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Corrections to Robert of Ketton's Translation of the Qur'an in MS Paris Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 1162

Abstract: An analysis of the emendations made by an anonymous reviser to Robert of Ketton's Latin translation of the Qur'an in Ms Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 1162 (12th century) shows that they distort the meaning and form of the original version, which was more faithful to the Arabic text. This makes clear that the revision process was carried out without Robert of Ketton's supervision and probably by someone who was not part of his milieu.¹

The purpose of this article is to analyze the emendations made by an anonymous reviser to Robert of Ketton's Latin translation of the Qur'an in MS Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 1162.² As is commonly acknowledged, *A* is the most valuable extant manuscript in the Corpus Islamolatinum or the *Corpus Cluniacense*. Its age (mid-twelfth century), the quality of the text it transmits, and its clear, regular calligraphy, with few abbreviations and abundant punctuation, make it the primary witness for any critical edition of the texts that it contains.

The text of Qur'an in *A* is accompanied by numerous marginal annotations, which have been analyzed by several researchers,³ but less attention has been given to other interventions in the text: namely, deletions or corrections of words or entire phrases. These changes are generally made by crossing or striking out the word or phrase and adding a superlinear annotation. By contrast, erasures are very rare. The lines crossing out the deletions are always very fine and

1 This study is part of the research project: Medieval and Modern Sources for the Study of Transcultural Relations in the Mediterranean: Writing and Transmission II (PGC2018-093472-B-C31) MCIU.

2 Henceforward referred to as *A*. This manuscript is accessible at: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52511844g> (last accessed: March 13, 2021)

3 Marie Thérèse D'Alverny, "Deux traductions latines du Coran au Moyen Âge", *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 16 (1948): 69–131; Thomas Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 84–89; Thomas Burman, *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 64–76; José Martínez Gázquez, "Glossae ad Alchoran Latinum Roberti Ketenensis translatoris, fortasse a Petro Pictaiense redactae: An Edition of the Glosses to the Latin Qur'an in BnF Ms. Arsenal 1162", *Medieval Encounters* 21/1 (2015): 81–120.

thus the original text can easily be made out. In this study, we will examine a selection, first of suppressed words and passages, then of corrected passages. This examination will allow us to draw some conclusions about the reason behind these interventions, the identity of the corrector or correctors and the position of *A* in the *stemma codicum* of the Corpus Islamolatinum.

Before setting forth specific examples, I should point out that the deletions and corrections in *A* were incorporated into the other 23 extant manuscripts of the Alchoran,⁴ as well as the two editions by Theodor Bibliander.⁵ In other words, all of the manuscripts and editions have only the corrected forms, never the original ones. This clearly demonstrates that *A* went through a revision process at a very early date and that the resulting new recension can be understood as the *archetype* of the Alchoran and the rest of the texts in the Corpus.

1 Deleted Passages

In nineteen different places in this Qur'an, text was deleted by being crossed out. The affected passages include individual words, short phrases, and entire verses. In all cases, the deleted text matches the original Arabic version closely,⁶ and therefore we must conclude that the deletions were not intended to rectify any copying errors (dittography, anticipation, repetition) or interpolations from glosses. Apparently, the reason for the deletions was not ideological either. The purpose was rather to make the text more intelligible by eliminating details that were difficult to understand, that made the text's syntax convoluted, and that seemed of little importance to conveying the general meaning.

⁴ Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, 108; Vatican City, BAV Vat. lat. 4071 and 4072; Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Mscr Dresd A. 120b; Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek Aug. Pap. 112; Mantova, Biblioteca Comunale Teresiana cod. 65 (A.III.1); Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C. 201; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Selden Supra 31; Oxford, Corpus Christi College 184; Oxford, Merton College 313; Paris BNF lat. 3390; 3391; 3392; 3393; 3668; 3669; 3670; 6064; 14503; St. Petersburg, Publichnaya Biblioteka Lar. Q. I. 345; Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale H.II.33 (1213); Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques Chirac 1235; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek cod 4815 (Univ 453). The El Escorial & IV.8 manuscript has not been taken into account as it is a copy of the first edition by Theodor Bibliander.

⁵ Theodor Bibliander, *Machumetis Saracenorum principia eiusque successorum vitae ac doctrina ipseque Alcoran* [. . .] (Basel: Johannes Opporin, 1543, 1550²) 7–188.

