message towards the Christians intellectuals, who should fight with all their zeal against Islam, “sagittas accuere et emittere et ipsos repellere et animas miseras de laqueo dyaboli eripere et in sagena Christi concludere <et> toto conatu trahere ad portum salutis”; secondly it ends with three prophecies that are repeated in *De statu* 23 (cf. infra), on the nearing end of Islam, in which one third will perish under the sword, another third in the desert, and a final third will convert to Christianity.¹⁸²

De statu’s conclusion is much shorter, but more explicit: “Et sic simplici sermone Dei sine philosophicis argumentis sive militaribus armis sicut ovis simplices petunt baptismum Christi et transeunt in ovile Dei.” Not only does this conclusion seems to prefer more explicitly a non-armed conversion of the Saracens, it also goes against the conclusion of *Notitia*, who calls upon the Christians theologians to fight against the Saracens and drive them into the nets of Christ. There is no need for any of this

¹⁷⁹ *De statu* 48.

¹⁸⁰ “Si quis enim querat ab ipsis, quenam sit fides eorum, nesciunt aliud dicere nisi hoc tantum: *Credimus Deum esse creatorem omnium, diem iudicii, in quo remunerabuntur merita hominum, et vera esse, que Deus locutus est per ora sanctorum prophetarum omnium.*”

¹⁸¹ Daniel, *Islam*, 206: “Tripoli (*i.e. De statu*) [...] expounded Christian doctrine in terms almost of poetic fire. Muslims, whose conversion in numbers he claimed, wonder at the mystery of the Trinity, unless it be expressed in language that makes it clear to them that it is what they already believe.”

¹⁸² *Not.* 15, 67-81; the Ḥadīth knows a quote from Muḥammad which states the Islam will be divided into three parts, cf. Engels endnote 185 p.402.

according to the author of *De statu*, who believes that the Saracens, when the prophecies will be fulfilled, will simply join the herd of Christ. Not only does *De statu* position itself against the use of force, but also against the complications and entanglements of theologians and philosophers. Simple preaching and convincing should wake up the Christian truths inside the Saracens, who will come to understand and accept it.¹⁸³

2.3 *The prophecies*

An important element in understanding both treatises is the context of prophecies in which they have been written. In these predictions of the end of Islam the strong belief in the conversion of the Saracens was embedded during the 13th century. This belief was connected, as it is in *Notitia* and *De statu*, with the interest in the similarities and common points between the two faiths, which convinced Christians that Muslims would convert when confronted with the truth of their faith and of Christianity.¹⁸⁴ The texts ascribed to William of Tripoli do not differ from this current that is convinced of the impending fall of Islam. According to Engels, the sources for many of the prophecies mentioned in both treatises are unclear, though it is likely they stem from Christian apocalyptic literature (with one exception that is based on the Qur'ān), but not from Muslim sources.¹⁸⁵ *Notitia* has two meaningful passages that relate to prophecies: 13, 13-19, on the fall of Islam at the ascension of the 43th caliph; and 15, 72-81, which includes three prophecies, of which one predicts the victory of the Latins on the Saracens, another on the upcoming end to the 7000 years after which Christianity will triumph, and lastly the aforementioned prophecy on how Islam will be divided into three parts.

De statu combines most of its prophecies in chapter 23. These have partly come from *Notitia*, but according to the text the end of Islam is to the Saracens a “certa scientia et fides firma”, based on a supposed quote from Muḥammad.¹⁸⁶ A small overview of the prophecies in this chapter would prove useful:

1. On the division of Islam in three parts, of which one will die by the sword, another in the desert, and a third will convert to Christianity.
2. On how as Islam has risen by the sword, so it must perish by the sword.¹⁸⁷
3. On how as the Jews have their time for their downfall, so also the Muslims have their time, and Christianity will endure with Christ descending from Heaven and killing the Antichrist (cf. *De statu* 49, 2-7).

¹⁸³ *De statu* 55, 7-12.

¹⁸⁴ Engels 39; Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1390-1391.

¹⁸⁵ Engels p.82. Engels contradicts Voerzio, “Fr. Guglielmo Da Tripoli,” 212, who states that William has gathered much information from the Ḥadīth, cf. Engels footnote 253 p.82.

¹⁸⁶ *De statu* 23, 4-5: “Machometus enim ita dixit: *Sarraceni ceperunt esse ut peregrini [et iterum incipient esse et fient, sicut erant, peregrini.]*”

¹⁸⁷ This passage contains a longer quote from Muḥammad, which is shortened by the author to “Per gladium inceptit, per gladium desinet,” which refers to Mt.26,52 and Apoc.13,10; Engels endnote 336 p.433.

