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## 5. Beyond Religious Polemics: An Arabic-Latin Qur'ān Used as a Textbook for Studying Arabic

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The span of time between the medieval and the early modern periods witnessed at least nine Latin translations of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> As Thomas Burman notes, Latin, and thus Christian, interpretations of the sacred book of Islam oscillated between religious polemics and philological zeal.<sup>2</sup> This chapter traces these oscillations and underlines the transition from a treatment of the Qur'ān as a source of polemical material to an understanding of its utility to master Arabic. The case study chosen to demonstrate this change of focus is a sixteenth-century translation of the holy book commissioned by the Italian cardinal Egidio da Viterbo (d. 1532), which was reworked in the seventeenth century by the Scottish Orientalist David Colville. Colville's annotations and glosses are testament to the copyist's genuine eagerness to use the Qur'ān (or various interpretations of it) in combination with other sources to develop a sense of the functioning of the Arabic language.

The reasons behind each of the Latin translations of the Qur'ān, executed between 1141–1143 and 1698, varied from country to country and from one translator (or group of translators) to another.<sup>3</sup> Broadly speaking, we might interpret medieval renditions of the Muslim holy book as texts devised to encourage the intellectual engagement with Islam with the aim of argumentative deconstruction as well as tools for political propaganda. Conversely, early modern translations can additionally be seen as erudite endeavours aiming at mastering Arabic. Translators engaged with long-lasting polemical themes, yet did so from a distant, scholarly perspective. This chapter offers a detailed examination of the commented

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2 See Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

3 For an overview of Latin translations of the Qur'ān, see Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān*; Burman, "European Qur'ān Translations, 1500–1700," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History, Volume 6: 1500–1900*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 25–38; and Benoît Grévin, "Le 'Coran de Mithridate' (ms. Vat. ebr. 357) à la croisée des savoirs arabes dans l'Italie du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Al-Qanṭara* 31, no. 2 (2010), 513–548, with the bibliography cited therein.

copy of a translation commissioned in 1518. Both the translation of 1518 and the commented copy of 1621 appear to lie at the intermediary point between the two approaches to the Qurʾān described above. On the one hand, the translation was produced in Iberia within the first two decades of the sixteenth century when Muslim conversion to Christianity was a highly disputed and prioritized issue. On the other hand, it was commissioned by an Italian cardinal so interested in language acquisition that, on the same trip to Spain to commission the translation, he also purchased two grammar books of the Arabic language.<sup>4</sup> Now lost, the original translation commissioned by Egidio was equipped with many philological aids to support an understanding of the Arabic text and thus promote the learning of the Arabic language. It was copied in four parallel columns: the first contained the Arabic source text; the second was made up of the transcription of the text into the Latin alphabet, so that someone who was not familiar with the Arabic alphabet could read it fluently; the third column contained the actual translation into Latin; finally, the fourth column was filled with quotations from Muslim exegetes, elucidating the text. At a later point, the entire text was heavily corrected by a reputed authority of that time, the erudite Leo Africanus.<sup>5</sup> While we cannot know exactly how much use the commissioner Egidio da Viterbo made of these adjustments, or how much Arabic he was able to learn from it,<sup>6</sup> the peculiar layout of the text caught the attention of another student of Arabic a century later.<sup>7</sup> The current chapter focuses on the uses that the Scottish scholar David Colville made of this Qurʾān translation when he copied it in 1621. Let us begin by tracing the history of this Latin Qurʾān before it reached Colville's hands.

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4 Alastair Hamilton, "'Nam tirones sumus.' Franciscus Raphelengius' Lexicon Arabico-Latinum, Leiden, 1613," in *Ex Officina Plantiniana. Studia in memoriam Christophori Plantini (ca. 1520-1589)*, ed. Marcus de Schepper, Francine de Nave (Antwerp: Vereeniging der Antwerpsche Bibliophielen, 1989), i.e. *De Gulden Passer* 66-67 (1988-1989), 557-589, here 561-562. On Egidio's library, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels. A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 369, fn. 3.

5 See Katarzyna Krystyna Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qurʾān (1518/1621) Commissioned by Egidio da Viterbo. Critical Edition and Introductory Study* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018); and Thomas E. Burman "The Latin-Arabic Qurʾān Editions of Egidio da Viterbo and the Latin Qurʾāns of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo," in *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los siglos XII y XIII*, ed. Miquel Barceló and José Martínez Gázquez (Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2005), 103-117, and Burman, *Reading the Qurʾān*.

6 On this topic see Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "Anti-Muslim Preaching in 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Spain and Egidio da Viterbo's Research on Islam," *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 3 (2015), 413-430.

7 For a more general overview see Burman, *Reading the Qurʾān*, chapter 6 "The Manuscripts of Egidio da Viterbo's Bilingual Qurʾān: Philology (and Polemics?) in the Sixteenth Century," 149-177.

## 5.1 The history of Egidio da Viterbo's Qur'ān

As we learn from David Colville's preface to the translation, Egidio da Viterbo obtained his translated Qur'ān when he was papal legate to the king of Portugal and Castile, a fact corroborated in other sources. In April 1518, Egidio left Rome for Spain as Pope Leo X's legate to emperor Charles V, in order to ask the latter to join forces against the Ottomans.<sup>8</sup> It must have been during this period that Egidio received the opportunity to meet Juan Gabriel of Teruel. He employed this former Muslim and Christian convert, originally named Alí Alayzar,<sup>9</sup> but known as Iohannes Gabriel Terrolensis in the Latin translation or Joan Gabriel, to produce a new translation of the Qur'ān.<sup>10</sup> Juan Gabriel was likely the former *faqīh* of Teruel and had probably been forced to receive baptism in 1502 along with the other Mudéjares of that city.<sup>11</sup> In the course of his conversion, he not only changed his status from a Muslim jurist (*faqīh*) to that of a Christian, but also began instructing Catholic preachers on the tenets of Islam so that they could preach against it with greater knowledge and conviction. The Catholic preacher Joan Martí Figuerola explains in his work *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán* (Valencia, 1521)<sup>12</sup> that he owed his knowledge of Arabic and of the Qur'ān to the teachings of Maestre Johan (Juan) Gabriel, a convert to Christianity.<sup>13</sup> Figuerola was an ecclesiastical figure connected to the bishop of Barcelona, Don Martín García, from whom he took over the campaigns to preach to the Moors. In his sermons, he regularly invoked Muslim sources, especially the Qur'ān. Juan Gabriel's instructional material must have gained a certain fame among the Spanish clergy, and thus it became possible for Egidio da Viterbo to employ the former *faqīh* to translate the entire Qur'ān, not into the vernacular, as that would have probably been of little value for an Italian cardinal, but into Latin. However, the original translation must have been regarded as flawed, as Egidio subsequently decided to have it corrected in Viterbo by his godson, Leo Africanus.

