

Struggling with Fear?

Emotions in Medieval Travel Accounts about the Mongols


Abstract The mendicant travel accounts to Asia, namely those of John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck, express their fear of the Mongols. The paper demonstrates how understanding such emotional expressions within their travel accounts can help us broaden our understanding of these particular texts. Following Barbara ROSENWEIN's theory of emotional communities, the paper suggests distinguishing between two different emotional communities and two systems of feelings that meet, combine, and even clash within one travel account – the audience's emotional community and the traveller's emotional community. Besides the problem of their mutual interaction within one text, the paper also examines expressing emotions in a subordinate position by using James SCOTT's theory of 'hidden transcripts'.

Zusammenfassung Die Berichte der Franziskaner Johannes von Plano Carpini und Wilhelm von Rubruck über ihre Missionsreisen nach Asien zeugen von ihrer Angst vor den Mongolen. Der Beitrag zeigt, wie der Einblick in Ausdrücke von Emotionen unser Verständnis dieser Reiseberichte erweitert. In Anlehnung an Barbara ROSENWEIN'S Theorie der emotionalen Gemeinschaften wird versucht, zwischen zwei verschiedenen emotionalen Gemeinschaften und zwei Gefühlssystemen zu unterscheiden, die innerhalb eines Reiseberichts auftreten, kombiniert werden oder sogar aufeinanderprallen: der emotionalen Gemeinschaft des Publikums und der emotionalen Gemeinschaft des Reisenden. Zusätzlich zu ihrer wechselseitigen Interaktion innerhalb eines Textes untersucht der Beitrag unter Zuhilfenahme von James SCOTT'S Theorie der ‚hidden

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transcripts‘ auch, wie Emotionen in einer sozial untergeordneten oder zumindest heiklen Position (wie der von Missionaren in einer fremden Gesellschaft) ausgedrückt werden können.

1 Introduction

Emotions of uncertainty and fear of the Mongols had been expressed in medieval European sources soon after their emergence on the European horizon.¹ Even before the Mongols invaded eastern parts of Europe in 1241, accounts from Hungarian Dominicans reported the threat growing beyond the eastern borders of Europe.² In a letter from 1238, the Dominican Riccardus mentions that he and his companions did not proceed further east on their journey *propter timorem Tartarorum*,³ because of their fear of the ‘Tartars’.⁴

Expressions of these types of emotions in travel accounts are not surprising and might be considered quite natural. Nevertheless, studying expressions of such emotions in travel accounts can help us to achieve a better understanding of these accounts, their authors, and their experiences with foreign cultures and peoples. In this chapter, I argue that it is fruitful to explore references to emotions in travel accounts, and to attempt to understand them as expressions which reveal contextual information relating to the encounter between the narrators and their environment. This, in turn, opens up new perspectives that can help us to examine the sometimes conflicting voices that are found within a single travel account. Such new perspectives are helpful for studying images of other religious groups found in Christian medieval accounts, as these are often connected to particular, sometimes implicit, emotions. I further argue that certain terms connected to various religious groups are sometimes associated with certain emotions, which need to be taken into consideration

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 - 2 Charles W. CONNELL, Western Views of the Origin of the ‘Tartars’: An Example of the Influence of Myth in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century, in: *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 3 (1973), pp. 115–137.
 - 3 Heinrich DÖRRIE, Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 6 (1956), pp. 125–202, here p. 154.
 - 4 On the image of the Mongols in Western sources, see Gian Andri BEZZOLA, *Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht (1220–70): Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Völkerbegegnung*, Bern and Munich 1974, and Felicitas SCHMIEDER, *Europa und die Fremden: Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*, Sigmaringen 1994.

when analysing medieval travel reports. As theoretical tools for this analysis, I have adapted Barbara ROSENWEIN's theory of 'emotional communities'⁵ and James SCOTT's concept of 'hidden transcripts'.⁶

In the following chapter, I address specifically the accounts of the Franciscan friars John of Plano Carpini (1182–1252)⁷ and William of Rubruck (1215–1270),⁸ who travelled to the Mongols around the mid-13th century. Their accounts are among the most detailed Latin sources reflecting the encounters of Latin Christians with the Mongols in this early period when little was known about their culture, habits, and the potential danger they might represent to the Europeans. Comparing the two authors, whose travels closely coincided with each other, reveals important differences between their travel experiences, their approaches towards various religious groups, and how they related these in their accounts.

2 Travel Accounts as Records of Social, Cultural, and Interreligious Interaction

Before the analysis of the expressions of emotion in the above-mentioned Franciscan reports, one methodological remark is necessary. In reaction to SAID's theory of Orientalism, the research of historical travel accounts has strongly focused on the analysis of the authors' discourses of the 'Other', and the conceptual frames and terminologies they used to describe the cultures of the 'Other'. While this is certainly an inevitable step in the investigation, it can sometimes lead to ignoring the role of the 'Other' as an active participant in the described interaction. According to SAID, the orientalist approach "shares with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are because they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter."⁹ While there is a rich and ancient tradition of Western/European imagination about the East, this does not mean that the products of this imagination are rigid and not impacted by the context within

5 Barbara H. ROSENWEIN, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, Ithaca NY 2006.

6 James SCOTT, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven 1990.

7 For the Latin text of his report see *Sinica Franciscana*, ed. by Anastasius VAN DEN WYNGAERT, Quaracchi 1929, vol. 1, pp. 27–130, or *Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, Storia dei Mongoli*, ed. by Enrico MENESTÒ, Spoleto 1989. For the English translation of his report, see Christopher DAWSON, *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, New York 1955, pp. 3–72.

8 For the most recent edition of Rubruck's account see Guglielmo di Rubruk, *Viaggio in Mongolia*, ed. by Paolo CHIESA, Milan 2011. For the English translation of the report with notes, see Peter JACKSON, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck. His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255*, London 1990. The Latin text of his account is also published in VAN DEN WYNGAERT (note 7), pp. 164–332. For an earlier English translation, see also DAWSON (note 7), pp. 89–220.

9 Edward SAID, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the East*, Harmondsworth 1995, p. 70.

which they were produced. Even though we can find one-legged creatures in John of Plano Carpini's 'Historia Mongalorum'¹⁰ and John of Marignolli's (d. 1358/59) 'Chronica Boemorum',¹¹ the motifs are contextually different. In the case of Carpini, they refer to Asian oral lore; in the case of Marignolli, the motif serves as an example of the rational explanation of traditional European lore.¹²

Therefore, this chapter takes the position that any travel account, unless it describes a completely imaginary journey, is not a product of a 'self-generated discourse'.¹³ The account's travelling author recorded his interactions with local inhabitants, whose actions should be understood within the context of local culture, the particular historical situation in which they were produced, and in regard to the literary genre. In this respect, I follow the view of Joan-Pau RUBIÉS, who points out that "[i]t is therefore very important to understand properly what was actually involved in the process of observing and describing a non-European society."¹⁴ Behind the travel narrative (unless it describes an imaginary journey), there is actual interaction with the travelled land, its nature, the people, and their culture.¹⁵

RUBIÉS identifies three important aspects, which he considers crucial to the production of travel narratives. First, these are "the tradition in which the authors of descriptions had been educated, including of course the rhetorical models and the information that each of them could be expected to know"; second, "the social strategies and political interests in which they participated, considering in particular the context of production of each text" and, finally, "the experience of otherness in which the narrator may have been involved."¹⁶

While literary tradition, including *mirabilia*, certainly played an important role within the discourse of travel writing, personal experience also began to serve as an important and valid source of knowledge.¹⁷ Franciscan friars travelling to Asia in the 13th and 14th centuries were, to some degree, questioning the traditional opinions

10 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), pp. 273–274; John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. VAN DEN WYNGAERT (note 7), pp. 74–75.

