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# Qur'an Quotations in the *Liber de Doctrina Mahumet*

**Abstract:** This contribution studies the Qur'an quotations contained in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*, the Latin version of the tenth-century (third-century H.) Arabic work *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*, translated from Arabic into Latin by Hermann of Carinthia in 1143 (537H.) and part, together with Robert of Ketton's Qur'an translation, of the so-called *corpus islamolatinum* commissioned by the Cluniac Abbot Peter the Venerable. Each Qur'an quotation is identified and compared with Robert of Ketton's translation as well as with the Arabic text of the *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*, taken directly from its manuscript transmission. On the one hand, this allows ascertaining the independence of Hermann's translation from Robert's. On the other hand, it discloses the complex textual tradition of the *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām* and its multiple versions.<sup>1</sup>

## 1 Introduction

While the Latin translation of the entire Qur'an by Robert of Ketton is certainly the most relevant accomplishment inside Peter the Venerable's *corpus islamolatinum* of 1143 (537H.), a complete survey of the Latin Qur'an translations from such a *corpus* must also take into account the Qur'an quotations occurring in the other works of which it is composed.

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In the present study, I will focus on the work entitled in Latin *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*,<sup>2</sup> translated for the Abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable (ca. 1092–1156 / 484–550H.) by Hermann of Carinthia,<sup>3</sup> which is a very good example of this phenomenon. The work is the translation of an Arabic text entitled “The Questions of ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām”, in Arabic *Masā’il ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām*, a text that probably dates from the tenth century (3rd–4th c. H.).<sup>4</sup> In it, a learned Jew, ‘Abdallāh

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**2** On the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet* see (selection): Guillaume F. Pijper, *Het Boek der Duizend Vragen* (Leiden: Brill, 1924), 5–8; 40–54; Óscar de la Cruz Palma and Cándida Ferrero Hernández, “Hermann of Carinthia,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Volume 3 (1050–1200)*, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallet (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 503–7; Cándida Ferrero Hernández, “Difusión de las ideas islámicas a partir del *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*,” in *Arabes in patria asturiensium*, ed. Clara E. Prieto Entrialgo (Oviedo: Asturiensis Regni Territorium vol III, 2011); Henri Lamarque, “Le dialogue d’Abdia,” in *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los siglos XII y XIII*, ed. Miquel Barceló and José Martínez Gázquez (Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Servei de publicacions, 2005); Cándida Ferrero Hernández, “La traducción latina de Hermann de Carinthia del *Masā’il Abdallah b. Salam*,” in *Coexistence and Cooperation in the Middle Ages. IV European Congress of Medieval Studies, Palermo 23–27 June 2009*, ed. Alessandro Musco and Giuliana Musotto (Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2014); Cándida Ferrero Hernández, “El *Liber de doctrina Machumeti* como auctoritas en el *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*,” in *Auctor et auctoritas in Latinis Medii Aevi litteris*, ed. Edoardo D’Angelo and Jan Ziolkowski (Firenze: Sismel, 2014).

**3** On Hermann of Carinthia see: De la Cruz Palma and Ferrero Hernández, “Hermann of Carinthia,” 497–500.

**4** On the *Masā’il ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām* see: Pijper, *Het Boek*; Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew. The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Steven M. Wasserstrom, “‘Abdallāh Ibn Salām,” in *Encyclopaedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Brill: first published online 2010); Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated. Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011); Samuel Stafford, “Constructing Muḥammad’s Legitimacy: Arabic Literary Biography and the Jewish Pedigree of the Companion ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām (d.43/633),” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 47 (2019); Ulisse Cecini, “Body, Senses, and Gender-related Questions as Gates to the Transcendent. A New Reading of the *Masā’il ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām*,” in *Religious Boundaries for Sex, Gender, and Corporeality*, ed. Alexandra Cuffel et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 113–131. In the past years I have been working together with Reinhold Gleis and Concetta Finiello on a project for the critical edition of the Arabic *Masā’il ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām* (prepared by myself, under the supervision of Reinhold Gleis, based on 33 manuscripts and 3 printed editions from Europe, Africa, America and Asia) and of Hermann’s Latin translation (prepared by Gleis and Finiello, based on 30 manuscripts and early-modern editions from libraries all across Europe). The edition has recently been published by Harrassowitz Verlag in the *Series Arabica-Latina of their Corpus Islamo-Christianum*: Ulisse Cecini, *Masā’il ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām (Doctrina Mahumet). Kritische Edition des arabischen Textes mit Einleitung und Übersetzung. Mit einem Anhang zur lateinischen Doctrina Mahumet von Concetta Finiello und Reinhold F. Gleis* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021). The textual quotation from both texts, the Arabic *Vulgata* – see below – and the Latin translation, rely on such criti-