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8 Balbino Rano, "La Orden Augustiniana en la Península Ibérica durante los años 1500–1520," in *Egidio Da Viterbo, O.S.A., E Il Suo Tempo. Atti Del V Convegno Dell'Istituto Storico Agostiniano Roma-Viterbo, 20–23 Ottobre 1982*, ed. Institutum Historicum Augustinianum (Rome: Institutum Historicum Augustinianum, 1983), 32.

9 Ernesto Utrillas Valero, "Los mudéjares turolenses. Los primeros cristianos nuevos de la Corona de Aragón," in *De mudéjares a moriscos. Una conversión forzada*, ed. Centro de Estudios Mudéjares (Teruel: Centro de Estudios Mudéjares, 2003), 809–826, here 820, 823, who refers to the Muslim name as mentioned in Archivo Histórico Provincial de Teruel, *Consejo de Teruel*, Carpeta Azul, doc. 274.

10 Mercedes García-Arenal and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic: Juan Gabriel as Qur'ān Translator for Martín de Figuerola and Egidio da Viterbo," *Al-Qantara* 35, no. 2 (2014), 409–459.

11 García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic." On Juan Gabriel, see also Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "Juan Gabriel," in *Christian-Muslim Relations, Volume 6: 1500–1900*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 415–419.

12 Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, MS Gayangos 1922/36.

13 García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic," 412–414.

Two years after he commissioned the Latin translation of the Qurʾān, Egidio met his “diversely erudite”<sup>14</sup> godson. Though his Muslim name was al-Ḥasan al-Wazzān, in Italian circles he was better known as Leo Africanus (or Yūḥannā l-Asad). When al-Ḥasan al-Wazzān was baptized by Pope Leo X in 1520, Egidio was one of his godfathers. Five years after his baptism, Leo Africanus corrected Egidio’s translation of the Qurʾān at the cardinal’s residence in Viterbo.<sup>15</sup> The original manuscript with Leo’s corrections has not been preserved, yet there are certain clues in David Colville’s copy of 1621 that allow us to distinguish between the different layers of the text and to identify more precisely which amendments were made by Leo. Surprisingly, David Colville’s copy can be read quite literally between the lines: on the basis of various comparisons and analyses, I have come to the conclusion that, with a few exceptions, the main text contains the original translation, produced in Iberia, whereas the text preserved in the space between the lines are the corrections inserted by Leo Africanus. This implies that Leo Africanus was able to detect, if not all, then at least some of the negligences and errors committed by Juan Gabriel. Moreover, Leo’s corrections attest to his literal understanding of Qurʾānic Arabic, and suggest that he was not able to express himself correctly in Latin. Engaging with Gabriel’s translation and Leo’s corrections, Colville criticized Leo for not having been able to improve the original translation. Notwithstanding his harsh criticism of Leo’s contribution, Colville did not wish to leave it out. Thus, he copied the original text together with the corrections of Leo Africanus. Colville’s approach resulted in the particular layout of the manuscript (see Fig. 5.1), which was copied by the Scottish scholar in the library of El Escorial and brought with him to Milan, where it remains to this day.<sup>16</sup>

What becomes apparent when reading David Colville’s prologue is the authentic concern, shared by European intellectual elites, to acquire accurate instruction in Arabic. The Qurʾānic material more generally available at the time was Theodor Bibliander’s edition, published in 1543 in Basel, of Robert of Ketton’s twelfth-century Latin translation.<sup>17</sup> This version, however,

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14 *Liber sacrosancti Evangelii de Jesu Christo, Domino et Deo nostro*, ed. Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter (Vienna: Zymmermann, 1562), fols. a\*\*\* 4a–b, describe Leo Africanus as a man of “pleasant disposition and diverse erudition” (*ingenii amoenitatem, eruditionemque variam*).

15 See Davis, *Trickster Travels*; and Natalie Zemon Davis, “Leo Africanus and his Worlds of Translation,” in *Translators, Interpreters and Cultural Negotiators: Mediating and Communicating Power from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era*, ed. Federico M. Federici and Dario Tesscini (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 62–80. See also Katarzyna K. Starczewska, “Leo Africanus,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History, Volume 6: 1500–1900*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 439–449; and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, “Leo Africanus’ Contribution to a Latin Translation of the Qurʾān. A Case Study of Intellectual Activity after Conversion,” *SMSR* 84, no. 2 (2018), 479–497.

16 Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS D 100 inf.

17 See, among others, José Martínez Gázquez, “Las traducciones latinas del Corán, arma antisalmica en la Cristiandad medieval,” *Cuadernos del CEMyR* 13 (2005), 11–27; and José Martínez Gázquez, “Finalidad de la primera traducción latina del Corán,” in *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los*



Figure 5.1: Sūrat al-Baqara (fragment) in Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS D 100 inf., f. 46.

was often criticized by European scholars as being unfaithful to the Arabic original: some of its parts were abridged, the titles of the *suwar* (pl. of *sūra*) and their numbering had been assigned arbitrarily by the translator; and, on the whole, it was more a rhetorical summary of the Qurʾānic content than an actual translation.<sup>18</sup> As commissioner of the 1518 rendition of the Qurʾān, cardinal Egidio da Viterbo chose to rely on the assistance of native speakers in his quest to understand Arabic. Colville, on the other hand, was a firm believer in self-education and reluctant to admit the native speakers' linguistic superiority. This attitude led him to commit various mistakes, described in detail below. In other words, while the copyist's criticism of Leo's language skills seems to be exaggerated, it is perhaps Colville's own knowledge of Arabic that should be called into question.

## 5.2 David Colville's studies and travels

David Colville was an erudite member of the Catholic clergy, versed in several languages.<sup>19</sup> He was probably born in 1581 near Cleish, in eastern Scotland, the youngest son of Robert Colville and Margaret Lindsay.<sup>20</sup> In 1597 he began his education in St. Andrews, where he studied Greek, some Hebrew, and some rudiments of Chaldean and Syriac. In 1606, Colville left for Avignon, converted to Catholicism, and commenced his theological studies, which he later completed in Rome at the Scots College in 1608. Subsequently, he went to Venice and Padua to study law, and to Bologna to deepen his knowledge of medicine. In 1617 Colville reached Spain, where he worked as a librarian in El Escorial from 1617 to 1627. He later explained in his letters that it was perhaps the most tranquil period of his life, during which he was able to devote himself to his studies.<sup>21</sup> Among other activities, he worked on the library's collections of Arabic manuscripts<sup>22</sup> and served as a royal interpreter by appointment of Philip III and Philip IV of Spain. Furthermore, he was a professor of Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic in

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*siglos XII y XIII*, ed. Miquel Barceló and José Martínez Gázquez (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2005), 71–77. See also Cándida Ferrero Hernández and Oscar de la Cruz Palma, "Robert of Ketton," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History, Volume 4: 1200–1350*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 508–519.

18 See Martínez Gázquez, "Las traducciones latinas del Corán," the section "Críticas de Juan de Segovia al Corán latino de Pedro el Venerable," 26–27.