11 Kronika Marignolova, ed. by Josef EMLER (Fontes rerum Bohemicarum III), Prague 1882, p. 509. For the English translation of selected parts, see Henry YULE, *Cathay and the Way Thither. Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China II*, London 1866, pp. 335–394. The most recent edition is Irene Malfatto (ed.), *Le digressioni sull'Oriente nel Chronicon Bohemorum di Giovanni de' Marignolli*, 2015, <http://ecodicibus.sismelfirenze.it/index.php/iohannes-de-marignollis-chronicon-bohemorum-excerpta-de-rebus-orientalibus> (30.7.2021).

12 Cf. Jana VALTROVÁ, *Beyond the Horizons of Legends. Traditional Imagery and Direct Experience in Medieval Accounts of Asia*, in: *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 57 (2010), pp. 154–185.

13 Joan-Pau RUBIÉS, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes 1250–1525*, Cambridge 2000, p. xiii.

14 *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

15 *Ibid.*, p. xiii–xiv.

16 *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

17 A notorious example is Roger Bacon, cf. Amanda POWER, *Roger Bacon and the Defence of Christendom*, Cambridge 2013, pp. 47–53.

regarding ‘unknown’ lands and they developed diverse strategies to reconcile potential conflicts between literary traditions and their own observations.¹⁸ This process also involved the ability to communicate with local informants and evaluate the information they provided.

Travel accounts, as defined by RUBIÉS, are ‘translations’ of the travel experience and the knowledge of the author into a textual message. The key question of his investigations is “under what conditions did travel literature actually become a form of translation?”¹⁹ Exploring the role of emotions in these accounts offers new ways to better understand this process. In the following text, I suggest how we can uncover the most obscure level of this interaction, which is the author’s experience with ‘Otherness’.

3 Emotional Communities in Travel Accounts

How can we explore emotions connected to travel if the written accounts are deeply bound with the values, wishes, and expectations of the intended audience of the text? There has already been abundant scholarship in the field of history of emotions,²⁰ and, in particular, the cultural history of fear.²¹ Barbara ROSENWEIN’s theory of emotional communities is especially fruitful with respect to this task. She suggests studying expressions of emotions in historical sources as messages that are targeted at certain audiences. These audiences create ‘emotional communities’, where certain expressions are meaningful. ROSENWEIN defines emotional communities as “precisely the same as social communities – families, neighbourhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships – but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover the systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they

18 Discussions about the role of literary tradition and personal experience in travel accounts are numerous: Michèle GUÉRET-LAFERTÉ, *Sur les routes de l’empire mongol. Ordre et rhétorique des relations de voyage aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*, Paris 1994, pp. 257–282; Scott D. WESTREM, (ed.), *Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination*, New York 1991; Peter JACKSON, *William of Rubruck in the Mongol Empire: Perception and Prejudices*, in: ZWEDER VON MARTELS (ED.), *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing*, Leiden, New York, Cologne 1994, pp. 54–71.

19 RUBIÉS (note 13), p. xviii. For questions related to the literary representations of the author / traveller see Susanna FISCHER, *Erzählte Bewegung. Narrationsstrategien und Funktionsweisen lateinischer Pilgertexte (4.–15. Jahrhundert)* (Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 52), Leiden, Boston 2019, pp. 39–42.

20 An overview of major trends in the field of emotion history is provided by Susan J. MATT, *Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the Inside Out*, in: *Emotion Review* 3 (2011), pp. 117–124.

21 Michael Francis LAFFAN and Max WEISS, *Facing Fear: The History of an Emotion in Global Perspective*, Princeton 2012; Joanna BOURKE, *Fear: A Cultural History*, London 2005.

make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize, and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore."²²

In terms of travel accounts, it is important to think of at least two different emotional communities. The first emotional community, which is identical to the intended audience of the account, including the possible patron, is termed 'the audience's emotional community'. The other community or communities encountered during the actual travel are less frequently addressed in the text. This second community could include a diverse mixture of people who interacted in some way with the travelling author and is referred to here as 'the traveller's emotional community'. While the audience's emotional community remains the same throughout each individual version of the text, the traveller's community varies depending on the circumstances of the travel. The traveller's emotional communities are formed by the companions of the travelling author, local guides, or anyone else with whom the traveller interacts. Any emotional expression is meaningful in the context of communication with either of the two emotional communities – either they address the feelings of the audience, who are expected to understand them, or they are meaningful within the context of the actual travel and refer to the traveller's experience and social interaction. Here I am especially concerned with the issue of emotions as signs which help us to identify these 'emotional communities', rather than with the question of how emotions are expressed, and which emotions are valued by particular communities.

4 Emotions on the World Map

When focusing on expressions of emotions recorded in travel accounts, we can find significant differences between reports related to travels to the Holy Land and the accounts of travel to Asia. The difference stems from the fact that Asia as described by medieval Christian travellers does not represent an 'emotional space' to them in the same sense as the Holy Land.

Places in the Holy Land are marked with Christ's presence, as described in the Gospels. The places of pilgrimage are linked to specific biblical events that prescribe the travellers' mindsets and emotions and provide the author with literary models. Although this does not apply to all itineraries of the Holy Land and pilgrim accounts, some of them contain this level of understanding of the sacred space as places of certain emotions. Travel accounts referring to Asia do not contain this level of emotional expectancy. A specific example of a travel account that clearly reflects the difference between a pilgrim account and a travel account of Asia is the report from

22 Barbara H. ROSENWEIN, Worrying about Emotions in History, in: *The American Historical Review* 107 (2002), pp. 821–845.

the Dominican friar Riccoldo of Monte Croce (1243–1320).²³ Riccoldo spent the last decade of the 13th century in Baghdad under Mongol rule. His ‘Liber peregrinationis’ demonstrates an interesting contrast between a pilgrim account and an Asian travel account.²⁴ Riccoldo’s physical journey around the holy places, which he undertook in the late 1280s and early 1290s, is interspersed with emotions that are revived through the reading and chanting of particular parts of the Gospels at specific places. From this perspective, ‘Liber peregrinationis’ also draws an emotional map of the Holy Land. With respect to the audience’s emotional community, the text describes how the pilgrims were moved to tears of sorrow or joy – such as when they visited the site at the Jordan River where John baptized Christ:

Ibi in festo Epifanie inuenimus congregatos Christianos ad baptismum et ad festum ultra decem milia ex omni populo et natione, ubi edificauimus altare iuxta fluuium ubi celebrauimus et predicauimus et baptizauimus gaudentes et flentes.

