

## SECCIÓN MONOGRÁFICA

### INTRODUCCIÓN

## **The Qur’ān in Early Modern Iberia and Beyond**

El Corán a comienzos de la Edad Moderna ibérica  
y más allá

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Early modern Iberia represents a unique case study in the history of the European translation of the Qur’ān. No other area of Western Europe knew such an intense and enduring confrontation between Latin Christendom, Judaism and Islam. Consequently, practices of translating sacred texts flourished respectively among Christians, Muslims and Jews, both for polemical and apologetic purposes. Since the Middle Ages, Christians and Jews translated the Qur’ān to disprove Islamic dogmas. Conversely, during the sixteenth century, Muslim religious elites transposed the Qur’ān into vernacular to strengthen Muslims in their faith. In Iberia, translation was used as a tool of conversion or as a shield to avoid being converted.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amelang, *Historias paralelas, judeoconvertos y moriscos en la España moderna*, p. 25; Alfonso, *Islamic Culture through Jewish Eyes. Al-Andalus from the Tenth to Twelfth Century*, pp. 42-43.

Translation and conversion, manipulation (*tahrif*) and interpretation (*tafsir*) of the Qurʾān, interaction between patrons and translators across opposing religious communities are some of the features discussed in the following cluster of essays. These studies bring new insight to a field which has developed significantly over the last two decades. Beginning with Bobzin's pioneering and encyclopaedic research on the Qurʾān in the age of Reformation (1995), cultural historians, as well as philologists of Latin and Arabic, have increasingly focused on the circulation and the re-contextualisation of the Qurʾān in Europe. Examples of this trend are the many editions of translations and confutations of the Qurʾān that have been published over the last few years.<sup>2</sup>

The renewed interest in the European reception of the Qurʾān coincides with and depends on a new attention to the role of Islam in the formation of modern Europe. Within this framework, which is perhaps slippery in its teleological drift, the Iberian peninsula, and especially al-Andalus, became the ideal historiographical laboratory to build or restore religious and cultural boundaries, as well as to critically deconstruct them. One of the outcomes of this historiographical process is the current re-thinking of medieval and early modern studies in Islam and Oriental languages, beyond the Saidian discourse and the history of representations of the other. Spanish Orientalism seems particularly interesting, because of its deep medieval Arabic-Latin roots, and its inescapable relationship with the religious issues of Converso and Morisco minorities. Moreover, its impact on the European and Mediterranean Republic of Letters has yet to be systematically examined.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa*; Piemontese, "Il Corano latino di Ficino e Corani arabi di Pico e Monchates"; Grévin, "Le 'Coran de Mithridate' (Ms. Vat. Ebr. 357) à la croisée des savoirs arabes dans l'Italie du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," p. 514. See *Frühe Koranübersetzungen. Europäische und aussereuropäische Fallstudien*, edited by R.F. Gleis in 2012; Burman, *Reading the Qurʾān in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560*. Other relevant on-going European research projects are the Italian project, *Beyond the Holy War; Christian-Muslim Relations between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century*, led by Giuseppe Marcocci, and the ERC project, *Conversion, Overlapping Religiosities, Polemics, Interaction. Early Modern Iberia and Beyond* (CORPI), led by Mercedes García-Arenal (Madrid, CSIC). A new research centre is the *Centre for the History of Arabic Studies in Europe of the Warburg Institute* (London).

<sup>3</sup> On Moriscos see García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain. Converted Muslims, The Forged Lead Books of Granada, and the Rise of Orientalism* (2013).

Translations of the Qur'ān occupy a place of great importance in this narrative. Since the twelfth century, the process of translating the Qur'ān into Latin, funded by Catholic authorities such as bishops and religious orders, had been running parallel to the project of the Reconquista and Spain's self-definition as a Latin and Catholic kingdom in the face of heretics, Jews and Muslims.<sup>4</sup> Later, during the sixteenth century, the translation of the Qur'ān into vernacular arose among Muslims, both in the Iberian peninsula and in the diaspora. Morisco religious elites produced vernacular translations of the Qur'ān, its commentaries, and Islamic tradition, both in the Latin alphabet and in Aljamiado, for their coreligionists who, forced to convert and to abandon the use of Arabic, were no longer able to read the Qur'ān.