19 This and the following sections are based on Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qurʾān (1518/1621)*, xcv–cix.

20 John Durkan, "Three Manuscripts with Fife Association, and David Colville of Fife," *The Innes Review* 20 (1969), 47–49.

21 Gregorio De Andrés, "Historia del texto griego Escorialense (Θ. IV. V. 30) de la vida de S. Sinclética y sus traducciones latinas," *La Ciudad de Dios* 178, no. 3 (1965), 491–511.

22 Braulio Justel Calabozo, *La Real Biblioteca de El Escorial y sus manuscritos árabes. Sinopsis histórico-descriptiva* (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1978), 225. Robert Jones, "Piracy, War, and the Acquisition of Arabic Manuscripts in Renaissance Europe," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 2 (1987), 96–110.

the college attached to the monastery.<sup>23</sup> As far as the last of these languages is concerned, it seems that Colville did not begin studying Arabic until 1621, the year he copied Egidio's Qur'ān, and it took him a mere two years to master it.<sup>24</sup>

In 1627, Colville left El Escorial for Italy, where he hoped to find well-stocked libraries filled with stimulating material. He travelled from Valencia to Genoa and then to Rome.<sup>25</sup> In 1628, he reached Turin as an interpreter of Charles Emmanuel I, duke of Savoy. In 1629, he came to Milan with a good number of manuscripts in Greek and Arabic, copied from El Escorial, together with his commentaries and translations. In Milan, the scholar was hosted by cardinal Federico Borromeo,<sup>26</sup> to whom he bequeathed around twenty manuscripts copied from El Escorial, half of which were in Arabic. These manuscripts are currently preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana.<sup>27</sup>

What emerges from the prologue of Colville's copy of Egidio's Qur'ān, and also from his later letters, is a sense of frustration at his lack of recognition in the field of philological studies. It might have been the cognitive dissonance between Colville's self-image as a gifted scholar and the position and remuneration he was given that led him to gloss and strive to correct the Latin Qur'ān he was copying. In the prologue to this translation, Colville complains that mortals are often fooled by misconceptions: when they see a Muslim, they believe immediately that the person is fluent in Arabic. And similarly on the Arabic side: when a Spaniard is taken captive, the captors assume straight away that their prisoner can write Spanish and read Latin. Colville draws similar analogies for the Jews and Greeks, finally concluding boastfully that while he had not been born either a Jew or a Greek, he had taught himself to know these languages better than the natives.<sup>28</sup>

Colville's prologue suggests that he had great self-confidence in his abilities to master Oriental languages. Nevertheless, five years later, in a letter sent in 1626 from El Escorial to the Jesuit Guillaume Bauters, rector of the College of Leuven from 1620 to 1625, the Scottish scholar offered his services in a text-editing capacity, and gives a more balanced résumé of his skills:

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23 Douglas Morton Dunlop, "David Colville, a Successor of Michael Scot," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 28 (1951), 39.

24 Gregorio De Andrés, "Cartas inéditas del humanista escocés David Colville a los monjes jerónimos del Escorial," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 170, no. 1 (1973), 83–155, here 86.

25 De Andrés, "Cartas inéditas," 105–110.

26 Enrico Rodolfo Galbiati, "L'orientalista nei primi decenni di attività," in *Storia dell'Ambrosiana, Il Seicento*, ed. Ada Annoni (Milan: Cassa di Risparmio delle Province Lombarde, 1992), 114.

27 De Andrés, "Cartas inéditas," 89.

28 Cited in Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 5, 7: "Omnia quae in hac lingua scio, absque praeceptore didici [...] Ego uera experientia didici me qui neque domo neque natione Hebraeus aut Graecus sum, utramque linguam rectius calluisse Hebraeis atque Graecis natione."

“However, in order to satisfy your Most Venerable Lordship’s wish, I shall answer sincerely and modestly, just as a nobleman should, regarding how little I am skilled in letters and foreign languages, without any boastfulness [. . .]. I learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew in my fatherland as an early adolescent. I also learned Chaldean and Syrian in schools there. Subsequently, I improved my Greek while studying the entire philosophical curriculum, as I listened to the text of Aristotle himself in its original Greek. Furthermore, afterwards I improved my Hebrew during my pilgrimage, so that I can translate well and explain everything concerning grammar; as for the meaning of the Bible, to tell the truth, I would never say that I do not understand the words, but I can only grasp one thousandth part of their meaning [. . .]. I read and understand the comments of the rabbis; also the Chaldean although to a lesser degree [. . .], and in the same way Syrian, which I learned from the New Testament and from lexicons and other studies. Additionally, I cannot guarantee anything with regard to the orthography of the long and short vowels in Hebrew and especially in Chaldean [. . .]. Lastly, I learned Arabic here in this house [the Escorial], from many teachers, so that I can skillfully write it; and I transcribed many [texts] with my hand, especially two dictionaries, which consisted of many very copious volumes; however, as for writings in a purer style, and which do not degenerate into common speech or any foreign influences, I could easily explain and translate them more profusely into Latin, as Greek seems to be resisting itself.”<sup>29</sup>

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29 My English translation. Latin text cited in De Andrés, “Historia del texto griego,” 499–500: “Sed ut descripte satisfaciam desiderio R. V., ingenue referam et cum modestia prout virum probum decet, quantum possunt tenues meae vires in literis et cognitione linguarum, citra omnium jactantiam [. . .] linguam latinam, graecam et hebraeam in patria sub primos annos adolescentiae ubi et chaldeam et syriacam etiam in scholis didici; graecam subinde excolui studiis et toto curriculo philosophico, quia ipsum textum Aristotelis graece in suo fonte audiui; hebraeam etiam continuo excolui tota peregrinatione ut bene interpretari ualeam et de omnibus rationem reddere quae ad grammaticam spectant; de sensu Bibliorum, ut uerum fatear, nunquam dixerim me uoces non capere sed uix millesimum sensum percipere possem; [. . .] commentaria etiam Rabbitorum lego et intelligo; chaldaica perinde sed inferiore gradu [. . .] ac eodem modo syriaca quae ex Nouo Testamento et lexicis et aliis studiis didici; nihil praeterea polliceri possim circa orthographiam uocalium longarum et breuium in hebraeis, praecipue chaldaeis [. . .]. Denique arabicam hic in domo ista ex multis magistris didici ut non inscite scribere ualeam et multa mea manu descripsi, imprimis dictionaria duo pluribus constantia tomis et copiosissima; at quae stilo scripta puriore nec degenerunt in idiotismum aut peregrinitatem aliquam, facile illa explicare et interpretari possim lingua copiosior latina, cum graeca strenue certare uidetur.” Gregorio de Andrés, “Cartas inéditas,” 96–97, also translated the letter into Spanish.



