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Abstract of thesis

My thesis covers the place of the Emirate of Granada in the European system of the international relations in the first half of the 15th century. I chose this period of time because, on the one hand, it was characterized by the relative stability – there were no large-scale wars against the Emirate however, on the other hand, it was the epoch of the extreme aggravation of the international situation around that last Muslim state in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, the age of a bitter struggle – manifest or secret – between a number of European countries for predominance in that key point. As regards the Emirate itself, it's rulers having no possibility to oppose on its own to the pressure of the Reconquista (although in that time it was depressed, unlike that of the 13th or 14th centuries) exploited that extraordinary situation of the balance of powers, and followed a quite reasonable policy conceding privileges sometimes to the one side sometimes to the other playing off them against each other.

That subtle diplomatic game doesn't allow us to take that state exclusively for an "overripe fruit" for the Christian kingdoms or for a "stillborn baby", a "curious of history" (as it was for a long time in the Spanish, French and American historiography right up to the beginning of the 1980s¹). The contemporary investigations of 1980–2010th and the newest approaches and tendencies to the refusal of one-sided views of the past little by little changed the attitude of the historians to the history of the Middle Ages in general and to the destiny of Granada particularly. Nowadays each historian should comprehend the dynamic character of the past in which the processes of diverse duration, nature and ability of change were closely interwoven. Taking into account the modern investigations, the recent publications of the archive sources I can consider that the Emirate of Granada was a rather independent player on the international scene. That's why it's possible to say that we deal with a very interesting case, which may be called "dynamic stability": a combination of the status quo in the boundaries of the Emirate and a very dynamic situation in the development of international relations. So one of the principal tasks of my thesis is a study of the reasons and consequences of that situation,
its results for Granada and the other sides, and finally an approaching to explanation of the secret of Granada's long existence (more than 250 years).

In addition the manifestation of the medieval *dynamism* could be seen in the development of the proper medieval diplomacy (a theme closely connected with the international relations), it's methods and techniques in the first half of the 15th century. As it was noted in the book of the American historian Garrett Mattingly\(^2\), that time was a transitional period from the medieval to the renaissance diplomacy. It was the first half of the 15th century when one of the first diplomatic treatises (Bernard du Rosier *"Ambaxaitor*\(^3\)) arose, the first "professional" diplomats (people assigned exceptionally to the diplomatic tasks not combining them with trade or military service\(^4\)) or attempts of creation of the first resident diplomatic missions appeared\(^5\) (the practice, which would be widely spread throughout Europe in the second half of 15th century, starting from the Italian states). All of that occurrences combined with the conservation of the main principles of the medieval (also called "old" in historiography) diplomacy, which represented the individual interests of kings or superior officials but not the ones of the state (as the proper national state didn't exist yet).

Accordingly the Granadan case (in application to the relations with the Christian states) had much in common with the all-European practice, which proves the dynamism and the development of diplomacy, it's transitional type: in the sources we face the new (appearance of the first "professional" diplomats and the proto-resident diplomatic missions on the basis of the trade ones) and the old (kings' individual interests) traits. However it's necessary to take account of the specificity of the diplomatic relations between Christian and the Islamic worlds: the necessity of special knowledge of languages, customs and traditions, differences of diplomatic etiquette etc\(^6\).

The main roles in the destiny of the Emirate belonged to three Christian countries: the Crown of Aragon, Castile and the Republic of Genoa, but I also intend to examine (as far as the source base allows me) the relations between Granada and some others European countries: the Kingdoms of Portugal and France, the Papal state, the Republics of Venice and Florence, the Holy Roman Empire and Poland.

It's necessary to say beforehand that the greatest part of the proper Granadan diplomatic documents was unfortunately lost: partly because of the consequences of the
Reconquista, partly owing to the actions of the Napoleon's army in 1808–1813. Some sources conserved (in original Arabic language or in translations) in archives of different Christian states (first of all in Aragon and Castile). The large part of manuscripts was transcribed and published by Spanish historians in 1940\(^7\).