4. On how the Romans (Latins or Greeks), who have been defeated in the Holy Land, now will defeat the Saracens.¹⁸⁸
5. On how Islam will fall when the genealogy of Muḥammad is ended, which has happened at the fall of Baghdad by the Tatar Hülägü (therefore the end is near) (cf. *De statu* 14, 11-22).¹⁸⁹
6. On how there cannot be more than 42 caliphs, and Hülägü has killed the 43rd (cf. *De statu* 11, 14).¹⁹⁰
7. On how the reign of Islam must be passed on from the hands of the Arabs to the hands of the Turks, which has been done since there no longer is a ruler of Arab descent among the Saracens (cf. *De statu* 11, 15-20).

There is also chapter 22, which prophesises the upcoming death of sultan Baibars (“ut sapientes Sarracenorum dicunt astrologi et mathematici”) in 1273, after which he will be succeeded by another Turkish leader, who will then die within one year. After that, Christ will descend from Heaven “et vexillum crucis elevari”.

These prophecies are embedded in a number of popular apocalyptic currents of the 13th century, both in the West as in the East. The astrological calculations of al-Kindī set the end of Islam after 693 years, and influenced the West, e.g. Roger Bacon, via his student Abū Ma‘shar (787-886).¹⁹¹ In the West, the current of Joachim of Fiore knew strong popularity during the 13th century, and *Notitia* and *De statu* attest to this. This millenarian belief marked the year 1260 as the beginning of a new millennium, and Islam would be conquered not by violence but by the words of the preacher. This zeal of conversion has been discussed above and can be connected with the belief that the Saracens would convert if they simply were confronted with the true doctrine of Christianity and the falsities that lie in Islam.¹⁹² The same belief and conviction can be found in both treatises. This is not manifested merely by the comparison of similar elements in both faiths, but in *Notitia*, as mentioned, William of Tripoli actively tries to win over (in a fictional dialogue) the Saracen with whom a dialogue is being conducted, whilst *De statu* concludes with an appeal to convert the Saracens in a simple manner,

¹⁸⁸ Cf. s.30, 2-3.

¹⁸⁹ The year of capture of Baghdad is wrong in both works (1253 instead of 1258), most likely due to a simple error in *Notitia* (13, 19), copied by *De statu* (14, 12) cf. Engels endnote 146,147, p.396; 276, p.420; Both texts also tell of the gruesome death of the last caliph by the Tatar conqueror Hülägü, who was put in a golden cage, had to eat golden coins and whose family was slaughtered before his eyes (*Not.* 13, 21-28; *De statu* 14, 11-22), cf. Engels endnote 277 p.420.

¹⁹⁰ The prophecy of the 43th caliph does not originate from an Islamic tradition, but rather also is embedded in the apocalyptic current of Joachim of Fiore, which states that the world knows 42 generation (cf. *infra*), cf. Engels endnote 254 p.414.

¹⁹¹ Engels endnote 332 p.432. For decades after the 13th century there would be new theories and prophecies announcing the end of Islam, based on new calculations etc.

¹⁹² Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1390-1391; Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 381; Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 204; Throop also connects the astrologies of John of Toledo (d.1275) with the apocalyptic prophecies, and places William in the tradition of this mysticism that was, in spite of the lack of successes in conversion, so popular among the mendicant orders, cf. Throop, *A Criticism*, 125, 134-135.

not fight them with swords or attempt to persuade them with philosophical ingenuities. Especially *De statu* emphasises both the prophetic aspect as the points of convergence and it does this in a positive and to a certain degree even friendly tone (in omitting many hostile passages that appear in *De statu* and promoting a more peaceful approach towards the Saracens).¹⁹³

This conviction in the certain fall of Islam and the triumph of Christianity explains the positive portrayal according to Tolan:

“This assertion of a swift and inevitable victory of Christianity over Islam makes his positive presentation of Islam and Muslims less problematic. There are good rulers on both sides, such as ‘Umar and Saint Louis, and there are bad rulers, such as Frederick II and Baybars. Yet Muslim piety, and Muslim reverence for Christ and Mary, can be presented in an unapologetically positive light. It is indeed only after repeated assertions that the Saracen faith is near extinction that *De statu* goes into describing it. The author says that Machometus’s companions compiled the Koran fifteen years after his death and that it does not reflect what Muhammad really taught; rather, he says, it is a mixture of Muhammad’s teaching and garbled passages of Bible, philosophy, and history.”¹⁹⁴

Whilst this thesis agrees with Hamilton, who says that William (i.e. the author of *De statu* for Hamilton) “clearly felt a considerable affinity for the Muslims among whom he worked, but this did not lead him to accept their faith as licit,” O’Meara places William’s vision (in both works) in a much broader spectrum of prophecies or teleology. Islam is part of the same salvation history as Christianity and Judaism, they lie within the same plan of God. O’Meara argues that the vocabulary of “vicini” and “propinqui” in *De statu*’s conclusion mark the proximity between the faiths in such a way that they demonstrate the sharing of the same path towards salvation: “At a time when from afar Muslims were vilified and wars against them were urged in emotional rhetoric, William discovered in the markets and streets of Acre faith in a history of salvation”¹⁹⁵ Whilst this is a plausible interpretation for *De statu*, in spite of its occasional denunciations of Islam, the Prophet and the Saracens, it cannot be an interpretation for *Notitia*, which clearly does not see Islam as a *vicinus* at the end of times, but as a faith destined for annihilation except for the Saracens who convert to Christianity.