Therefore, according to his own testimony, Colville taught himself Arabic, relying mainly on the manuscripts that he had at hand and that he copied.<sup>30</sup> If we are to assume that Colville commented upon the translation he was copying the very same year he began learning Arabic, his language skills are truly impressive. Several comments and annotations contain clues about which materials were at his disposal, which he used as tools to try to correct or enrich Egidio's translation. However, the accumulation of parallel translations and comparisons with the Arabic original sometimes prevented the copyist from reaching any particular conclusion, leaving him hesitant about which rendition of the Qur'anic text was correct.

### 5.3 Colville and Erpenius's grammar

David Colville copied the Milan manuscript in order to "be more skilful in the study of this extremely difficult language."<sup>31</sup> From my perspective, his greatest merit derives precisely from his ignorance of Qur'anic Arabic: as Colville was not sure which version of the translation was correct—the original authored by Juan Gabriel, or the corrections by Leo Africanus—he copied both. It appears that Colville expected to improve his Arabic by copying Egidio's Qur'ān and by commenting on its contents.

Colville was clearly acquainted with the tradition of translating the Muslim holy book, at least in a vague sense. In the prologue he explains that he compared the text he was copying "with the translation of Robert the Englishman," clearly referring to Robert of Ketton.<sup>32</sup> Much further along, he comments on verse Q 88:21–22: "So warn [them], for you are a warner / you are not someone holding power over them" (*fa-dak-kir innamā anta muḏakkirun / lasta 'alayhim bi-muṣaytir*). Alongside what appears to be Leo's translation of the Arabic term "muṣaytir," i.e. "someone holding power," as "custos"—in contrast to Juan Gabriel's "disiunctio"—Colville notes that Robert rendered it as "tu non es coactor," and put a gloss in the margin.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, turning to Bibliander's edition of Robert of Ketton's Qur'ān, we find "Tu namque doctor es, non coactor," i.e. "For you are a teacher, not someone who coerces." Additionally, as Colville claims, there is a gloss in this place, which states "Doctor, non coactor Machumet.

30 The Biblioteca Ambrosiana manuscripts transcribed by Colville that I have been able to identify are: B 349 suss., Q 114 sup., O 42 inf., M 86 suss., P 270 sup., J. 92 sgg., S 110 sup., B 134 sup., B 137 sup., B 139 sup., B 145 sup., B. 146 sup., D 141 P inf., and Z 193 sup. I would like to thank the staff of the Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana for their invaluable help in locating these materials.

31 "Ideoque omnia qua potui, diligentia descripsi, ut sic exercitator fierem in studio tam difficilis linguae, ego David Coluillis Scotus in coenobio D. Laurentis 1621 in Bibliotheca Regia."

32 "Et tandem contuli cum translatione Roberti Angli, et indices in margine apposui ex illo. Deus bone! Quam aliena est translatio illa ab arabico ut uix unam lineam reperias quadrare textui!"

33 In the original, "disiunctio *add.* custos *et* transtulit Robertus: 'Tu non es coactor' et posuit glossam in margine." Cited in Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 723.

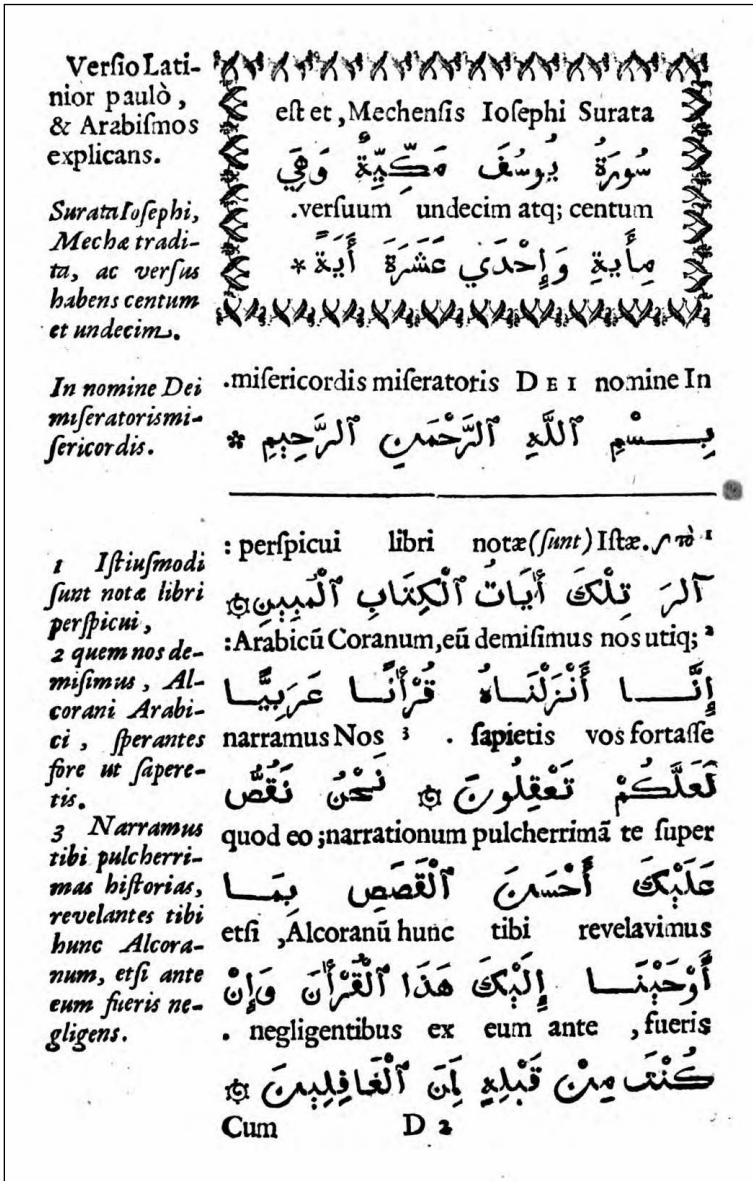


Figure 5.2: Erpenius' Historia Iosephi Patriarchae ex Alcorano arabicè, D2.