The largest corps of the historical sources which I use comes from the General Archive of the Crown of Aragon in Barcelona and from the municipal archives of different towns of the Crown: Valencia, Alicante, Orihuela and others. The pioneer of the investigation of the Aragonian diplomatic documents at the beginning of the 20th century was the famous Spanish historian and arabist Andrés Giménez Soler. In the number of his articles\(^8\) dedicated to Aragon's foreign policy he described generally the history of the bilateral relations between the Crown and the Emirate and published in the appendix several letters and charters from the royal office (including those of the first half of 15th century). Subsequently although some investigations which appeared during the whole 20th century – in Spain and in other countries – covered different themes of Granada's history (including the fundamental general work of M.A. Ladero Quesada\(^9\)), all of them make only a casual mention of the diplomacy of Granada not concentrating on the place of the Emirate in the European system of international relations. Besides their authors didn't pay much attention to the vast collections of documents of the Archive of the Crown of Aragon.

That situation changed only in the beginning of the 1980s, when the Spanish National Research Council (in Spanish abbreviation CSIC) started it's amazing activity in publishing of the historical sources from the archives of many towns of Aragon. Especially I can note the publication of Roser Salicrú i Lluch\(^10\), which was the point of my interest during the performing of the qualifying work and continues to be such in my thesis: this is the vast collection of transcribed royal diplomas and charts, translation of several emirs' letters, reports of the officials, resolutions of municipal councils, many properly diplomatic documents (for example, permits of pass, credentials and safeguards) in Latin, Old Catalan and Old Spanish. This publication allows to outline the bilateral relations of the two states (besides it contains some interesting information concerning the involvement of the other European countries, for example, the embassies of French kings in Granada or the trips of German, Polish, Italian, French knights in the Emirate).
The archive documents reveal a lot of facts, which previously seemed to be incredible, but nowadays they must be taken into account for a deeper understanding of the situation. For example, in one of the secret instructions of the king Alfonso V the Magnanimous (1416–1458) to Joan Mercader, the bailiff of the Kingdom of Valencia (battle general del regne de València), which was the part of the Crown of Aragon, we can find some very interesting information about the plan of the possible Castilian-Granadan alliance against Aragon. Berenguer, son of Joan, was sent by his father in 1429 (by order of the king) to the Granadan emir's court as an ambassador (missatger). He was sending home secret letters (usually to his father, who later was forwarding them to the king) in which he described the state of affairs and the rumours in Granada, including the plans of the alliance. In the mentioned instructions to Joan the king wrote the following: "...from your letter it became known that the king of Castile was possibly inclining to the treaty with the king of Granada asking him for alliance and help with armed forces against us..."¹¹. Then the king gave an order to Joan: "...think about a capable person...who should try and act, in the best way which would be possible, for the mentioned king of Granada...would incline neither towards one side nor to the other;....and if he can't achieve this aim let him act for our alliance with the mentioned king [of Granada] against the mentioned king of Castile..."¹². In the final part of the instructions the king defined that future alliance with the emir as just, because there was the king of Castile who has begun to intrigue.

So basing on this instructions we can draw some important conclusions: first of all, the Aragonian king was interested in stability and maintenance of the status quo in the Iberian Peninsula; secondly (and above all for us), he considers the emir of Granada a full-fledged participant of an alliance regardless of his faith and his state of the vassal of the king of Castile. Indirectly we also can conclude from this document that for the king of Castile a treaty with a Muslim ruler was not something extraordinary, because the plans of the Castilian king didn't amaze the Aragonian king at all. This fact is confirmed by the studies of a number of historians, who concentrated on the analysis of Castilian-Granadan and Aragonian-Granadan treaties of truce (treguas, trevas) in the 14th and the 15th centuries¹³, which supposed the potential military aid of Granadans to each of Christian kings against their enemies, who might be Muslims as well as Christians. So
the factor of a religion applying to the problem of military alliances in the international relations in the Iberian Peninsula came to the background but never disappeared completely. After Alfonso the Magnanimous had got to know that the emir Muhammad VIII was seeking to create an alliance with Castile (at least he was more favorable to the Castilian king), he proclaimed the following: "...we [the Aragonian king] don't have an intention to anger our Lord creating a league with an infidel king...we also want to say that if our adversary creates an league or alliance with the mentioned king [of Granada], the Lord will confound it and we shall gain a victory..."14. Of course in that case the religious difference was not a real reason of the failure of the alliance with the emir, but it was that matter to which the Aragonian king resorted to obtain political points (as a "protector of Christianity") in his Christian subjects' and the Pope's eyes.