⁶ All quotations in English from the Qur'an are taken from the A. J. Arberry translation (1955), available at The Quranic Arabic Corpus website: <http://corpus.quran.com/> (last accessed: March 13, 2021)

- Thus, sometimes phrases were deleted which had an untranslated Arabic term:
- fol. 42ra, l. 6 (az. 9): *Nemo molestiam uel iniuriam sentiet quantum est fetile*. Qur'an 4:77: “you shall not be wronged a single date-thread”. It is noteworthy that Robert of Ketton left the term *fatilān* (*date-thread*) untranslated, since earlier in the same sura he did translate it: fol. 41rb, ll. 12–14 (az. 9 = s. 4:49): *Deus tamen quos uult exaltat, nulli faciens iniuriam nec auferens pondus nuclei ossis*. It is also surprising that the text's reviser chose to suppress the problematic phrase instead of introducing a note to clarify the Arabic term, as he had done on folio 41rb, l. 14: **ossis, id est de fructu palme*.
 - fol. 97ra, ll. 10–11 (az. 35): *si librum autem hunc cui libet algermi traderemus ad legendum*. Qur'an 26:198: “If We had sent it down on a barbarian”. As in the case above, it is surprising that Robert of Ketton did not translate the terms *ba'di al-a'jamīna* (any of the non-Arabs). For his part, the reviser opted to suppress the term rather than to introduce a gloss, as he does at other places.⁷ This leads me to think that he did not know the meaning of the term and was incapable of deducing it from the context.

In other cases, the suppressed passages have an obscure meaning or present some kind of syntactical difficulty:

- fol. 53va, ll. 6–7 (az. 16): *in quem enim crederem nisi in dominum omnium rerum? Et anime cui libet suus effectus incumbat*. Cf. Qur'an 6: 164: “Say: ‘Shall I seek after a Lord other than God, who is the Lord of all things?’ Every soul earns only to its own account, no soul laden bears the load of another”.
- fol. 64vb, ll. 1–2 (az. 19): *hic Alchoran, firmans quod manibus inerat et res discernens, omnis falsitatis expers. . .* Qur'an 10:37: “This Koran could not have been forged apart from God; but it is a confirmation of what is before it, and a distinguishing of the Book, wherein is no doubt, from the Lord of all Being”. The same formula appears on folio 71vb, ll. 34–35 (az. 21 = Qur'an 12:111): *confirmans atque corroborans quod uestris inest manibus, omnia discernens*.⁸
- fol. 123ra, l. 29 (az. 59): *uidelicet homines Noe et Hat superbique Pharao et arboris nec non et Tuba. . .* Qur'an 50:12–14: “Cried lies before them the people of Noah and the men of Er-Rass, and Thamood, and Ad and Pharaoh, the brothers of Lot, the men of the Thicket, the people of Tubba”. Undoubtedly the reviser was unfamiliar with the expression *<homines / gens> arboris* and

⁷ fol. 108ra, l. 31 (Az. 44 = s. 35:13): *nec etiam quantum est alkitiner mandant*, with the gloss: *Alquttiner aliquid uile et modicum*. The Arabic term is *al-qit'mirin*: ‘the membrane of a date-seed’.

⁸ Robert of Ketton regularly uses *discerpere* in the sense of *make distinctions*. This verb thus can mean “to explain something in detail” or it can convey the idea of breaking up what was a single, original teaching into different doctrines.

therefore chose to delete it. In fact, it refers to the Madianite people (see Qur'an 7:85–93, 11:84–95), who are here referred to as *wa-aṣḥābu l-aykati*: *the men (or companions) of the thicket*. The same formula *homines arboris* appears on folio 111va, l. 10 (az. 47).

- fol. 123rb (az. 59:30): *Verbum enim meum (~~nunquam hominibus nocui~~) non mutabitur*. In his translation, Robert of Ketton renders in a somewhat convoluted way the two coordinate clauses in the Arabic version. Qur'an 50:29: “The Word is not changed with Me; I wrong not My servants”. The reviser of the Latin version simply eliminates the parenthetical remark embedded in the main clause.
- fol. 128rb, l. 12 (az. 68): *seculoque futuro perpetuum ignem, quoniam, in fine malis grauem, suum prophetam impugnabant*. Cf. Qur'an 59:4: “That is because they made a breach with God and His Messenger; and whosoever makes a breach with God, God is terrible in retribution”.
- fol. 133vb (az. 85:28–9): *licet suas corroborauimus facturas; nostra uoluntate petente, restituemus alias*. Cf. Qur'an 76:28: “We created them, and We strengthened their joints; and, when We will, We shall exchange their likes”.
- fol. 137ra, ll. 5–6 (az. 102): *Deus te nequaquam dimittens [corr. in dimittet] nec abhorrens terminus sufficiens efficiet*. The ungrammatical absolute constructions with participles have been corrected or deleted, as has the phrase *terminus... efficiet*, whose meaning is unclear. However, it is the unredacted version that accurately expresses the sense of Qur'an 93:3–4: “Thy Lord has neither forsaken thee nor hates thee, and the Last shall be better for thee than the First”.