These prophecies were not fulfilled as time went on and the belief in mass conversion slowly died when it was no longer supported by ‘an aggressive optimism’ regarding the impending downfall of the Saracens.¹⁹⁶ There were no great successes in converting the Saracens, whilst many Christians were converting to Islam, which worried the clergy in

¹⁹³ Engels 39-40.

¹⁹⁴ Tolan, “Saracens,” 207-208.

¹⁹⁵ Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 381; O’Meara, “The Theology,” 94-98. It should be repeated that O’Meara takes William of Tripoli the author of both *Notitia* and *De statu*.

¹⁹⁶ Burns, “Christian-Islamic Confrontation,” 1434.

the West deeply.¹⁹⁷ The political and consequent teleological changes proved (at least) these prophecies to be incorrect:

“The final collapse of the Crusader Kingdom in 1291, the ascendancy of the new Mameluke Caliphate and the Mongol conversion to Islam in 1295 clearly demonstrated that Islam was not about to go away. After these events, it would be impossible to believe that the kind of prophecies we encounter in *De statu* were about to be fulfilled any time soon [...] The fall of Acre in 1291 was not merely a military defeat that signalled the final end of the Crusader Kingdom. It was an eschatologically significant event, because it was an event that, in the plan of Christian salvation history, was not meant to happen.”¹⁹⁸

2.4 Purposes of both texts

Notitia is mostly concerned with the demonstration of Islam (‘notitia’ can be translated not just by ‘data’ but also by ‘introduction’ or ‘presentation’), whilst *De statu* reduces the emphasis on the theological aspect and adds a strong historical component (‘status’ is not merely ‘state’, but also ‘realm’ or ‘reality’).¹⁹⁹ According to Engels, *Notitia* was written with a theological and polemical-apologetical motive in mind, whilst *De statu* has an emphasis on history. They have a same interest for the Qur’ān, both for its origins as well as its contents, and the Christian teachings in Islam. *Notitia* to Engels does not appear much different from other Christian polemical or apologetical works except for its thorough knowledge of the Qur’ān and the *Ṣalāt al-Jumu‘ah* (Not. 15). It is both an informative work, destined for Teobaldo Visconti, on Islam, its history and the Christian teachings withing, as it is an general appeal to wage an intellectual fight against Islam (cf. *Notitia* 15, 67-71).²⁰⁰

De statu on the other hand is meant to convince the readers of the proximity of Islam to Christianity and their readiness to conversion, thus there is no need for an armed crusade. Engels considers this work to be part of two genres which were popular in Europe at the time: the genre which can be labelled with ‘*de recuperatione Terre Sancte*’ (which was popular in France and Italy), and the genre that includes travel- and pilgrimage stories, which include descriptions of the Holy Land as well (and which were popular in France, Italy, England and Germany). The popularity of *De statu* in these regions is also represented in the manuscripts found here: *Notitia* only knows three manuscripts, all in Germany, whilst *De statu* knew popularity in France, Italy and England (cf. infra). Engels considers that *De statu* therefore was used as an informative treatise in these regions where the desire and initiative for crusading was ardent. It was not meant, as Throop states, as one of the requested memoirs for the Second Council of

¹⁹⁷ Munro, “The Western Attitude,” 343.

¹⁹⁸ Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 205.

¹⁹⁹ O’Meara, “The Theology,” 90.

²⁰⁰ Engels 61.

Lyons: *De statu* was published afterwards, although some parts, especially the chapters on sultan Baibars, could have been sent as part of such a memoir (cf. supra). Engels therefore considers it a handbook for those who wanted to engage themselves in a crusade and needed information on the Holy Land and its inhabitants (but not on missionary activity, in spite of *De statu*'s reputation for serving that purpose).²⁰¹ The message of *De statu*, one of peaceful conversion and rejection of all polemics and hostility, did not find much resonance in its time, since the treatise was mostly used informatively. Like Daniel, Engels acknowledges that the aims and perceptions of the author of *De statu* are unclear and it is uncertain to what degree the author believed in the successfulness and effectiveness of his vision. Engels regards the author's honest belief in convincing fellow Christians of this pacifist approach to Islam, based on the proximity between the faiths and the prophecies on its end, to be a sign of "großer Naivität und Weltfremdheit". The climate was too hostile and the war was far from successful for such a message to succeed.²⁰²

