

Juan of Segovia's Translation of the Qur'ān

La traducción del Corán de Juan de Segovia

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John of Segovia (1393-1458) is together with Nicolaus Cusanus one of the most important theologians of the 15th century. His struggle for peace and consensus during the council of Basel culminated in his engagement for interreligious communication in the last years of his life. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, he prepared a new approach towards the Islam. Not crusade, but interreligious communication based on thorough knowledge of the religion of the other should result in peace, either through converting the other or at least convincing him to stop warfare. Therefore John of Segovia initiated a new translation of the Qur'ān into Spanish, which he himself translated into Latin. This article outlines the history of this famous project and illustrates its main characteristics with examples taken from fragments of this first polyglot translation of the Qur'ān.

Key words: John of Segovia; 15th Century; Latin translation; Qur'ān; Theologians; Crusade; Yça Gidelli; Council of Basel; Robert of Ketton; Interreligious communication.

Junto a Nicolás de Cusa, Juan de Segovia (1393-1458) fue uno de los teólogos más importantes del siglo XV. Sus esfuerzos por llegar a una paz y a un consenso durante el concilio de Basilea culminaron con un compromiso de comunicación interreligiosa en los últimos años de su vida. Después de la caída de Constantinopla en el año 1453, preparó un nuevo acercamiento hacia el Islam. Ya no se trataba de una cruzada, sino de realizar una comunicación entre religiones basada en un conocimiento profundo de la religión del otro, lo que creía que resultaría en una paz a través de la conversión del otro o, al menos, a través del convencimiento de que dejaría la guerra. Juan de Segovia comenzó así la tarea de traducir de nuevo el Corán al castellano, que él mismo había traducido al latín. Este artículo muestra la historia de este famoso proyecto ilustrando sus características más llamativas con ejemplos tomados de esta primera traducción políglota del Corán.

Palabras clave: Juan de Segovia; siglo XV; traducciones latinas; Corán; teología; Cruzada; Yça Gidelli; Concilio de Basilea; Robert de Ketton; comunicación interreligiosa.

John of Segovia (d. 1458) occupies a unique place among the well-known late medieval theologians who studied Islam with great attention and care, transcending the horizons of their time. In more radical ways than his contemporaries, John demanded an end of military confrontations with Muslims and that the West should abandon crusading.

Among all those who were satisfied with a smattering of superficial and biased knowledge, John distinguished himself by striving for years to obtain sound information about the scriptural basis of Islam, the Qur'ān. The Castilian and subsequent Latin translations of the Qur'ān which he initiated and ultimately concluded are a milestone in the history of Christian-Muslim encounters. This project did not remain unacknowledged in later years. Enea Silvio Piccolomini wrote about it in his widely diffused *De Europa*.¹ Raffaele Maffei (Volterrano) and Theodor Bibliander transmitted this report, albeit with inaccuracies, to Ludovico Marracci.² None of these witnesses, however, was able to recognize the exceptional features of this translation of the Qur'ān in the historical context in which it was produced. This was a multi-lingual Qur'ān in which the Arabic original and the Castilian and Latin translations were juxtaposed on facing pages. It was only in the sixteenth century that another such polyglot text was fashioned. John's aim had never been to produce a multi-lingual Qur'ān, but rather a reliable translation for contemporary scholars. The language of this translation had to be Latin, the *lingua franca* of Western Christians. The Castilian version was only an intermediary which was necessary since the man John commissioned with the translation from Arabic did not know any Latin. The Arabic original was included alongside these translations since John specifically requested that a reliable source for the Qur'ān should be preserved. According to his own words, he consulted the Arabic text regularly when working on his Latin translation.

¹ Piccolomini, *De Europa*, cap. 42, p. 175: "Ioannes Segobiensis, homo hispanus moribus et doctrina illustris, qui cum summos theologie preceptores doctrina equaret, ab Amedeo, dum se papam dixit, cardinalatus eminentiam acceperat, et deinde unioni consentiens a Nicolao pontifice maximo cardinalatus dimisso titulo cesariensi ecclesie prefectus fuerat, in altissimis reconditus montibus, parvo monasteriolo contentus, vocatis ex Hispania legis arabice magistris librum, quem vocant Alchoranum et in quo Maumethis pseudoprophete non tam mysteria quam deliramenta continentur, in nostram linguam de novo convertit et ineptias eius veris ac vivis rationibus et argumentis expulsi."

² See Marracci, *Alcorani Textus Universus*, Praefatio p. 8: "Celeberrimus quoque Theologus Joannes Segoviensis, postea Romana purpura decoratus, in Concilio Constantiensi *Alcoranum à se interpretatum, nonnisi notis adornatum, & (ut scribit Volaterranus) validissimis confutationibus munitum, publici juris fecit, & et per omnium manus ire permisit: atque utinam ad nostras etiam devenisse.*" Quoted according to Gleis, "Arabismus latine personatus. Die Koranübersetzung von Ludovico Marracci (1698) und die Funktion des Lateinischen," p. 99, which includes a list of witnesses. Almost all statements concerning the translation are, however, only in part accurate or even false, such as the reference to the publication (see below).

This suggests that the Arabic original of this trilingual manuscript was meant to serve as a source of information for future studies as well. Segovia reasoned that future scholars would be best served if they knew all three languages and were able to trace back the translation from Latin into Spanish and finally to Arabic and to understand the original text on the basis of the two translations.³ Segovia's sensitivity for the peculiarities of the Arabic language deserves attentions since it brings to mind the new ambitions of the humanists. John of Segovia, however, displayed a rather sober attitude and was mostly concerned with rendering the correct meaning. In his case, nothing points to a concern with the mystical interpretation of Arabic or any other Oriental language, for that matter, as was the case with Reuchlin's interest in Hebrew. Likewise, he did not seek to identify an original wisdom as did Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and other authors inspired by the Kabbalah⁴ or to develop the ideal of a classical style, as did Erasmus. Marginal comments and excerpts in his handwriting confirm that he had studied too classical literature such as Cicero's *De officiis*, but his attention was focused on the text's contents. In his philosophical works too he appears to us as a theologian rather than as a rhetorician. His attitude reflects the close connection between philological and polemics which are inspired by dogma, 'the oscillation between polemic and philology',⁵ which Thomas Burman identified as the general feature of the study of the Qur'ān in the Christian West.