There on the Feast of Epiphany, we found over ten thousand Christians of every people and nation gathered together for baptism and the feast. There we built an altar beside the river on which we celebrated, and we preached and baptized with tears of rejoicing.²⁵

It would be an immense simplification to reduce emotions in pilgrim accounts to a mere revival of biblical events. However, the context of pilgrimage creates a particular template for the travel account, which encourages the expression of various emotions at various places. When thinking of discourses of emotions in the context of the Holy Land, one must understand the significance of the particular place to which they are related.

In contrast, travelling to Asia does not imply similar emotional priming. The regions of Asia abound in literary traditions with motifs of an ambiguous and paradoxical nature – the Garden of Eden, human monsters, as well as gold, precious stones, and the nations of Gog and Magog. None of these motifs are unequivocally connected to a specific place. Unlike a pilgrim account describing the Holy Land, the author describing an Asian journey can hardly expect his readers to understand emotions connected to certain places unless the author provides an explanation and the particular context to these emotions. Such an explanation or context could

23 Rita GEORGE-TVRTKOVIĆ, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq. Riccoldo da Montecroce’s Encounter with Islam*, Turnhout 2012.

24 Latin text in Riccoldo of Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient: Texte latin et traduction. Lettres sur la chute de Saint-Jean d’Acre. Traduction, ed. and tr. by René KAPPLER (Textes et traductions des classiques français du Moyen Âge 4)*, Paris 1997. English translation in GEORGE-TVRTKOVIĆ (note 23), pp. 175–227.

25 Riccoldo of Monte Croce, ‘Peregrinatio’, ed. KAPPLER (note 24), p. 54. Translation: Denys PRINGLE (ed.), *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land 1187–1291*, Farnham 2012, p. 369.

involve meeting people after days of lonely travel,²⁶ entering an impressively large Mongol camp (*orda*),²⁷ or a rare visit to a church building, which is linked with the author's great joy.²⁸

Expressions of emotions recorded in mendicant travel accounts of Asia are mainly connected to the physical experience of travelling and coming into contact with the local inhabitants.

In Riccoldo of Monte Croce's 'Liber peregrinationis', we can observe a shift between the pilgrim element, and the part devoted to the regions further east in Persia.²⁹ After Riccoldo concluded his description of the Holy Land, the text that follows is no longer structured as an itinerary of places, but instead becomes an ethnography of diverse religious groups, which he studied with the intention of finding ways to convert them.³⁰ Understanding this is of vital importance. When speaking of Asia, emotional expressions that would be meaningful to the audience's emotional community cannot be connected to specific places, but instead need to be connected to the people who inhabited these places.

A key aspect that influences the interaction between the traveller and local inhabitants is their 'religion'.³¹ We know that the authors related their emotions regarding their interaction with local inhabitants with respect to the audience's emotional community, which already had certain feelings towards various non-Christians. However, this does not mean that all authors and travellers shared a unified set of emotions toward these communities because we also need to consider the social situation and personal experience of the traveller. Revealing more about the traveller's emotional

26 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 68. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 110.

27 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 92. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 131.

28 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 134. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 165.

29 Juliane SCHIEL, 'Der "Liber Peregrinationis" des Ricoldus von Monte Croce. Versuch einer mittelalterlichen Orienttopographie', in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 55 (2007), pp. 5–17.

30 Riccoldo explicitly claims his intentions in his 'Five Letters on the Fall of Acre' (1291): "For you, O Lord, I left the world and entered the Order. For you I left the Order, so to speak, and came to proclaim you to the Saracens and Tartars." GEORGE-TVRTKOVIĆ (note 23), p. 145. Latin text in Martin M. BAUER, *Ricoldus de Monte Crucis: Epistole ad ecclesiam triumphantem* (Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 24), Stuttgart 2021, p. 98: *Pro te, Domine, dimisi mundum et veni ad ordinem, pro te dimisi ordinem, ut ita dicam, et veni te nunciare Sarracenis et Tartaris.*

31 It is beyond the scope of this study to address the issue of the conceptualization of a 'religion' in medieval mendicant accounts; here, it suffices to point out that we should reflect on the discrepancies between the medieval understanding (often, but not always, related to the term *lex*) and our modern concept. Cf. Peter BILLER, 'Words and the Medieval Notion of "Religion"', in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985), pp. 351–369; John BOSSY, 'Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim', in: *Past & Present* 95 (1982), pp. 3–18; Nathan RISTUCCIA, 'Lex: A Study on Medieval Terminology for Religion', in: *Journal of Religious History* 43 (2019), pp. 532–548.

communities can help us to understand which emotions were expressed and why, and also suggest why some information was omitted.

For example, it may have been difficult for the author to positively refer to people who were considered as ‘enemies of Christendom’. At the same time, the very same people were important sources of information or may have played a vital role during the author’s travel by providing material or other support. Thus, the author needed to bridge the discrepancies between the two discourses.

5 Fear of the Mongols, Joy with the Christians? Religious Communities and Emotions

The terrifying pictures of the Mongol invaders presented in ‘Chronica Maiora’ by Matthew Paris are well known and fully in accord with the contemporary image of the Mongols coming from Tartarus, or as the envoys of the Apocalypse.³² To a certain degree, knowledge of the Mongols’ impact and reports of their destructiveness obscure our sensitivity towards expressions of fear in travel accounts. It appears to be only natural that friars travelling to the Mongols feared them. However, a closer look into two Franciscan accounts by John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck reveals important details regarding what the friars claimed that they feared, how these fears affected their behaviour and interactions with the local people, and what this might mean for our understanding of their texts. These claims help us better identify the ‘audience’s emotional community’ and enable us to identify potential clashes between the systems of feelings in both the audience’s and the traveller’s emotional community.

The discrepancies become visible when analysing and comparing the accounts of these two Franciscans who travelled to the Mongols around the mid-13th century. John of Plano Carpini referred to his fears in the prologue to his report:

elegimus prius ad Tartaros proficisci. Timebamus enim ne per eos in proximo Ecclesie Dei periculum immineret. Et quamvis Tartaris vel ab aliis nationibus timeremus occidi vel perpetuo captivari, vel fame, siti, algore, estu, contumeliis et laboribus nimiis quasi ultra vires affligi, que omnia multo plus quam prius crediderimus, excepta morte vel captivitate perpetua, nobis multipliciter evenerunt, non tamen pepercimus nobis ipsis ut voluntatem Dei secundum Domini pape mandatum adimplere possemus, et ut proficeremus in aliquo Christianis vel saltem, scita veraciter voluntate et intentione ipsorum, possemus illam patefacere Christianis.

32 Susanne LEWIS, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the ‘Chronica majora’*, Berkeley 1987, pp. 286–287. Regarding the role of the Mongols in medieval European eschatological thought see Felicitas SCHMIEDER, *Christians, Jews, Muslims – and Mongols: Fitting the Foreign People into a Western Christian Apocalyptic Scenario*, in: *Medieval Encounters* 12,2 (2006), pp. 274–295.

