

Acculturation and Elimination: Europe's Interaction with the Other (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Century)

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This article examines the cultural contact between the core countries of western Europe and the European periphery. With the examples of Caffa, Ceuta and Dublin, it identifies the different methods and patterns utilised by persons from the core countries of Western Europe upon interaction with foreign peoples before the period of early modern expansion. The various types of interaction are discussed on the basis of Tzvetan Todorov's theses on European expansion in America. Were Europeans such successful conquerors because they were masters of differentiating techniques of transcultural hermeneutics? This is the key question we would like to address here.

Keywords: Late Middle Ages; acculturation; Otherness; European expansion; Todorov; Caffa; Ceuta; Dublin

In the spring of 1519, Hernán Cortés landed on the coast of Mexico with a fleet of eleven ships and 670 men. The governor of Cuba had sent him to explore the alleged gold-abundant mainland and to claim it for the Spanish crown. On 8 November, Cortés reached the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán. Although the Aztec ruler Moctezuma II received the foreigners warmly at first, the relationship between the Spaniards and Indians rapidly deteriorated. The capture of Moctezuma further inflamed the atmosphere. Violent conflicts soon broke out and half of the Spanish army fell when trying to flee the city during the *Noche Triste* on 30 June 1520. Nevertheless, Hernán Cortés soon returned, conquered Tenochtitlán and made the city the centre of the expanding Spanish colonial empire in Central America.¹

To this day, there is something puzzling about the capture of Mexico: how can it be explained that Cortés, with a few hundred men, was able to succeed in conquering the Aztec Empire with its several hundred thousand warriors? Normally, Moctezuma's hesitant manner, internal conflict among the Indian tribes, the Europeans' technical and military-based superiority and the transmission of germs are named as reasons for the Europeans' success. But do these indisputable advantages suffice for a complete explanation? In a well-known study, Tzvetan Todorov puts forward the argument that these factors could only be fully effective because of another phenomenon: the specific European style of interacting with a foreign culture. According to this argument, the Europeans were masters of differentiating techniques of a type of transcultural hermeneutics. These techniques were seldom of academic interest only, but could be used for a variety of purposes in different situations. The most

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1 For details on the conquest of Mexico, cf. Hassig, *Collision of Two Worlds*.

obvious situation was the conquest. For Todorov, the reason for this intellectual and practical flexibility lies in the medieval heritage of Europe. European culture is characterised by cultural heterogeneity and intercultural exchange processes in a unique way. This has led to the fact that, »consciously or not, its [the culture's] representative must make a whole series of adjustments, translations, and occasionally very arduous compromises which allow him to cultivate a spirit of accommodation and improvisation destined to play so decisive a role in the course of the conquest.«²

The theory of the special ability of the Europeans – meaning here the Latin Christians of western Europe – to interact with foreign cultures, or more specifically, to manage them, to subdue them both intellectually and practically and to come out on top can be discussed from different viewpoints.³ It can be questioned whether Hernán Cortés and his troops were actually representative of the Spanish conquest of the Americas or if the Spanish course of action in Central and South America was typical for the European conquests overseas.⁴ One could also ask if such a historical discourse leads to portraying non-European cultures as homogenous entities. From a medieval perspective, the importance of Todorov's thesis for research on the early modern period should not be examined here. Instead, the paper will focus on the European Middle Ages and question whether this epoch could have actually laid the foundation for Europe's interaction with the other after 1500 as well.⁵ The main question should therefore be whether there are actually specific European forms of interaction with the other. Can a discussion of the medieval situation reveal something to us about the character of western Europeans and their expansion?⁶

A question of this kind can only be approached with examples. Three cities were therefore chosen that lay on the outer edges or beyond the borders of Europe and were sites of intercultural contact in the late Middle Ages. Our tour through the periphery of Europe leads us from Caffa in the southeast to Ceuta in the southwest up to Dublin in the northwest. The three examples are intended to provide the empirical foundation needed to generally reflect on Europe's interaction with the other at the end of the Middle Ages.⁷

Caffa

The first site is the city of Caffa, on the southeastern coast of the Crimean Peninsula. The Genoese had founded the city after the end of the Latin Empire in Constantinople shortly after 1270.⁸ Their amicable understanding with the Byzantine emperor, whom they had helped on the throne only a few years prior, and with the Mongolian Khan of the Golden Horde had made the resettlement of the ancient port town possible. Until the handover to the Ottomans in 1475, the city of Caffa was the most important trading post for the Genoese on the Black

2 Todorov, *Conquest of America*, 109. On Todorov's later view on the interaction of peoples and cultures, cf. Todorov, *Angst vor den Barbaren*. On Todorov's idea of man, cf. Goodheart, Tzvetan Todorov's Humanism.