Thereby this case, drawn from the royal archive's documentary, proves that the history of the Reconquista (especially of the late period of the 13–15th centuries) couldn't be considered one-sidedly as a struggle of Christian crusaders against infidels, or as (in case of Granada) like permanent resistance to the pressure or the North. These conclusions could be done if a historian uses only the material of tendentious chronicles, which were mostly created by the orders of Christian kings to glorify their valour and feats. An investigation of archive documents allows us to study the problem more in relief, it shows us that there are no insignificant aspects and every historical case and situation (with it's political, economic, cultural or religious background) should be taken into account and should be explained (at least it is worth trying to do so) even if it deviates from the "general" line of the history of the Reconquista.

Also I use the electronic publications and facsimiles of untranscribed manuscripts from the sites of a number of Aragonian municipal archives, a vast narrative material (first of all the Latin chronicle of Jerónimo Zurita15) and the CSIC's thematic publications of the sources dedicated, for instance, to the problems of the Aragonian frontier16 or the Muslim slavery in Barcelona17 and several fragments of fiction literature, collected and published by famous the Catalan philologist Martí de Riquer18.

So the Aragonian-Granadan relations will take one of the central place in my thesis. The Crown of Aragon had it's wide political and economic interests in the last Muslim state in the Iberian Peninsula especially during the reign of Alfonso the Magnanimous.
For the king, whose foreign policy was directed towards the predomination in the Mediterranean region and whose main enemies were the Genoeses and the Turks\textsuperscript{19}, the stability in the centre of his lands was extremely important.

Although the Granadan territory didn't have a joint terrestrial boundary with the Crown of Aragon, the Kingdom of Murcia (belonged to Castile), which was situated between the Kingdom of Valence (the part of the Crown of Aragon) and the Emirate, was not an insuperable obstacle (neither in geographic nor in juridical sense). I can give one demonstrative example: in 1417 a band of the so-called Almogavars (Aragonian or Castilian, not clearly), a group of Christian officials and mercenaries, who obtained from the king a licence to wage hostilities against the infidels (by the way they took a decisive part in the famous Catalan Company of the East of Roger de Flor in the early 14th-century\textsuperscript{20}), captured several Moors, subjects of the emir, near the town of Huéscar in Granada, than they transported the captives, having overcome the mountains between the Emirate and Castile, to the town of Murcia, where they tried to sell them. Having failed, the Almogavars without any delay crossed another boundary, in that case the Castilian-Aragonian one, and transported the captives to the town of Alicante (in the Kingdom of Valencia)\textsuperscript{21}. I don't want go into details of that case, but I think that it shows the transparency of medieval boundaries. Also Aragon had a so-called "maritime frontier" with Granada: the permanent contacts with Granadan sea merchants and corsairs. The \textit{convivencia} ("the coexistence") as well as the violence were the two main components of the life of the Christian, Muslim and Jew communities in the medieval Iberian Peninsula and a certain manifestation of the violence (captivity, pogroms etc.) usually neither lead to the large-scale wars and nor were considered as violations of the treaties of truce\textsuperscript{22}.

For the Crown of Aragon, which had the largest Muslim population (the so-called Mudéjars, many of them had relatives in the Emirate of Granada) of all Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, the maintenance of the status quo, of the balance between the coexistence and the violation was extremely necessary for carrying out the conquests in Mediterranean region especially in the first half of the 15th century. Besides the Catalan merchants had their wide interests in Granada, especially in its' principal ports such as Málaga and Almería. For example, in one of the commercial documents (dated 1426) we read about the salt monopoly, which was created in Granada by the
representative of the prominent Valencian merchants' dynasty Fransesc d'Àries\textsuperscript{23}. In addition, the greater part of the Aragonian archive documentation with respect to Granada covers exactly the trade matters such as ownership relations, trials of inheritance, complaints of illegally arrested property between the proper Catalan merchants in Granada as well as between them and the local authorities or the representatives of the other state (more frequent with the Genoeses).