Sources

Although the manuscript of the trilingual Qur'ān John of Segovia had bequeathed to the University of Salamanca remains lost we know a fair bit about his translation project. A small number of sources allow insights into this exceptional enterprise. The most important source is the preface to the translation itself. This *Praefatio in translationem* may

³ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 195r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, "El prólogo de Juan de Segovia al Corán (Qur'ān) trilingüe (1456)," p. 409 ll. 540-542): "[...] translationem ipsam Latinam, rubeis literis, in medio linearum Hispani ydeomatis scribi feci, ut per illud trium peritis linguarum innotescat quid secta Mahumedonis contineat [...]"

⁴ For this important feature of Quranic studies in the early modern West see Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560*, p. 194f.

⁵ Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, p. 186.

have been written in 1456 after the translation work was completed.⁶ John of Segovia sets out his motivation for the translation, but he also provides a detailed account of the genesis of this project as well as a description of the distinctive features of his own, new Latin translation. Although he includes quotations from that translation in the *Praefatio*, their number is small. The preface thus hardly conveys a direct impression of the actual translation although it provides us with a credible representation of the historical context as well as Segovia's intention and view of himself.

Independent confirmation for John's account of the origins of the translation project can be found in a letter sent to him by Yça Gidelli and dated 24 April 1454, i.e., even before the two men had even met for the first time. This letter also provides further insights into the historical circumstances of this enterprise.⁷ While it almost goes without saying that this letter does not contain any information about the actual text of the translation, a letter which John of Segovia sent in 1458, shortly before he died, to an otherwise unknown friend contains a quotation from *sūrah* 9:71.⁸ The deed of 1457 in which John bequeathed his library to the University of Salamanca also includes two short citations. The document describes the manuscript containing the trilingual Qur'ān which was donated to Salamanca. While it includes neither the incipit nor the explicit, it does cite the first and last lines of the first

⁶ The *Praefatio in translationem* is preserved in two manuscripts. The most important testimony is ms Biblioteca Vaticana, cod. lat. 2923 (abbreviated in what follows as *V*), fol. 186r-196r, which was completed under Segovia's supervision in May 1458 shortly before he died. The second manuscript is ms Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 9350, fol. 107r-121v, which formed part of the property of Nicolás Antonio according to Hernández Montes, "Obras de Juan de Segovia," p. 339. See the edition by Martínez Gázquez, "El prólogo" and the detailed analysis by Scotto, "De Pe a Pa'. Il Corano trilingue di Juan de Segovia (1456) e la conversione pacifica dei Musulmani." The dating of the *Praefatio* is based on the fact that it was written 29 years after Segovia's second sojourn in Rome in 1427/8, cf. the quotation in note 16.

⁷ Segovia had Gidelli's letter *Epistola ad Johannem de Segovia* included in the manuscript Biblioteca Vaticana, cod. lat. 2923, fol. 178v-180r as part of the compilation which was meant to inform Enea Silvio Piccolomini about Segovia's attitude concerning dealings with Islam. See the transcription of the letter in Cabanelas Rodríguez, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico*, pp. 273-277, and the analysis and English translation in Wieggers, *Islamic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado. Yça of Segovia (fl. 1450), his Antecedents and Successors*, esp. pp. 230-235.

⁸ See the transcription of John of Segovia's letter in *Epistula ad amicum ignotum* (18.4.1458, *V* fol. 196v-198r) in Cabanelas Rodríguez, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico*, pp. 337-341.

and last pages, both of which include a short passage of the new translation. In addition to these fragments which have attracted some attention among scholars,⁹ we have a few shorter passages as well as a longer quotation from *sūrah* 5:110-115 which are contained in marginal notes, written by John himself, in ms Sevilla, Biblioteca Colombina, 7-6-14.¹⁰ Apparently, Segovia had initially expected that this new translation of the Qur'ān would allow him to revise his voluminous treatise *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Sarracenorum*. For this purpose, he revised the first page and added the correct new translation in a later passage of some importance where the text he had previously consulted had misled him. The author soon abandoned this ambitious revision though. A comprehensive review would have required an enormous amount of time and energy. In the final year of his life, he had neither since he was determined to complete other projects as well even though his illness made him increasingly weak. Nevertheless, the survival of at least a few more fragments of the translation is owed to this earlier attempt to revise his treatise.

Since the Latin translation for all intents and purposes can be considered lost, scholars have long harbored the hope that the Castilian translation may have survived. A number of historical reports sustained this expectation. Segovia mentions that upon his departure, his translator Yça Gidelli intended to take his Castilian translation with him. He needed a scribe to produce another complete copy of the translation for himself before Gidelli returned home, apparently carrying his Castilian version of the Qur'ān.¹¹ In addition to that, there is one complete Spanish translation of the Qur'ān among a number of translations of the text into Aljamiado: the ms Toledo, Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha 235.

⁹ See Wieggers, *Islamic Literature*, pp. 112-114, and López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo. Edición y estudio del manuscrito 235 de la biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha*, pp. 33-35.

¹⁰ These have been edited and analyzed alongside all other fragments of the translation of the Qur'ān in Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren der lateinischen Koranübersetzung des Juan de Segovia – alte Probleme und ein neuer Fund," and Roth and Gleis, "Eine weitere Spur der lateinischen Koranübersetzung des Juan de Segovia."

¹¹ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V fol. 190v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 402, ll. 279-284): "Ipsa autem magistro, qui uxorem nouiter nuptam dimiserat, ad recessum hinc festinante et secum translationem per eum scriptam reportare uolente, quoniam ille qui iuxta Arabicum in alia columpna translationem in uulgari Hispanico scribebat, litera grossa et formata, non ualebat eque cito complere opus, ut copia maneret, alium scriptorem fuit habere necesse."

Although written only in 1606, the manuscript presents itself as the copy of a much older original. Based on the small fragments mentioned above scholars suggested a connection between Gidelli's translation and the translation in the Toledo manuscript. The many differences between the Spanish Qur'ān and the Latin fragments which stem from Segovia's translation though do not allow us to affirm with any certainty a direct relationship between these two versions.¹² The long fragment contained in the manuscript of *De gladio divini spiritus* even demonstrates clearly that Segovia's translation and the Toledo manuscript are not immediately related.¹³ Except for a few traces, the exceptional work which consumed so much of John's and Yça's time and effort appears to be forever lost. Whatever few fragments have survived, however, betray a project which surpassed the achievements of the time. Alongside Segovia's theological approach to the encounter with Islam it can be related to our present century and contemporary efforts for religious dialogue. It is for this reason that Segovia's work and the ideas of his correspondent Nicholas of Cusa are still appreciated today.