Moriscos displayed very interesting and pragmatic strategies to justify the translation of the Qur'ān into vernacular. The mother tongue of the believers had come to be considered more suitable than the miraculous code of revelation. The copyist of the Spanish Qur'ān of Toledo (1606), as well as famous *alfaques* such as Yça Gidelli (1462), used apocryphal traditions to legitimise this linguistic choice. Comparing medieval Iberia to Persia, where Muslims translated the Qur'ān into vernacular both for exegetical and liturgical purposes, Travis Zadeh has pointed out previous narratives of this kind. The Andalusian Mālikī jurist Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388) recognised the necessity of translating the Qur'ān for Muslims who did not know Arabic. Religious confrontation necessarily influenced linguistic theories and translation choices. The dogma of the inimitability of the Qur'ān and the discussion as to the legitimacy of translation both arose in contexts of political and religious conflict, and early-modern Iberia was just such a case. The peninsula included zones of exclusion, as well as interaction, between dominant and subordinate religious groups.<sup>5</sup>

On the role of Arabic and Islamic culture in the formation of modern Europe, see Al-Rodhan (ed.), *The Role of the Arab-Islamic World in the Rise of the West, Implications for Contemporary Trans-Cultural Relations* (2012).

<sup>4</sup> Barceló, Badenas de la Peña y Martínez Gázquez (eds.), *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los siglos XII y XIII* (2015).

<sup>5</sup> López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo, Edición y estudio del Manuscrito 235 de la Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha*, p. 25; Zadeh, *The Vernacular Qur'ān, Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis*, p. 125.

Nuria Martínez de Castilla Muñoz focuses on exclusion in sixteenth-century Aragon. She deals with the translation practices of a specific *scriptorium* managed by a small community before the Expulsion. She analyses 35 copies of the Qurʾān and of the *tafsīr*, found in a trove located in a house in a small town called Almonacid de la Sierra. Through a codicological and textual analysis of the manuscripts, she argues that the entire collection was produced during a short period of time, probably in the same city where they were rescued, for the neighbouring Muslim audience settled in the region. The texts studied by Martínez de Castilla Muñoz corroborate the existence of an organised *scriptoria* among Aragonese Moriscos, and of a micro-regional hidden market of Islamic sources between minority communities.

Roberto Tottoli focuses on a manuscript produced by Moriscos in Castile. He sheds new light on the Spanish Qurʾān of Toledo, copied by an anonymous Morisco in 1606 and recently edited by Consuelo López-Morillas. The product of a Muslim translator for a Muslim audience—as with the bilingual and fragmentary manuscripts produced in Almonacid de la Sierra—this text represents an early example of a complete translation of the Qurʾān from Arabic into vernacular. Tottoli examines the text through a lexicological analysis of the terminology surrounding hell. This close-up is actually connected to more extensive research about eschatological narratives in the literature of Moriscos. In this tradition, hell seems to be perfectly in line with Islamic descriptions, strictly adhering to images from the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth. This lexicological analysis demonstrates that Aljamiado religious texts do not attest to a decline of knowledge of the precepts of Islamic faith. On the contrary, it seems that Moriscos were closely bound to the tenets of their faith and to the preservation of their literature.

The essay by Ulisse Cecini, in turn, follows the lexicological path traced by Tottoli. Cecini focuses on the Latin medieval translations by Robert of Ketton (1143) and Mark of Toledo (1210), and bases his work on a contrastive analysis of the translation of proper names in both texts. This detailed essay clearly shows how anthroponymy and toponymy serve as reliable means of defining different strategies for transmitting culture. Cecini's analysis is a good starting point for further research on the diffusion of Latin translations of the Qurʾān across Catholic and Morisco translation workshops. Mark's translation, for

instance, seems to be quoted in the *Confusión o Confutación de la secta mahomética* attributed to the convert and former *alfaquí* Juan Andrés, from Xátiva (1515).<sup>6</sup>

This monographic section shows that Catholic Latin translations and vernacular texts translated by Muslims were not solely the product of separate worlds. Other two contributions demonstrate that interaction between these worlds was possible and, in fact, frequent. Both articles deal with translations of the Qur'ān that were produced or sponsored by Catholic authorities—namely, by the theologian Juan de Segovia (1393-1458) and Cardinal Giles of Viterbo (1469-1532).