ibn Salām, is sent to Muḥammad in Medina by his community of Khaybar, an oasis approximately 150 km north of Medina, in order to verify whether Muḥammad is a true prophet or not, as Muḥammad had sent a letter to the Jewish community asking for the conversion of its members to Islam. ‘Abdallāh therefore asks Muḥammad a series of questions, which Muḥammad answers correctly, thus demonstrating his prophethood and leading ‘Abdallāh to conversion. The questions cover a wide range of subjects: prophethood, of course, as well as what faith and religion are and how they are revealed to men.<sup>5</sup> There are also questions related to figures and events from Jewish scriptures and traditions, such as Moses, Abraham or Noah, the creation of the first man and woman, the description of Paradise and Hell and of what happens to the souls that dwell in those places, the description of the angels and the day of the Last Judgment and what will happen thereafter. One also finds questions concerning legal principles, medicine, cosmology and geography. For instance, there are questions regarding the status of men and women within a marriage, their respective value as witnesses during a process, the reason why babies resemble their mother, father or even other relatives, the heavens that succeed one another above the Earth and the different levels of Hell below it, as well as a description of rivers and cities of the Earth. ‘Abdallāh tests Muḥammad with cleverly formulated riddles whose answers are often in the Sacred Scriptures. In some cases, the prophet of Islam supports his answers with a Qur'an quotation. These are the cases that are significant for this survey. We will start with the Latin text, from which we will isolate the Qur'an quotations. We will identify them, as the quotations in the text are identified neither by the name nor by the sura or verse number. After having identified the given Qur'an passage, we will compare it with the translation by Robert of Ketton to determine whether it relies on it. We will also reflect on the translation methodology employed in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*. To this end, we will compare the Latin translation with the Arabic original, or – better said – with different originals, of the *Masā'il* ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām, thus showing the complex textual tradition behind the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*.

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cal editions. To identify each question, I will use as reference the numeration of the questions preceded, respectively, by an A, for “Arabic”, and L, for “Latin”.

5 Cfr. Cecini, “Body, Senses,” 113.

## 2 Qur'an quotations in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*

I found 17 Qur'an quotations in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*. The first two occur in Muḥammad's answer to the very first question asked by 'Abdallāh:

[L1] ['Abdallāh asked:] "So first say, o Muḥammad, if you please: Are you a prophet or a messenger?" He answered: "God constituted me both a prophet and a messenger. In fact, He says so in the Qur'an: 'I sent a part upon you, and a part I did not send.' And another sentence from God is: 'It is not possible for a man to have a conversation with God, if not through a messenger.'"<sup>6</sup>

Before we look at the Qur'an quotations themselves, let us explain what the question above concerns. 'Abdallāh asks Muḥammad if he is a prophet (Arabic "nabiyy") or a messenger sent by God (Arabic "rasūl"). In the first case, the accent is on the call and on the relationship with God, while in the second it is on the mission (the Arabic verb "rasala" meaning "to send"). Muḥammad answers that he is both those things and backs his response with two Qur'an quotations.