[W]e chose first to make our way to the Tartars, for we were afraid that in the near future the Church of God would be threatened by danger from that quarter. And although we feared we might be killed by the Tartars or other people, or imprisoned for life, or afflicted with hunger, thirst, cold, heat, injuries and exceeding great trials almost beyond our powers of endurance – all of which, with the exception of death and imprisonment for life, fell to our lot in various ways in a much greater degree than we had conceived beforehand – nevertheless we did not spare ourselves in order to carry out the will of God as laid down in the Lord Pope’s mandate, and be of some service to Christians, that, at all events, having learned the truth about the desire and intention of the Tartars, we could make this known to the Christians.³³

Fear of the Mongols as enemies of Christendom and the necessity to discover more about them appear to be the motive for his journey. The fears listed in the prologue also indicate to the potential reader the content of the report. Overcoming various hardships certainly proved the traveller’s dedication to the Church and the Pope, and Carpini’s achievements sound hard-earned (which indeed they were).

Although the prologue suggests a great fear of the Mongols, it was assumed that it was generally safe to send envoys to the Mongols at the time of Carpini’s journey. According to Peter JACKSON, it was probably the statements of the Russian ‘archbishop’ Peter in 1244³⁴ which supported this idea. Indeed, there were four embassies sent by the Curia to the Mongols after 1244. Paradoxically, the biggest fear for his life that Carpini expressed in his report was not related to the Mongols at all:

Post hec dux predictus usque in Kioviam nobiscum unum servientem transmisit; nihilominus tamen ibamus semper sub periculo capitis propter Luthuanos, qui sepe insultum faciebant occulte quantum poterant super terram Ruscie, et maxime in locis illis per que debebamus transire. Et quia maior pars hominum Ruscie a Tartaris fuit occisa vel in captivitatem deducta, iccirco eis resistere potenter minime possent; a Rutenis tamen per servientem predictum eramus securi.

After this the Duke sent a servant with us as far as Kiev; however, in spite of this we went in continual danger of death on account of the Ruthenians, who made frequent and secret raids as often as they could upon Russian territory, especially in those parts through which we had to pass. And since

33 John of Plano Carpini, ‘Historia Mongalorum’, ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), pp. 227–228. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 3.

34 Peter JACKSON, ‘The Testimony of the Russian ‘Archbishop’ Peter Concerning the Mongols (1244/5): Precious Intelligence or Timely Disinformation?’, in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26,1–2 (2016), pp. 65–77, here p. 77.

the majority of the men-folk of Russia had either been killed or taken into captivity by the Tartars, they were unable to offer any effective resistance. However, thanks to the said servant we were safe from the Ruthenians.³⁵

Carpini and his company found that their status as envoys guaranteed them a certain level of protection among the Mongols. The Ruthenians were operating outside the scope of the Mongolian administration and thus represented an unexpected danger that could hardly be prevented. William of Rubruck, who travelled to the Mongols between 1253 and 1255, had a similar experience on his outward journey when travelling between the camps of Sartaq and Batu. For him, the biggest fear for his life arose because of various bands of marauders, including Ruthenians, Hungarians, and Alans:

In uia uero inter ipsum et patrem suum habuimus magnum timorem. Ruteni enim et Hungari et Alani serui eorum, quorum est maxima multitudo inter eos, associant se XX uel XXX simul, et fugiunt de nocte, habentes pharetras et arcus, et quecumque inueniunt de nocte interficiunt; de die latitant.

On the journey between Sartach and his father we went in great trepidation. For their Russian, Hungarian and Alan slaves, who are to be found among them in very large numbers, band together in groups of twenty or thirty and escape by night. They possess bows and arrows, and kill anyone they meet up with in the dark. During the day they lie in hiding.³⁶

Therefore, in both cases, their fear for their life was not connected with an organized Mongol rule, but rather with unpredictable bandits, or escaped captives. However, for Carpini, the Mongols represented a different kind of danger, which was connected to their 'idolatrous' customs. Carpini listed many such customs that had to be obeyed in order to avoid severe punishment or even the death penalty.³⁷ These rules, including prohibitions on stepping over the threshold of a yurt, entering certain areas, or putting knives into a fire were neither evident nor known to the travelling company and Carpini and his companions unwittingly transgressed some of these taboos. As Carpini discovered, the unconscious breaking of some of these rules by

35 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), p. 304. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 52.

36 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 88. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 127.

37 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), pp. 239–240. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 11. The example of the Dominican friar Ascelin of Lombardy, who because of his tactless behaviour was sentenced to death by the Mongols, but finally released, also shows that the Mongols tended to pardon foreign envoys for their unknowingness. There are only indirect accounts of his mission in 'Speculum historiale' by Vincent of Beauvais and in 'Chronica maiora' by Matthew Paris. Chapters which Vincent of Beauvais recorded as coming from the report of Simon of St Quentin were published separately as 'Histoire des Tartares', ed. and trans. by Jean RICHARD, Paris 1965, pp. 94–113.

himself or other envoys was pardoned by the Mongols and the usual punishment was not applied.³⁸ William of Rubruck had a similar experience during his journey, although, compared to Carpini, he was better informed about the Mongol customs. The potential danger of unintentionally violating some of the many Mongol customs was, nevertheless, a source of great stress for Carpini.

Carpini was worried that he might be forced into engaging in 'idolatrous' practices. When entering the khan's camp, the envoys carrying their gifts were made to pass between two fires as an act of purification and they were also expected to genuflect in front of the khan.³⁹ For Christians, the most problematic aspect of their interaction with the Mongols was the requirement that the envoys should bow to an idol of Genghis Khan and/or genuflect in front of it. Passing between fires or bowing to the living khan posed no great problem but bowing or genuflecting before the idol of Genghis Khan was considered by Christian travellers as idolatry and the friars tried to avoid it.⁴⁰ The second redaction of Carpini's account is more anti-Mongol in its tone and mentions that the Mongols might force others to follow their practices:⁴¹

Quid ulterius faciant ignoramus; presumitur tamen a quibusdam quod si monarchiam haberent, quod Deus avertat, faceret quod omnes isti idolo inclinarent.

What they may ultimately do we do not know, but there are some who are of the opinion that, if they became sole rulers, which God forbid, they would make everyone bow down to that idol.⁴²

As examples of the Mongol attitude towards Christians, Carpini related stories of Russian dukes who were executed for refusing to perform 'idolatrous' practices. The Russian duke Michail of Chernigov reportedly refused to bow to an idol and as a consequence was put to death.⁴³ Another example of practices that might challenge Christian laws was the story of a levirate marriage which the Mongols forced upon

38 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), p. 244. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 14.

39 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), pp. 237–240. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), pp. 10, 11, 14. Rubruck also relates this practice, see William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 284. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 241.

40 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. VAN DEN WYNGAERT (note 7), p. 119. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 63. Carpini himself does not say how he managed to avoid this practice, but his companion Benedict the Pole relates that the friars refused to worship the idol of Genghis Khan and were made to only bow their heads. DAWSON (note 7), p. 80.

41 Donald OSTROWSKI, Second-Redaction Additions in Carpini's Ystoria Mongalorum, in: Harvard Ukrainian Studies 14,3–4 (1990), pp. 522–550.