Sed contrarium saepissime in Alcoran docet," i.e. "Muḥammad, a teacher, not someone who coerces. But in the Qur'ān, he very often teaches the opposite."<sup>34</sup>

Bibliander's edition of Robert of Ketton's work was not the only translation of the Qur'ān that Colville consulted. At first glance, the twelfth *sūra* of the *M* manuscript is conspicuous for its elegant lettering and the absence of verse numbers. The copyist explains that this is due to the fact that he transcribed this *sūra* before the others, having found it printed and translated by Erpenius.<sup>35</sup> Thomas Erpenius was a central figure among European-Christian scholars of Arabic. He was a Dutch professor of Arabic in Leiden as well as the founder of an Arabic press vital for the development of European Arabist scholarship.<sup>36</sup> Erpenius was able to discern the meaning of difficult Qur'ānic passages thanks to the assistance of Aḥmad b. Qāsim al-Ḥaḡarī, a Morisco exiled to Morocco from Spain and author of *Kitāb Nāṣir al-dīn*.<sup>37</sup> Al-Ḥaḡarī visited Erpenius and his disciple Jacob Golius in Leiden, and all three kept up a learned correspondence after al-Ḥaḡarī's return to Morocco.<sup>38</sup>

The fragment that Colville claims to have copied from Erpenius probably comes from the latter's textbook entitled *Historia Iosephi Patriarchae ex Alcorano arabicè*, published in Leiden in 1617.<sup>39</sup> As Alastair Hamilton explains, this grammar was intended for students who were already familiar with Erpenius's earlier *Grammatica Arabica*, published in 1613. It was also one of the first books to be printed in the special press, equipped with Arabic fonts, established by Erpenius in Leiden.<sup>40</sup> The *Historia Iosephi Patriarchae* uses as chrestomathy *sūra* 12 (*sūrat Yūsuf*), which is printed together with an interlinear word-for-word translation into Latin, and another, more approachable rendition in the margins (see Fig. 5.2). What follows in the remaining part of the manual is the translation of this *sūra* by Robert of Ketton and its grammatical commentary. The final part of

34 Theodor Bibliander, *Machumetis Saracenorum principis eiusque successorum uitae ac doctrina [...]* (Basel: Johann Oporinus, 1550), 185, republished by the working group GRAC-UMR 5037 (September 2010), 24: <http://grac.univ-lyon2.fr/dialogues-de-chretiens-avec-l-islam-682831.kjsp?RH=1464270711526>.

35 "Azoaram istam transcripsi prius quam caeteras, quia reperi impressam et translata ab Herpempio." Cited in Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 261.

36 Mercedes García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain: Converted Muslims, the Forged Lead Books of Granada and the Rise of Orientalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 245.

37 Pieter S. van Koningsveld, Qasim Al-Samarrai, and Gerard A. Wieggers, "General introduction," in Aḥmad Ibn Qāsim al-Ḥaḡarī, *Kitāb Nāṣir al-Dīn 'alā l-qawm al-kāfirīn / The Supporter of Religion Against the Infidels*, ed./trans. Pieter S. van Koningsveld et al., second ed. (Madrid: CSIC, 2015), 13–74.

38 García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain*, 143, 423.

39 Erpenius's translation of *sūra* 12 (*sūrat Yūsuf*) is also referenced in the margins of Zechendorff's Qur'ān. Roberto Tottoli, "The Latin Translation of the Qur'ān by Johann Zechendorff (1580–1662) Discovered in Cairo Dār al-Kutub," *Oriente Moderno* 95 (2015), 5–31, here 18–19.

40 Alastair Hamilton, "The Qur'ān as Chrestomathy in Early Modern Europe," in *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jan Loop et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 215.

the book consists of three different Latin versions of the opening *sūra* 1 (*al-fātiḥa*) of the Qurʾān.<sup>41</sup> In Erpenius's words, the textbook contains:

“a certain sample of an authentic Arabic text, extremely accurately marked with vowels, also translated into Latin word by word, and explained; I am talking about the History of the Patriarch Joseph, as it is expounded by this Ishmaelite impostor in the Qurʾān not without added lies and fables. Because truly the Arabic language, not unlike Hebrew, cannot be in any way mastered satisfactorily without the help of a text with all the vowels correctly annotated, and there is nothing that can be regarded more correct than the Qurʾān; indeed, the Arabs themselves derive almost all their understanding of grammar from that work alone; nothing was more helpful for me than showing you a chapter of the Qurʾān, easily understandable and including much material relevant for the thorough understanding of the language.”<sup>42</sup>

In his preface, Erpenius explores a change in the perception of the Qurʾān, which occurred in the early modern period. He suggests that, although the text is still full of “lies and fables,” it also provides excellent training material for practising standard Arabic, “with all the vowels correctly annotated.” Colville seems to subscribe completely to this idea, claiming that:

“there is some benefit to be derived from the translation of both [i.e. Juan Gabriel and Leo Africanus], even when it errs. For we can gain as many benefits and experience from the errors of others as from things well done. For this reason, I have carefully written everything I could in order to be more skillful in the study of this extremely difficult language.”<sup>43</sup>

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41 For a more detailed description of Erpenius's grammar see Hamilton, “The Qurʾān as Chrestomathy,” 215–218.

42 Thomas Erpenius, *Historia Iosephi patriarchae, ex Alcorano, Arabicè. Cum triplici versione Latina, & scholijs Thomae Erpenii, cujus & alphabetum Arabicum praemittitur* (Leiden: Ex Typographia Erpeniana, 1617), A2–A3: “specimen quoddam textus Arabici authentici accuratissime uocalibus insigniti, atque de uerbo ad uerbum in Latinum uersi, & explicati; Historiam inquam Iosephi Patriarchae, ut eam impostor ille Ismaeliticus in قُرْآنٍ non sine admixtis mendacijs & fabulis enarrat. Cum enim lingua Arabica, non secus atque Hebraea, sine ope textus accurate uocalibus omnibus notati addisci haudquaquam feliciter possit, nec quidquam sit quod accuracione cum Alcorano certare queat; quin ex hoc fere solo tota rei Grammaticae ratio elici ab ipsis Arabibus solet: nihil mihi potius fuit, quam ut caput aliquod eius facile intellectu & multa ad linguae solidam intelligentiam pertinentia complectens uobis exhiberem.”

43 “Est tamen utilitas aliqua ex utriusque translatione delibanda etiam cum errauit, cum ex aliorum erratis quandoque non minus quam ex recte gestis emolumentum experientiamque capere possimus. Ideoque omnia qua potui diligentia descripsi, ut sic exercitator fierem in studio tam difficilis linguae.” Cited in Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 6.

The statement also justifies Colville's approach to the text: he sees himself not as a mere copyist but as a critical reader. Consequently, his annotations should be viewed as the product of this particular learning technique. However, in spite of the apparent similarity between their views regarding the utility of the Qur'ān as a help for students of the Arabic language, a comparison of *sūra* 12 (*sūrat Yūsuf*) in Erpenius's *Historia Iosephi Patriarchae ex Alcorano arabicè* and in Colville's transcription reveals both similarities and differences. For example, in Erpenius' grammar, verse Q 12:4 is translated as follows:

<p>إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ</p>	<p>Cum dixit Iosephus patri suo: "O pater mi! Vtique ego uidi undecim stellas, et solem, et lunam; uidi eos me adorantes."<sup>44</sup></p>
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Colville, in turn, uses his particular copying system, in which the two versions of the text are maintained. In the following passage, the version *supra lineam* is presented in parentheses, whereas the underlining is maintained as in the manuscript, where it indicates the parts of the text that should be substituted by the version *supra lineam*. Thus, Colville writes:

<p>إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ</p>	<p>Quando dixit Ioseph patri suo: "O meus pater! Ego uidi undecim stellas, et solem, et lunam, uidi eos qui <u>me reuerebantur</u> (mihi prosternentes)."<sup>45</sup></p>
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The translations of the following verses, Q 12:5–8, seem to have more in common, bold font having been used here to highlight parallels. In Erpenius we read:

44 Erpenius, *Historia Iosephi patriarchae*, D2.

45 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 261.