Some of the deleted passages contained specific details about actions, subjects, or concepts that, for the reviser, must have seemed of little importance, so that eliminating them clarified, in his opinion, the general ideas communicated in the passages in question. This can be seen in the following cases:

- fol. 48ra, ll. 25–27 (az. 13): *uinum et aleas et scaccos, cum non sint res licite sed diaboli machina, per que inter homines inimicitiam et abhorritionem inicere et eos ab orationibus et inuocatione Dei retrahere maxime nititur, ~~uos ut antecedatis, pretermittite~~*. Cf. Qur'an 5:90–91: “O believers, wine and arrow-shuffling, idols and divining-arrows are an abomination, some of Satan's work; so avoid it; haply So you will prosper.⁹ Satan only desires to precipi-

⁹ Note the sense of *prosperous*, *to prosper* that Robert of Ketton assigns to the verb forms *antecedere*, *antecedens* in the following passages: *et semetipsos meliores et antecedentes efficiat* (6:26) *qui bonam sequendo uiam semper antecedunt* (40:6–7), *gens Dei, semper antecedens* (67:57), *Ab auaritia namque liberi semper antecedunt* (73:34), *Bonum autem exequens semper antecedit* (91:6).

tate enmity and hatred between you in regard to wine and arrow-shuffling, and to bar you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer. Will you then desist?”.

- fol. 52va, ll. 17–18 (az. 16): *Deus. . . nullis ~~uillis nisi uerbo suo premunitis malum inferre desiderat~~*. Cf. Qur’an 6:131: “That is because thy Lord would never destroy the cities unjustly, while their inhabitants were heedless”.
- fol. 54ra, l. 29 (az. 17): *Deo. . . mendacium inponunt et ~~quod nesciunt cum uiam rectam derelinquentes falsam sequuntur~~*. Cf. Qur’an 7:28: “Say: ‘God does not command indecency; what, do you say concerning God such things as you know not?’”.
- fol. 96vb, l. 15 (az. 35): *per imbrem inmissum, ~~correctis pessimum~~, residuos omnes pessundedimus*. Cf. Qur’an 26:173: “And We rained on them a rain; and evil is the rain of them that are warned”.
- fol. 119v, l. 1 (az. 54): *gratias homo Deo reddat, ~~omnibus prouidis admirando et glorificando~~*. Cf. Qur’an 45:13: “And He has subjected to you what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, all together, from Him. Surely in that are signs for a people who reflect”.
- fol. 129ra, l. 16 (az. 72): *a sublimibus atque diuitibus ~~ad urbem uersis pressi diruantur~~*. Cf. Qur’an 63:8: “They say, ‘If we return to the City, the mightier ones of it will expel the more abased’”.
- fol. 135rb, l. 5 (az. 90): *omnibus ~~uestri qui rectificari studuerint~~*. Cf. Qur’an 81:28: “For whosoever of you (ar. *minkum*) who would go straight”.
- fol. 136ra, l. 10 (az. 95): *sciat Deum illum reducere posse ~~sine uindicta uel uirium obiectione~~*. Cf. Qur’an 86:8–10: “Surely He is able to bring him back, [. . .] and he shall have no strength, no helper”.

Lastly, longer passages were also eliminated, apparently for reasons similar to the ones that we have seen up to this point: namely, the desire to simplify the syntax of the text and clarify its general meaning:

- fol. 67ra, ll. 1–9 (az. 20): *Dixit Noe: «Nullus preter Deum, si sibi placuerit, cum his uirtutibus ueniet. Qui, si uos malam uiam aberrare fecerit, cum ipse sit Deus uester, ad quem omnium fiet reditus, nec meum consilium nec ammonitio prodesse poterit, cum iam etiam impotentes stupidique sitis. ~~Me quidam hoc fecisse iam perhibebunt, sed si reus ego sum uestrorumque factorum expers~~*. Cf. Qur’an 11:33–35: “He said, ‘God will bring you it if He will; you cannot frustrate Him. And my sincere counsel will not profit you, if I desire to counsel you sincerely, if God desires to pervert you; He is your Lord, and unto Him you shall be returned.’ (Or do they say, ‘He has forged it’? Say: ‘If I have forged it, upon me falls my sin; and I am quit of the sins you do’)”.
- fol. 97vb, ll. 16–19 (az. 36): *cartam . . . magnatibus aduocatis regina perlegit, in ea uidens nomen Salomonis et ~~in nomine Dei pii et misericordis~~ et ~~non michi~~*

resistetis sed credentes accedite. Cf. Qur'an 27:29–31: “She said, ‘O Council, see, a letter honourable has been cast unto me. It is from Solomon, and it is In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Rise not up against me, but come to me in surrender’”. As we see, the reviser deleted the contents of the letter from Solomon to the Queen of Sheba, perhaps because he considered it irrelevant.

In sum, the emendations made to the text through deletions are intended in most cases to eliminate obscure passages or to simplify the complicated syntax used by the translator, always with the idea that the omitted parts of the text are irrelevant, though in fact that is not the case.