42 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), p. 238. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 11.

43 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), pp. 237–238. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), pp. 10–11, 15.

the widow of the Russian duke Andrew of Chernigov and his brother.⁴⁴ Carpini obviously related these stories under the influence of his informants, the Russian clerics who often acted as interpreters and sometimes as his main source of information about the Mongols:

Et nisi Dominus preparasset nobis quemdam rutenum qui vocabatur Cosmas, qui erat aurifaber imperatoris satis dilectus, qui nos in aliquo sustentavit, ut credimus, mortui fuissetus, <vel> nisi Dominus in aliquo alio nos iuvasset.

If the Lord had not sent us a certain Russian, by name Cosmas, a goldsmith and a great favourite of the Emperor, who supported us to some extent, we would, I believe, have died, unless the Lord had helped us in some other way.⁴⁵

One of the commissions of Carpini's embassy, besides establishing diplomatic contacts with the Mongols, was to remind the Russian bishops that "they should return to the unity of Holy Mother Church".⁴⁶ With this aim in mind, his report on Christianity in the East is free from criticism. Unlike Rubruck, Carpini did not emphasize the doctrinal or ritual differences between the Christians of the Latin West and other churches. His report urged all Christians to join forces against the idolatrous Mongols. This diplomatic and social context also prescribed this traveller's emotional community, which included Russian guides but excluded the Mongols.

This aim is also reflected in another feature of Carpini's report. When mentioning Christians at the Mongol court, Carpini avoids using the term 'Nestorians', which he certainly knew. The term 'Nestorians' occurs in Carpini's report within the list of nations that were subdued by the Mongols.⁴⁷ However, unlike other friars, he never labelled particular Christians at the Mongol court as 'Nestorians'. This can be explained either by ignorance or intention. In the time of Carpini, the knowledge of eastern Christian churches was limited, as Christopher MACEVITT noted, and the various groups of eastern Christians encountered during the Crusades were sometimes confused.⁴⁸ Information that connected the 'Nestorians' with Muslims was produced by Peter the Venerable in 1144, while around 1222 Jacques de Vitry also provided

44 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), pp. 238–239. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 11.

45 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), p. 324. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 66, cf. also p. 70.

46 DAWSON (note 7), p. 51. Cf. Peter JACKSON, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410*, Harlow 2005, p. 94.

47 John of Plano Carpini, 'Historia Mongalorum', ed. VAN DEN WYNGAERT (note 7), pp. 55–56 and 89–90. Translation: Dawson (note 7), pp. 20 and 41.

48 Christopher MACEVITT, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance*, Philadelphia 2008, pp. 102–106.

a brief summary of what he considered to be their teaching.⁴⁹ More attention was paid to Jacobites or other denominations, such as Armenians, but as MACEVITT has indicated, 13th-century Latin tractates about eastern Christians show a kind of ‘theological ignorance’, which concurred with his ideas of ‘rough tolerance’.⁵⁰

In the context of the Latin missions to Asia, we can observe a significant difference. In medieval mendicant accounts about Asia, the term ‘Nestorian’ was often associated with ‘heresy’, which induced emotions of disdain and rejection among the intended audience’s emotional community. These associations are evident from the accounts of William of Rubruck, as we will see later, and can be found in the report by Odoric of Pordenone,⁵¹ and the letters of John of Montecorvino.⁵² They considered ‘Nestorians’ as *schismatici et heretici*.⁵³

However, Carpini described the ‘Christians’ at the court of Güyük Khan in the following words:

Iste autem imperator potest esse quadraginta vel quadragintaquinque annorum aut plus, mediocris est stature, prudens est valde, et astutus nimium et multum serius, et gravis in moribus; nec unquam videt homo eum de facili ridere vel facere aliquam levitatem, sicut nobis Christiani dicebant qui assidue morantur cum eo. Dicebant etiam nobis Christiani qui erant de familia eius quod credebant firmiter quod deberet fieri Christianus, et de hoc habent signum apertum, quoniam ipse tenet clericos Christianos et dat eis expensas; Christianorum etiam capellam semper habet ante maius tentorium eius, et cantant publice et aperte, et pulsant ad horas secundum morem Grecorum, ut alii Christiani, quantacumque sit ibi multitudo Tartarorum vel etiam hominum aliorum; quod non faciunt alii duces.

The present Emperor may be forty or forty-five years old or even more; he is of medium height, he is very intelligent and extremely shrewd, and most serious and grave in his manner. He is never seen to laugh for a slight cause nor to indulge in any frivolity, so we were told by the Christians who are constantly with him. The Christians of his household also told us that they firmly believed he was about to become a Christian, and they have clear evidence of this, for he maintains Christian clerics and provides them with supplies of Christian things; in addition, he always

49 Anna-Dorothee VON DEN BRINCKEN, *Eine christliche Weltchronik von Qara Qorum*. Wilhelm von Rubruck OFM und der Nestorianismus, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 53,1 (1971), pp. 1–19, here p. 7.

50 MACEVITT (note 48), p. 25.

51 John of Plano Carpini, ‘*Historia Mongalorum*’, ed. VAN DEN WYNGAERT (note 7), pp. 424 and 442.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 346.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 424. Similarly, p. 442: *qui nequissimi sunt heretici*.

has a chapel before his chief tent and they sing openly and in public and beat the board for services after the Greek fashion like other Christians, however big a crowd of Tartars or other men be there. The other chiefs do not behave like this.⁵⁴

Either he did not identify these Christians as ‘Nestorians’, or he avoided the term completely. The latter would correspond to the overall aims of his report – to address Christian oikumene and mobilize it against the Mongols. Omitting the problematic label ‘Nestorian’ would have helped Carpini to promote his vision of Christendom as a (potentially) united power defending Christianity against Mongol idolatry.

Although Carpini might have ignored the label ‘Nestorians’, another Franciscan hardly could. When John of Marignolli travelled across Asia in the 1330s and 1340s, the label ‘Nestorian’ was already widely used in mendicant writing. However, when reporting his travels in India, he avoided labelling Indian Christians as ‘Nestorians’ and instead used the term *Christiani sancti Thomae*, the term these groups traditionally used for themselves. Marignolli is also the only medieval European friar to report fruitful cooperation with Indian Christians and, compared to other European medieval travellers, he provides the most detailed information about them.⁵⁵ Avoiding the term ‘Nestorians’ in his writing helped him to allay any suspicion that he was cooperating with ‘heretics’. In this case, the author described his ‘traveller’s emotional community’ in such a way as to take into account the emotions of his ‘audience’s emotional community’. It would seem that Carpini adopted the same approach.

Rubruck’s perspective of Christians in the Mongol Empire could not be more different from that of Carpini. Rubruck’s travel community included people with diverse religious backgrounds, even ‘pious idolators’,⁵⁶ but excluded ‘Nestorians’, from whom he tried to distance himself, even if he was staying with them. On many occasions, Rubruck portrayed the Nestorians as ignorant heretics with an excessive liking for alcohol:

Nestorini nichil sciunt [...] Et hinc est quod totaliter sunt corrupti: sunt in primis usuarii, ebriosi, etiam aliqui eorum, qui sunt cum Tartaris, habent plures uxores sicut Tartari [...] et sunt bigami [...] sunt etiam omnes symoniaci, nullum sacramentum exhibentes gratis [...] unde non intendunt dilatationi

54 John of Plano Carpini, ‘Historia Mongalorum’, ed. MENESTÒ (note 7), pp. 326–327. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 68.