The first article, by Ulli Roth, outlines the history of the irenic and multilingual project of Juan de Segovia (1455). After the councils of Basel, Ferrara, and Florence (1431-1449), and the fall of Constantinople (1453), the Spanish theologian prepared a new approach toward Islam, based on interreligious dialogue and conversion through knowledge of the religion of the other. To this end, he collaborated intensely with the Segovian Yça Gidelli, formerly 'Īsā b. Jābir, to produce a trilingual translation of the Qur'ān (Arabic, Spanish, and Latin), which has, unfortunately, been almost completely lost. Roth, however, illustrates the main characteristics of this first European polyglot translation of the Qur'ān with examples taken from existing fragments. His stylistic reading is particularly convincing. Roth analyses the influence of Arabic syntax on Juan de Segovia's Latin prose, as well as the spread of Spanish words, derived from Arabic, into Segovia's Latin vocabulary.

The second of these articles examines a specific attribution. Mercedes García-Arenal and Katarzyna K. Starczewska investigate the similarities between two works: the Latin translation of the Qur'ān commissioned by Cardinal Giles of Viterbo (1518) and the Quranic quotations included in the *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán* (Valencia, 1521) by the Catholic preacher Johan Martín de Figuerola. A very careful comparison strongly suggests a common author for both texts. This

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the rendering of Qur'ān 96:1-2. *Confusión o Confutación de la secta*, 109: "O Mahoma, lee en nombre de tu Criador, el que crió el hombre de gusanos." Mark of Toledo (ed. Petrus i Pons), p. 411: "Confitere nomen Creatoris tui qui creavit, creavit enim hominem ex sanguisuga." Both translate Ar. *rabb* 'lord' as 'creator' (Ar. *khāliq*). On *Rabb* as 'nourisher unto perfection', see Akbar, *God and Man, The Root of Creation and the Life hereafter; the Holy Qur 'ān and Modern Science*, xxv. See also Ar. '*alaq* translated by Mark of Toledo as *sanguisuga* 'leech' and in the *Confusión* as *gusano* 'worm'.

author may be Juan Gabriel of Teruel, a convert from Islam to Christianity, formerly known as Ali Alayzar. His translation of the Qurʾān reached the erudite circles of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy through the circulation of both texts. As this example clearly shows, the Islamic tradition was kept alive by small groups of ex- and crypto-Muslim scholars.

In addition, García-Arenal and Starczewska's essay points to the possibility of a fruitful interaction between Morisco elites and Catholic authorities. Collaboration with former *alfaquíes* was often requested because of the difficulty of rendering the Muslim holy book into Latin or into vernacular. García-Arenal and Starczewska conclude by suggesting that this collaborative tradition "was to be continued from the Middle Ages until the translation of Marracci." In fact, a later and until now unknown episode confirms the spread of this practice throughout seventeenth-century Europe. An anonymous Italian translator of André du Ryer's French translation of the Qurʾān (1647), collaborated with a "coggia," Turkish *hoca* ("master, lord"), in translating the text into Italian and correcting du Ryer's mistakes. Most likely this collaboration occurred in Tuscany: in Leghorn or possibly Florence. A number of marginal notes provide evidence of such a translation workshop. For example, du Ryer's heading of *Sūrat al-Masad* (Qurʾān, 111) was translated as follows: "Il Capitolo della Palma, che contiene undici versetti, scritto alla Mecca." The Italian translator added in the margin, "dice Coggia contener cinque versetti—et essere il titolo Capitolo di Ablheb."<sup>7</sup>

Recently, problems of attributing European translations of the Qurʾān have stimulated discussion about censorship, authorship, and dissimulation in early modern Europe. The essay by García-Arenal and Starczewska enriches the current debate, raising challenging questions about co-authorship, reciprocity, and power dynamics. Some of these translations undoubtedly represent examples of trans-religious literary practices. However, the collaboration between members of opposing confessional communities was often based on the subordination of one of the two subjects involved. In addition, the article presents in a new light the intellectual circle, and translation workshop, which arose under the auspices of the bishop of Barcelona Martín García in the first

<sup>7</sup> Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXIV, 31, 2v. About seventeenth-century Italy, Moriscos, and Islam, see Fiume and Pastore (eds.), *Diaspora morisca*.