2 Corrections

Some corrections are intended to rectify obvious copying errors. These generally consist of restoring short text segments (words or syllables) that have been omitted. Some examples follow:

- fol. 43vb, ll. 10–11 (az.10): *si <in> illa perseuerent incredulitate*
- fol. 44vb, l. 19 (az. 11): *si <e> conuerso contigerit*
- fol. 55va, l. 8 (s. 17): *suas domos funditus diluit (→ diruit)*
- fol. 64va, l. 21 (az. 19): *Hic est Deus, suus dominus uerax, et ueritatem <deserens> nil preter errorem atque iacturam sequitur*. Cf. Qur'an 10:32: “That then is God, your Lord, the True; what is there, after truth, but error?”.
- fol. 78rb, l. 28 (az. 26): *quod his (→ bis) terram amitterent*. Qur'an: 17:4: “You shall do corruption in the earth twice”.
- fol. 86va, ll. 18–19 (az. 29) *ego Deus eos radicitus confundam, sua fundamenta plana <faciens> penitus et equalia*.
- fol. 89va, ll. 9–10 (s. 31): *eorum uentres et capita cutesque foco uoluens perpetuo, exuteque (→ exireque) <inde> uolentem repellens*. Cf. Qur'an 22:22: “As often as they desire in their anguish to come forth from it, they shall be restored into it, and: ‘Taste the chastisement of the burning!’”.
- fol. 91va, l. 30 (az. 32); *permanent <in> errore*
- fol. 93ra, l. 16 (az. 33) *doctor et cog<nitor>*
- fol. 109vb, ll. 28–29 (az. 45) *Nonne <celi> terreque conditor*
- fol. 110rb, ll. 34–35 (az. 46): *Nos quidem immensam <gloriam> adepti sumus*. Cf. Qur'an 37:60: “This is indeed the mighty triumph”.
- fol. 124vb, l. 3 (s. 62): *nil nisi tantum opinionones et uoluntate<s> <uestras> sequimini*

In many other cases, the reviser's goal was to correct supposed spelling or grammar errors, to propose lexical alternatives, or to intervene in other ways to change the meaning of the text. Let us take a look at some examples.

2.1 Spelling Emendations

In addition to trivial corrections like *Salamon* > *Salomon*, *percunctare* > *percontare*, *habundare* > *abundare* etc., there is one that is of more interest: fol. 36va, l. 21 (az. 6): *Beccham* (→ *Meccham*) *scilicet, locum benedictum*. However, *Beccham* corresponds perfectly to the Arabic *bibakkata*: “at Bekka” (Qur’an 3:96). In fact, *Bekka* is a second name for the city of Mecca.

2.2 Verb Tenses and Modes

Changes from the subjunctive to the indicative mood, from the future or past tense to the present, or vice versa, are intended to improve the grammatical correctness of the translation, but they do not always seem entirely necessary:

- fol. 55ra, l. 18 (az. 17): *cumque Noe contradicebatur* (→ *contradiceretur*)
- fol. 55vb, l. 25 (az. 17): *nostra uindicta superueniet* (→ *superueniret*)
- fol. 64va, l. 24 (az. 19): *quod incredulos nunquam conuersuros* (→ *conuertendos*) *affirmat*.
- fol. 64vb, l. 12 (az. 19): *quis esset* (→ *fuerit*) *finis perspicite*. But in other passages the same formula appears with the verb form *esset*: fol. 56ra, l. 5: (az. 17): *non credentium quis esset finis uideatur*. fol. 108rb, l. 22 (az. 44): *quorum quis esset finis perpende*. fol. 110va, ll. 14–15 (az. 46): *quorum... quis esset finis perpende*. fol. 118ra, l. 22 (az. 52): *et quis esset finis perpende*.
- fol. 65ra (az. 19:109): *siquidem cum aduenerit creditis* (→ *credetis*)
- fol. 79rb, l. 6 (az. 26) *licet uos eas non intelligitis* (→ *intelligatis*)
- fol. 89vb, l. 19 (az. 31): *accidentia sibi patienter sustinent* (→ *sustineant*)
- fol. 93va, l. 23 (az. 33) *minime se polient* (→ *poliant*) *et ornent*
- fol. 96va, l. 15 (az. 35): *idemque precipit eos* (→ *precepit eis*)
- fol. 135rb, l. 27 (az. 92): *cum ceteris reddant* (→ *reddunt*) *ultra uero cum accipiant* (→ *accipiunt*)

2.3 Forms with and without Prefixes

- fol. 28vb, l. 20 (az. de boue) *neglexerit deliqueritue* (→ *dereliqueritue*)
- fol. 30va, l. 25 (az. 2): *nec ~~a~~bradamini* (→ *radamini*). However, the use of *abradere* is common in the Alchoran: 31:95: *abradat*; 51:51: *abradet*, etc.
- fol. 33vb, l. 29 (az. 4): *seu molestiam inde faciat ~~a~~creditori* (→ *creditori*)
- fol. 90va, l. 13 (az. 31): *omnes adorati a uobis dei<que> loco ~~conu~~ocati* (→ *uocati*)