O'Meara, in contrast with Engels, states that *Notitia* indeed was made for Visconti, but William later revised the treatise (in 1273), likely in service of the Second Council of Lyons (cf. Throop), resulting in *De statu*. Whilst O'Meara emphasises the positive tone of *De statu*, he ignores the polemics of *Notitia* and does not distinguish the fundamentally different messages of both works. He is, however, correct in stating that it is not a handbook on how to evangelise.²⁰³ Although O'Meara recognises William of Tripoli as author of both works, this does not contribute to a broader understanding of his person due to the lack of information. He considers the melting pot of cultures and languages in which William of Tripoli grew up to have had the positive effect of approaching Islam differently and not polemically, but he fails to acknowledge the polemics of *Notitia* and the degree to which William subscribes to the medieval polemical current of branding Islam as the enemy.²⁰⁴ Even if the socio-political situation were to have created this openness to Islam and the otherness of the Saracens with William, it would be, as Engels stated, naïve to belief in such an approach when the situation of the Latins in the East was all but well-faring. O'Meara considers the

²⁰¹ Engels 37.

²⁰² Engels 62, 66-69, 74; Daniel, *Islam*, 227, 264.

²⁰³ O'Meara, "The Theology," 93, 95.

²⁰⁴ O'Meara, "The Theology," 96: "Any presentation of William is hampered by a lack of information about him. Was he a world-traveler? Was he a naïve enthusiast with little cultural and linguistic sophistication? Was he an ordinary Dominican preacher whose experience of his own life and society led him to new ideas, pastoral and theological? He grew up not in Europe but in a multicultural, polyglot society in which he, in faith and language, belonged to a ruling minority, whose future was precarious. He spent his life in forms of evangelical outreach to Muslims and others. With a growing openness he developed new approaches to a people who in his eyes have a history, a religion, and a faith. The Dominican's serene directness is the result of experience and insight. He was a person of a milieu, a personality of comparison and dialogue, a man of a particular faith but with a temperament inclined to respect others. William was more or less consciously fashioning a perspective that was new in his own region and largely unknown or unimagined in Europe."

intention of *De statu* one of comparison in order to become theology, and to express his views on the same path towards salvation that Islam, Christianity and Judaism trod upon.²⁰⁵

This thesis therefore agrees with Engels' thesis that *Notitia* is a strong polemical-apologetical work by the hand of William of Tripoli, whilst *De statu* is an edited version, likely by a European author, who copies *Notitia* to spread its own beliefs, who to some degree converge with those of *Notitia* (cf. *infra*). The message of this author was not popular or strongly propagated during its time, since *De statu* most likely was used as an informative source for its clear descriptions of the Holy Land and its political situation, and of Islam and the Muslims.²⁰⁶

2.5 Polemical current

Mossman estimates *Notitia* to be a work "primarily concerned with the transmission of factual information about Islam, although it is at the same time indebted to the tradition of high medieval polemic."²⁰⁷ The polemics employed in both treatises, but especially in *Notitia* show just how strongly William of Tripoli was still part of a polemical current against Islam, in spite of the strong belief that conversion should be preferred over combat. Whilst *De statu* copies much information from *Notitia*, many of its polemics are omitted or mitigated, resulting in a more positive treatise.

Both treatises touch upon polemical topics which had been part of popular currents in Christianity since the beginning of encounters with Islam. Many of these topics have already been discussed above: the prophethood of Muḥammad and his status as Paraclete; the universality of Islam; the *tahrīf*; the traditional link with Abraham, Christianity and Judaism; a carnal and material Paradise; the veneration of Christ and Mary; the responses of Muslims to the Incarnation, the Trinity and the Crucifixion; the illiteracy of Muḥammad; the confusion between Mary and Maryam. In *Notitia*, these are all heavily polemicized, with constant comments on how empty Islam's doctrine is, how it has emerged as a corruption of the Judeo-Christian tradition and how to Qur'ān is *in omnibus contrarius*. Qur'ān verses are being twisted in order to fit the narrative (e.g. *Not.* 5, 25-27, cf. *supra*) and subtle contrasts are drawn to underline the inferiority of the Saracens (e.g. *Not.* 3, 58, on an infinite number of Saracens living "in tentoriis" and then invading North-Africa vs. *Not.* 3, 63 "Christianorum civitates invenientes munitas eas fortiter" (though William notes that the Saracens are able to capture these cities, in spite of the parallel that he makes on savages vs. civilisation); *Not.* 13, 5-7 on the second caliph of the Saracens: "Secundus vero habitabat in civitate nomine Karre [...], que usque hodie caput regni Egypti, ubi regnavit Pharao duri cordis", drawing a parallel between the cruel pharaoh of Moses' time and the caliph). The passage of the 'colourful

²⁰⁵ O'Meara, "The Theology," 97.