decades of the sixteenth century. Within this group of individuals, all of them from Valencia and all involved in preaching activities in Granada, were produced some of the most influential anti-Islamic pamphlets of early modern Europe, such as the *Confutación del Alcorán y secta mahometana* by Lope de Obregón, published in Granada in 1555, and especially the *Confusión o Confutación de la secta mahomética*, attributed to Juan Andrés (1515). García-Arenal and Starczewska suggest that Juan Gabriel de Teruel was also involved in the Quranic translations scattered throughout the text published under the name of Juan Andrés.<sup>8</sup>

The other article of the collection looks at the Jewish diaspora. It focuses on the diffusion of the Qur'ān throughout Europe and, notably, among Spanish and Portuguese Sephardim. Harm den Boer and Pier Mattia Tommasino present a previously unknown Spanish translation of the Qur'ān, extant at the Ets Haim/Livraria Montezinos Library of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam. The manuscript dates from the seventeenth century and was the work of a Spanish or Portuguese Jew living in Amsterdam or another community of the Sephardi diaspora. The translator used the Italian version of the Qur'ān by Giovanni Battista Castrodardo, published in Venice in 1547, and, interestingly enough, the *Confutación del Alcorán* by Lope de Obregón, composed within the circle of translators and polemicists led by Martín García.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Italian version of the Qur'ān was translated into German, and from German into Dutch. The Italian text was also translated into Hebrew. The text rescued by Harm den Boer represents a previously unknown translation of the Qur'ān into Spanish, second in length only to the Qur'ān of Toledo. Moreover, it was not made in the Iberian peninsula, but was composed in Europe by a Sephardi Jew for a Jewish readership. The use of Italian diplomatic Orientalism and Spanish anti-Islamic sources, made this diaspora text

<sup>8</sup> Feingold, “‘The Turkish Alcoran’: New Light on the 1649 English Translation of the Koran”; Malcolm, “The 1649 English translation of the Koran: its origin and significance”; Tommasino, *L'Alcorano di Macometto. Storia di un libro del Cinquecento europeo*; López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 33; Roth and Gleit (“Die Spuren der lateinischen Koranübersetzung des Juan de Segovia-alter Probleme unde ein neuer Fund”), refuses López-Morillas's suggestion of a relation between the Qur'ān of Toledo (1455) and Juan de Segovia / Yça Gidelli's translation (1455).

a unique case-study in the history of readings of the Qur'ān across religions. Through this latest translation, the old *Corpus Islamolatinum*, formerly *Collectio toletana*, once again reached the Jews, whom Peter the Venerable, the sponsor of the *Corpus*, wrote against in his time.<sup>9</sup>

Material and linguistic aspects of the texts should also be mentioned. The manuscripts studied in these essays seem to share common codicological and linguistic characteristics. Multi-alphabetism and interlinearity, multilingualism and multiple authorship, all speak to the fact that most of these translations were the product of a context of contact. In addition, the use of vernaculars along with, or instead of, Latin and Arabic reveals that local languages were crucial for the global strategies of the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church, as well as for the survival of Morisco minorities.

Finally, the essays show the impact of Spanish Orientalism on continental Europe, a subject that certainly deserves further and broader research. The correspondence between Juan de Segovia and Yça Gidelli, the diplomatic mission of Giles of Viterbo, and the travels to Spain of Nicolas Cleynaerts, Cardinal Camillo Massimo, David Colville, and Robert Ashley are part of the same story. During the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, Iberia was still a place in which to study Arabic, to a certain degree, and, more successfully, in which to collect manuscripts of the Qur'ān and the Islamic tradition. In this respect, the relationship between Spain and Italy occupies a privileged position. As the centre of Latin Christendom, Rome became the hub of a renewed and triumphant Catholic Orientalism. Venice, moreover, was still the European capital of the printing press and diplomacy, and a safe haven for political and religious refugees coming from Spain and Spanish territories. Moreover, two-thirds of the Italian peninsula itself was ruled by Spaniards.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, Spanish diplomats, ambassadors' secretaries, Jesuit preachers and polemicists, Conversos, *alumbrados* and anti-Trinitarians contributed to knowledge of Islam throughout Italy. Domingo de Gaztelu, Alfonso Salmerón and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza were just some the protagonists of this *translatio studii*. The nobleman Domingo de Gaztelu translated the *Confusión* attributed to Juan Andrés into Italian (1537), while the Jesuit Alfonso

<sup>9</sup> López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 12.