2.4 Indefinite Determiners

Robert of Ketton uses the indefinite determiner *quis/quae/quid* with some frequency. The reviser tends to replace this with *quisquam*, *aliquis* or other alternatives:

- fol. 65rb, l. 24 (az. 19): *An habent inde rationes ~~quas~~* (→ *hoc*) *demonstraturas?*
- fol. 83rb, l. 28 (az. 27): *nec deo quem* (→ *quemquam*) *participem statuat*
- fol. 97va, l. 32 (az. 36): *nisi michi quos* (→ *aliquos*) *rumores retulerit*

In one unusual case, the genitive *alius*, in the expression *alius seculi*: *from the other world, the beyond*, is replaced by *alterius*, on fol. 87ra, l. 6 (az. 29): *alius* (→ *alterius*) *quidem seculi malum grauius est*. *Alterius* es clearly more appropriate, since it specifies the latter of the two. But the formula *alius seculi* is left uncorrected in nine other places, whereas *alterius seculi* is found in only two.

2.5 Variations in Gender

- fol. 90va, l. 14 (az. 31): *culicem unam* (→ *unum*) *facere*
- fol. 126ra, ll. 23–24 (az. 64): *et pomi* (→ *poma*) *ac palme pomique* (→ *pomaque*) *punice* (→ *punica*)

2.6 Variations in Number

- fol. 54rb, l. 26 (az. 17): *ubi est quem adorauiſtis in Dei loco? Responderunt eos* (→ *eum*) *aufugiſſe*. But in the Arabic original the pronoun forms are plural: Qur’an 7:37: “Where is that you were calling on, beside God?. They will say, ‘They have gone (Arab. *ḍallū*) astray from us”.

- fol. 89rb, l. 19 (az. 31): *Dei loco bonorum et malorum impotens* (→ *impotentēs*) *adorant*. But the same formula appears elsewhere in the singular: fol. 88rb, l. 6 (az. 30): *bonorum et malorum impotens adorastis*; fol. 94vb, ll. 7–8 (az. 34): *bonorum et malorum impotentem inuocant*.
- fol. 106ra, l. 22 (az. 42): *post illam* (→ *illas*) *tamen non est tibi licitum alias. . . mutuo sumere*. The singular pronoun undoubtedly refers to a specific woman, Zayneb, the wife of Zayd.
- fol. 117va, l. 19 (az. 51): *tot contumelie tantumque malum inferentur* (→ *inferetur*). Given that the verb agrees with the two terms in the subject, the correction is completely unnecessary.

2.7 Variations in Case

- fol. 128bisrb, l. 34 (s. 70): *quis autem peior est imponente mendacium Deo uocante* (→ *uocanti*) *cunctos ad legem rectam illosque malos abhorrente* (→ *abhorrenti*).

2.8 Lexical Changes

The lexical changes show a greater degree of arbitrariness, either because they are not applied in all instances where the same formula is used or because they involve significant changes to the syntax.

- fols. 42rb l. 25 y 42va, l. 3 (az. 10): *Sumite* (→ *capite*) *et interficite*. But elsewhere the same formula goes uncorrected: fol. 60rb, l. 8 (az. 18): *sumite et interficite*
- fol. 78vb, l. 12 (az. 26): *de diuina substantia, que minime pauca* (→ *parua*) *est*. But the noun *substantia* is more frequently modified by *paucus* or *paucitas* in the Alchoran: *Nonne perpendunt paucitatem atque breuitatem huius mundane substantie?* (az. 19), *illi paucam substantiam tribuente* (az. 22), *Nonne sciunt Deum huic substantiam multam, illi paucam pro uelle suo tribuisse* (az. 48), *huic uictum substantiamque multam, illi paucam pro uelle suo prebet* (az. 51).
- fol. 85va, l. 1 (az. 29): *timemus quod cruciatus atque flagitia* (→ *flagella*) *uel statim inferet*. Cf. Qur'an 20:45: "Truly we fear he may exceed against us, or wax insolent". The correction seems unnecessary, first of all because *flagella* is redundant with *cruciatus*, and secondly because *flagitia inferet* better captures the meaning of the Arabic term *yaṭghā*: *transgress all bounds, to be insolent*.