The prehistory

Segovia's interest in Islam dates back at least to the early phase of his teaching career as a professor at the University of Salamanca.¹⁴ He addressed Muḥammad's doctrine, among others, in two lectures which he held in 1426 and 1427.¹⁵ His views reflect the stereotypes which

¹² See Wieggers, *Islamic Literature*, pp. 108-114; critical responses have been presented, among others, by López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, pp. 31-43, and López-Morillas, "Secret Muslims, Hidden Manuscripts: Spanish Translations of the Qur'ān from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries," pp. 111-112.

¹³ See the conclusion by Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 153, and Roth and Gleis, "Eine weitere Spur," p. 228.

¹⁴ Segovia's engagement with Islam has been the subject of many academic publications. See especially Cabanelas Rodríguez, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico*; Wolf, *Juan de Segovia and the Fight for Peace. Christians and Muslims in the Fifteenth Century*; Madrigal Terrazas, *El pensamiento eclesial de Juan de Segovia (1393-1458). La gracia en el tiempo*, pp. 72-94; Scotto, "Via pacis et doctrine". *Le Epistole sull' Islam di Juan de Segovia*, pp. II-CXXXVIII, and my introduction in John of Segovia, *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Sarracenorum*, pp. XXX-LXXXIII.

¹⁵ See Scotto, "Inseguire l'islam tra memoria e teologia. Spigolature su Juan de Segovia intorno al 1427," and Madrigal Terrazas, *El pensamiento eclesial de Juan de Segovia*, p. 43-69 and 227-225 with a transcription of the second lecture from 1427.

were common among medieval Christians. According to this view, Islam was a false doctrine which gained followers only by means of violence and the promise of sensual delights. It appears that at this point, John of Segovia did not possess any more profound knowledge of Islam. He had not even seen a Latin translation of the Qur'ān despite the fact that he was a Spaniard active at a Spanish university. Therefore, when the patriarch of Constantinople requested a copy of the Qur'ān from John in Rome in 1427/28, he could only offer to send a written enquiry to Spain to obtain it.¹⁶ He and his circle had access neither to the Latin translation by Robert of Ketton nor to that by Mark of Toledo. He gained access to Robert's translation only in 1437 and immediately commissioned a copy of this rare book.

Even before this, however, John was keen on establishing contacts with Muslims and gathering directly information about their faith. His first such encounter took place in Cordoba in July 1431, but was unsatisfactory since he could not find anybody who was willing to discuss religious matters with him. The Muslims had been afraid of being charged with spreading a doctrine considered a dangerous heresy by Christians in Christian territories. Furthermore, none of the visitors had been sufficiently educated in religious affairs to engage in a debate with a professor of theology.

Later in the same year, another encounter was more successful. In October 1431, John met a Moorish envoy in Medina del Campo and engaged him in a conversation which lasted for several days and in which he had the opportunity to expound on the Christian belief in the Trinity. Even though his Muslim interlocutor received these explanations well he did not convert to Christianity. Segovia, however, learned a lesson from this encounter which led to a more ambitious theoretical project. Christians were clearly capable of presenting their faith to Muslims in a rational manner, even their belief in the Trinity, and it was possible to inform Muslims about their wrong impressions in that respect. This encounter had a lasting effect on Segovia although the focus

¹⁶ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 188v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 399, ll. 162-168): "Sunt etenim, ut memorari michi uideor, XXIX anni quod, Rome constitutus, rogatus fui a Patriarcha Constantinopolitano, quoniam in Ytalia haberi nescirem, in Hispaniam me scribere pro illo habendo. Et ex tunc multorum percepi relatione, idque ipse agnouit, quod paucissimi Christianorum librum ipsum tenent quodque in paucissimis reperitur librariis, de quarum una, in Germania, librum incathenatum habui, anno XXXVII copiarique feci."

of his activities shifted and in the course of fifteen years of efforts at the Council of Basle, he turned into one of the most important leaders of the church of his time.

Even before this interest in Islam was corroborated in a different way during the Council of Basle, it was a matter close to John's heart. At this time, he believed that the basis on which a religious dialogue should take place is reason rather than the textual authorities, i.e., Scripture.

Due to the negotiations with orthodox Christians concerning church union, the Turkish threat in the East became an important topic at the Council of Basle 1431-1449, including during its relocation to Ferrara and Florence. Islam as an independent theological challenge was hardly addressed. A number of theologians who attended the council, however, now became interested in Islam as well. Islam, which they regarded as a Christian heresy, related well to the efforts of the council to overcome the division of Christendom and to achieve world peace in general.¹⁷

John Stojković of Ragusa OP (1390/5-1443) who served as the council's legate in 1435-1437 in Constantinople was a particularly important figure in this context. In the letters which he sent from the Byzantine capital and which were read out aloud publicly in Basle he expressed confidence regarding the possibility to overcome Islam. Returning from his journey, he carried an Arabic Qur'ān which has been preserved (ms Basle, Universitätsbibliothek, A III 19) as well as a copy of Robert of Ketton's Latin translation of the Qur'ān. Segovia had this manuscript brought to Aiton in order to compare it to his own copy.¹⁸ In 1437, he had had the opportunity to commission a copy made in the library of a monastery which remains unidentified. Furthermore, when Nicholas of Cusa was sent in 1437 to Constantinople, he agreed to John's plea to leave his copy of the *Collectio Toletana* with him. From 1437 onwards, John had thus two copies of Robert of Ketton's translation in his possession and, according to his own statement, began to

¹⁷ See the short compilation in Hamann, "Der Koran als ekklesiologische Autorität bei Heymericus de Campo († 1460)," and Hamann, *Das Siegel der Ewigkeit. Universalwissenschaft und Konziliarismus bei Heymericus de Campo*, pp. 37-42. The extent to which the Islamic religion was the subject of discussions at the Council of Basle has not yet been sufficiently explored.