Salmerón recalled “The Thirteen Articles of the Faith” by Yça Gidelli in his *disputatio* on Purgatory. Giovanni Battista Castrodardo, the translator of the Qur’ān into Italian (1547), read the text attributed to Juan Andrés and most probably met Alfonso Salmerón while the Jesuit was preaching in Belluno (1549).<sup>10</sup>

As Stefania Pastore has keenly argued, Spanish religious diversity and European heterodoxy seem to have been closely and continuously intertwined. Sixteenth-century printers and polemicists had the perception of a kind of hidden thread of this sort. As controversial topics, such as Purgatory, the Trinity, or the worship of images, resurfaced on the Catholic agenda, medieval polemical treatises were reshaped and published to fit new polemical needs. For instance, the treatise *De Trinitate* by Alcuin of York (735-804), dedicated to Charlemagne, was published twice at the turn of the sixteenth century, first in Strasbourg in 1530, and later in Frankfurt in 1554. The two editions of the text were issued almost simultaneously with the works of the anti-Trinitarian Michael Servetus (c. 1509-1553). In fact, Servetus’s *De Trinitatis erroribus* was published in 1531, while the *Christianismi Restitutio* came out in 1553. The second edition of Alcuin’s *De Trinitate* was edited by the German and Lutheran humanist Lucas Lossius (1508-1582), who dedicated the work to Frederick of Denmark (1532-1556), the youngest son of Frederick I of Denmark and Sophie of Pomerania, who was appointed bishop of Hildesheim (1551-1556). In the dedication letter, Lossius reminds readers that Muslims, Jews, and Tartars also deny the Trinity.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, a catalogue of the most notorious heretics who denied the Trinity was published as an appendix to the second edition, among whom was Michael Servetus himself. European printers and polemicists made use of the old weapons sharpened by Alcuin for the war

<sup>10</sup> Salmerón, *Disputationum*, II, 293: “Haec etiam fidem vel impurus Machometus in Alcorano, in decimo articulo fidei testatur: ‘Crede quod omnes transibunt per Purgatorium, alii plus, alii minus’”; Wiegers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Alfamiado. Yça de Segovia (Fl. 1450), his Antecedents and Successors*, p. 95; Tommasino, *L’Alcorano di Macometto*, pp. 202-210.

<sup>11</sup> Pastore, *Un’eresia spagnola. Spiritualità conversa, alumbadismo e Inquisizione, 1449-1559; De fide sanctae et individuae Trinitatis*, 4v: “[...] alii ut Mahometistae, Iudaei praesentes, Ethnici, Tartari et similes, qui sunt extra Ecclesiam Dei, negant illum esse verum et aeternum Deum, conditorem et moderatorem naturae, qui est Pater Domini nostri Iesu Christi, [...] negant Trinitatem, hoc est tres distinctas personas, seu πρῶσάσεις coaeternas et consubstantiales, Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum.”

against Spanish Adoptionism to disprove Servetus's anti-Trinitarianism. At least in their eyes, a sort of exceptional continuity between eighth-century Adoptionism and sixteenth-century anti-Trinitarianism, both originating in the Iberian peninsula and in contact with Judaism and Islam, seemed real. During the Carolingian era, Adoptionism—like anti-Trinitarianism in the sixteenth century—was considered a peculiar Spanish theological error. It was indeed referred to as *Hispanica haeresis*, a 'Spanish heresy'. Looking at the role of Spain in the intellectual history of Renaissance Europe from the point of view of the sixteenth-century printers of Alcuin's *De Trinitate* could perhaps be misleading, but also very instructive.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *De fide sanctae et individuae Trinitatis*, 174v: "Ideo Hispanica haeresis. Alter locus confutatio Nestorii, Eutyichis, et aliorum, qui contenderunt Christum non esse natura Deum et Filium Dei, sed tantum vocari Deum, communicatione divini nominis, sicut alii reges et principes dii vocantur, propter divinam eorum vocationem, et Filium Dei appellari propter gratiam adoptionis, sicut omnes credentes filii Dei adoptivi vocantur, quae execranda et diabolica est haeresis, quia duas personas in Christo constituit, alteram divinam, cuius non sit mater Maria, alteram humanam, cuius tantum sit mater, contra dictum Ioannis: Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis"; Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West. Adoptionism in Spain and Gaul, 785-820*.

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