- fol. 86vb, l. 19 (az. 29): *membra uirilia* (→ *genitalia*) *patuerunt*. The correction makes sense, but in other places the same lapse by the translator was not corrected, e.g. fol. 53v, ll. 29–30 (az. 17): *membrorum uirilium atque pudendorum*.
- fol. 87va, l. 12 (s. 30): *cuius [i.e. God] omnium opera perscrutantis minime facta pereunetabitur* (→ *perscrutabitur*) *quisquam*. Cf. Qur’an 21:23: “He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall he questioned”. The correction muddles the syntax in the clause, since *percunctabitur*, as a deponent verb form, is compatible with the subject *quisquam* and the direct object complement *facta*, whereas *perscrutabitur* (future passive) cannot take a direct object complement.
- fol. 89vb, l. 32 (az. 31): *Aliter enim turre et ecclesie* (→ *mesquide*) *templaque quibus Deus multum inuocatur penitus pessundarentur*. The Arabic text (Qur’an 22:40) uses four terms: “There had been destroyed cloisters (Arab. *ṣawāmi‘u*) and churches (Arab. *wabiya‘un*), oratories (Arab. *waṣalawātun*) and mosques (Arab. *wamasājidu*), wherein God’s Name is much mentioned”. Although on this point Ketton’s translation is rather paraphrastic, the lexical substitution is intended to make a clear distinction between Christian churches (*ecclesie*) and Muslim temples (*mesquide*).
- fol. 94vb, l. 24 (az. 34): *Multiplicator* (→ *multiplicans*), *in celo signa nec non lumen et lunam lucidam disponens. . . a cunctis bonis est adorandus*. Cf. 25:61: “Blessed be He who has set in heaven constellations, and has set among them a lamp, and an illuminating moon”. The correction was made to improve the syntax, but it is completely unnecessary. *Multiplicator* is frequently used in the Alchoran as a name for or attribute of God and here it renders the Arabic verb *tabāraka*: “blessed is He”. For its part, *in celo signa* is the object argument of *disponens*.
- fol. 106vb, l. 15 (az. 43): *nostra quidem uoluntate petente* (→ *potente*). The same thing happens on fol. 133vb, l. 27 (az. 85): *nostra uoluntate petente* (→ *potente*) *restituemus alias*. These corrections distort the true meaning of the text, which refers only to the will of God (*petere*), not his power (*posse*). Cf. Qur’an 34:9: “Did We will. . .” and Qur’an 76:28: “and when We will. . .” By contrast, on fol. 135ra, ll. 2–3 (az. 89) = Qur’an 80:22, the same formula goes uncorrected: *omnes demum, uoluntate sua petente, resuscitaturus*.
- fol. 110va, ll. 3–4 (az. 46): *arbor ezeclus, ob malos plantata, eimos* (→ *cirros*) *sicut diabolorum capita gestans*. The reviser seems not to have understood the term *cimos*, which is merely *cyma* (from the Greek κῦμα), whose meaning is explained by Isidore of Seville, *Etym.* 17:10: *Cima dicitur quasi coma; est enim summitas olerum vel arborum, in qua vigens virtus naturalis est*. The masculine gender of *cimos* may be due to a change specific to medieval Latin in Hispania. In Portuguese and Galician, *cimo* is masculine, and while in Portu-

guese has the abstract meaning of the highest point of an object, in Galician it still denotes the buds and new leaves of cabbage plants. The correction to *cirros*, even if we grant the term a similar meaning (*crests, curls*), is less apt given the context, since it refers to the sprouts on the infernal tree. Cf. Qur'an 37:65: "its spathes¹⁰ (ar. *ṭal'uhā*) are as the heads of Satans".

- fol. 125vb, l. 11 (az. 64): *quod istorum operum Dei contradicitis* (→ *reprehenditis*). The reviser thinks that *contradicere* should take the dative, as on line 18 of the same folio: *Cui factorum Dei contradicitis?* And therefore replaces the verb with one that takes the accusative. However, the same formula appears elsewhere with the accusative: fol. 125ra, ll. 10–11 (az. 62): *An aliquid istorum Dei factorum contradicitis?* fol. 126ra, l. 12 (az. 64): *An aliquid horum factorum Dei contradicitis?*

2.9 Other Corrections

The lexical corrections that we just looked at are, for the most part, synonymic variations. By contrast, the emendations that we are going to examine below involve changes that affect the meaning of the text.

- fol. 87ra, ll. 25–26 (az. 29) *cum nos illis uictum et finem* (→ *uestitum*) *prebentes, ab eis minime uictum* (→ *talia*) *exhigamus*. It is true that *finem* seems to be a corrupt reading, but its replacement by *uestitum* – and the later replacement of *uictum* by *talia* – are somewhat arbitrary, since the Arabic wording refers generically to food. Cf. Qur'an 20:132: "We ask of thee no provision (ar. *riz'qan*), but it is We who provide thee and the issue ultimate is to god-fearing".
- fol. 87rb, l. 34 (az. 30): *hoc quidem uerbum non tacebitis nisi prius quasi messis manu nostra prostrati*. However, the meaning of the Quranic verse requires the adverb *non*. Qur'an 21:15: "So they ceased not to cry, until We made them stubble, silent and still".
- fol. 104vb, ll. 27–32 (az. 42): *Nemini quidem duo corda tribuit, nec matres in uxores [. . .] ducere permisit, nec filios uestros [. . .] Deus ipse [. . .] illuc aduocari uoluit* (→ *noluit*). Perhaps because the clause is so long, the reviser did not notice that the entire predicate was already negative, due to the conjunction *nec*, which led him to correct the verb form unnecessarily.

¹⁰ Cf. Sahih translation: 'emerging fruits', Yusuf Ali translation: 'shoots of its fruit-stalks'.