²⁰⁶ Mossman, "The Western Understanding," footnote 113 p.203; Kedar, *Crusade*, 146.

²⁰⁷ Mossman, "The Western Understanding," 195.

crow', explained above, is one of William's strongest *invectiones* against Islam (at least in *Notitia*): a weird creature with stolen fathers, black as coal underneath, is ridiculed when it appears among the birds whose feathers it stole. *Not.* 12, also explained above, is filled with attacks and polemical arguments against the Saracen faith with a culmination in *Not.* 12, 75-76 on who in their right mind would call Islam a divine faith and not a product of men and demon. Finally, the initial illustration of Muḥammad's character is counter-balanced by the later passages of his vision on the amount of women one should have, how to treat them and how to deceive and kill infidels (cf. *supra*).

William also subscribes to a number of ideas and views that are visible in works of other contemporary authors and/or polemicists. Some of these ideas are part of a general knowledge of information that Christian authors used, e.g. the growth of 10 to 20 to 40 companions of the Prophet is also present with Theophanes the Confessor (c.758/60-817/818), Petrus Alfonsi and Peter the Venerable²⁰⁸; 'Ali as an *avunculus* of Muḥammad instead of his cousin or son-in-law also appears with William of Tyre²⁰⁹; of the idea of the four holy books and the Qur'ān consisting out of Jewish and Christian theology is also present in *Contra sectam* of Peter the Venerable²¹⁰; and many similar ideas and wordings with William's fellow friar Riccoldo da Monte di Croce.²¹¹ The legend of Bahīrā and Muḥammad was part of a popular current, but it is treated more neutrally and without many of the polemics. The highly popular figure in the West of Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn (1137-1193), the legends around his sons and his killing of the last Fatimid caliph are thoroughly discussed in both works.²¹² The different mentions of the *shahāda* can also be considered a *topos* among Western Christian authors.²¹³ Finally, Burns remarks that during the 12th century, the *chansons de geste* no longer talked of war against the Saracens, but of conversion. The influence of the older *Chanson de Roland* in both works therefore is quite interesting, since this does refer to Charlemagne's war against the Saracens in Europe.²¹⁴ In *De statu*, this testifies to the historical emphasis of the treatise, without the polemics, but *Not.* 4, 31-34 praises Charlemagne for his endeavour of driving the Saracens out of Europe.²¹⁵

²⁰⁸ *Not.* 2, 29-31; *De statu* 3, 14-15; Engels endnote 12 p.376; 202 p.404.

²⁰⁹ *De statu* 3, 10; Engels endnote 201 p.403-404.

²¹⁰ Engels endnotes 48 p.383; 55 p.384.

²¹¹ Engels endnotes 211 p.406 on conquering half of the world; 336 p.433 on Islam perishing by the sword; 355 p.436 on the *tahrīf*; 363 p.437 on the crucifixion of Judas instead of Christ. These common points are part of contemporary popular ideas and currents and do not imply a direct relation between the two friars cf. Engels p.104 and *infra*.

²¹² *Not.* 13, 29-57; *De statu* 14, 4-10; 17, 10-14; 18, 8-11. The killing of the Fatimid caliph al-ʿĀḍid and thus abolishing the Fatimid caliphate is also discussed by Jacob of Vitry, William of Tyre and Thomas Tuscus, cf. Engels endnote 275 p.419-420.

²¹³ *Not.* 3, 50-51; *De statu* 8, 18-19; Engels endnote 28 p.379.

²¹⁴ Burns, "Christian-Islamic Confrontation," 1386.

²¹⁵ "Hoc notum est, quod, nisi dictis hostibus Dominus obstitisset per fidem et robur Karoli, tota Europa subiciebatur dicioni eorum. Dominus exercituum prostrator est hostium suorum infidelium. Laus ei et gloria, quia iudicia eius abyssus multa. Amen."

Where *Notitia* has many reproaches towards Islam, *De statu* can be very praising about Islam and some of its historical figures. In chapter 6, the beneficial disposition of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ al-Sahmī (c. 573-664) towards the city of Gaza in Syria is narrated: “[...] qui precepit sociis non interficere senem, puerum nec puellam, non truncare arborum fructiferam et uberem, non diruere domos.” The army commander did not desire any war loot or plunder from the city, “sed eorum amorem, concordiam, securitatem et pacem, ut ex duobus populis unus efficeretur et dicerent omnes unum esse Deum et Machometum Dei nuntium.”²¹⁶ The same tone is continued when speaking of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in chapter 9, who wished to do no harm to the Christians of Jerusalem and not to pray in any of the holy places of the Christians, for he did not want to turn those religious sites into places only meant for Saracens. The respect that ‘Umar has shown to the Christians is resembled in the respect with which *De statu* describes him. Daniel considers this positive description political: “[...] it tends to show that Muslim rule was tolerable, and even favourable, to Christians.”²¹⁷ This can be seen as a counter-narrative to the stories of e.g. Humbert of Romans, who described Muslim rule as harsh, oppressive and outright dangerous for Christian pilgrims.²¹⁸ Strangely enough, the strongest polemical tones are found in the European context against Frederick II (*De statu* 15, 44-73). As explained above, Frederick is depicted as a deceitful emperor who kept the Saracens close as his friends, but also betrayed them.²¹⁹ This passage is not mentioned in *Notitia* and according to Engels is an expression of support from the author of *De statu* towards the pontifical stance against Frederick II (cf. supra). Many of the polemical phrases and reproaches expressed in *Notitia*, have been omitted or at the least mitigated in *De statu*.