55 EMLER (note 11), p. 496; Malfatto (note 11), p. 4. Marignolli also recorded local legends connected to the apostle Thomas, his mission in India, martyr death, and miracles occurring at his grave near present day Chennai. EMLER (note 11), pp. 507–508. About the premodern history of Indian Christians see Ian GILLMAN and Hans-Joachim KLIMKEIT, *Christians in Asia before 1500*, London, New York 2006, pp. 155–202; Susan VISVANATHAN, *The Christians of Kerala. History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakoba*, New Delhi 2004.

56 William of Rubruck, ‘Itinerarium’, ed. CHIESA (note 8), pp. 132–134. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), pp. 163–164.

fidei sed lucro. Vnde contingit, cum aliqui eorum nutrient aliquos filios nobilium Moal, quamuis doceant eos Euangelium et fidem, tamen per malam uitam et cupiditatem magis elongant eos a ritu Christianorum, quia uita ipsorum Moal et etiam tuinorum, hoc est ydolatrarum, innocentior est quam uita ipsorum.

The Nestorians there are ignorant. [...] And therefore they are completely depraved: Above all they are usurers and drunkards, and some of them, furthermore, who live among the Tartars, have several wives just as the Tartars have [...] and they commit bigamy as well, [...] they are all simoniacs who do not administer a single sacrament without recompense [...] have an eye not to spreading the Faith but to making money. The result is that when any of them rear the sons of aristocratic Mo'als, even though they instruct them in the Gospels and the Faith, nevertheless by their immorality and their greed they rather alienate them from the Christian religion. For the lives of the Mo'als, and even of the tuins (that is idolaters), are more blameless than their own.⁵⁷

He was also critical of their deceitfulness,⁵⁸ and their practice of sorcery and divination.⁵⁹ He tried to point out their faults in doctrine and practice whenever possible and presented himself as the only one capable of defending Christianity in the theological debate at the khan's court.⁶⁰

While Carpini feared that he might be forced into idolatry, Rubruck never mentioned any such concern. Despite his relative confidence among the Mongols, Rubruck also expressed a specific kind of fear:

In crastino mandauit michi quod uenirem ad curiam, afferens litteras regis et capellam et libros mecum, quia dominus suus uellet ea uidere; quod et fecimus, honerantes bigamunam libris et capella, et aliam pane et uino et fructibus. Tunc fecit omnes libros et uestes explicari; et cicumstabant nos in equis multi Tartari et Christiani et Sarraceni. Quibus inspectis, quesui si uellem omnia ista dare domino suo. Quo auditi expaui et displicuit michi uerbum; dissimulans tamen respondi [...]

57 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), pp. 132–134. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), pp. 163–164.

58 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), pp. 224–230.

59 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 194. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 199. Marco Polo also reported divinations performed by the Nestorians. The Travels of Marco Polo, including the unabridged third edition (1903) of Henry YULE's annotated translation, as revised by Henry CORDIER; together with CORDIER's later volume of notes and addenda (1920), vol. 2, New York 1993, pp. 241–242.

60 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), pp. 246–248. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), pp. 230–231.

The following day he [i.e. a Nestorian at Sartaq's camp] sent instructions that I was to come to court bringing with me the King's letter, the liturgical items and the books, as his master wished to see them. We obeyed, loading up one wagon with the books and the liturgical items, another with bread, wine and fruit. Then he had all the books and vestments displayed, while a great many Tartars, Christians and Saracens surrounded us on horseback. After he had examined them, he asked whether I intended to present them all to his master. When I heard this, I was struck with fear. But although I did not care for his question I concealed the fact and replied [...]⁶¹

A similar situation occurred at the camp of Chaghadai when Rubruck was asked by Chaghadai's interpreter about gifts:

Quesiuit quid portaremus domino suo; accepimus unum flasconem de uino, et impleuimus unum uernigal de biscocto et platellum unum de pomis et aliis fructibus. Non placebat ei, quia non ferebamus aliquem pannum pretiosum. Sic tamen ingressus cum timore et uerecundia.

He enquired what we were taking for his master. We took a flagon of wine and filled a jar with biscuits and a dish with apples and other fruit. He was disgruntled that we were not taking some valuable cloth. Nevertheless, in fear and diffidence, this was how we entered.⁶²

In these instances, it was not the encounter with the khan which caused him fear, but the prospect that he might fail diplomatically. Rubruck knew that the Mongols expected gifts from envoys coming to the court.⁶³ However, he had no such precious gifts. The only precious objects that he carried with him were liturgical items, vestments, and books, which he feared would be taken from him, thus complicating his journey for two reasons. First, he would lose important equipment for his mission. Second, by providing the Mongols with precious objects, he might signal the submission of his lord, the French king, to the Mongols, because 'gifts' were easily mistaken for a tribute.⁶⁴ This role of gifts to the Mongol rulers was already well known to Rubruck, so it was a signal he tried to avoid. He presented himself as a poor Franciscan friar who could not bring any gifts for the Mongols, although at the same time he was

61 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 74. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 116.

62 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 52. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 100.

63 William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), pp. 70–74. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 114–115.

64 Cf. Joinville, *The Memoirs of the Lord of Joinville*, trans. by Ethel WEDGEWOOD, London 1906, pp. 249–250.

carrying a substantial amount of precious liturgical items.⁶⁵ Rubruck's reference to fear signals that he cared most about presenting himself correctly with respect to his lord, King Louis, and about his identity as a Franciscan monk who keeps to the ideal of poverty.⁶⁶ Equally, while this expression of fear is obviously meaningful in relation to William's interactions with the Mongols, it could also indicate a link with the audience's emotional community. These fears about Mongol tribute, or the loss of these precious religious objects to the Mongols, may have been similarly felt and understood by King Louis himself, members of his court, or other individuals who William knew would read his report and could have been used to demonstrate the difficulty of William's position. Clearly, expressions related to 'fear' in the accounts of Carpini and Rubruck have very different connotations and can be understood with respect to the different emotional communities of the authors – both the traveller's and the audience's.

