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that he would observe the tenor of the agreement with good faith, without deceit or evil tricks. [...] Having dismissed them, [the caliph] sent gifts to the legates as a sign of his royal liberality, which commended the prince so greatly by their magnitude and splendour that they left the presence of so great a prince delighted and joyfully returned to their own lands. [pp. 886-9]

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Peter the Chanter, *Summa on the sacraments and spiritual advice*

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Peter the Chanter was a theologian who taught in Paris between c. 1170 and 1197. He was part of a generation of theologians who took particular interest in practical moral questions, and he was active in campaigning for moral reform: he preached against heretics and influenced the future Pope Innocent III's (r. 1198-1216) Crusade policy. This extract comes from his last work, dating from sometime after 1190, a long treatise on sacraments and spiritual advice.

The *Summa* is unfinished, surviving as a disparate set of reports of the Chanter's theology lectures given over a number of years. We do not have resolutions to all the questions raised in it, and his students' opinions are sometimes interpolated into the texts. The second half, from which this extract is taken, is a long list of moral dilemmas which might confront Christians of all kinds. Here he considers the difficult choices faced by Christian subjects of Islamic rulers. Are Christians living under Islamic rule permitted to hold services which would normally be irregular, in view of their difficult circumstances? Do Christians sin mortally if they obey a requirement to participate in prayer in an Islamic place of worship, or if, under duress, they manufacture arms for the use of Islamic armies against Christians?

In the course of discussing the dilemmas faced by Christians living under Islamic rule, the Chanter makes three points about the Islamic faith: there are no images in Islamic places of worship, there is no equivalent to Christian sacraments in the Islamic faith and therefore the role of the Islamic imam (to whom Peter refers as *princeps*, 'the leader') is simply to lead the prayer. The imam thus does not have ritual authority in the same manner as a Christian priest.

The Chanter spent the whole of his life in northern France, and therefore had no direct experience of Islam. His knowledge most likely came from polemical treatises written by Christian theologians, such as Alain of Lille's *Contra paganos*. These polemics used Islam's faith in a unified God, its lack of images, and its rejection of sacraments as a means of ridiculing the faith and undermining its status

as a true religion. They characterized Islam as a heresy, that is, not a religion in its own right but a deviation from Christianity that had rejected a number of key Church doctrines.

The work is unusual in that it employs these same details about the Islamic faith as an argument for permitting Christians living in Islamic lands to pray in mosques. The Chanter's argument is that, a Christian who prays in a Muslim place of worship does not commit any formal blasphemy since Muslims worship the same God as Christians (even though they are mistaken about God's nature), they acknowledge no sacramental authority in the leader of the prayers, and there are no cultic images or other intermediaries between the individual worshipper and God. Since Islamic prayer is so simple in form, a Christian who participates does not directly take part in any deviant or heretical rites.

The final paragraph considers whether Christians sin if under duress they manufacture arms which will be used against Christians. At the Third Lateran Council (1179), Pope Alexander III (r. 1159–81) had forbidden Christians to supply arms, iron and lumber to Islamic forces. Nevertheless, there was a certain amount of ambiguity and debate about the matter. The Chanter raises this issue of culpability and duress with regard to Christian craftsmen working under Islamic rule. He does not provide an answer to the question but draws attention to this difficult moral-theological problem.

See further:

M.-T. d'Alverny, *La connaissance de l'Islam dans l'Occident médiéval*, Aldershot, 1994.

O.R. Constable, 'Clothing, Iron, and Timber: The Growth of Christian Anxiety about Islam in the Long Twelfth Century', in T.F.X. Noble and J. van Engen (eds), *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth-Century*, Notre Dame IN, 2012, 279–313.

E. Corran, *Lying and Perjury in Medieval Practical Thought: A Study in the History of Casuistry*, Oxford, 2018.

This translation is based on Petrus Cantor, *Summa de sacramentis et animae consiliis*, ed. J.-A. Dugauquier, 5 vols, Louvain, 1954–67, vol. 3/2a §219.

Many Christians live among Saracens in servitude to them, and do not dare to celebrate mass except at night. Do they sin in celebrating mass in this way?

[We reply:] I do not believe so, since their difficulty excuses them.

Saracens pray to one God and abhor idolatry to such an extent that they have no images in their temples, nor any seat,¹³⁰ nor do they make any sacrifice;¹³¹ instead they only pray there. When it is necessary for Christians to enter the temples, and when the leader has knelt in prayer, all those with him are required to bend their knees as well;

¹³⁰ No equivalent to a bishop's throne. The Chanter is making a point about the lack of sacramental authority among Islamic religious leaders.

¹³¹ There are no sacraments.

this is their custom. Do the Christians then sin if they pray with them, since they pray to one God like us, the same God to whom we pray?¹³²

We reply: if this could take place without scandal, they would not sin.¹³³

Again, they [the Christians] in their misery do not have anointed priests, nor can they have them, particularly those who are far away. But they choose someone from amongst themselves whom they obey in those matters which pertain to faith, and call him pope. He only lays his hand on the one he wishes to make a priest. Is he [truly] ordained? What is his status with regard to the substance of ordination? When this rite is administered by the bishop, at what moment can it be said that this man has first been ordained?

Moreover, almost all Christians living among the Saracens are forced to be smiths and manufacture arms for fighting against Christians. Do they commit a mortal sin in doing so? Are they required to suffer death rather than comply? It is certain that the weak are permitted to flee martyrdom as long as they do not have a flock which they are deserting.¹³⁴ But since these cannot flee, what should they do?

¹³² It is relatively rare for Western Christians to emphasize the commonalities between Islam and Christianity. In a letter sent to Al-Nāṣir, emir of Mauritania, in 1076, Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073–85) expressed the view that Christians and Muslims worship the same God, but it is unclear whether the Chanter was aware of this letter.

¹³³ The mediaeval concept of scandal was more specific than the modern sense of the word. It was the sin of leading others into sin by example. The Chanter is saying that it is permitted for Christians to pray in this fashion as long as their actions do not lead other Christians to doubt their faith.

¹³⁴ The spiritually weak. It was acknowledged that only Christian saints would embrace martyrdom, and all other Christians were permitted to seek their own safety rather than suffer death for their faith.