There is a final practice at play in both treatises that also is part of contemporary current and which later would be called *cribratio* by Nicolas of Cusa (cf. supra). Riccoldo da Monte di Croce argued that the Qur’ān could be used to prove the superiority of Christianity, and the same principle can be found in the two texts ascribed to William of Tripoli.²²⁰ Mossman calls this the search for *laudabilia de Deo*, “a polemical device aimed at converting Muslims by demonstrating to them that, if one strips away all the wrong material, the Qur’ān actually testifies not to Muhammad but to Christianity [...]”²²¹ As is demonstrated abundantly above, both *Notitia* and *De statu* take an interest in the Christian elements in Islam and the Qur’ān on multiple levels (history of compilation, reverence for Jesus and Mary etc.). Burman considers this practice both a device to attack Islam as to defend Christianity, whilst Mossman

²¹⁶ *De statu* 6, 4-12.

²¹⁷ Daniel, *Islam*, 277.

²¹⁸ Munro, “The Western Attitude,” 342-343: “The Saracens exclude preachers, they decapitate anyone speaking against Mohammed's law or sect [...] There is no hope of converting them.”; cf. also Munro 330 on the long-lasting ideas that the East was not safe for Christians.

²¹⁹ Tolan, “Saracens,” 206.

²²⁰ Burman, “Polemic,” 182-183.

²²¹ Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 194.

considers it also a method of conversion. It is important to note that the search for similarities does not mean that Islam was considered a true faith. Whilst this closer study and comparison somewhat reduced the distance between the two faiths, it did not lead to acceptance: Christianity would be the triumphant religion at the end of the world and only Christians would be saved. Mossman remarks that William in *Notitia* “does not regard the Qur’an as anything other than wrong: “*liber iste non est nisi corruptio fidei et morum piorum.*”²²² O’Meara, seeing the bright positive attitude in both works, remarks that William “rejected the previous method of describing Muhammad’s religious life as the product of immorality and illness and of picturing the origins and triumph of Islam in terms of violence, immorality, and religious fantasy,” which is correct in that Muḥammad’s life is described more neutrally. O’Meara is wrong, however, in stating that William offers “an alternative to the earlier view that Islam was the gospel deformed and that its ethics were contrary to both the natural law and the teaching of Jesus,” because, as stated above, *Notitia* even explicitly says that the Qur’ān deviates from everything, is contrary to everything and teaches nothing but that what is contrary.²²³

In extension of the debate on the authorship of both texts, the difference in tone and perception of Islam is a strong argument in favour of different authors. Engels states: “Die Geisteshaltung des Autors steht in diametralen Gegensatz zu der im Schlußkapitel von *De statu* vorgebrachten Auffassung.”²²⁴ This leads to a temporary conclusion regarding the visions on conversion and Islam ascribed to William of Tripoli, for there are two texts ascribed to his name with fundamentally different approaches, but also with many convergences. These convergences come forth out of the mere fact that *De statu* copied much information from *Notitia*, but also because the author of *De statu* felt the same as William of Tripoli on the subject of crusade, conversion and the upcoming end of Islam. Their strongest difference lies in the approach to Islam when it comes to their perception of it. *Notitia*, the original work, subscribes to a strong and popular polemical current that negates Islam as a licit faith, and only deviates from it in a more neutral description of its origins.²²⁵ All other aspects that can be considered positive or less polemical, especially his praising words about the veneration of Jesus and Mary in the Qur’ān, should be regarded within the framework of his demonstration of the supremacy of Christianity, towards the reader as towards the Saracen that he is attempting to convert. Islam is on the brink of the end of its existence and the Christians will once again be victorious. *Notitia* is the ultimate celebration of the true path towards

²²² Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 195-197; *Not.* 6, 41.

²²³ O’Meara, “The Theology,” 90; *Not.* 12, 42-44.

²²⁴ Engels 49-50.