It is obvious that the expectations of the audience's emotional community might have completely obliterated the systems of emotions within the traveller's community. However, we can attempt to find out where the two emotional systems clashed. This is namely in those cases where the author's interaction with the locals might be considered problematic because of the locals' reputation among the audience's emotional community. We can find several examples where the authors of these texts try to bridge the gap between the perspectives of these two emotional communities. One of these is already discussed above, when John of Marignolli referred to his cooperation with Indian Christians and avoided the label 'Nestorian'. Another is his statement regarding Jews in Asia as sources of certain knowledge. In his chronicle, Marignolli relates information that he gained from his Jewish friends:

Ibi dicitur [sc. in libro Iosue] quod cultris lapideis facta est a Iosue circumcisio. Prudentiores tamen Iudeorum, cum quibus de ista materia contuli, qui sunt amici mei, sicut Iudeus Christiano potest esse amicus, dixerunt michi asserendo, quod nunquam de communi lege potuit fieri, nisi cum acutissimo rasorio et de ferro vel de alio nobiliori metallo sicut est es vel aurum, et concordant cum dicto Aristotelis in libro Probleumatum, qui expresse probat, quod incisiones facte cum ere vel aureo cultello citius sanantur, quam ille que fiunt cum ferreo instrumento. Et ita utuntur medici de Cathay, ut ego vidi.

[It is said there that the circumcision was done by Joshua with a stone knife.] Talking on this matter with some of the more intelligent Jews who

65 For more on the nature of his baggage and its significance for Rubruck's mission, see Jana VALTROVÁ, Christian Material Culture and the Mongols: the Case of William of Rubruck, in: *Eurasian Studies* 17,2 (2020), pp. 228–243.

66 For more about Rubruck's status, see A.J. WATSON, Mongol Inhospitability, or How to do More with Less? Gift Giving in William of Rubruck's Itinerarium, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 37,1 (2011), pp. 90–101.

were friends of mine (at least as far as Jews can be friends with a Christian), they observed to me that the general law in question could never be fulfilled except with a very sharp razor, either of steel or of some nobler metal, such as bronze or gold. And they agreed with the dictum of Aristotle in his Book of Problems, where he expressly asserts that cuts made with a knife of bronze or golden are healed more quickly than such made with a steel instrument. And this accords with the practice of the surgeons of Cathay, as I have seen.⁶⁷

While he labels the Jews as his ‘friends’, he immediately mitigates the strength of his bond with the expression *sicut Iudeus Christiano potest esse amicus*. Such examples of ‘bridges’ that try to reconcile the perspectives of the traveller’s and audience’s communities provide a unique opportunity to glimpse the discrepancy between the travel experience and its ‘translation’ into a written account for a specific audience.

Another example of this sort of bridge is in a short part of a letter by the Franciscan friar Andrew of Perugia (d. 1332). In 1328, he wrote about the state of ‘sects’ in Mongol China:

Sane in isto vasto imperio sunt gentes de omni natione quae sub coelo est, et de omni septa. Et conceditur omnibus et singulis vivere secundum septam suam. Est enim hec opinio apud eos, seu potius error, quod unusquisque in sua septa salvatur.

In this vast empire there are verily men of every nation under heaven and of every sect; and each and all are allowed to live according to their own sect. For this is their opinion, or I should say their error, that every man is saved in his own sect.⁶⁸

Est enim hec opinio apud eos, seu potius error is an interesting passage because it reveals the author’s experience with the multi-religious society, while at the same time showing his respect for the emotions of the audience’s community, which, unlike Andrew of Perugia, had no such experience. Therefore, ‘the opinion’ of the locals recorded in China is referred to as ‘their error’ for European readers.

Overall, this demonstrates that to successfully identify an author’s emotional communities, we must consider two related aspects. First, we must carefully consider the original terms used in these accounts with respect to their possible implicit emotional content. Terms that are today used without any emotional charge may have

⁶⁷ John of Marignolli, ‘Chronicon Bohemorum’, ed. MALFATTO (note 11), p. 26. Translation: YULE (note 11), p. 390, additions my own.

⁶⁸ John of Plano Carpini, ‘Historia Mongalorum’, ed. VAN DEN WYNGAERT (note 7), p. 376. Translation: DAWSON (note 7), p. 237.

had a strong charge in historical sources, such as the label ‘Nestorian’.⁶⁹ Second, we should not only think about the information included in the travel accounts but also carefully consider what is excluded, omitted, or unsaid.

6 ‘Hidden Transcripts’ among the Mongols

Besides these discursive gaps between the world of the travel experience and the world of the audience, there is yet another feature worthy of attention: an investigation of the so-called ‘hidden transcripts’.⁷⁰ According to James SCOTT, people who have a subordinate status and suffer suppression from (an)other social class(es) look for ways to express their disagreement with the respective power relations. Their critique of the *status quo* must be hidden from the ruling classes because it would put them in danger; however, it remains ‘open’ in the sense that it is presented in public. In the manner of a ‘hidden transcript’, the critique is understandable to those who share the same status of oppression or disagreement. The final suggestion of this chapter will be that traces of a ‘hidden transcript’ may be found in Rubruck’s account.

Rubruck wanted to spread Christianity and serve his lord and was outraged by Mongolian claims about ruling the world. Understandably, he did not dare to express this opinion directly to the khans, but occasionally expressed it to local Christians:

et certe, si permitteretur michi, ego in toto mundo pro posse meo predicarem bellum contra eos

I would, if permitted, preach war against them [i.e. the Mongols], to the best of my ability, throughout the world.⁷¹

He preached to the Christians at Möngke Khan’s court that they should never fight against other Christians and should instead choose a martyr’s death, if necessary.⁷² Besides these expressions of disagreement with Mongol rule, Rubruck also relates his loyalty to his order and his king in another way, employing a ‘hidden transcript’. The vehicle for this was Latin hymns, which Rubruck tells us he sang on various

⁶⁹ The term ‘Nestorian’, although widely used by scholars to designate the members of the Church of the East, has also been questioned as being unsuitable precisely because of its negative connotations. See Sebastian BROCK, *The ‘Nestorian’ Church: A Lamentable Misnomer*, in: *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78,3 (1996), pp. 23–35.

⁷⁰ SCOTT (note 6).

⁷¹ William of Rubruck, ‘Itinerarium’, ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 146. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 173.

⁷² William of Rubruck, ‘Itinerarium’, ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 222. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 215.

occasions in front of Mongol rulers.⁷³ While the Mongols would have had difficulty in understanding these hymns due to their being sung in Latin (if they could have understood them at all), their content would have been familiar to European captives. Importantly, some of the hymns mentioned by Rubruck contain verses referring to ‘Tartarus’, a term commonly associated with the Mongols.

Through the apparent choice of these hymns at different points in his journey, Rubruck presents in his writing the impression of a gradual growth of his self-confidence in the face of the Mongols. At the beginning of his journey through Mongolian territory, at the court of Sartaq, Rubruck tells us that he chanted *Salve Regina*,⁷⁴ a hymn which refers to this world as “a vale of tears” and asks for strength. However, during his first audience with Möngke Khan, Rubruck tells us that he chose a Christmas chant, *A solis ortus cardine*, a hymn which, besides being appropriate for the time it was sung, was also, as other scholars have noted, an audacious choice.⁷⁵ One of its final verses reads:

*Ymnis uenite dulcibus,
Omnes canamus subditum
Christi triumpho Tartarum,
Qui nos redemit uenditus.*

Come, with sweet hymns,
Let us all sing of the vanquishing
Of Tartarus by Christ’s triumph,
Who was sold, but redeemed us.⁷⁶

Naturally, writing about the “vanquishing of Tartarus by Christ’s triumph” sends a clear message to Rubruck’s audience, and understanding this moment as a part of a rhetorical device to encourage this emotional community explains its inclusion in his text. However, if we take Rubruck at his word, allowing for the fact that this may be more than just a rhetorical device and the description of a genuine moment in Rubruck’s story, the singing of “vanquishing of Tartarus by Christ’s triumph” could also be interpreted as an intended hidden and yet clear message which Rubruck wished to send to local enslaved Latin Christians.