¹⁸ Concerning these two manuscripts, see Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa*, although the author errs in his assumption that John of Segovia obtained access to the Arabic manuscript.

read the Qur'ān.¹⁹ It was probably also in this period that he started to compile his collection of quotations *Errores legis Mahumeti*. In this text, Segovia assembled several wrong doctrines preached by Muḥammad from the Qur'ān and presented them in a systematic manner.²⁰ From 1450 onwards, he certainly had detailed knowledge of the Latin translation of the Qur'ān. His substantial *Liber de magna auctoritate* which was completed in 1453 after several years contains a fairly detailed discussion of the law of the Saracens which includes a number of quotations from the Qur'ān.²¹

It is therefore hardly surprising that when the news of the fall of Constantinople reached John of Segovia in 1453, he was immediately able to integrate his thoughts about a peaceful and argumentative defeat of Islam into the rich and overflowing treatise *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Sarracenorum* which he began to write in the summer of 1453. The text contains hundreds of quotations from and references to the Qur'ān. Apart from a few later marginal additions, all of these stem from Robert of Ketton's translation. Segovia believed that none of the authors he was familiar with who had discussed Muḥammad's doctrines had paid proper attention to the Qur'ān as the basis of the religion, but rather presented wrong accusations. He, however, declared that he wanted to escape this lack of fairness, honesty and diplomacy. Otherwise, such attacks against Islam could too easily be rendered moot if it turned out that the Christian accusations were made up.²² This attitude

¹⁹ Cf. John of Segovia, *Epistula ad Nicolaum de Cusa* (V 6v; ed. Scotto, p. 8): "Etenim cum vestra concessione librum ipsum Alchoran habuerim anno XXXVII^o sepeque in eo legeram et errores exciperam [...]"

²⁰ See the analysis and edition of this text in Bündgens *et. al.*, "Die *Errores legis Mahumeti* des Johannes von Segovia." Segovia may have assembled a version of this collection of *Errores* in the appendix of one of the Qur'ān manuscripts, as suggested in the description of the manuscripts in *Donatio* n. 112 (ed. Hernández Montes, *Biblioteca de Juan de Segovia. Edición y comentario de su escritura de donación*, p. 112).

²¹ See John of Segovia, *Liber de magna auctoritate episcoporum in Concilio generali*, ed. de Kegel, p. 223-224. 377-383. 496.

²² See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 189r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 399, ll. 183-190): "Quocirca, intendere cupientibus ad Sarracenorum conuersionem in sacramenta catholice fidei per uiam pacis et doctrine [...] admodum reuera utile, quin et necesse uidetur ut ueram habeant notitiam quid lex dicat eorum, quod ex dicta translatione non habetur." Furthermore John of Segovia, *De gladio divini spiritus*, Praef. 259-263 (ed. Roth, p. 22): "Sed tamen auctores, quantum apparet ex scriptis ipsorum, non viderint librum Alqurani, multa namque illi imponunt non vera. Quod maxime officit circa disputationes catholicae fidei adversariis vera credere renuentibus, dum vident, quod falsum illis imponitur testimonium."

reflects John's personal integrity and sincerity which had generated great respect for him at the Council both among members of his own party and among his opponents. It is also the result of an experience which had grown during years of scholarly and diplomatic service which manifested itself in the love for the truth. According to John, only accurate knowledge of Islam would allow Christians to overcome this religion through the 'path of peace and doctrine' (*via pacis et doctrinae*).

While working on *De gladio divini spiritus*, it was precisely at this critical point that Segovia had now doubts.²³ He began to read again through the Qur'ān in pursuit of an explanation why Islam had been so successful and was able to gain increasing numbers of followers. He turned to this issue only in the final third of *De gladio divini spiritus* (Considerationes 29-33), probably only in the autumn of 1453 or even later. Initially, John's doubts concerning Robert of Ketton's translation were primarily nourished by internal features. His suspicion was inspired by Robert's style and procedure as well as the structure of the book. Furthermore, he received a notice from Spain which informed him that the translation did not correspond with the original, either because somebody had compared select verses with the Arabic original or, more probably, tried to match the Latin with the Spanish translation. His informant, however, does not seem to have had access to a complete translation of the Qur'ān. For this reason, John decided to ask for the translation which John of Ragusa had bequeathed to the Dominicans in Basle to be sent to him in Aiton. He then discovered that the manuscript contained merely a copy of Ketton's translation of the Qur'ān albeit in a more reliable version than his own copy. At the same time, he tried repeatedly to obtain a Spanish translation from Castile, but to no avail. The endeavor ended with an even greater disappointment when he received an anti-Islamic treatise by Pedro Pascual instead of a more reliable translation of the Qur'ān.²⁴

²³ For the following see especially John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 189v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 400, ll. 212-221): "Ad prosecutionem uero considerationum primi libri [sc. *De gladio divini spiritus*], uidere solito attentius cepi librum Alchurani iuxta dictam translationem [sc. Roberti Kettenensis] [...]. Quo uero amplius inspiciebam preefate translationis stilum procedendique modum et ordinem ac substantialia libri, eo magis suspicio se ingerebat non esse ueram, quod ipse agnouit accepto ex Hispania testimonio, uisis ibidem certis, quas mandaueram, Alchurani membranas."

²⁴ Cf. John of Segovia, *Epistula ad Johannem Cabilonensem episcopum* (18.12.1455; V 184r; ed. Cabanelas Rodríguez, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico*, p. 326): "[...]

Finally, however, John succeeded with his ceaseless efforts to obtain such a more reliable translation of the Qur'ān, for which he was even prepared to initiate and support an entirely new project. It appears that the Castilian king's influence may have been crucial for this enterprise since he commanded that the *faqīh* Yça Gidelli left Segovia for Savoy in the company of another Muslim.²⁵ Segovia had thus gained access to an actual Muslim and even to an important religious scholar. Within four months of hard work, Gidelli produced a copy of the Qur'ān as well as a Spanish translation and taught John of Segovia the fundamentals of the Qur'ān and its structure as well as the basics of Arabic script, grammar and language.²⁶ When Gidelli left in the spring of 1456 to return to Spain and left Segovia on his own, the work on the Latin translation had not even started. Even though Gidelli had brought with him a few books and composed shorter treatises about the Qur'ān and the doctrines of the Islamic religion, these hardly provided any substantial help with the actual text of the Qur'ān. John, however, now had a bilingual copy of the Qur'ān at his disposal which he expanded to the famous trilingual Qur'ān by adding his own Latin translation of the Spanish translation. The final result must have been a substantial volume which included in addition to the translations the *Praefatio in translationem* as well as, at the end, a *Summarium psalmorum omnium*, a short summary of all the

notificationem michi grati illud vero est, cum ex multis suspecta michi foret interpretatio libri Alchoran quem latine scriptum penes me habeo a XVIII iam annis, persepe in Castelle mandavi pro interpretatione in vulgari hispanico ut de vera continentia haberem notitiam. Aliquando autem destinatus est michi pro libro Alchoran liber unus, inactivam in eum magis quam eius designans tenorem, et quamplurima illi falso imponens." The text is edited in Pseudo Pedro Pascual, *Sobre la se[c]ta mahometana*, ed. by Fernando González Muñoz.