²²⁵ Daniel, *Islam*, 277; Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 381; nor were the Latins capable of understanding or accepting Islam as a religion, in spite of the great deal of information known about it cf. Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy,” 377-378.

salvation that only Christianity can claim. The polemical approach of *Notitia* will not convince the Saracen to convert, but it will only incite the Saracen to take pride in their faith and hold on to it (cf. supra, on how an armed crusade also would do this).²²⁶ *Notitia* therefore is a strongly polemical work, meant for Latin Christian readers, but with its own ideas on how the Saracens will come to convert since the end of their faith is near.

De statu's approach is so radically different because it regards Islam in a different manner: it recognises the good intentions of Islamic leaders and does not merely acknowledge the Christian elements in Islam, but also the Christian actions committed by Saracens who do not know that they are Christians. A polemical approach is superfluous, because the Saracen faith will soon come to fall, but the Saracens themselves already bear the Christian faith inside of them and are at the point of conversion.²²⁷

2.6 View on a Crusade

From the contents of the two texts it is clear that both treatises do not support an armed crusade. They base this view on the same foundations, but propagate a different message. Whilst they both consider an armed crusade to be *unnecessary* due to the impending collapse of Islam, *Notitia* does not explicitly condemn such crusades. Conversion is the preferred method in order to save the Saracens from perishing at the end of times, but those who do not convert will come to fall anyhow, predicted by many prophecies. In *Notitia*, there is simply no need for a crusade, since the prophecies foresee a third of the Saracens converting to Christianity, whilst the rest will die. *De statu* agrees with this position, but states more clearly that an armed crusade is not necessary and likely also not preferred by the author, in its conclusion (cf. supra, "sine [...] militaribus armis").

This view of regarding the crusades as unnecessary positions itself in somewhat of a grey area between the strong opinions regarding a holy war against the Saracens in the 13th century. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, a shift in perception of the Crusades was taking place in the West during the 12th-13th century. There were strong pacifists such as Ramon Lull and Roger Bacon, who rejected all violence. On the other hand, there were strong supporters, such as Humbert of Romans, who were convinced that the Saracens could not be converted. Humbert spoke out against those who rejected an armed Crusade as a licit method of regaining the Holy Land or converting Saracens, but it is uncertain to what degree this would apply to *Notitia* and *De statu*. Most

²²⁶ Theoretically, naturally. As Daniel states: "There is no convincing evidence of debates against Muslims within Islam under anything resembling normal conditions. No doubt Muslims and Christians, when they did live side by side, normally refrained from discussing religion, as happens now; and, as happens now, each side may have retained a number of false ideas of the other in consequence," Daniel, *Islam*, 402-43. Polemics were a literary creation and would yield very little result in an 'normal' debate.

²²⁷ Daniel, *Islam*, 145.

researchers agree that ‘William’ (in both works) merely deemed an armed crusade unnecessary, without explicitly speaking out for or against it. The works do not proclaim a outspoken pacifist reaction to the Saracens.²²⁸

2.7 Influence and impact

Some final notes should be made on the (direct) influence and impact both works have had in their nachleben. This minor overview is based on Engels’ chapter on the *Wirkungsgeschichte*.²²⁹

Both works do not just differ in contents, but also in range of circulation. Mentions or clear influences of *Notitia* have only been found with three manuscripts and authors, in Germany, whilst *De statu*’s influence has been bigger, finding reproduction in French, Italian and English. Engels reports that one of the editors of *Notitia*, of the oldest surviving manuscript, is an unknown Franciscan friar, who edited and commentated on the text. The second author is the cardinal Nicolas of Cusa, who acquired a number of manuscripts for his work on non-Christian religions, under which was *Notitia*. He, however, does not make mention of William’s work in any of his writings, nor feels Engels that *Notitia* has had any influence on them. His Qur’ān citations are also based on Ketton’s translation of the Qur’ān, whilst he had *Notitia*’s better and more accurate translations at hand. Finally, the Dominican friar Felix Fabri of Ulm (1438-1502) has quoted and copied *Notitia* in two of his works: in his *Evagatorium in Terre Sancte, Arabice et Egypti peregrinationem* (on his pilgrimage through those lands between 1484-1488), and in his *De Sarracenis*, also with some adaptations.

De statu’s continuance has known a bigger influence and spread, with more impact. Firstly, Engels reports “einem Benutzer, der eigentlich keiner ist”, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, the Florentine Dominican friar who travelled in the East during 1288-1301. In the beginning of one of the manuscripts he is called an *editor*, but it is unclear whether this is meant as author or editor of the manuscript (Engels does not think Riccoldo to be the author of *De statu*).²³⁰ He is connected to the manuscript, but it is unclear to what degree. In spite of this unclear connection between the friar and *De statu*, many researchers have considered the work to have had profound influence on Riccoldo, with which Engels does not agree. The similarities and common points between Riccoldo’s works (e.g. in his *Liber peregrationis*) and *De statu* are part of contemporary popular currents, ideas and legends and do not imply a direct connection. Riccoldo’s biggest polemical work, *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, shows little similarities to *De statu* and

²²⁸ Engels 41; Mossman, “The Western Understanding,” 199, 202-203; Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 25; Tolan, “Saracens,” 204; O’Meara, “The Theology,” 92-93 (although O’Meara considers *De statu* also to be a critical voice of an armed crusade against which Humbert of Romans directed his commentary); Kedar, *Crusade*, 180-181. Throop is the only exception in stating that *De statu* does contain a rejection of violence, a pacifist approach cf. Throop, *A Criticism*, 122.