Let us start with the second one: "It is not possible for a man to have a conversation with God, if not through a messenger." This is a rather famous passage: it explains the different ways that God uses to communicate His message to men and, incidentally, it was often referred to concerning the incarnation of Jesus in Christian-Muslim polemics.<sup>7</sup>

The verse we are dealing with is Qur'an 42:51, of which, we notice, the translation is essentially correct and literal. Nonetheless, it does not translate the

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6 Cecini, *Masā'il*, 194: [Ait:] "Dic ergo, si placet, imprimis, o Mahumet: Propheta es an nuntius?" Respondit: "Et prophetam et nuntium constituit me Deus. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Partem misi super te, partem non misi.' Et sermo Dei alter: 'Nec est possibile homini colloqui Deo nisi per internuntium.'" (The English translations, unless stated otherwise, are mine.)

7 For example in the eighth-century Melkite apology *Fi tathlith Allah al-wāḥid* (On the Triune Nature of God), the ninth-century Melkite encyclopaedia *Al-jāmi' wujūh al-imān* (The Compilation of the Aspects of the Faith), the anonymous tract *Masā'il wa-ajwiba 'aqliyya wa-ilāhiyya* (Questions and Rational and Theological Responses), or the ninth-century *Kitāb al-burhān* (The Book of the Demonstration) by Peter of Bayt Ra's: see Mark N. Swanson, "Beyond Proof-texting: Approaches to the Qur'ān in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies," *The Muslim World* 88 / 3–4 (1998); Mark N. Swanson, "Fi tathlith Allāh al-wāḥid," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Volume 1 (600–900)*, edited by David Thomas and Barbara Roggema (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1997), 502–505.

whole verse, but only those parts that are of interest for the text, thus offering an abbreviation and an interpretation. The complete verse says:

And it is not possible for a man (*wa-mā kāna li-basharin / nec est possibile homini*), that God speaks to him (*an yukallima-hu llāhu / colloqui deo*), except (*illā / nisi*) by revelation (*waḥyan*), or from behind a veil (*aw min warā'i ḥijābin*), or He sends a messenger (*aw yursila rasūlan / per internuntium*) to reveal whatsoever He will, by His leave; surely He is All-high, All-wise.<sup>8</sup>

We can now compare Hermann's translation and Robert of Ketton's translation to see whether there was any influence:

Liber de doctrina Mahumet  
Nec est possibile homini colloqui  
Deo nisi per internuntium.

Robert of Ketton:  
Non accidit cuiquam hominum, quod cum eo  
Deus sublimis et sapiens loqueretur nisi per  
uisionem et uelamen interpositum, uel per  
internuncium, omnia pro uelle suo praeceptoque  
dicentem.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the word "*internuntium*", which we find in both translations, the two texts are clearly different. This suggests that Hermann was aware of and consulted Robert's translation, but then translated on his own.

In my attempt to identify the first Qur'an quotation: "I sent a part upon you, and a part I did not send" ("*Partem misi super te, partem non misi*"), a Qur'an verse did not immediately come to mind. I therefore looked for help in the Arabic text of the *Masā'il* 'Abdallāh ibn Salām. Before presenting the results of my search, I need to make a short premise. While I was examining the manuscript tradition to prepare the critical edition, I became aware of the complexity of the textual tra-

<sup>8</sup> The translation, with some slight changes, draws on the one proposed by Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 198 (Arberry's translation: "It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or that He should send a messenger and he reveal whatsoever He will, by His leave; surely He is All-high, All-wise;" Arabic [Cairo edition]: "Wa-mā kāna li-basharin an yukallima-hu llāhu illā waḥyan aw min warā'i ḥijābin aw yursila rasūlan fa-yūḥiya bi-idhni-hi mā yashā'u inna-hu 'aliyyun ḥakimun.")