3 Osterhammel, *Kulturelle Grenzen in der Expansion Europas*, 102-103.

4 For a comparison of the Spanish actions in Central America with the Portuguese arrival in China in 1517/20, see Gruzinski, *Eagle and Dragon*.

5 For different examples of how the foreigner or the »other« was dealt with in urban environments especially, cf. Keene, Introduction.

6 Schneidmüller, *Fitting Medieval Europe into the World*.

7 On the European perception of foreign peoples in the Middle Ages, cf. Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China*; Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden*.

8 Balard, *Caffa e il suo porto*, 447.

Sea. In its glory days, it consisted of up to 20,000 inhabitants.⁹ The first signs of prosperity reached the city at the end of the thirteenth century, after the pope had forbidden trade with the Muslims and the *Pax Mongolica* provided for relatively open trade in Asia. In these decades, Caffa was the gateway for intercontinental trade, where, in particular, spices and silk from the East were traded for textiles and manufactured goods from the West. In the second half of the fourteenth century, however, regional trade with the Russian principalities and the Golden Horde became more prominent. Fur, grain and slaves were the most important commodities of this time.¹⁰ Caffa profited therefore from its position at the gateway of several trading routes in the east to Asia and in the north to Russia.¹¹ The Genoese had always been aware of Caffa's prominent position on the junction between Asia and Europe. They therefore named their outpost in the East *Genuensis civitas in extremo Europae*.¹²

The special geographic location led to the city being well-fortified. In the thirteenth century, it was surrounded by palisades and trenches, which nevertheless did not hold up against a Mongolian siege in 1308.¹³ Caffa was destroyed and had to be rebuilt in the following years.¹⁴ A great amount of time and money was invested in the new defensive fortification: a stone wall with trenches in front was built around both the old city centre and around the new part of the city during the fourteenth century. The outer of the two rings was more than five kilometres long. The success of these measures became apparent in the middle of the fourteenth century, when several Mongol attacks could be warded off. What is probably the most famous attempt by the Mongols to capture the city ended in 1346, with the well-known spreading of the plague into Europe.¹⁵ However, after 1453 and the takeover of the colony by the *Banca di San Giorgio*, expenditure in defensive fortifications petered out. When the Ottomans stood before the gates of Caffa in 1475, the opposition was only slight.¹⁶

A colourful mix of people lived together in Caffa, a mix in which the Italians from Genoa and the Ligurian coast were never the absolute majority;¹⁷ in fact, they weren't even the largest community there.¹⁸ Balard estimates that the number of Latin Christians (not only Genoese) was just 20% of the total population.¹⁹ Up into the 14th century, the Greeks were the largest ethnic group.²⁰ However, the Armenian community grew so rapidly that, at the beginning of the 15th century (which was also the point when they began to more strongly leave their mark literarily),²¹ they surpassed the Greeks in number and soon accounted for more than half of

9 Veinstein, *From Italians to Ottomans*, 223.

10 Slater, *Caffa*, 272. On the slave trade, cf. Meltzer, *Slavery*, 227-231.

11 Balard, *Caffa il suo porto*, 449-450.

12 Balard, *Genuensis civitas in extremo Europae*, 143.

13 Balard, *Caffa il suo porto*, 448.

14 On the topographic location and the fortifications of Caffa, cf. Balard, *Genuensis civitas in extremo Europae*, 143-145.

15 Slater, *Caffa*, 271.

16 Balard, *Notes sur la fiscalité génoise*, 225.

17 Slater, *Caffa*, 274.

18 Balletto, *Brevi note su Caffa genovese*, 454-455.

19 Balard, *Les Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 225.

20 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 229.