Therefore the kings of Aragon (especially Alfonso the Magnanimous) reacted very dramatically to every change of the internal political situation in Granada (for example, to the attempts of the Castilians to throne a loyal emir, or to strengthen the trade expansion of the Genoeses). When in 1432 pro-Castilian part of the Granadan court overthrew the emir Muhammad IX and raised the emir Yusuf IV loyal to the Castilian king Juan II (1406–1454) Alfonso the Magnanimous immediately helped the overthrown emir to recuperate his power sending the Catalan armed fleet to the Granadan coast, occupying some frontier fortresses, where the partisans of Yusuf IV were, and thanks to pro-Aragonian part of the Granadan court and Aragonian diplomats paving the way to the return of Muhammad IX\textsuperscript{24}. Juan II didn't dare to begin the full-scaled war against the Crown of Aragon confining himself to the demonstration of armed forces in the boundary. From the chronicles we learn that shortly after the emir Muhammad IX had recognized himself the vassal of the Castilian king\textsuperscript{25} maybe under the pressure of Juan II or maybe not willing the excessive strengthening of the pro-Aragonian part of the court. Anyway the status quo was restored, which was accepted by all three sides of the conflict.

When the political interests of Alfonso the Magnanimous were totally transferred to Italy (with the royal court transported from Saragossa to Naples), the king reabandoned in 1456 the political and military presence in Granada in favour of an ambitious but finally not embodied project of the conquest of Constantinople and the creation of the huge Mediterranean empire\textsuperscript{26}. However the treaty with Castile in Naples which gave a political carte-blanche to the Castilians in Granada didn't cancel the trade interests of the Catalan merchants\textsuperscript{27}.

Unfortunately in case of Castile there was no such vast publication of historical the sources from the General Archive of Simancas. That's why I use some electronic
publications of documents from the sites of municipal archives (first of all, from the region of Murcia, which was the part of Castile in the Middle Ages). Also I use several investigations dedicated to the frontier and which contain documental appendixes\textsuperscript{28}, narrative material (the chronicle of Juan II\textsuperscript{29}, the "Chronicle of Hawker"\textsuperscript{30}), fiction literature (first of all, some frontier romances\textsuperscript{31}, which reflect the ideas of the knighthood about Granada). However, the full-fledged work at the Castilian sources is an aim of my future investigation.

In outline I can characterize the Castilian policy towards the Emirate of Granada as a much more aggressive the Aragonian one. Castile didn't have as large Muslim population as Aragon did and resolved the appearing problems (for instance, the frontier conflicts) by force rather than by diplomacy. The Castilian merchants didn't have as wide commercial interests in Granada as the Catalans and the Genoese and more frequently confined themselves to the secondary market as well as corsair raids, but it must be taken into account that the Castilian trade and armed fleet in that period of the first half of the 15th century was not as numerous as the Catalan and the Genoese and even the Portuguese ones. Besides the trade with infidels was declared out of law by the papal bulls (most likely of the Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303), at least the prohibition of the trade with the Muslims can be found in his Decretals\textsuperscript{32}). Of course the anger of the Lord and His vicar was not the main reason of the official prohibition of the trade with the Muslims. It was a political aim of weakening of the Catalan and the Genoese commercial influence in Granada which was pursued by the Castilian king. Juan II in 1437 at the height of another conflict with the Granadan sent a reproaching letter to Joan Mercader, where he wrote the following: 

"...the law clearly runs that these [the Muslims] must not been supplied by the Christians with food nor with other provisions...our Saint Father, by his especial bull, has excommunicate and anathematized each person or persons...who would do it..."\textsuperscript{33}. The king meant the Catalan merchants who delivered to the Moors food and so-called forbidden goods (first of all the arms). But the contemporary investigations note that the proper Castilians were trading with the Granadans and even in forbidden goods and Juan II turned a blind eye to that fact because it was very profitable to Castile to get the pedigree horses (Granada during all time of it's existence was famous for the art
of chivalry war) as well as gold and silver, which the Castilians received from the Northern Africa via the Emirate.