- fol. 111rb, l. 15 (az. 46): *ad malum nostrum* (→ *suum*) *properantes*. Cf. Qur’an 37:176: “What, do they seek to hasten Our chastisement?”. This obviously refers to the punishment that God will inflict, not the punishment that sinners will suffer.
- fol. 111vb, l. 23 (az. 47): *equos istos pro iussu dilectioneque Dei regis tantum ab ortu ad occasum diligo* (→ *dirigo*). However, *diligo* is the correct reading. Cf. Qur’an 38:32: “He said, ‘Lo, I have loved the love of good things better than the remembrance of my Lord, until the sun was bidden behind the veil’”.
- fol. 120vb, l. 16 (s. 55): *cum diabulos <ad> auditum alchoran atque te conuertimus*. The reviser unnecessarily corrected a common syntactical construction in Robert of Ketton’s Latin to express finality: the supine with verbs of motion.
- fol. 129vb, ll. 15–16 (s. 74): *nemini precipit expendere nisi secundum modum sui dare* (→ *posse*). Again, the correction distorts the original meaning of the text. Cf. Qur’an 65:7: “God charges no soul save with what He has given him” (ar. *ātāhā*).
- fol. 132vb, l. 3 (s. 82): *decroso* (→ *decreto*) *namque spatio sibi permissio ad nos uenient*. The obvious copying error *decroso* was emended to *decreto*, but for reasons both paleographic and semantic, the more apt correction would have been *decursio*, since the meaning of the text is not that God has established (*decreto*) a time frame, but that the time limit has expired (*decursio*); cf. Qur’an 73:11–12.
- fol. 133ra, l. 19 (s. 83 :18) : *Nos non posuimus <super> populum ignis nisi tantum angelos*. The addition of the preposition *super* clarifies the general meaning of the phrase, but it probably does not fit with the syntax in Robert of Ketton’s original wording, which merely used a calque of the original Arabic: Qur’an 74:31 *ja’alnā aṣḥāba l-nāri illā malāikatan*: “We have appointed only angels to be masters of the Fire”. Note that the ordinary meaning of *aṣḥāba* is *companions*, but Ketton rather imprecisely chose the term *populum*.
- fol. 133ra, ll. 29–31 (s. 83): *Iste est unum maiorum castigantium atque docentium gentes quas p̄cedere* (→ *credere*) *seu recedere uoluerit*. The reviser again misinterprets the original meaning of the text. Cf. Qur’an 74:35–37: “Surely it is one of the greatest things, as a warning to mortals to whoever of you desires to go forward or lag behind”.
- fol. 137rb, ll. 16–18 (az. 106): *Hoc in nocte Alchidera . . . superne* (→ *super te*) *posuimus*. Cf. Qur’an 97:1: “Behold, We sent it down on the Night of Power”. Robert of Ketton elsewhere uses the expression *superne ponere* to refer to the revelation: fol. 62vb, ll. 5–6 (az. 18): *Dei precepta . . . suo legato superne posita*.

3 Alternative Readings

Occasionally, the reviser, while not rejecting the original reading, will propose an alternative variant. It is not clear whether this because the writing in his model was difficult to decipher or because he had doubts about the interpretation of the passage.

- fol. 43va, l. 32 (az. 10): *Viri boni, directores* (→ *uel dil<ectores>*) *hominum et equilibres coram Deo testes . . . estote*. The correct reading is, obviously, *directores*. Cf. Qur'an 4:135: "O believers, be you securers of justice, witnesses for God". Only the latest manuscripts and Bibliander's edition have *directores uel dilectores*.
- fol. 48rb, l. 20 (az. 13): *Mecce domum et menses* (→ *uel mensas*) *ac oblationes Deus haran hominibus constituit*. The correct reading is the original one: *menses*. Cf. Qur'an 5:97: "God has appointed the Kaaba, the Holy House, as an establishment for men, and the holy month (*ar. wal-shahra l-ḥarāma*); the offering, and the necklaces". In this case, the rest of the manuscripts, as well as Bibliander, opted for the variant *mensas*.

4 Corrections or Glosses?

In some cases, it is not clear whether the annotations should be understood as glosses intended to clarify the meaning of the text or as restoring words that had supposedly been omitted by the copyist. In any case, the copyists of later manuscripts introduced these annotations into the body of the text.

- fol. 87rb, ll. 26–31 (az. 30): *Quot* (→ *quotquot*) *uillarum noxiarum, quarum loca ceteris gentibus restaurauimus, hucusque confudimus! Cum malorum presenserant aduentum, libenter se retraherent. Vos autem minime <perfidiam> derelinquetis, sed ad uestras mansiones reuertetis, usquequo percunctati dicetis: Nos quidem erronei male fecimus*. The addition of *<perfidiam>* suggests a whole new interpretation of the text, since the meaning of the initial Latin version must have been, as in the original Arabic, that the people should not abandon their cities. Cf. Qur'an 21:11–14: "How many a city that was evildoing We have shattered, and set up after it another people! Then, when they perceived Our might, behold, they ran headlong out of it. 'Run not! Return you unto the luxury that you exulted in, and your dwelling-places; haply you shall be questioned'. They said: 'Alas for us! We have been evildoers'". Moreover, the original Latin form *quot* is also closer to the Arabic wording than the corrected form *quot<quot>*.