²²⁹ Engels 99-110.

²³⁰ Engels 74.

is closer to *Notitia*. Engels concludes that even if Riccoldo had come directly in contact with William's work during his stay in Acre (1288/89), he would have consulted *Notitia* and not *De statu*. Two other Florentine authors who show influence from *De statu* are the merchant and politician Giovanni Villani (ca. 1276-1348), who has written a history of Florence, of which the first part consists out of a world history, including the origins of the Saracens, and the politician and humanist Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), who mentions *De statu* in one of his letters.²³¹ Finally, two Englishmen have also used *De statu*: John Mandeville, who wrote a travelogue that became popular in the second half of the 14th century, in which some references to passages from *De statu* are made. An unknown author edited this travelogue and other works into a French frame tale in 1357, and *De statu* also was part of this narration. This tale was highly popular during medieval times and has known a variety of versions in different languages, and is conserved in more than 250 manuscripts.²³² Lastly, the chronicler Ranulph Higden (ca. 1290-1363) has also made mention of *De statu* in his history of the world *Polychronicon*.

Throop considers 'William of Tripoli' (*De statu*) and the renouncement of force ascribed to him to also have had an influence on later humanist-pacifists such as Erasmus (1466-1536).²³³ With *De statu*'s ideas present at the beginning of the humanist movement with authors such as Salutati, and bearing in mind not only the familiarity of humanists with many of the medieval currents and ideas, but also with the rising concern for a pacifist approach to Islam and a return to a peaceful, original Christianity in Europe, *De statu* indeed could have contributed to a new perception of Islam and the Muslims. The power of the Arab Saracens had started to disappear, but a new force, precluded in *Notitia* and *De statu*, had already risen: the Turks, who were to become the new principal enemies of the West.

Conclusion and final remarks

The findings regarding this thesis's aims of discussing the views on Islam, conversion and crusade in *Notitia de Machometo* and *De statu Sarracenorum* result in the following conclusions. Firstly, there are different authors for both works: *Notitia* is likely written

²³¹ A letter to Francesco Bartolini.

²³² Engels 107.

²³³ Throop 142.

by William of Tripoli, in 1271 in the eastern capital of the Latins Acre, whilst *De statu* is a heavily edited and adapted work based on *Notitia*, compiled in Europe at a later date (1273 at the earliest). The works differ in tone and message, but share some fundamental ideas which brought the author of *De statu* to using *Notitia* as the model for his work: the core elements of Islam are Christian, Islam is on the brink of collapsing (as foretold by the prophecies), the Saracens will convert to Christianity at the end of their faith and thus an armed crusade is unnecessary to recuperate the Holy Land or bring the Saracens to conversion. Whilst armed combat against the Saracens is simply deemed unnecessary, the treatises differ in the emphasis put on this and their approach to Islam. *Notitia* does not explicitly reject the use of force anywhere and is very polemical about Islam. It is the work of an author who refutes the ideas and beliefs of the Muslims in a very aggressive manner, interjecting his writing with insults, reproaches and vilifications. Its conclusion is one that calls on all Christian intellectuals to fight Islam on the fields of theology and philosophy in order to repel such wrong teachings and drag the infidels into the nets of Christianity. *De statu*, next to its focus on the history of Islam, omits most of these hostilities and emphasises the Christian elements in Islam in order to prove that the Saracens already bear Christianity in them. It does speak out more explicitly against an armed crusade in its conclusion and the general tone of the work leads to believe that the treatise does not just think it was not unnecessary, but also spoke out against the use of force (and the complicated reasonings of the philosophers). It calls upon a trust in the prophecies and the simplicity of Christianity to draw in the Muslims.

Whilst the influence of *Notitia* remained limited, its information, edited and adapted, lived on in a more positive form in *De statu*, which knew quite some popularity in its time, mainly due to its informative side. But it is not difficult to imagine that the more positive portrayal of Islam in *De statu* was part of a bigger current that preached a pacifist Christianity and an approach different from a polemical one towards Islam. The information and ideas William of Tripoli embedded in his *Notitia* laid the foundations for *De statu*, who in turn could build a different portrayal of Islam, and contribute to the new views and perceptions of the religion of Muḥammad that were rising in Europe and would continue to occupy and inspire the West in its new confrontations with the Muslims.

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