21 Rapti, *Recul ou modernité*, 47-48.

the total population. In the mid-fifteenth century, the consul of Caffa wrote to Genoa about this population shift: »The city is mainly inhabited by Armenians, who are obedient to the city authorities and are good tradesmen and therefore bring the city a good profit.«²²

The Greek and Armenian settlements were built around their own churches in the outer city, although they were also sometimes in the old city centre (which had originally been intended as a place of residence for Italians only).²³ Clearly, the Latins could never quite fill up the area set aside for them.²⁴ Both groups had various professions: there were tradesmen and shopkeepers among them, as well as merchants with international contacts. In addition to these two large communities of the Christian faith, there were also eastern Christians in Caffa, especially Georgians, Russians, Hungarians, Bulgarians and others, as well as a small Jewish community that lived in their own quarter, *Giudecha*.²⁵ The Turkish and Mongol community was partly in the city, partly in the walled outskirts of the city, which, based on the settlement area, was of a considerable size; it rarely appears in the written sources, however.²⁶ Overall, the Genoese strove to separate the ethnic groups geographically and to subject them to their observable authority by occupying the geographical centre of the city. The result was a »ville quasi-coloniale.«²⁷

In order to maintain their dominance over the non-Latin majority, the Genoese made use of a balancing and »see-saw« policy, which was not without its compromises. This is clearly shown, for example, in the urban framework of the city. During the rebuilding of the city after 1308, the Genoese attempted to separate the different ethnicities and to allocate each of them to closed-off areas in the city. With the Mongols and Jews, these measures likely succeeded without major effort. The eastern Christians, however, who had initially lived in homogenous groups around their churches as well, soon began to mix with the Latin people. They bought houses in the inner city, while at the same time several of the Latin people also settled in the outer city. Thus an urban framework based on social-economic possibilities began to superimpose an older framework based on ethnic considerations.²⁸

The Genoese also had to rely on the locals for the administration of the city, particularly after the colony passed into the hands of the *Banca San Giorgio*.²⁹ Local dignitaries (*caput centenarii*) presided over the Greek and Armenian parts of the city, which were named after the Genoese model *contrada*.³⁰ These dignitaries were appointed and paid by the Genoese. They were responsible for administrative and fiscal matters as well as for the recruitment of guards for the city walls.³¹ Translators and two scribes were hired for communication across the language barriers: a *scriba litterarum grecarum* and a *scriba litterarum saracenarum*.³²

22 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 225.

23 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 227.

24 Balard, *Caffa e il suo porto*, 448-449.

25 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 231.

26 Balard, *Genuensis civitas in extremo Europae*, 144.

27 Balard, *Habitat, ethnies et métiers*, 132.

28 On the organisation of the individual groups and the mixing of eastern and Latin Christians, cf. Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 233-238.

29 Balard, *Caffa e il suo porto*, 448.

30 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 229.

31 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 227.

32 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 233.

Proclamations by the public authorities were read out both in Latin and *in lingua tartarica*.³³ Furthermore, the Turks and Mongols who lived in Caffa and paid a special head tax were still under the control of the Khan of the Golden Horde as well. A special envoy protected the Khan's interests in Caffa, levying taxes in the Mongol community (*commercium canlu-chorum*) as one of his duties.³⁴ In the official Genoese documents, the distrust towards fellow non-Christian citizens appears repeatedly: it was forbidden for them to house Mongols from the Kingdom of the Golden Horde in the city, they were not allowed to accept presents from Mongols not from the city and they also could not carry weapons.³⁵ They were mostly referred to as Saracens and not as Turkic or Tatars. Religion, not ethnicity, was thus the decisive criterion for demarcation.³⁶

Despite all the compromises, the Genoese always kept their leadership role: representatives of other ethnic groups did not belong to the *familia* of the consul, but worked only in subordinate positions of the municipal central administration.³⁷ In order not to be dependent on local forces in the military sector, mercenaries were recruited in Latin western Europe. However, due to a lack of money, the Italians and the western Europeans were only half of the military contingent in the middle of the fifteenth century.³⁸ The superiority of the Italians and their separation from the local people was therefore an agenda that had been developed in the early years of the colony that, however, could not be maintained over several centuries. The cross-cultural mix which was the result of the steady coexistence of different ethnicities was too strong for that. The mutual influence was architecturally visible among the fourteenth-century church buildings, which displayed a uniformity in Caffa that embraced all denominations; their decorative elements originated to a large extent from the oriental-Seljuk stylistic elements.³⁹ People married across the faith boundaries as well. As is apparent from a 1381 payroll of the rowers on the municipality's ships, out of 87 men from the west, eleven (ca. 14%) were married to oriental women. This includes both Greek and Armenian as well as Mongolian women.⁴⁰ Due to the fact that the immigration of males from the west was significantly heavier, it can be assumed that marriages or other forms of relationships between Latin Christians and local women were widespread. Interestingly enough, there is no known example of a marriage between a western European woman and a local Crimean.