Although Castile had a lot of frontier conflicts with Granada during that period of time and even managed to seize some fortresses, such as Antequera (1410), Huéscar (1438) and Gibraltar (1462) however there were no full-scale wars till the end of the 15th century. Having no possibility to complete the conquest of the Emirate on its own and due to the rivalry with the Crown of Aragon and Genoa and sometimes with Portugal, Castile also sought to maintain the peculiar status quo by the use of the treaties of truce, however never putting out the flame of the Reconquista. Investigating a lot of the Castilian-Granadan treaties of truce of the 15th century, the well-known Spanish historian Juan Torres Fontes marked out its general terms and features. As a rule these treaties fixed the vassal state of the Granadan emir and his duty to pay a tribute and return captives. Also they usually contained a clause of forbidden things (arms, horses, bread and so on), but sometimes the sale of them and oflivestocks was allowed in the territory of Granada. The truce duration varied from a few months or a provisional cessation of war to 10 years. Of course, these treaties were not signs of the equitable relations between the two states and were pointed to the obligations of Granada as heavily as possible and the restrictions of the free trade however, they established a legal foundation of such an important act as the return of captives and also they distinguished between the just war (bellum justum, buena guerra) and, for example, raids (razzias) or robbery. So in these treaties we can see the aspiration of Castile for a legal base of the relations with Granada, for the maintenance of stability (perhaps, it could be called a "dynamic stability") even in the conditions of the permanent hostility (the "cold war" according to the apt expression of the Japanese historian Yuda Kuroda). Also the testimonies of the aspiration of the Castilian kings to establish the stable contacts with the Muslim society could be seen in the fact of the existence of the so-called Moorish guard, which was the royal cavalry and infantry corps composed almost of the recent converts (among the Mudéjars and the Granadan mercenaries). Because of their desirable skills in frontier warfare, high social position within their original Muslim societies, and willingness to serve on the Christian side, these individuals came to compose an elite standing military
force that served to protect the Castilian monarch as well as to conduct important missions along the Castilian-Granadan frontier.

The Genoese documents connected with the relations between this republic and Granada in the first half of the 15th century were collected and published by R. Salicrú i Lluch in her recently appeared book. There are about 30 letters of Genoese merchants and ambassadors in Granada concerning the political and the trade issues. I also use several documental appendixes to the articles about the Genoese trade activity in the Emirate, first of all in the Mediterranean ports Málaga and Almería. In spite of being dedicated to the economical problems these documents (reports of merchants, several recommendations etc) contain much helpful information for a historian specializing in the history of the international relations. Recently I started to work with Genoese documentation and currently it's hard to me to make any detailed conclusions concerning the role of Genoa in the history of Granada but it seems to be one of the essential subjects due to the enormous scale of Genoese trade with Granada, the advanced network of Genoese merchant and diplomatic missions in Granada and the bitter rivalry between Genoa and the Crown of Aragon in all spheres of trade during the whole existence of Granada which continued between Spain and the Republic in Modern Age and reflected in one of the Spanish proverbs of the 16th century: "One broken Genoese is valued more than four entire [untouched, healthy] poets" (in Old Spanish orthography: "Más vale un ginovés quebrado que cuatro poetas enteros") So the Genoese line of my investigation is prospective and seems to be very useful to enrich my knowledge about Granada.

There are as well certain materials (publications of sources, books and appendixes to articles) which could be very useful to describe the relations between Granada and Portugal, France, the Holy Roman Empire, the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and the other European countries. But as compared with the Crown of Aragon, Castile or the Republic of Genoa their role in the history of Granada seems to be secondary, limited by the presence of a few merchants or knights, participating in the Reconquista. But even that role is important for us and must attract our attention because we can't achieve a deeper perception of the situation around the Emirate of Granada without it.