<sup>9</sup> Here and in the following quotation, Robert of Ketton's translation is quoted from the Bibliander revised edition of 1550 (956H.): Robert of Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," in *Machumetis Saracenorum principis... doctrina ac ipse Alcoran*, ed. Theodor Bibliander (Basel: Iohannes Oporinus, 1550), online at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20121224042616/http://sites.univ-lyon2.fr/lesmondeshumanistes/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Le-Coran-latin-de-Th%C3%A9odore-Bibliander.pdf>, 7–188 (last accessed: 15/03/2021, here, 151)

dition of this Arabic text. The text is widespread and I could find it contained in 53 manuscripts from across the world: in Europe, in Asia, in Africa and America. To summarize a very complex situation, I managed to group the majority of these manuscripts as witnesses of the text according to a particular version, which I named the *Vulgata*. I found, however, manuscripts that had different versions of the story, which were either told in a different way, had a different structure, or had substantial differences regarding which questions were asked. In other words, in the other versions, there are questions that do not appear in the *Vulgata* and vice versa. That being said, the situation is even more complicated, as the witnesses of the *Vulgata* themselves – even if, according to the macrostructure of the text and the majority of the questions asked, they may be conducted back to the same version – *also* contain significant differences, either in the order of the questions or the content of the answers, so that the same *Vulgata* appears in almost each particular witness in different forms and with different nuances. The Qur'an quotations are an element that may vary in different manuscript witnesses.

Having made this clarification, we will now look at the critical edition of the *Vulgata* text of the *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*. We will then examine two specific manuscripts: the manuscript Paris, BnF, Ar. 1974, from the 17th century (11th–12th c. H.), which I refer to as P and which is a witness of a version that does not pertain to the *Vulgata*, and the manuscript Jakarta, Museum Nasional, 417, from the 18th century (12th–13th c. H.), which I refer to as L<sub>BI</sub> and which, on the contrary, *pertains* to the *Vulgata*.

Here is the text of the *Vulgata* [A1 and A2] (I also include the second question, for a reason that will become clear):

He [i.e. 'Abdallāh] said: "You told the truth o Muḥammad and you are sincere and trustworthy. O Muḥammad, are you a prophet or a messenger?" He said: "Indeed, God, the Great and Most-High, has sent me as a prophet and a messenger, [up to here the text is exactly as in Hermann's translation. However, it continues, *n. Cecini*] and I am the seal of the prophets. Have you not read in the Torah [what follows is, however a quotation of Q. 48:29–30, translated here according to Arberry, *n. Cecini*]<sup>10</sup>: 'Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another. [48:30] Thou seest them bowing, prostrating, seeking bounty from God and good pleasure.'" He said: "You told the truth o Muḥammad: were you talked to or did you receive a revelation?" He said: "O Ibn Salām, 'This is naught but a revelation revealed' [Q. 53:4],<sup>11</sup> which the trustworthy Gabriel has brought down from the Lord of the Creatures."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 229.

<sup>11</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 244.

<sup>12</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 14-16: Wa-qāla: "Ṣadaqta yā Muḥammad wa-anta aṣ-ṣādiq al-amin. Yā Muḥammad, anta nabiyy am rasūl?" Fa-qāla: "Inna llāh, jalla wa-'alā, ba'atha-nī nabiyyan wa-rasūlan wa-

As one can clearly see, the Qur'ān passages quoted here, 48:29–30 and 53:4, do not resemble what was translated by Hermann with “*Partem misi super te, partem non misi*” and in Hermann’s text we do not read the quotation from Q. 42:51 either, for that matter. Nonetheless, the quotations employed in the *Vulgata* are pertinent as they refer to Muḥammad as a messenger and as receiving a revelation.

As I mentioned earlier, the Qur'ān quotations may change in different manuscript witnesses. For example, in other witnesses of the *Vulgata* we also find a quotation of Q. 33:40, which includes the mention of the “seal of the prophets”. In Arberry’s translation: “Muḥammad is not the father of any one of your men, but the Messenger of God, and the Seal of the Prophets [ . . . ]”<sup>13</sup>

After having established the quotations in the *Vulgata*, 48:29–30, 53:4, 33:40, and after having seen that none of them resemble Hermann’s quotations, let us now turn to the first two questions in the manuscripts I mentioned before, the manuscript of Paris, P, and the manuscript from Jakarta, L<sub>BJ</sub>.