Finally, it cannot be excluded that the famous *Codex Cumanicus*, which includes a Latin-Persian-Cuman dictionary, originated in Caffa or was at least used there.⁴¹ Therefore, it can be said that overall, Caffa is an example of an extensive peaceful expansion of Latin Christians, who, as the minority, had to come to an arrangement with foreign peoples in a distant land, but also strove to preserve their Genoese-Catholic identity and leadership position. The situation in Ceuta on the Moroccan Mediterranean coast was completely different. We now come to our second example.

33 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 231-232.

34 On the diplomatic ties with the Golden Horde, cf. Petti Balbi, *Caffa e Pera a metà del Trecento*, 218-223.

35 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 232. The legal situation of the individual groups was often difficult as well. On this, cf. the examples from: Balletto, *Caffa genovese al fine del Trecento*.

36 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 232.

37 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 235.

38 Balard, *Orientaux à Caffa au XVe siècle*, 235-236.

39 Bulgakova, *Islamisch-christlicher Kulturkontakt im nördlichen Schwarzmeerraum*.

40 Balard, *Genuensis civitas in extremo Europae*, 148.

41 Schmieder, *Welt des Codex Cumanicus*, 289.

Ceuta

On St. Jacob's Day in 1415, the Portuguese fleet went on a military expedition. King John I led the endeavour himself, and several of his sons were also on board the ships. The royal fleet navigated through the Strait of Gibraltar and, on 21 August, dropped anchor off the Moroccan coast.⁴² Despite a storm that made disembarkation difficult, the Portuguese stormed and conquered the Muslim city of Ceuta that day.⁴³ Until then, the city, which was on a peninsula, had been one of the most important trade ports on the Maghrebi coast and was equally controlled by Muslim and Christian ships. In addition to its position as a centre of trade, control of Ceuta was strategically important, as the strait between the Mediterranean and Atlantic could be controlled from the city.⁴⁴

In the days after the conquest, the Portuguese plundered the city. The Muslim population of approximately 20,000 people was killed. The only people who escaped death were those able to flee inland in time.⁴⁵ In contrast to earlier expeditions, King John I decided not to leave the plundered Ceuta immediately, but instead to occupy it permanently and make it an outpost of his empire. Entrusted with this task was the king's son Henry, who began his career as a promoter of maritime expansion with the journey to Ceuta, a journey which gave him his nickname »the Navigator«. ⁴⁶ However, supplying the city proved to be difficult. There was a lack of money and people. In order to permanently maintain the desired contingent of 3,000 men, convicts, who could trade their prison sentence or galley slavery for military service in exile, were soon sent to Ceuta.⁴⁷ In spite of this, the desired contingent was never reached.⁴⁸ To financially support the exclave, special taxes were imposed nationwide and a *Casa de Ceuta* was founded with its headquarters in Lisbon. It was the model for all subsequent establishments of this type for overseas territories.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Ceuta remained a losing transaction for the Portuguese crown during the entire fifteenth century.⁵⁰

The plundered city was completely taken over by the Christian conquerors. All mosques were converted into churches.⁵¹ The first monks from the Franciscan order soon settled in the city, which Pope Martin V made into a diocese in 1418.⁵² As of 1451, the Dominicans also had a settlement in the city,⁵³ and, in the sixteenth century, the Jesuits did as well.⁵⁴ The concern for the Church and for Christianity had accompanied and shaped the conquest of Ceuta from the very beginning. The Portuguese king himself stylised his campaign as a crusade and as a continuation of the Reconquista.⁵⁵ At the Council of Constance, Portuguese envoys

42 Vogt, *Crusading and Commercial Elements*, 287.

43 Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 24.

44 Selentiny, *Aufstieg und Fall*, 21.

45 Paviot, *Les Portugais et Ceuta*, 430.

46 On the administration of the city, cf. Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 99-107.

47 For the sentences for which one could be sent to Ceuta, cf. Paviot, *Portugais et Ceuta*, 430-431.

48 Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 53.

49 Paviot, *Portugais et Ceuta*, 428.

50 Vogt, *Crusading and Commercial Elements*, 298-299.

51 In the *Crónica da Tomada de Ceuta*, *Gomes Eanes de Azurara* gives an account of the first mass held in the former mosque of Ceuta. cf. Newitt, *Portuguese in West Africa*, 25-28.

52 Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 143.

53 Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 150.