73 On the importance of music for the Franciscan order, see Peter Victor LOEWEN, *Music in Early Franciscan Thought*, Leiden 2013.

74 William of Rubruck, ‘Itinerarium’, ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 76. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 117.

75 JACKSON (note 8), p. 177, n. 1. JACKSON here also points out that this hymn was translated into Turkish and can be found in the *Codex Cumanicus*. William of Rubruck, ‘Itinerarium’, ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 154. For more about the hymn, see Carl SPRINGER, Sedulius’ *A Solis Ortus Cardine: The Hymn and Its Tradition*, in: *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 101 (1986), pp. 69–75.

76 Carl P. SPRINGER, *Sedulius, The Paschal Song and Hymns*, Atlanta 2013, pp. 200–201.

On the next occasion of meeting the khan, Rubruck writes that he chose to sing *Veni Sancte Spiritus* as an invocation of the Holy Spirit. This choice corresponds to Rubruck's efforts to be granted permission to stay and preach in the Mongolian territories.⁷⁷ However, if we once again take Rubruck at his word and assume that he actually did sing this hymn in front of the khan, then several lines of the hymn might also reflect, in the manner of a 'hidden transcript', Rubruck's opinion of the Mongols:

III.

O lux beatissima!
Reple cordis intima,
Tuorum fidelium.
Sine tuo numine,
Nihil est in homine,
Nihil est innoxium.

IV.

Lava quod est sordidum,
Riga quod est aridum,
Sana quod est saucium!
Flecte quod est rigidum,
Fove quod est frigidum,
Rege quod est devium!

III.

O most blessed Light! The heart's
 Innermost, most hidden parts,
 Of Thy faithful people fill!
 Not without Thy favor can
 Any thing be good in man,
 Any thing that is not ill.

IV.

What is sordid make Thou clean,
 What is dry make moist and green,
 What is wounded heal for aye.
 Bend that's rigid to Thy will,
 Warm Thou whatso'er is chill,
 Guide what's devious and astray.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ For more about Rubruck's claim about his intention to preach among the Mongols and serve the captives, see William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), pp. 150, 244, 260. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), pp. 174, 230.

⁷⁸ Abraham COLES, *Latin Hymns with Original Translations*, New York 1869, pp. 50–51.

Interestingly, Rubruck also tells us that the meaning of the hymns was sometimes also understood by other people in the Möngke's camp, not only the Christians. Rubruck related that Muslims were "greatly surprised" to hear the Latin hymn *Vexilla Regis prodeunt* during a Christian procession in Möngke Khan's camp.⁷⁹ As Claire and René KAPPLER have pointed out,⁸⁰ the sixth stanza contains quite an audacious reference to the *Tartari*:

*Beata cujus brachiis
Pretium pependit saeculi
Statera facta est corporis
Praedam tulitque Tartari*⁸¹

On whose dear arms, so widely flung,
The weight of this world's ransom hung:
The price of humankind to pay,
And spoil the Spoiler of his prey.⁸²

Again, there are two explanations for these episodes of singing in Rubruck's text. The first is that they were aimed to appeal to the audience's emotional communities. Knowing that his audience would have understood these hymns, and their contents, and by allowing them to believe that these moments genuinely happened, Rubruck encourages his audience with the image of the brave friar acting in a moment of defiance (albeit cautious defiance) against a group of people who he has already established as dangerous and frightening. The second explanation must be put forward more cautiously and is built on the foundation that these episodes of singing actually occurred as Rubruck suggests. If this is the case, these examples show that Rubruck sang these hymns and included them in his account to express the 'hidden transcripts' he deployed while among the Mongols. Notwithstanding the veracity of these moments, these episodes serve to make Rubruck's audience believe that the allusions to the *Tartari* in the hymns were his hidden message to the people around the khan, while also emphasizing the risks he is willing to take. The distribution of the hymns along the narration of Rubruck's journey, as he claims to have sung them, confirms the friar's deep concern for his 'audience's emotional community', which was King Louis and the Franciscan order.

⁷⁹ William of Rubruck, 'Itinerarium', ed. CHIESA (note 8), p. 196. Translation: JACKSON (note 8), p. 200, n. 1.

⁸⁰ Claire and René KAPPLER (eds.), Guillaume de Rubrouck, envoyé de saint Louis. Voyage dans l'empire mongol, Paris 1985, p. 63.

⁸¹ John JULIAN, A Dictionary of Hymnology: Setting forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations, London 1907, p. 1219.

⁸² John Mason NEALE, Mediaeval hymns and sequences, London 1867, p. 7.

7 Conclusion

Research on emotions within travel accounts may help us to better understand the perspectives of the authors, both on the level of their interaction with their audience and to provide us with at least some glimpses of the circumstances of actual travel. Emotional expressions and judgements in travel accounts help us to identify the ‘emotional communities’ of the travelling authors. These communities may be considered as twofold – on the one hand, the communities of travel, which include the author’s companions, guides, interpreters, and locals, and on the other, the audience’s community, which includes the expected readers, donors, and authorities to which the account is addressed. These two types of communities do not share the same ‘systems of feelings’, as we have seen. Some interactions, namely those with alleged heretics, that occurred during the travel deserve special treatment in these accounts which takes into consideration the audience’s emotions. While travel accounts often conform to literary *topoi* and employ the rules of the genre, as RUBIÉS pointed out, behind it (unless we are discussing an imaginary journey) is actual contact with the ‘Other’.

Unlike pilgrim accounts to the Holy Land, accounts of Asian travel offer more space to the author’s personal experiences, which are less bound by the oftentimes fixed spiritual meaning of the pilgrim places. Emotional expressions in Asian travel accounts are usually connected to the physical experience of travel and often to interactions with locals, which are interpreted in relation to the audience’s expectations. What becomes crucial in this context are the religious identities of the actors and their labels, which could bear implicit emotional or judgemental meaning, such as the term ‘Nestorian’.

One of the most interesting parts of these travel accounts are the passages where the authors provide the perspectives both of the traveller’s community and of the audience. In some cases, the author may want to confirm which of the communities he actually belongs to. This may be especially important when the author refers to his past actions, which might call into question his loyalty. The diplomatic missions to the Mongols, which were subjected to various compromises in behaviour that the khan’s court required, serve as such examples. One of the strategies for showing the author’s position may have been to employ the system of ‘hidden transcripts’ – actions that publicly but in a concealed way express the feelings of the author.

Fundamentally, exploring the emotional expressions and judgements that the authors use in their accounts contributes to understanding the travel accounts in a nuanced way, especially in reference to interactions between the two types of emotional communities. Moreover, such an approach allows us to observe elements of the least visible level of travel experience: the first step in the ‘translation’ of the actual personal experience into a travel account.