P reads:

“ . . . You are just, O Muḥammad. Now tell me: Are you a prophet or a messenger?” He said to him: “A prophet and a messenger and this is the word of God, the powerful and great, in the Qur’ān [and now comes the first Qur’ān quotation, *n Cecini*]: ‘Of some we have related to you and of some we have not related to you.’” [Then comes the second question and answer, *n Cecini*] He said: “You told the truth. Now tell me, did God talk to you before?” He said: “God forbid! [Quotation from Q. 42:51, *n Cecini*]: ‘It is not possible for a man, that God speaks to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil.’”<sup>14</sup>

The text from L<sub>BJ</sub> is very much the same, with some small variants that are easy to detect.<sup>15</sup> This version corresponds to Hermann’s Latin text, which we can easily

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anā khātim an-nabiyyin, a-mā qara’ta fi t-tawrāt: ‘Muḥammadun rasūlu llāhi wa-l-ladhīna ma’a-hu ashiddā’u ‘alā l-kuffāri ruḥamā’u bayna-hum tarā-hum rukka’an sujjadan yabtaghū faḍlan min Allāhi wa-riḍwānan.’” Qāla: “Šadaqta yā Muḥammad: a-mutakallam anta am mūḥā ilay-ka?” Qāla: “Yā Ibn Salām, ‘inna huwa illā waḥyun yūḥā’, yanzilu bi-hi Jibrīl al-Amīn ‘an Rabbi l-‘ālamīn.”

13 Arberry, *Koran*, 126. (Arabic: Mā kāna Muḥammadun abā aḥadin min rijāli-kum wa-lākin rasūla llāhi wa-khātima n-nabiyyīna [ . . . wa-kāna llāhu bi-kulli shay’in ‘aliman].)

14 Paris, BnF, Ar. 1974, 2r-v: Qāla: “Anṣafta, yā Muḥammad, akhbir-nī: a-nabiyy anta am rasūl?” Qāla la-hu: “Nabiyy wa-rasūl, wa-dhalika qawl Allāh ‘azza wa-jalla fi l-qur’ān: ‘Min-hum man qaṣaṣnā ‘alay-ka wa-min-hum man lam naqṣuṣ ‘alay-ka.’” Qāla: “Šadaqta, fa-akhbir-nī: hal kallama-ka llāh qablan?” Qāla: “Ma’ādha llāh: ‘Mā kāna li-basharin an yukallima-hu llāhu illā waḥyan aw min warā’i ḥijābin.’”

15 Jakarta, Museum Nasional, CDXVII, fol. 12v (the differences with P are emphasized through *of italics*): Qāla: “Anṣafta, yā Muḥammad, akhbir-nī ‘an-ka: anta nabiyy am rasūl?” *Fa-qāla an-nabiyy, šallā llāh ‘alay-hi wa-sallam*: “Anā nabiyy wa-rasūl, wa-dhalika qawlu-hu ta’ālā: ‘Min-hum man qaṣaṣnā ‘alay-ka wa-min-hum man lam naqṣuṣ ‘alay-ka.’” Qāla: “Šadaqta,

confirm from the second quotation, i.e., Q. 42:51. The other quotation, the first one, is derived from verse 78 of sura 40, which I now quote in its entirety:

We sent Messengers before you; of some [Ar. *min-hum*, which we could also translate as “a part of which”, n. Cecini] we have related to you [Ar. ‘*alay-ka*, literally “upon you”, “super te”, n. Cecini], and some we have not related to you. It was not for any Messenger to bring a sign, save by God’s leave. When God’s command comes, justly the issue shall be decided; then the vain-doers shall be lost.<sup>16</sup>

The verse is indeed about prophets and it is clear that Hermann translates precisely the underlined part, which is the part we find in the manuscripts P and L<sub>BI</sub>.

If we add to our synopsis Robert’s translation of Q. 40:78, we can clearly see once again that Hermann’s translation is independent.