54 Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 153.

55 Vogt, *Crusading and Commercial Elements*, 287.

praised the capture of the city and described it as the »gateway to the control and conversion of all of Muslim Africa.«⁵⁶ The pope agreed and published several Crusade Bulls in which he promised the conquerors and their supporters full indulgences. This interpretation of conquest, with the help of the pope and court chronicles, would continually accompany further expansion – and not only that of the Portuguese.⁵⁷

In addition to religious motives, the attack on Ceuta was also based on political and economic interests. The city was a rich centre of trade and an endpoint of the caravan routes from the gold countries in the south of the Sahara.⁵⁸ The Portuguese chronicler Gomes Eanes Zurara documented the belief of the economic prosperity of Ceuta when he characterised the city as a »big, rich and beautiful city« in the mid-fifteenth century.⁵⁹ This assessment was likely somewhat exaggerated, as Ceuta was not an interregional trade centre.⁶⁰ However, – and this was not an isolated case in the history of European expansion – these were the dreams and images of the fabulous wealth of foreign countries that fired the imagination of the explorers and conquerors and led them to become crusaders. Henry the Navigator held tight to Ceuta and, in the following years, supported all attempts at expanding Portuguese rule in North Africa. Morocco remained his most important area of activity before the expeditions in the Atlantic. His goal was to conquer North Africa and »win it back« for Christianity.⁶¹ This plan was more important than the interaction with the local peoples. In the years after 1415, the Portuguese pushed the Muslims who lived on the periphery of the city farther and farther out. An uninhabited barrier arose between the religious communities.⁶² However, the Portuguese continued to maintain diplomatic contacts and trade relations with the Muslim empires in the western Mediterranean. Furthermore, Ceuta was not always a completely monoethnic city. At times, the city formed a place of refuge, especially for Moriscos and for converted Sephardic Jews who had fled from the Iberian Peninsula before the Inquisition.⁶³ Like many other port cities, Ceuta also attracted a bright mix of traders and sailors from all of Europe.⁶⁴ However, this mix of people was hardly reflected in the city's administration.⁶⁵

Ceuta was therefore not a peaceful area of contact like Caffa was, but instead was completely integrated into the governmental and economic system of the Portuguese kingdom. The local people were forced to flee or were murdered. An intercultural coexistence, such as in Caffa and in many places on the Iberian Peninsula itself, was ruled out from the very beginning. The model of Ceuta is therefore fundamentally different from the model of Caffa. A third type of path was taken in Dublin, our last example.

56 Witte, *Bulles pontificales et l'expansion portugaise*, 689-690.

57 Paviot, *Portugais et Ceuta*, 429.

58 Vogt, *Crusading and Commercial Elements*, 290-292.

59 Eanes de Azurara, *Conquête de Ceuta*, 15.

60 Vogt, *Crusading and Commercial Elements*, 298.

61 Selentiny, *Aufstieg und Fall*, 34-35.

62 Gozalbes Cravioto, *Las fortificaciones de la Ceuta medieval*, 402.

63 Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 66-70.

64 Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 64-65.

65 For the large number of different nations in Ceuta around 1600, cf. Mendes Drumond Braga and Drumond Braga, *Ceuta Portuguesa*, 177-178.

Dublin

At first glance, Ireland does not necessarily seem to be a border region of Europe, but rather a part of Latin Europe. However, in the Middle Ages, this was only true for the religious organisations, and even there, the Irish church first placed itself under the dominion of Rome in the twelfth century (if only formally).⁶⁶ Until then, the Irish church had operated as independent organisation, which differed from the western Roman Church through the strong monastic element in particular. However, Ireland showed itself as a border region much more in the societal domain than in religious matters. If the term »Latin Europe« is placed in a wider context and not only describes a religious dimension but an entire model of society that defines itself through commonalities such as the development of the feudal system or the significance of the Roman heritage in the legal or linguistic sector, then Gaelic-Irish society appears to be significantly outside of this system. Irish society is characterised by the high significance of clanship, its own legal and literary tradition and a strong isolation from the rest of Europe. In Gaelic areas, after a short time, the Latin language lost its importance⁶⁷ compared to the Irish language.⁶⁸ It wasn't until the Anglo-Norman conquest in the twelfth century that defining characteristics of Latin Europe, such as the feudal system, arrived on the island. However, these characteristics only caught on in the areas under undisputed Anglo-Norman rule at first. Many areas of Ireland remained almost completely untouched by them for centuries. When these parameters are considered, Christian Ireland can be regarded as a border region of Latin Europe.