(12:5) قَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تَقْضُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَيَّ  
 إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ  
 لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (12:6) وَكَذَلِكَ  
 يَجْتَنِبُكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ  
 وَيُنمِّئُ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا  
 أَتَمَّهَا عَلَى أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ  
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (12:7) لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي  
 يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِّلْمَسْأَلِينَ (12:8) إِذْ  
 قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِمَّا  
 وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ آبَاءَنَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

(12:5) Dixit: "O filiule mi! Ne narra-  
 uisionem tuam super fratribus  
 tuis, et struent tibi dolum, etenim  
 Satanas homini hostis manifestus.  
 (12:6) Et sic **eliget** te dominus  
 tuus, et docebit te de explicatione  
 narrationum, **et complebit gra-  
 tiam suam super te et super**  
**familia** Iaacobi, sicuti **compleuit**  
**eam super** parentibus tuis antea  
 Abrahamo et Ishaco. Etenim domi-  
 nus tuus sciens, sapiens." (12:7)  
 Certe fuerunt in Iosepho et fra-  
 tribus eius signa interrogantibus.  
 (12:8) Cum dixerunt: "Iosephus et  
 frater eius cariores apud patrem  
 nostrum quam nos et nos complu-  
 res. Certe pater noster **in errore**  
**manifesto**."<sup>46</sup>

In Colville's version we read:

(12:5) قَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تَقْضُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَيَّ  
 إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ  
 لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ (12:6) وَكَذَلِكَ  
 يَجْتَنِبُكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ  
 وَيُنمِّئُ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا  
 أَتَمَّهَا عَلَى أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ  
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (12:7) لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي  
 يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِّلْمَسْأَلِينَ (12:8) إِذْ  
 قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِمَّا  
 وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ آبَاءَنَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

(12:5) Dixit: "O filii mi (filioli mi)! Non  
declares (narres) insomnium tuum  
super fratres tuos (fratribus tuis),  
quare (quia) facient traditionem  
 tibi et dolum, et quia (certe) dia-  
 bolus pro persona (hominibus) est  
 inimicus manifestus. (12:6) Et sic  
audiet (**eliget**) te creator (dominus)  
 tuus, et demonstrabit tibi solutio-  
nem (docet te ex significationibus)  
 historiarum, **et complebit gra-**  
**tiam suam super te, et super eos**  
 (familiam) Iacob, quemadmodum  
**compleuit eam super** patres tuos  
 ante Abraham et Isaach; quia cre-  
ator (dominus) tuus est sapiens,  
uidens (sciens)." (12:7) Certe fuit in  
 Ioseph et in fratribus suis myste-  
rium (miraculum) pro scrutantibus  
 (rogantibus). (12:8) Et quando dix-  
 erunt: "Certe Ioseph et frater eius  
 amatur plus a patre nostro, plu-  
 squam nos, et nos sumus congregatio,  
et quod (certe) pater noster  
 est **in errore manifesto**."<sup>47</sup>

It is tempting to assume that Colville copied the *sūra* he found in Erpenius's textbook, but then merged it with Juan Gabriel's and Leo Africanus's versions. If the copyist had truly consulted the 1617 *Historia Iosephi Patriarchae*, he would have learned from it much more than just the word-for-word translation of one *sūra*, for it contains the Arabic alphabet, information about grammar, Robert of Ketton's version of the chapter in question, and comments on Qur'ānic vocabulary and phraseology. Superficial study of Erpenius's textbook probably motivated Colville to look more closely at the Qur'ān out of philological interest, but also seems to have given him the false impression that he had already mastered the Arabic language. This impression resulted in Colville's profuse glossing of the text. In the following pages, I consider Colville's annotations containing erroneous corrections, paying particular attention to those that stand in stark contrast to the amendments made by Leo Africanus.

#### 5.4 Colville, Leo, and the number of verses in the Qur'ān

Over the pages of the Latin Qur'ān, Colville presents himself as a man of bold judgements. As his prologue makes clear, he is particularly inclined to disparage the skills of Leo Africanus. Dealing with verse Q 11:85, Leo rejects the word "decipiatis," correcting it with the neologism "uilatis," which, in his opinion, was closer to the Arabic meaning of the root "b-ḥ-s" of the Qur'ānic verb "tabḥasū," i.e. "you [plural] shall not deprive." The term "vile" seems a reasonable equivalent of "baḥs," and the form "uilatis" somehow resembles the Arabic verbal morphology. Nevertheless, Colville is appalled by Leo's liberties, as he exclaims:

"uilatis,' id est 'uile faciatis,' inquit, ecco ridiculum glossatorem!"<sup>48</sup>

"do not vile,' that is, 'vilify,' he says, behold the ridiculous glossator!"

Such was Colville's outrage that he even seems to have confused Latin with Italian, using the word "ecco" instead of the classical "ecce."

Colville once more vented his anger without obvious motive, this time in correct Latin, in the note that accompanies the title of *sūra* 15 (*al-ḥiġr*), where an alternative title is provided.<sup>49</sup> Next to the headline "de lapidibus" Leo proposes "pauimento." The Scotsman exclaims: "behold the barbarity of the corrector!" (*ecce barbariem correctoris!*). The heated remark hardly seems justified, since the word "al-ḥiġr," translated into English as "The Rocky Tract," "The Stoneland," or "The Rock City," can with all accuracy be

46 Erpenius, *Historia Iosephi patriarchae*, D3.

47 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 261.

48 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 257.

49 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 285.

translated into Latin as “pauimentum,” i.e. a floor composed of stones.<sup>50</sup> There are numerous similar examples, in which Colville criticizes Leo’s corrections. However, it is striking that Colville sees fit to include these alternative translations in his copy, although he considers them incorrect.