Although there are several recent investigations, which cover the history of the emirate of Granada in whole as well as the diplomatic relations of the Emirate of Granada
in particular [not only in Spain, France, Great Britain or the USA where exists a long tradition of investigation the history of the Muslim states during the Reconquista, but also in Germany (Thomas Freller\textsuperscript{44}), Czech Republic (Josef Ženka\textsuperscript{45}), Japan (Yuga Kuroda\textsuperscript{46}), which indicates the true flourishing interest to the study of the transcultural regions and the Muslim-Christian dialogue in the Middle Ages], the majority of them covers the local subjects. Nobody have set the task to reveal the role and the place of the Emirate of Granada in the European system of the international relations in general, to describe that paradoxical "dynamic stability". So I believe that my future thesis will make a contribution to the understanding of this interesting phenomenon.


\textsuperscript{2} MATTINGLEY G. \textit{Renaissance diplomacy.} N.Y., 1988, p. 23–44


\textsuperscript{7} ALARCÓN Y SANTÓN, M.A., GARCÍA DE LINARES, R. \textit{Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón.} Madrid, 1940.

\textsuperscript{8} GIMÉNEZ SOLER A. \textit{La Corona de Aragón y Granada // Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras} de Barcelona, III (1905-1906), IV (1907-1908), Barcelona 1905–1908.


\textsuperscript{10} SALICRÚ I LLUCH R. \textit{Documents per a la història de Granada del regnat d’Alfons el Magnànim (1416–1458).} Barcelona, 1999.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 234 (doc. 193):"...per letra vostra, seria stat avisat que lo rey de Castella hauria mogut de tracte al rey de Granada demanant-li liga e ajuda de gent d’armes contra nós..."

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 235: ":...pensets de...persona ydònea...que procure e tracte, en la millor manera que sia possible, que lo dit rey de Granada...no faça valença a la una part ne a la altra; e, on açò no-s pogués obtenir, que-s tracte de liga de nós ab lo dit rey contra lo dit rey de Castela..."

\textsuperscript{13} Minutely in: AMADOR DE LOS RÍOS J. \textit{Memoria histórico-critica sobre las treguas celebradas en 1439 entre los reyes de Castilla y Granada.} Madrid, 1879; SUÁREZ FERNÁNDEZ L. Juan II y la frontera de Granada. Valladolid, 1954; ARRIBAS PALAU M. \textit{Las treguas entre Castilla y Granada firmadas por Fernando I de Aragón.} Tetuán, 1956; TORRES FONTE S J. \textit{Las relaciones castellano-granadinas, 1427–1430 // Relaciones exteriores del Reino de Granada: IV coloquio de historia medieval andaluza.} Almería,

14 SALICRÚ I LLUCH R. Documents... p. 235–236 (doc.194): «...no és nostra intenció fer ofensa a nostre senyor Déu faient liga ab rey infeliz... ens tenim per dit que, si nostri adversari tractarà liga o concòrdia al lo dit rey, Déus lo confondrà e nós haurem victòria...”


21 SALICRÚ I LLUCH R. Documents... p. 38–39 (doc.15).


23 SALICRÚ I LLUCH R. Documents... p. 172 (doc.136).


25 SALICRÚ I LLUCH R. El Sultanat...p.276.


27 SALICRÚ I LLUCH R. Documents... p. 497–498 (doc.413).


32 Liber Sextus Decretalium D. Bonifacii Papae VIII. Romae, MDLXXII

33 SALICRÚ I LLUCH R. Documents... p. 372 (doc.312): "...los derechos expresamente defienden que a los tales no sean ministrados por los christianos mantenimientos nin otras provisiones algunas...nuestro Santo Padre, por su bulla special, ha excomulgado e anetematizado a cualquier o qualquier personas...que lo tal fisiesen..."


Yuga Kuroda is working on the project: "Conflict and Acculturation in the Medieval Iberian Peninsula: Comparative Study on 'Frontier' among Societies, and Religions".