²⁵ For this cf. John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 190r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 401 ll. 236-245) and Scotto, "De Pe a Pa," p. 535f. Concerning Yça Gidelli see especially Wiegers, *Islamic Literature*.

²⁶ Segovia offers a very detailed description of Gidelli's method, see his *Praefatio in translationem* (V 189v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 400, ll. 269-273): "Spatio igitur designato trium mensium, uno, Alchuranum scripsit, alio *axuclauit*, et alio, interpretatus est in vulgari Hispanico, translationem etiam ipsam propria describens manu, permoxime quidem, uti monstravit, labore, singulo namque dierum cathedra sedebat per horas, ad minus XII, die excepto festiuitatis Sarracenorum quo natiuitas colitur sui Prophete." The description is meticulous and Segovia is usually reliable. The date 12 Rabi I, on which Sunnis celebrated Muḥammad's birthday in the year 860 AH indeed corresponds to 19.2.1456 AD, which falls exactly into the range mentioned by Segovia.

suwar composed by Yça Gidelli.²⁷ Yet, John hesitated repeatedly to make this work as well as his treatise *De gladio divini spiritus* available to a wider readership since he hoped to improve it even further.²⁸ Such revisions though would have required the help of external experts which despite repeated efforts he did not succeed in securing. This may explain why the trilingual Qurʾān has been preserved in a single manuscript only which John of Segovia bequeathed to the University of Salamanca²⁹ where its traces disappear. It is only the above-mentioned fragments which provide insights into the text as well as the preface which Segovia had added to the manuscript Vatican 2923 which contains texts about Islam and was meant for Enea Silvio Piccolomini.

Basic features and examples of the new translation of the Qurʾān

Segovia was convinced that the only solution for the growing Muslim threat was by way of peace and doctrine (*via pacis et doctrinae*). He believed that a military response would never result in a durable success. As long as Muslims thought and believed that Christianity represented heretical ideas such as the Trinity they would put up even greater opposition against this false doctrine in a violent confrontation. Apart from its failure to produce success, the path of war (*via belli*) also provided the worst possible impression of Christianity since it contradicted the model of Jesus and the early church. Muslims would only abandon their efforts to push back Christianity if they were either persuaded of the religion's truth in a peaceful manner or if their false impressions were at least corrected. Such an intellectual encounter should not take the verbal form of war either, but rather be inspired by the love for peace and the truth. Segovia criticized for this reason anti-Islamic polemics which proceeded without this love for the truth and operated

²⁷ See John of Segovia, *Donatio* n. 87 (ed. Hernández Montes, *Biblioteca de Juan de Segovia*, p. 108, ll. 1-11): "Liber Alcurani, per sarracenos deputatus uelut sit diuina lex, ne latere quicquam ex ea possit, interpretatus nouissime ipsius Johannis labore magnisque impensis; triplici quoque lingua descriptus est ipse Alcuranus: arabicis uidelicet, yspanicis et latinis litteris, in magno uolumine de marca majori [...]."

²⁸ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 195rv; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 408f. ll. 529-537).

²⁹ Cf. Scotto, "De Pe a Pa," p. 565, who also rejects speculations that the trilingual Qurʾān ended up in the Vatican library.

with false accusations and misinformation. Even though Segovia himself was hardly hesitant in attacking Muḥammad he always tried to provide evidence and used the Qur'ān as the *lex Sarracenorum* as his source.

Segovia realized that the style, structure and main contents of Ketton's translation of the Qur'ān did not reflect such an ideal of love for the truth.³⁰ He may have noticed the distinctive style of Ketton's translation, but someone may have also pointed out the fact that the unusual number of 123 *suwar* did not correspond to the Quranic tradition.³¹ Robert of Ketton's own preface may have provided further reasons for suspicion since the translator explained that he had neither left out nor changed anything, except in order to enhance the clarity of the translation.³² John must also have been put off by the large number of marginal comments in the manuscript, which were often very polemical. Furthermore, some of these notes suggested that Ketton's translation did not always correspond to the Arabic original.³³

³⁰ See note 23 above. Subsequent to the collaboration with Gidelli, he listed systematically all the shortcomings of Ketton's translation; see his *Praefatio in translationem* (V 192v-193v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 405 ll. 386-431), i.e. the division and numbering of the *suwar*, the omitted titles of *suwar*, changes of contents, rearrangements, explanations or omissions. Segovia claims that Yça Gidelli avoided all of these in his translation (V 193v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 406 ll. 438-441). Most of these accusations are only partly justified and result from Robert of Ketton's desire to produce a comprehensible and valuable translation. See Cecini, *Alcoranus latinus. Eine sprachliche und kulturwissenschaftliche Analyse der Koranübersetzungen von Robert von Ketton und Marcus von Toledo*.

³¹ Robert of Ketton followed in some way the subdivision of his Arabic original, which obviously had a Maghrebian origin, see the detailed analysis by Castells Criballés, "Alguns aspectes formals de la traducció llatina de l'Alcorà de Robert de Ketton (c. 1141-1143) i la seva relació amb el text original àrab." The Arabic Qur'ān of Segovia's translation must have had a Maghrebian origin, too, as can be deduced from the division of the Qur'ān into four parts (*suwar* 1-6, 7-18, 19-37 and 38-114), which Segovia learned from Gidelli, cf. Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 113, and John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 192v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 404 ll. 354-371). This is the same division as in the Qur'ān of ms Toledo 235 (cf. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, pp. 40 and 135f.) and nearly the same division as documented by Castells Criballés, "Alguns aspectes formals," p. 82, for the modern Maghrebian tradition (*suwar* 1-6, 7-18, 19-35 and 36-114).

³² Cf. Robert of Ketton, *Praefatio* (ed. Bibliander, *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina, ac ipse Alcoran*, p. 7, l. 4): "nil excerpens, nil sensibilibiter, nisi propter intelligentiam tantum alterans." Segovia was familiar with the preface and cited it in John of Segovia, *De gladio divini spiritus*, Praefatio ll. 272-274 (ed. Roth, p. 24).

³³ For this see my introduction in John of Segovia, *De gladio divini spiritus*, p. LXXVIII.