Colville appears to feel a strong need to polemicize against the glosses of the first translator, Juan Gabriel. One of many examples is his note next to verse Q 20:29 (*wa-ğ’al lī wazīran min ahli*). Next to the translation of the Arabic word “wazīr,” rendered here as “admonitor,” the copyist wrote:

“consiliarium, addit glossa quod Hispanice dicitur ‘Al-guazil’ sed puto eum decipi quod ‘alguazil’ est الوصیل, hoc est ‘lictor’ seu ‘compraehensor.’”<sup>51</sup>

“Advisor, the gloss adds that in Spanish it is ‘Al-guazil’ [‘alguacil’ i.e. a minor official] but I think he is mistaken, as ‘alguazil’ is ‘al-waṣīl,’ which is ‘lictor’ or ‘compraehensor.’”<sup>52</sup>

The question of why Colville would seek to derive the etymology of the Spanish word “alguacil” from “al-waṣīl” (i.e. “the intimate friend”) remains open. He might have relied on an external source of information or simply made it up himself. In any case, from the perspective of modern etymological studies, Juan Gabriel’s gloss is impeccable.<sup>53</sup>

Nevertheless, Colville leaves numerous glosses in which we can see that he does not necessarily denigrate or judge, but simply studies and collects information that he found relevant for his understanding of the Qur’ān and its characteristic form of Arabic. On numerous occasions, we see Colville comparing the Arabic text with the translation as he copies it, struggling to understand the equivalence between the original and the Latin version. We might interpret his comment on the last word of verse Q 22:28 (*li-yaṣhadū manāfi’a lahum wa-yaḍkurū sma llāhi fī ayyāmin ma’lūmātin ‘alā mā razaqahum min bahīmati l-an’āmi fa-kulū minhā wa-aṭ’imu l-bā’isa l-faqīra*) in this way, i.e. the term “al-faqīr,” i.e. a poor person. In reference to the Latin word “pauperibus” (rendered in the main text in its plural form but corrected into singular “pauperi” between the lines), he comments:

“in alio erat الفقير et cum cesra [?] et in alio الفقير cum demma.”<sup>54</sup>

50 An annotation of a similar kind can be found next to the Latin heading of *sūra* 46, titled according to the manuscript “de Arditate.” Colville’s note in reference to the title reads: “Ecce barbariem, uoluit dicere ‘Colliculorum.’” In this case, Colville’s alternative is more adequate. Cited in Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 551.

51 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 334.

52 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 334.

53 *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (DRAE), s.v. *alguacil*, la: “Del ár. hisp. *alwazir*, y este del ár. clás. *Wazir*,” accessed November 24, 2017, <http://dle.rae.es/?id=1ny83D5>.

54 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 355.



"In the other [copy] it was *al-faqīri* with *kasra* and in [yet] another *al-faqīru* with *ḍamma*."<sup>55</sup>

Colville's annotation is significant in two ways: primarily it provides further confirmation that he used more than one copy of the Qur'ān in Arabic. This would not have been difficult given the number of Muslim holy books kept at El Escorial.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, it proves how little Colville actually knew of Arabic grammar, since he could not distinguish which was the correct *ḥaraka*—in other words, which short-vowel ending is grammatically correct within this sentence structure.

In various annotations, Colville expresses his concern about the correct numeration of the Qur'ānic verses. The following comment combines two of Colville's obsessions—the correct count of verses and criticism of Leo Africanus. The gloss is located between the title of *sūra* 15 and its opening *basmala* and makes direct reference to the verse count that almost always accompanies the *sūra* titles. The copy states that *sūra* 15 contains ninety-nine verses, which corresponds to the verse count in modern standard editions. Colville, however, comments:

"Nevertheless I found ninety-seven, in the Arabic title it is said that there are ninety-seven, in the Latin translation ninety-nine; and the very inept corrector inserted the letter *d*, which means that there is a doubt. He should not have doubted but corrected in the right way for once, and written 'ninety-seven.'"<sup>57</sup>

At the beginning of *sūra* 18, which was supposed to contain 150 verses, the copyist acknowledges that he did not find more than ninety-eight, although in the other codex there were said to be 121.<sup>58</sup> Colville shows similar attentiveness at the beginning of *sūra* 21, where he expected to encounter 112 verses, but found only 109.<sup>59</sup> It is worth noting that other seventeenth-century European scholars of the Qur'ān found the question of verse numbering and division particularly challenging.<sup>60</sup> Roberto Tottoli associates the problem with the fact that Christian translators were unable to identify an undisputed standard in this matter. Interestingly, it seems

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55 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 355.

56 See Justel Calabozo, *La Real Biblioteca*, 224–226.

57 In the original, "reperi tamen 97, in titulo arabico dicitur quod sunt 97, in translatio latina 99; et corrector ineptissimus posuit literam 'd' qua uult significare esse dubium. Non debebat dubitare sed corrigere saltem semel recte et scribere 'nonaginta septem.'" Cited in Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 285.

58 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 313.

59 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 343.

60 See Reinhold F. Gleis and Roberto Tottoli, *Ludovico Marracci at Work: The Evolution of his Latin Translation of the Qur'ān in the Light of his Newly Discovered Manuscripts with an Edition and a Comparative Linguistic Analysis of Sura 18* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 20–31.

that Colville also seized this opportunity to practice Arabic numerals, as he proudly copies them in their original script in various places.<sup>61</sup>

## 5.5 Colville's dictionaries

Judging by the remarks preserved in the margins of this Latin translation, it seems likely that, while copying Egidio's Qur'ān, Colville had numerous resources at his disposal. He probably started with Erpenius's abridged grammar, and, as he went along, compared aspects of the translation with various Arabic originals. Occasionally, he also cited the authority of a dictionary.

In his letter to the Jesuit Guillaume Bauters, mentioned above, Colville claimed to have copied two voluminous Arabic dictionaries at El Escorial. These dictionaries have been identified by Gregorio de Andrés as *Al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, written by Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Fayrūzābādī in the early fifteenth century, and *Tāğ al-luġa wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-'arabiyya*, written by Ismā'īl b. Ḥammād al-Ġawharī in the eleventh century.<sup>62</sup> The *Tāğ al-luġa wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-'arabiyya* was a fairly popular glossary among European Arabists, and among Arabic speakers. It was particularly famous as the first dictionary to order words according to the last letter of their root, a practice that proved to be helpful in composing rhymed poetry.<sup>63</sup>

In the pages of Egidio's Qur'ān, Colville mentions having consulted al-Ġawharī's dictionary on three occasions in his comments on verses Q 15:74, Q 17:5, and Q 18:9. He transcribes the Arabic name "al-Ġawharī" as "Goheri." Commenting on Q 18:9 (*am ḥasibta anna aṣḥāba l-kaḥfi wa-r-raqīmi kānū min āyātīnā 'ağaban*), Colville refers to the translation of the Arabic word "ar-raqīm," which Juan Gabriel translated as "flumen" (river) and Leo corrected to "riuuus" (brook). However, Colville was not convinced by either of these translations. He annotates that his (*sic!*) "dictionary of al-Ġawharī says that it was a tablet in which the deeds and the names of those who are in hell were written."<sup>64</sup> Evidently the copyist was not aware of the *tafsīr* tradition, i.e. Qur'ānic exegesis, according to which "ar-raqīm" was the name of a river or a valley.<sup>65</sup> It is telling that, unlike the medieval

61 See, e.g., chapters VI, XX, XLIV, LII, LVI, and LVIII.

62 De Andrés, "Historia del texto griego," 498–500.

63 See García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain*, 254–255, 343.

64 Colville comments: "istud [?] قِيم, dictionarium meum Goheri dicit esse tabulam in qua scripta sunt gesta et nomina eorum qui sunt in inferno." Colville seems to refer to al-Ġawharī's dictionary, *Tāğ al-luġa wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-'arabiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Tāmīr (Cairo: Dār al-ḥadīṭ, 2009), 461 [s.v. "raqm"], who writes: "yuqāl: huwa lawḥun fihi asmā'uhum wa-qīṣaṣuhum." The second part of the Latin phrase "qui sunt in inferno" seems to be a later addition. Cited in Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 313.