In 1169, Anglo-Norman nobles travelled from south Wales to Ireland in support of a local Irish king and conquered a part of the island, thanks to their military superiority.⁶⁹ The immigrants spoke French and belonged to an international feudal upper class. Some of these nobles also had property in Wales, England, Normandy or southern France.⁷⁰ They did not fight for any crown, but rather to expand their own property. However, as they were vassals of the English king Henry II, Henry came to Ireland in 1171, accepted the homage of his barons and governed church matters at a synod.⁷¹ As of this visit, Ireland was classified as a lordship of the English king, despite only periodic rule.⁷²

The Anglo-Norman barons covered the land with a network of feudalism, at the same time as the representatives of the crown attempted to create a sweeping administrative organisation. However, the only areas that were actually conquered and ruled over were individual, relatively populated fertile regions in the east and south of the island, which slowly became smaller with time. The centre of the Anglo-Norman and later English rule was the *Pale*, an area around Dublin that was the most heavily influenced by the new Anglo-Norman rule.⁷³

66 Melville and Staub, *Enzyklopädie des Mittelalters*, vol. 2, 343.

67 Hughes, *Irish Church*, 645.

68 On the history of Latin in the early Middle Ages in Ireland, cf. Ó Cróinín, *Hiberno-Latin Literature to 1169*. On the development of the Irish language, cf. Russell, »What was the best of every language«; Scott, *Latin Learning and Literature in Ireland*, 934-936.

69 Duffy, *Ireland's Hastings*, 77-80.

70 For a successful case study on the de Verduns, one of these Norman families who had property in Normandy, in England, in Ireland and in Wales, cf. Hagger, *Fortunes of a Norman Family*.

71 Duffy, *Ireland's Hastings*, 80-81.

72 For the exact sequence of events, cf. Martin, *Allies and an Overlord*.

73 On the development of the *Pale* in the fifteenth century and its continuous decline, cf. Cosgrove, *Emergence of the Pale*.

On large parts of the island, the old Irish clans still retained their power. The Gaelic legal system and the traditional social structure with the clientelism of the big families continued: the native Irish were still not considered subjects of English law, but were classified as serfs (*betaghs*).⁷⁴ In fact, the English crown only had direct influence on the happenings in Ireland on the east coast. Even there, however, many nobles pursued a very independent policy that often conflicted with the royal policy. Individual noble families, especially the Earls of Kildare, used the weakness of the English monarchy in the time of the War of the Roses and the early Tudor period to free themselves from it.⁷⁵

In the course of the fourteenth century, the clear lines between natives and immigrants dissolved. In Gaelic regions where the conquerors had little power and could hardly maintain cohesion with their own people, they soon married into the big Irish families and conformed to the language, clothing, manners and ways of life of the Irish people.⁷⁶ These families, some completely immersed in Gaelic society, also opposed every strong influence the English king had and were referred to as *English Rebels*. They were thus not only put on the same level as the *Irish Enemies*, the Gaelic Irish, but often despised even more strongly.⁷⁷

Since the late thirteenth century, the Irish Parliament, which was only responsible for the English inhabitants of Ireland, and the English Parliament had issued laws against these »degenerated English« who spoke Gaelic, associated with the Irish bards, rode without saddles, wore their hair and beard in the Irish way and dressed like the locals.⁷⁸ However, the sanctions (through which the Irish Parliament wanted to enforce the unity of the Anglo-Norman barons) were only effective in a core area of English colonisation. Even there, they usually only retained their effect for a short time. In the places where individual immigrants lived among the Irish, the immigrants assimilated as they had before. As the power of the Anglo-Norman feudal lords disappeared, Gaelic society regenerated and re-established itself in the territories that had previously been lost. Even on the borders of the *Pale*, there were hardly any actual distinguishing factors between the English and Irish in the fifteenth century. Even strict regulations on clothing changed this only slightly.⁷⁹

The outpost of English rule was Dublin, which had been fortified as a naval base in the ninth century by the Vikings⁸⁰ and had presented itself as a multicultural city where Scandinavian and Irish elements intermixed from the very beginning. The ethnic shifts in Ireland have characterised the development of the city since this time. After the Anglo-Norman invasion, Henry II granted the biggest city of Ireland (which was already considered the centre of the island) a town charter,⁸¹ meaning Dublin became the first city in Ireland to be directly under the English crown. The late medieval image of the city was strongly shaped by the English: The cathedral *Christ Church (Holy Trinity)* and Dublin Castle (start of construction:

74 Lydon, *Making of Ireland*, 73.

75 On the hegemony of the Earls of Kildare, which was not crushed until the reign of Henry VIII, cf. Quinn, *Aristocratic Autonomy*; Quinn, *Hegemony of the Earls of Kildare*.