Omnium prophetarum ante te missorum, quorum nullus quicquam nisi diuinum praeceptum attulit, quosdam nominauimus, quosdam autem non.<sup>17</sup>

After establishing that the two quotations are from Q. 40:78 and 42:51, respectively, we can make a few observations about the whole passage, in Latin and in Arabic.

Although it is clear that the translator has taken a few liberties, we can say that the translation is reliable. However, I would like to highlight two major differences. The first one is that the second question, “did God speak directly to you before?”, disappears in the Latin text and the Qur’an quotation becomes a second quotation to support this first question. The second difference is probably related to the first. Hermann leaves out of his translation the ways God uses to communicate with men that are listed in the quotation, i.e. through revelation or behind a veil, “*waḥyan*” and “*min warā’i ḥijābin*”. With “*per internuntium*”, he continues the translation of the verse from the point where it says “or He sends a messenger” (“*aw yursila rasūlan*”), which is missing in our manuscript witnesses but is

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*yā Muḥammad*, fa-hal kallama-ka llāh?” “*Fa-qāla*: ‘Wa-mā kāna li-basharin an yukallima-hu llāhu illā waḥyan aw min warā’i ḥijābin.’”

**16** Cfr. Arberry, *Koran*, 183 (with slight changes). Arabic: “Wa-la-qad arsalnā rusulan min qabli-ka min-hum man qaṣaṣnā ‘alay-ka wa-min-hum man lam naqṣuṣ ‘alay-ka wa-mā kāna li-rasūlin an ya’tiya bi-āyatin illā bi-idhni llāhi fa-idhā jā’a amru llāhi quḍiya bi-l-ḥaqqi wa-kasira hunāli-ka l-mubṭilūna.” (A similar formulation is found also in Q. 4:164: “wa-rusulan qad qaṣaṣnā-hum ‘alay-ka min-qablu wa-rusulan lam naqṣuṣ-hum ‘alay-ka.”) However, it is clear that our verse is 40:78, not only because of the evidence in the manuscript, but also because the latin “*partem*” can only be a translation of “*min-hum*”, which is absent in Q. 4:164).

**17** Ketton, “*Lex Saracenorum*,” 147.



indeed related and more pertinent to the first question about prophets and messengers. Thus, Hermann's familiarity with the Qur'an text is clear, as he translates *ad sensum* in the first quotation from Q. 40:78 and he translates only the parts of the verse of the second quotation that relate to the context of the question.

Now that we have seen in detail how Hermann translates, and now that I have shed light on the complex textual translation of the *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām* using the manuscripts P and L<sub>BI</sub> as emblematic witnesses of the variants of transmission, we will analyze the other Qur'an quotations that appear in the *Liber* to identify them and to either confirm or discard our observations.

The third quotation from the Qur'an is found in question nr. 11 of the Latin text:

[L11] He said: "You tell the truth. Now say: what do you have as beginning of the Alfurcan?" He answered: "This is the beginning of the book: 'In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate.'" [L12] "What then?" He said: "*Abuget* and so on." [L13] "What is *Abuget*?" He answered: "A is God, B the power of God; G, the beauty of God, D the law of God. In fact God's mercy comes before His wrath." [L14] So he [asked]: "How is that?" He answered: "Right after Adam had been created and he stood up for the first time, he sneezed and said: 'Thank God!' Having heard that, the Angels said: 'God's mercy upon you, Adam.' Upon which he [said]: 'Amen.' God said to them: 'I accept your prayer'"<sup>19</sup>

The quotation is, of course, from the *Basmala* ("*Bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīmi*") at the beginning of the Qur'an. What follows reveals again the complexity of the textual tradition, as it is absent from most manuscripts of the *Vulgata*. We find it once again in the manuscript P, which we will now quote to make a couple of observations:

He said: "You told the truth, o Muḥammad. Now tell me how is the beginning of the Qur'an and what comes after that." He said: "Its beginning is: 'In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate' and what comes next is: 'Praise to God, Lord of Creatures' [second verse of the opening sura, n. *Cecini*]<sup>20</sup> or *Abjad* [that is to say the succession of the first 4 letters of the Arabic Alphabet, *alif, bā, jīm, dāl*, which Hermann transcribed as *Abuget*, n. *Cecini*]." He said: "What is the interpretation of *Abjad*?" He said: "The *alif* is 'Allāh' [God]; the *bā* is the '*bahā*' Allāh' [magnificence of God]; the *jīm* is the '*Jalāl Allāh*' [the beauty of God]; the *dāl* is the '*Dīn*

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. Arberry, *Koran*, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 196-198: Ait: "Verum dicis. Dic ergo consequenter: Quod habes principium Alfurcan?" Respondit: "Initium libri: 'In nomine Dei misericordis et miseratoris.'" "Quid post?" Ait: "Abuget et cetera." "Quid est abuget?" Respondit: "a, Deus; b, potentia Dei; g, pulchritudo Dei; d, lex Dei. Praevenit enim Dei pietas iram." Et ille: "Id quomodo?" Respondit: "Cum enim recenter creatus Adam primum consurgeret, sternutavit dixitque: 'Deo gratias.' Quod audientes angeli dicunt: 'Pietas Dei super te, Adam.' Et ille: 'Amen.' Quibus Dominus: 'Recepi orationem vestram'."

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. Arberry, *Koran*, 29: "Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being".

*Allāh* [the religion or law of God] [. . .] [here, having arrived at the D of *Abjad*, Hermann's text stops, while the Arabic text goes on with a couple of more letters and explanations, which I will not present here. In the Arabic text then comes a new question which is incorporated by Hermann in the preceding answer, while the question in Hermann's translation is reduced to the essential (*Id quomodo?*), n. Cecini]. He said: "You tell the truth, o Muḥammad. Now tell me: how did His mercy come before His wrath? He said: "When Adam sneezed, he said: 'Praise to God!' Gabriel said: 'Your Lord has mercy upon you, Adam!' So the amicable manners from his Lord came to him first, before Adam disobeyed his Lord in the Garden."<sup>21</sup>

Concerning Hermann's translation methodology in this passage, we notice that, even if he transcribes the Arabic term *Abuget*, he does not transcribe the single Arabic words that explain the letters of the alphabet, but merely gives their translation. He cuts the text once again, but perfectly adjusts the cut to the redaction he chooses, incorporating a subsequent question in the preceding answer and adjusting the question accordingly. As far as the Qur'an translation is concerned, Robert's translation of the beginning of the Qur'an is "*Misericordi pioque Deo*".<sup>22</sup> In the other *Basmalas* as well, we usually find "*in nomine Domini pii et misericordis*",<sup>23</sup> with "*raḥmān*" translated as "*pius*" and "*raḥīm*" as "*misericsors*". Once again, this confirms Hermann's independence from Robert, with a translation, "*in nomine Dei misericordis et miseratoris*", which, incidentally, is identical to the one which Mark of Toledo uses for the *Basmala* 67 years later.<sup>24</sup> However, the substantivated translation of the root *r-ḥ-m* in "*yarḥamu*" as "*pietas*" once again shows Hermann's knowledge of Robert's translation patterns.

The next couple of quotations in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet* are from a section which, once again, is outside the *Vulgata* tradition, for example in the manuscript P. In this section Muḥammad is asked to explain the meaning of the numbers from one to 100 [L18].<sup>25</sup>

21 Paris, BnF, Ar. 1974, 4r-v: Qāla: "Ṣadaqta, yā Muḥammad, fa-akhbir-nī fi ayyin shay'in mubtadi' u l-Qur'an wa-ākhiru-hu?" Qāla: "Mubtadi' u-hu: 'Bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīmi' wa-ākhiru-hu: 'Al-ḥamdu li-llāhi rabbi l-'ālamīna' aw: 'Abjad'." Qāla: "Mā tafsir Abjad?" Qāla: "Al-alif 'Allāh', wa-l-bā' 'bahā' Allāh', wa-l-jīm 'jalāl Allāh', wa-l-dāl 'dīn Allāh' [. . .]." Qāla: "Ṣadaqta, yā Muḥammad, fa-akhbir-nī: kayfa sabaqat raḥmatu-hu ghaḍaba-hu?" Qāla: "Lammā 'aṭasa Ādam, qāla: 'Al-ḥamdu li-llāhi!' Qāla Jibrīl: 'Yarḥamu-ka rabbuka, yā Ādam!' Fa-sabaqat la-hu l-ḥusnā min rabbi-hi min qabli an ya'ṣiya Ādam rabba-hu fi-l-janna."