65 See, among others, al-Ṭabarī's exegesis of 18:9, in which he uses the word "wādin" to mean both "river" and "valley." Al-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Šakīr, 24 vols. (Beirut: al-Risāla, 2000), vol. 17, 602.

European scholars who worked on the Latin translations of the Qurʾān,<sup>66</sup> Colville left aside any religious interpretation authored by Muslim exegetes. It appears that he was not familiar with any work of *tafsīr* and was interested only in the literal meaning of Qurʾānic Arabic. Curiously, his consultation of al-Ġawharī's definitions is inconsistent. As already mentioned above, he only used it on three occasions, placed relatively close together in the text. Given the fact that Colville demonstrated rather limited knowledge of Arabic at the time of glossing Egidio's translation, one wonders whether he had already copied al-Ġawharī's text. What we know is that Colville finished the copy of this Qurʾān in 1621, and that by 1623 he had been studying Arabic for two years and had copied two dictionaries of the language. Moreover, during his stay in El Escorial, Colville had access to at least two more Arabic dictionaries. In fact, it is highly likely that he consulted the work of Pedro de Alcalá, and almost certain that he wrote a short preface to the glossary authored by Leo Africanus and Jacob Mantino.

Pedro de Alcalá—author of *Arte para ligeramente saber la lengua arábica* and of the dictionary of spoken Arabic *Vocabulista arábigo en letra castellana*, printed in Granada in 1505—composed both works at the request of the archbishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera (d. 1507).<sup>67</sup> The works were intended for use by Christian clergy preaching in areas of southern Spain that remained Arabic-speaking. However, local Moriscos may also have used such resources as reference material.<sup>68</sup> Pedro de Alcalá's dictionary was peculiar in that the Arabic words were transcribed into the Latin alphabet, as there was no printing press with Semitic types in Spain of the early sixteenth century. This characteristic might account for the confusion in Colville's notes, for, if I am not mistaken, it was Pedro de Alcalá's dictionary to which the copyist refers as "the lexicon of Granada." Referring to the Arabic term "maqīl" (مَقِيل), i.e. "resting place," Colville writes in the gloss to verse Q 25:24 (*aṣḥābu l-ġannati yawma'idin ḥayrun mustaqarran wa-aḥsanu maqīlan*):

"meridiem' s.l. et id est, inquit glossa: 'Locus in quo statur ad umbram in meridie.' Inuenique id ipse in lexico Granatenis scriptum مَكِيلًا cum caph. et hispanice dicitur: 'la sesta.'"

"'Midday,' which is, as the gloss says, 'a place in which one stands in shade at noon.' And I myself found it in the lexicon of the Granadian written 'makīlan' with a kāf, and in Spanish it is called 'la siesta.'"<sup>69</sup>

66 See, e.g., Thomas E. Burman, "Tafsir and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qurʾān Exegesis and the Latin Qurʾāns of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo," *Speculum* 73 (1998), 703–732.

67 Petrus Hispanus, *De lingua arabica libri duo*, ed. Paul de Lagarde (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1883).

68 See García-Arenal, Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain*, 39–40.

69 Starczewska, *Latin Translation*, 379.

Indeed, in Pedro de Alcalá's dictionary, printed without Arabic fonts, we find an entry that states: "sestadero lugar para tener siesta' [i.e. "napping place to have a siesta"]: maqyāla, -āt."<sup>70</sup> The key problem with this attribution is that Pedro de Alcalá's system of transcription does not distinguish between *kāf* (ك) and *qāf* (ق), which he transcribes indiscriminately as *q* or *c*.<sup>71</sup> Had Colville been aware of this inconsistency, he would not have mentioned that Pedro de Alcalá wrote "maqīl" (مقيل) with the letter "kāf" (ك), simply because it was impossible to know how the author of the dictionary wanted to write it. However, the clearly Hispanic context of the gloss and the reference to the "dictionary of Granada" make plausible the assumption that Colville was using Pedro de Alcalá's book.

Another dictionary that passed through Colville's hands, but of which he made no mention while glossing Egidio's Qur'ān, is the wordbook that Leo Africanus authored together with Jacob Mantino.<sup>72</sup> The manuscript containing this dictionary is preceded by a short description, probably in Colville's hand.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, in this description, the dictionary's author is said to be unknown ("Incerto authore") and, this time, there are no critical remarks regarding his knowledge of Arabic.

## 5.6 Conclusion

To conclude, let us state clearly that Colville's marginal comments on this translation have little academic value; the copyist was often wrong and excessively judgemental. However, his annotations are fairly informative as to the materials available in the Royal Library of El Escorial before the 1671 fire.<sup>74</sup> They tell us that the scholars working there on Arabic had at their disposal not only the famous collection of Mawlāy Zidān al-Nāṣir but also Erpenius's grammar book, Robert of Ketton's translation of the Qur'ān, and more than a few Arabic dictionaries. Furthermore, Colville himself is also representative of the change in the European approach to the Qur'ān in the early modern period. Even though he was not an unbiased reader, his interests in glossing the Muslim holy book were strictly philological and almost entirely detached from medieval polemical currents. Colville was so engrossed in the Arabic grammar—the verbal forms, the declension of nouns, the numerals—that he almost entirely disregarded the theological

70 Elena Pezzi Martínez, *El vocabulario de Pedro de Alcalá* (Almería: Editorial Cajal, 1989), 471.

71 See Abdelouahab El Imrani, "Lexicografía Hispano-Árabe. Aproximación al análisis de cinco diccionarios elaborados por religiosos españoles" (unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1998), 30–33.

72 Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, MS 598, Manuscritos árabes. This dictionary has been described by Davis, *Trickster Travels*, 84–85.

73 Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, MS 598, f. 3.

74 See, among other works, Daniel Hershenson, "Traveling Libraries: The Arabic Manuscripts of Muley Zidan and the Escorial Library," *Journal of Early Modern History* 18, no. 6 (2014), 535–558.

dimensions of the text. One is left to speculate whether Colville would have hoped to engage with the content of the Qurʾān in order to defend his own religious views once he attained sufficient mastery of Arabic. In any case, thanks to Colville's lack of language skills, we have one less refutation of the Qurʾān in Latin Christendom. However, this is not the only debt we have to Colville's ignorance. We should also be thankful that his befuddlement while copying Egidio's Qurʾān caused him to leave it very much as he had found it. Thanks to his lack of discernment we are able to consult two versions of the work: the original one by Juan Gabriel and the one authored by Leo Africanus.