76 Lydon, *Making of Ireland*, 80.

77 Clarke, *Decolonization*, 180.

78 The *Statute of Kilkenny* offers an example of this, cf. *Statute of the Fortieth Year of King Edward III*, trans. Hardiman.

79 On this cf. Cosgrove, *Gaelic Resurgence and the Geraldine Supremacy*.

80 Halpin, *Development Phases in Hiberno-Norse Dublin*, 102-104.

81 Duffy, *Ireland's Hastings*, 69 and 76; Watt, *Dublin in the Thirteenth Century*, 152.

1204) were built in the decades after the invasion.⁸² A new bridge over the Liffey was built (ca. 1215) and the harbour area was raised, meaning that the area for building was expanded.⁸³ Suburban settlements developed on all sides of the city.

The coexistence of different ethnicities in Dublin clearly reflected the English-Irish history of the late Middle Ages. In spite of the acculturation processes in many parts of the country, in Dublin, the English tried to keep to themselves. After 1171, the Celtic-Scandinavian population, which was composed of a mixture of Gaelic Irish and descendants of the Vikings from Scandinavia (and is usually referred to as Hiberno-Norse), were soon pushed to the suburb of Oxmantown (east-man-town) beyond the bridge.⁸⁴ In the time that followed, the Anglo-Norman citizens who settled within the walls acquired a series of rights and privileges that the larger English cities had also received.⁸⁵ The seat of the archbishop had been exclusively occupied by Englishmen since the invasion. Immigrants from France and Flanders also settled in the city, as did an Italian community in exile, which consisted mainly of members of the great Italian trading companies. They had come to Ireland in the service of the pope and king and dominated the Irish involvement in the international trade of goods and money, at least in the thirteenth century.⁸⁶

Citizenship and membership in all the trade guilds were limited to people of »English« origin.⁸⁷ The practice of separating the ethnic groups was intensified again in the mid-fifteenth century, as the influence on large parts of the country was steadily weakening. At that time, it was stipulated that all Irish who lived in the city had to leave within four weeks. Only those who had already lived in Dublin for more than twelve years were exempt. If they did not comply, there was the threat of property confiscation and imprisonment. The Irish were only allowed to reside in the *Irishtown* outside of the city walls. However, in actuality, many Irish likely lived in the city and its sprawling suburbs.⁸⁸ In the sixteenth century, there were once more so many Irish in the city that the English complained that Irish Gaelic would compete with English as the everyday language.⁸⁹

The situation in Dublin thus shows parallels with both Caffa and Ceuta. As in the North African city, the Latin Christians came to Dublin as military conquerors and expelled the local inhabitants from the city. As in Caffa, despite multiple attempts to implement strict ethnic divisions, a limited coexistence and co-operation with the oriental and Gaelic Christians was nevertheless allowed in the subsequent period. Unlike the southern cities, however, Dublin was the outpost of extensive colonisation and was the undisputed centre of the island.⁹⁰

Which conclusions can now be drawn from these three examples and how can the late medieval interactions of Latin Christians with peoples at or beyond the borders of Europe be characterised?

82 Simms, *Dublin*, 252-254.

83 Wallace, *Dublin's Waterfront at Wood Quay*.

84 Simms, *Dublin*, 249 and 252. On the significance and development of Oxmantown, cf. Purcell, *City and the Suburb*.

85 Watt, *Dublin in the Thirteenth Century*, 152-153.

86 Down, *Colonial Society and Economy*, 483-484.

87 Watt, *Dublin in the Thirteenth Century*, 156.

88 Watt, *Dublin in the Thirteenth Century*, 156-157.

89 On the significance of the Irish in Dublin and its suburbs, cf. Purcell, *City and the Suburb*, 203-206.

90 Watt, *Dublin in the Thirteenth Century*, 151.

Conclusion

For the description and interpretation of the interaction between Latin Christians and other peoples or religions in the late Middle Ages, four particularly important points become apparent:

1. The Latin Christians had a type of superiority thinking. Other peoples and religions were classified as inferior. Both ethnic and religious criteria could be used as factors of differentiation and shape intercultural interactions. Examining the history of the perception of the foreigner can provide support for this observation.⁹¹ However, even the mere portrayal of the concrete situations of interaction and their effects illustrate this idea. Based on this type of foundation, war, conquest, separation and murder could be considered reasonable treatment towards non-Christians and Christians alike. Incidentally, the categories of distinction and the mechanisms of repression that were practiced on the borders of Europe do not appear to have differed significantly from the practices within the continent.⁹²

2. Interaction with foreign peoples did not only create categories of inclusion and exclusion, but also contributed to identity formation. Through these interactions, cultural-religious entities as well as differences between civilising entities were constructed and interpreted as God-given facts. Latins, Franks, Genoese, Portuguese and English were such categories of descriptions for one's self; Greeks, Saracens, Moors, Tartars and Irish were usually pejoratively-used descriptions for others. Europe and Roman Catholic *christianitas* were also terms and images that were used in this identity discourse. The essential understanding of people, culture and religion served to order the world and to legitimise one's own actions. All forms of transcultural existence were suppressed or explicitly fought against. Even in areas of contact, clear-cut borders were sought.

3. When Christians of western Europe left their homelands and made contact with other peoples, it was due to various motives. Always present and at the forefront was the pursuit of political power and material gain. While the royalist historiography of Portugal highlighted the spread of Christianity, Alvise Cadamosto, an Italian in Portuguese service, spoke more of the honour and gain that drove him and his fellow sailors.⁹³ The regulations in the border areas of Europe led to proto-colonial economic systems in which the periphery was oriented towards the centre. This is easy to see in Ireland, whose surplus – in times when it was achieved – was immediately sent to England to finance the king.⁹⁴ Therefore, in the mid-sixteenth century at the latest, Ireland became a sort of testing ground for the later colonial economic policies of England.⁹⁵

4. The variety of the forms of interaction – shown here by the three selected examples – is large and ranges from acculturation to annihilation. In practice, the interactions appear to have been strongly guided by pragmatic and success-oriented thoughts, in which the programmatic principles were rarely fully and permanently realised. This is accompanied by a flexible ability to adapt to the particular situation of interaction. For the description and typology of these culture contacts, models of historical research can be used. Jürgen Osterhammel's ideas on the cultural borders in the expansion of Europe also appear to be

91 Schmieder, »... sie sind ganz normale Menschen«.

92 On how minorities were dealt with in the German-speaking realm, for example, cf. Schmieder, *Various Ethnic and Religious Groups*.

93 Cadamosto, *Cadamostos Beschreibung von Westafrika*, chapter 2.

94 Lydon, *Expansion and Consolidation of the Colony, 175-178*.

95 On the economy of Ireland around 1600, cf. Butlin, *Land and People*.

helpful for the topic of medieval relations. Osterhammel includes the following forms in the basic repertoire of the interaction with the foreigner: inclusion, accommodation, assimilation, exclusion, segregation, extermination – and states that the Europeans had practiced each of the six basic forms in the process of expansion.⁹⁶ Such taxonomy of forms of cultural interaction could also be helpful for medieval research.

Lastly, there remains the question: what is specific or perhaps even unique to the behaviour of western Europeans towards foreign peoples? Perhaps, along with Tzvetan Todorov, one could identify the adaptability practiced in certain situations as typically European and attribute it to the large European wealth of experience of intercultural interactions. Then one could also agree with Todorov's thesis that in the Middle Ages, the intellectual skills for cultural interactions were developed that were important for the early modern expansion. On the other hand, the question arises of whether expanding powers in all time periods – such as the Romans and Chinese of Antiquity or the Arabs and Mongols in the Middle Ages – behaved in similar pragmatic, adaptable and success-oriented ways. The constant interactions with foreign cultures and their situation-dependent forms appear to have belonged to the history of every civilisation. There is also the question of whether »the Latin Christians« are even a reasonable subject of study. With this question, the field of medieval studies faces a problem that early modern research is also familiar with when analysing the differences between Spanish, English and French expansion in America.

Therefore, Todorov's hypothesis does not seem entirely convincing for the Middle Ages. However, it has – and this is a distinguishing feature of a good thesis – the potential to raise further awareness of the issue, to encourage the comparison between European and non-European expansion methods and to strengthen epoch-spanning collaboration in the field.

96 Osterhammel, *Grenzen*, 121.

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