The ambition of John's own translation was thus clearly set. It had to be authentic by being as literal and complete as possible and to avoid any false assumption or association. This could ultimately only be accomplished by or in collaboration with a Muslim in order to render moot any accusation of falsification and to secure a reliable translation. Segovia believed that he needed to cooperate with a Muslim expert not only because of his own linguistic shortcomings, but also because of the nature of the project. His aim was that the translation should correspond to the Arabic text and the Arabic wording and avoid any additions, explanations or omissions.³⁴ By way of summary, Gidelli explained that he had translated the text "De Pe a Pa," which Segovia rendered into Latin as "de uerbo ad uerbum" with the meaning of "exhaustively."³⁵ Segovia followed the same principle when he translated the text without the Muslim scholar's help from Castilian into Latin. Some examples from his translation which will be discussed below illustrate the consequences of John's love for the truth and scrupulous procedure.

According to his own statement in the preface to the trilingual Qur'ān, John aimed at imitating the Arabic wording of the original as much as possible. He was even prepared to ignore rules of the Latin language. Gidelli accepted the necessity of occasional additions or changes in his Castilian translation in order to allow for a better understanding, whereas John developed a tendency to maintain the Arabic expression even if this led to grammatical or other puzzles. In such cases, he went back to the Arabic text.³⁶ He removed some of Gidelli's

³⁴ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 190r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 401 ll. 246-251): "Unde oportuit et aliis postpositis uni intendere cure, quatenus magister ipse [sc. Iça Gidelli], opus, ad quod accesserat uocatus, impleret, translationem facturus libri Alchurani Arabico ydeomati et textui conformem, absque glosis, limitationibus, expositionibus quoque insertis textui, sed et quasdam breues certe admodum rarasque in marginibus addidit pro quorundam uocabulorum annotatione."

³⁵ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 193v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 406 ll. 434-435); cf. Gidelli, *Epistola ad Johannem de Segovia* (V 178v; ed. Cabanelas, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico*, p. 273), and the discussion in Scotto, "De Pe a Pa," p. 538f. note 87.

³⁶ Segovia owned two Arabic copies of the Qur'ān, the copy which belonged to Yça Gidelli and a copy purchased in Granada, and he noticed the different spellings; see his *Praefatio in translationem* (V 194rv; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 407 ll. 474-477): "[...] signa tamen habent quibus ipsorum appareat diuersitas casuum; et huiusmodi casuum designationes reperi attentius obseruatas in uno libro Alchurani empto michi antiquissimo certe et, ut dicitur, in regno scriptum Granate, quam in nouo penes me edito."

additions and included in his Latin translation Castilian expressions which had been derived from Arabic.³⁷ He did not intend to follow the regular rules of grammar.³⁸ Again according to his own statement, he produced clauses without verbs which apparently were meant to correspond to the common Arabic nominal sentences that don't contain a verb. Furthermore, he invented artificial words such as "sussuus" for the third-person plural possessive pronoun which is identical in Latin with the third person singular.³⁹ Despite these efforts, Segovia did not believe that this work had reached the quality required for publication.⁴⁰ He also had to admit that he himself could not revise his own Latin translation yet again, even though he understood Arabic better at the end than he had at the beginning.⁴¹ He noticed, amongst other things, that Gidelli had chosen different ways of rendering one and the same Arabic expression although he was unable to ascertain the reasons for these decisions. Apart from not having the necessary language skills, he did not have access to the exegetical works which Gidelli had consulted while working on his translation.

How much of the radical attitude which Segovia had claimed for his Latin translation can we actually find in the surviving fragments?⁴² The majority of these fragments are fairly short and cannot be identified with the corresponding Quranic verses with certainty. Fragments which can be correlated with the Arabic text contain parts of *sūrah* 2:4. 193; 5:110-115; 8:65-66; 9:29. 71; 58:11 as well as 112:3. The most promi-

³⁷ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 194r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 407 ll. 461-470).

³⁸ See Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 117f.; concerning Segovia's principle "minime dubitavi uerberare Priscianum," see his *Praefatio in translationem* (V 193v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 406 ll. 444f.).

³⁹ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 194r and 195r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 406 ll. 453-460 and p. 408 ll. 513-519).

⁴⁰ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 195v; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 408 l. 532-p. 409 l. 537): "Etenim, quo percipio, ut plene Alchuranus intelligatur, utriusque lingue et Arabice peritum requirit, qualem, uita comite, spero me habiturum. Et usque plenior lingue ipsius absit mihi notitia, alia non cogente necessitate uel utilitate suadente, translationem non intendo communicare, nisi unde sentiam ad perfectum inchoati operis auxilium euenire posse."

⁴¹ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 195r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 408 ll. 519-525).

⁴² For a detailed analysis see the two publications by Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," and Roth and Gleis, "Eine weitere Spur"; cf. also Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, p. 182-185.

nent features of Segovia's translation in these passages are literalness and precision. Sometimes, the nature of the original used by Gidelli is not obvious: it remains unclear whether he himself did not produce a close and accurate translation of a passage or whether he was following the interpretation of a commentary. We can nevertheless establish that the surviving fragments of Segovia's Latin translation are fairly readable and seek to follow the Arabic text rather closely. Further confirmation of this quality emerges from a comparison with the translation by Robert of Ketton which Segovia endeavored to surpass. The fragment from *sūrah* 8:65-66 renders the text as follows:

yā 'ayyuhā l-nabiyyu ḥarriḍi l-mu'minīna 'alā l-qitāli in yakun minkum 'iṣrūna ṣābirūna yaḡlibū 'mi'ataini [...] wa-in yakun minkum alfun yaḡlibū 'alfaini [...] wallāhu ma'a l-ṣābirīna.

Iam ecce propheta imperare credentibus super mactancia guerre Et si fuerint XX sufferentes, vincetis ij. Et si fuerint de vobis mille vincent duo millia Et deus una cum sufferentibus.⁴³

The divergences from the Arabic text are limited to the usage of the infinitive form *imperare* instead of the imperative, an omitted *de vobis* following the first *fuerint* and *vincetis* instead of *vincent*. These differences may be due to the manuscript on which Gidelli based his translation, which may have had variants in the punctuation which survived in his version, or they may have been due to an inaccurate copying of the Spanish translation or of Segovia's Latin translation, or in fact his own reproduction of quotations in his preface to the trilingual Qur'ān, or mistakes made by the scribe of ms Vatican 2923 which is indeed not always reliable. Given the complex nature of these transmissions it is impossible to reach definite conclusions here. It is, however, fairly easy to compare this passage to the translation by Robert of Ketton. This exercise reveals interesting insights. He renders the passage as follows:

Tu nuncie [...] tuis pugnam persuade. Tui namque uiginti sustinentes et indurantes, duentos alios superabunt [...] et uos mille, caeterorum duo milia, Deo praeside indurantium sustentamine.⁴⁴

⁴³ Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 126.