- fol. 93ra, ll. 17–19 (az. 33) *In domibus Dei precepto instructis ad ipsius adorationem et inuocationem <uenite> uespere et mane*. Cf. Qur’an 24:36: “In temples God has allowed to be raised up, and His Name to be commemorated therein; therein glorifying Him, in the mornings and the evenings”. In the Arabic version, this verse refers to the lamps mentioned in Qur’an 24:35.
- fol. 99ra, ll. 26–27 (az. 37): *Deus uero, propitius atque commodus <Egyptiis> debilitatis eos precellentes et imperantes ac heredes et ditissimos effecit*. Cf. Qur’an 28:5: “Yet We desired to be gracious to those that were abased in the land, and to make them leaders, and to make them the inheritors”. The reviser doubtless interpreted the participle *debilitatis* to refer to the Egyptians, understanding it as an ablative absolute or as a dative dependent on *precellentes et imperantes*. Actually, *debilitatis* complements the adjectives *propitius atque commodus* and therefore refers to the Jews subjected by the Egyptians.

5 Some Conclusions

The process of revision that manuscript *A* underwent took place at a very early period, since all the changes made to the original wording were transferred to the rest of the manuscripts.

This examination of a good number of passages that were emended by the reviser has not revealed any deletions or corrections made for ideological reasons. The reviser’s main objective was simply to improve the quality and the clarity of the language in the text. On the one hand, he was aware that he was working on a copy that was without a doubt painstakingly produced but not without errors. On the other, the original wording in Latin was often complicated, both as a result of Robert of Ketton’s particular style and due to the fact that the translation was completed in a relatively short amount of time.

As has been seen in these pages, most of the corrections result in readings that are further from the true meaning of the Arabic text than was the initial Latin version. This makes clear that the revision process was carried out without Robert of Ketton’s supervision and probably by someone who was not part of his milieu. The reviser was not proficient in the Arabic language, nor was he overly familiar with the phraseology, the imagery, or the referents (*realia*) of the Qur’an. As a result, he was not able to understand many of the ways that Ketton chose to phrase his translation. He sometimes suppressed obscure passages or passages that were, in his opinion, irrelevant; at other

times he corrected them, changing the translator's linguistic usages and the interpretation of the passages in question.

On the other hand, the revision process can be characterized as intermittent and unsystematic. Some suras have many corrections, others practically none. Sometimes wording that is changed in one place is left untouched in another. There are, furthermore, errors that went undetected.¹¹

The corrector's identity is unknown, but there are many signs pointing to the figure of Peter of Poitiers, who probably also wrote a good many of the glosses. Since he had already received a commission from Peter the Venerable to rewrite the *Rescriptum Christiani* (the *Risālat al-Kindī*), he possibly felt that he was likewise authorized to alter the original wording of the Alchoran in order to ensure the quality and the clarity of the language in the Latin text. But his lack of familiarity with Arabic meant that, both in the glosses and the corrections, he made frequent errors of interpretation.

Manuscript *A* seems to be a *working codex* that was not intended, in theory, to circulate publicly: in addition to the scarcity of ornamentation, it is also important to note that the deleted passages were not erased, since the reviser wanted the original readings to remain legible.

Following the revision of *A*, a new, clean copy was made, likely in Cluny's own scriptorium, which would have the following new features: the crossed-out passages deleted, the corrections introduced, glosses – mainly the interlinear ones – selected, and the contents reordered: a preliminary text added as an index to the collection, and the Epistle to Bernard moved to the end of the volume, to link it more closely to the *Rescriptum Christiani*. This clean copy can be considered the true archetype of the Alchoran and of the rest of the texts in the Corpus Islamolatinum.

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¹¹ f. 29vb, l. 33 (az. 2): pro mimo (= pro minimo); f. 42rb, l. 16 (az. 10) communicans (= communicatis); f. 49va, l. 15 (az. 14): reuelabit (= releuabit); f. 55rb, l. 15 (az. 17): Teuth (= Temuth); f. 70ra, l. 26 (az. 21): fit (= sit); f. 74rb, l. 19 (az. 23): cunctipotentem (= cunctipotente); f. 93va, l. 3 (az. 33): debentis (= debenti); f. 119rb, l. 28 (az. 53): nos (= uos); f. 127vb, l. 25 (az. 67): proferre (= proferte); f. 133vb, l. 32 (az. 85): qui (= cui).

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The Quranic Arabic Corpus Website: <http://corpus.quran.com/>