⁴⁴ Latin translation of the Qur'ān by Robert of Ketton (ed. Bibliander, p. 62 ll. 9-11). The edition by Bibliander is based on a single manuscript which John of Ragusa brought back from his journey as a legate to Constantinople and which John of Segovia had borrowed and sent from Basle to Aiton in southern France. José Martínez Gázquez (Barcelona) is preparing a critical edition.

This quotation illustrates that Robert focused on the meaning of the text rather than intended to render its precise wording. Segovia's translation follows the Arabic text word by word and even maintains precisely the sequence of the words, whereas Robert of Ketton reduces the number of verbs in order to avoid unnecessary repetitions. Furthermore, he added words in order to enhance the smooth flow of the text (*namque*) or in order to disambiguate references (*alios; caeterorum*). Segovia translates simple phrases such as "God is with those who are steadfast" faithfully and utilizes the same expressions as in the preceding passage (*sufferentes/sufferentibus*). Reproducing the Arabic nominal clause which does not contain a verb, he practices exactly what he described in the preface to his translation.⁴⁵ Robert of Ketton, by contrast, created an unusual wording which ignores the grammatical structure of the simple Arabic sentence and follows Latin habits with an ablative construction. In this way, Robert already establishes a certain line of interpretation (*praeses; sustentamen*), whereas Segovia leaves it open what exactly it means that God is "with" those who are steadfast. Likewise, the expression *indurantes* reveals different styles of translation. Both words, *sufferentes* and *indurantes*, are good choices. Segovia selected a phrase which exists in Spanish too which suggests that he may have followed Gidelli's translation. Robert had translated the word when it first occurred with the longer expression *sustinentes et indurantes*. This reflects a common practice of medieval translators who sometimes used two words in their translation in order to render more accurately the range of meanings of a single word in the original text. Later in his translation, however, Robert uses only one of these words. Some more examples seem to indicate that Segovia sometimes even borrowed from the Spanish vocabulary of Gidelli in his Latin translation. He himself admits freely that in the beginning he translated according to (*conformiter*) the Spanish translation, but later tried to imitate more the Arabic original.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 195r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 408 ll. 516-519): "[...] sed in processu malui Latinam interpretationem Arabico quam Hispanico loquendi modo fieri conformem, positus nominatiuis absolutis quoque absque uerbo [...]."

⁴⁶ See John of Segovia, *Praefatio in translationem* (V 194r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 407 ll. 461-470): "Aliis etiam aut nouitatibus aut incongruitatibus usus fui, Latina uerba, quamuis alia suppetent, iuxta Hispanum ydeoma componens, propterea quod reperi in

This is primarily said about grammatical structures, but could hold true for the vocabulary, too.⁴⁷

A similar contrast between Segovia's and Robert's translations is obvious in the translations of *sūrah* 9:29:

qātilū 'lladīna lā yu'minūna bi-llāhi wa-lā bi-l-yawmi l-ākhirī

occidite ergo illos qui non credunt in deo et in die postremo.⁴⁸

Robert of Ketton renders this as follows:

Non credentes in deum, dieique futurae [...] expugnatē.⁴⁹

In this case too, we can see that Segovia's translation follows the Arabic text closely, imitating its structure. This is obvious in the position of the imperative in the sentence, but especially in the grammatical construction. The order of the words and the grammatical features of Robert of Ketton's translation, on the other hand, reveal his ambition to produce an eloquent Latin construction (final position of the imperative, participial construction with *credentes* instead of a subordinate clause) and to acknowledge the Latin conventions of the theologians (*credere in* + accusative to render belief in God as opposed to *credere* + dative to render belief in Judgment Day). In these cases, Segovia uses a phrase which is very uncommon among contemporary theologians and which he does not use himself in any of the texts he composed at the time: *credere in* + accusative in order to render the Arabic *'āmana*

Alchurano multa uocabula que pro uulgari habet Hispanum ydeoma [...]. Demum, cum ab initio precipue inspicerem ydeoma Hispanum in quo magister ille [sc. Gidelli] Arabicum uerterat, illi conformiter interpretabar, at in successu operis, uel presagiens stili formam, in Arabico agnito quod ob defectum grammatice interpretatio ipsa quedam addiderat, ut potui, Arabicum magis quam Hispanum seruare uolui loquendi modum."

⁴⁷ See *sūrah* 5:110 *bi-īdñi*: "cum licencia mea" (Segovia) and "con mi liçençia" (Qur'ān of ms Toledo 235), but "meo uelle" (Robert of Ketton); or *sūrah* 5:113 *mina l-šāhidīna*: "ex testificantibus" (Segovia) and "de los atestiguanes" (Qur'ān of ms Toledo 235), but "cum nostro testimonio"; cf. Roth and Glej, "Die Spuren," pp. 130f., 140, 144, and López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 213. Another example in three Aljamiado translations taken from *sūrah* 5:117 (cf. López-Morillas, *El Corán de Toledo*, p. 38) proves that the choice of "testigo" in *sūrah* 5:117 was common in Aljamiado translations of the Qur'ān and not specific for the Qur'ān of ms Toledo 235. Thus Segovia's constant choice of "testificare" and its cognates for the root *š-h-d* (cf. Roth and Glej, "Eine weitere Spur," p. 225) could reflect this common tradition, transmitted by Gidelli.

⁴⁸ Roth and Glej, "Die Spuren," p. 127.

⁴⁹ Latin translation of the Qur'ān by Robert of Ketton (ed. Bibliander, p. 63 ll. 42-44).

bi- + genitive.⁵⁰ Due to his declared principle to distinguish the different Arabic cases and to always render them in the same way in Latin,⁵¹ Segovia produces a translation which sounds very unusual for a theologian. In the Apostles' Creed and theological interpretations since Augustine, scholars made a clear distinction between the personal belief in God (*credere in Deum*) and Latin constructions which referred to beliefs in subordinate truths (*credere ecclesiam, vitam aeternam* with accusative). Segovia, however, imitated the Arabic expression. He violates the rules of Latin grammar by rendering *credere in* with an ablative and does not respond to the expectations of a reader familiar with theological conventions by failing to distinguish belief in God and belief in Judgment Day – a distinction not made in German or English either. In one instance, he even uses the phrase *credere cum* + ablative which is contrary to any Latin rules.⁵²

Further evidence for this significant difference between Segovia's and Robert of Ketton's translations can be gleaned from the longer fragment in ms Seville, Biblioteca Colombina, 7-6-14. In this case, however, such radical violations of the conventions of Latin grammar and structure are less prominent. The following example from *sūrah* 5:110 may serve as an illustration:

id qāla llāhu yā 'isā bna maryama dkur ni'matī 'alaika wa-'alā wālidatika id ayyadtuka bi-rūḥi l-quḍusi tukallimu l-nāsa fi-l-mahdi wa-kahlan wa-id 'allamtuka l-kitāba wa-l-ḥikmata wa-t-tawrāta wa-l-injīla wa-id takhluqu mina l-ḥini kahay'ati l-tairi bi-idnī fa-tanfukhu fihā fa-takūnu tairan bi-idnī wa-tubri 'u l-akmaha wa-l-abraṣa bi-idnī wa-id tukhriju l-mawtā bi-idnī.

⁵⁰ In early Latin confessional texts as well as in interpretations until the period of the church fathers we can find *credere in* + ablative, often alternating with *credere in* + accusative. This expression starts to disappear in theological writing of the high and late Middle Ages, although it can be found in isolated cases.

⁵¹ Segovia's own statement reveals his insufficient knowledge in this respect. See his *Praefatio in translationem* (V 194r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 406 ll. 450-452): "Quantum ad casus, in participiis tres, in nominibus duos, dativum et ablativum; terminationes distinctas masculini et femini generis nouiter imponens, illas ydeomate Arabico expressante." The term "dative," which Segovia translates according to a different statement as accusative, probably refers to the accusative in Arabic; he probably interpreted the genitive as ablative and translated it accordingly as in the example above, cf. his *Praefatio in translationem* (194r; ed. Martínez Gázquez, p. 406 l. 448): "[...] et pro datiuo ponens accusatiuum [...]."

⁵² For *sūrah* 2:4 see the translation "et illis qui c[r]edunt cum eo quod misi tibi" in Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 128, which suggests that Segovia revised and corrected constructions when he decided to follow the Arabic wording in a more radical manner, cf. 147f.

Quando dicet deus Iam Jesu filii [ex filii *corr.*] marie nomina gratiam meam super te et super matrem tuam quando te vigoravi cum spiritu sancto alloquebaris gentem in infancia et maioritate et quando docui te scripturam et iudicia et tabulas et Evangelia et quando creabas ex luto quomodo similitudinem auium cum licencia mea et sufflabas in eo et erat auis cum licencia mea et sanabas cecos et leprosos cum licencia mea et quando extrahebas mortuos cum licencia.⁵³

Robert of Ketton, by contrast, ignores the formal device of direct speech and summarizes the contents. Furthermore, he changes the sequence of the statements:

Deus Iesum Mariae filium affatus, cui tribuit animam mundam atque benedictam, qua iuvenes et infantulos affatus est, et formis uolatilium luteis a se factis insufflans uolatum praebuit. Caecum natum, atque leprosum curauit: Mortuos resuscitauit: quem item librum, et sapientiam, ne non Euangelium et testamentum docuit [...].

According to Arabic commentaries, the passage which is rendered as *in infancia et maioritate* establishes that Jesus had spoken to the people from his crib as well as later as an adult. Segovia's translation allows for such a reading, whereas Robert of Ketton identifies the expression as a description of those who are spoken to and who are described accordingly as small children and young adults. While numerous Arabic commentaries interpret the expression *cum spiritu sancto* as an allusion to the angel Gabriel, Robert of Ketton suggests a very different meaning, whereas Segovia's translation is again fairly neutral. The latter thus does more justice to the main theme of the Quranic verse by rendering more faithfully the repeated emphasis on God's sovereignty (*cum licencia mea*). In Robert of Ketton's translation, by contrast, the miraculous acts of Jesus become the focus of the passage since the numerous references to divine acts are collapsed into a single *tribuit*. A conspicuous choice is Segovia's rendering of *ḥikma* as *iudicia*. This may reflect Gidelli's interpretation of the Arabic text which privileges the notion 'to judge' as the root meaning of *ḥikma*. Some Muslim commentaries too read *ḥikma* here as a reference to the knowledge of clear and right distinctions, such as the difference between what is allowed and what is forbidden. The plural *iudicia* would account for such an interpretation. While the word selected by Robert of Ketton, *sapientia*, appears to be a suitable choice, the interpretation of Muslim commentators differs from the connotations of this term for Christians who as-

⁵³ Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 129f.

sociate *sapientia* with *sapida scientia*, i.e., knowledge which is also experience or knowledge of things divine.

These examples essentially corroborate the accuracy of Segovia's statement. When compared to the Arabic text, his translation of Gidelli's Castilian version appears to be fairly literal and in most cases accurate. It follows the Arabic text in the word order and sometimes even in grammatical constructions. The radical changes imposed on Latin grammar and word choice, which Segovia referred to, however, are barely recognizable in the fragments which have come down to us. Apart from the phrases *credere in* + accusative and *credere cum* + ablative, which have been discussed above, there is only one verb which is used in transitive form even though Latin conventions dictate intransitive usage: a passage from *sūrah* 5:114 is "descendet super nos mensam unam de celo."⁵⁴ There is one instance only in which, according to the Arabic model, a singular predicate is followed by a plural subject, whereas other passages which could have been constructed in the same way, are rendered according to the rules of Latin grammar.⁵⁵ Generally speaking, however, Segovia describes his method accurately and one can only imagine what kind of text he produced on the basis of the work of the Muslim translator and adding to that. His insufficient knowledge of Arabic only allowed him limited access to the Qur'ān in its original language and he was not able to study or take otherwise into consideration the Arabic commentaries on the Qur'ān. These shortcomings should not distract from the fact that Segovia and his project constituted an example ahead of its time in the long tradition of Christian responses to Islam.⁵⁶ In this respect, he can still inspire us to overcome the intellectual limitations of contemporary intra- and interfaith thought and activity.

⁵⁴ Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 131 and the discussion in p. 145f. Another example of *descendere* used in the transitive way can be found in this book concerning *sūrah* 5:115: "dixit deus ego descendam eam super vos."

⁵⁵ See Roth and Gleis, "Die Spuren," p. 130 and the discussion in p. 143 concerning *sūrah* 5:112 *id qāla l-hawāriyūna*: "Quando dixi apostoli."

⁵⁶ Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*, p. 196: "There are obvious ways, in which his edition was more primitive than either Egidio's or Marracci's [...]. But that he was as preoccupied with polemic as he was with philology – in this like both Robert of Ketton and Ludovico Marracci as well – reminds us of the deep continuities in how Latin intellectuals engaged in Qur'ān throughout the whole period from 1140 to 1560."

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