22 Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 8 [emended].

23 E.g. Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 8.

24 See Nàdia Petrus Pons, *Alchoranus latinus, quem transtulit Marcus canonicus toletanus: Estudio y edición crítica* (Madrid: CSIC, 2016); Cecini, *Alcoranus latinus*.

25 Cecini, *Masā'il*, 200: "Nunc itaque, si placet, per ordinem exponas: Quid est unum, deinde quae duo, quae tria, quae quattuor, quinque, sex, septem, octo, novem, decem et ita per ordinem, usque ad centum."

When the list arrives at number seven, Muḥammad says: “Seven are the heavens. In fact it says in the Qur'an: ‘And he ordered the seven heavens’”.<sup>26</sup>

If we look at the text contained in the manuscript P, we find at this point a quotation from Q. 78:12: “And We have built above you seven strong ones.”<sup>27</sup> We know that this verse is indeed talking about the seven heavens, however the word “heaven” (ar. “*samā*”) does not appear explicitly in it, as it does in Hermann's translation, nor is there any reference to “putting them in order”, as we have in the Latin with the verb “*ordinavit*”. Fortunately, in a manuscript of the *Vulgata*, in which, as we have said, this numerological part does not appear, there is a sort of appendix containing the numerological interpretation. It is MS Gotha A 1831. Regarding the number seven, we read: “And as far as the seven is concerned it is the seven heavens, ordered in levels one above the other.”<sup>28</sup> Here we have indeed the explicit mention of the heavens and of the concept of ordering them. By looking in the Qur'an for the word “*ṭibāqan*” we find two verses, very similar to each other, 67:3 and 71:15: “Who created seven heavens one upon another”,<sup>29</sup> and: “Have you not seen how God created seven heavens one upon another.”<sup>30</sup> It is very likely that Hermann translated one of these verses, probably the first one, 67:3. Once again, we can see how, in the Arabic text of the *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*, the Qur'an quotations may vary; nonetheless, each quotation we find responds appropriately to the question asked. As usual, Robert of Ketton's translation differs from Hermann's translation in both verses: “*septem coelos disposuit*”<sup>31</sup> (Q. 67:3); “*et coelos ordine septeno distinxit*”<sup>32</sup> (Q. 71:15).

In the same list we find quotation number five, this time in reference to number 15:

The fifteenth, because the Qur'an came down all at once from the highest heaven to the lowest; then it has fallen little by little up to the fifteenth day of Ramadan. In fact it says so in the Qur'an: “The month of Ramadan, in which the Qur'an came down.”<sup>33</sup>

26 Cecini, *Masā'il*, 200: “Septem sunt caeli. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: ‘ordinavitque septem caelos.’”

27 Paris, BnF, Ar. 1974, fol. 7r: “Wa-ammā al-sab'a fa-qawlu-hu ta'āla: ‘wa-banaynā fawqa-kum sab'an shidādan.’” (Translation of the quotation according to Arberry, *Koran*, 320).

28 Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, A 1831, fol. 10v: “wa-ammā l-sab'a fa-l-sab'u samāwāt ṭibāqan.”

29 Arberry, *Koran*, 290 (Arabic: Al-ladhī khalāqa sab'a samāwātin ṭibāqan.)

30 Cfr. Arberry, *Koran*, 303 (Arberry has “regarded” instead of “seen”; Arabic: A-lam taraw kayfa khalāqa llāh sab'a samāwātin ṭibāqan.)

31 Ketton, “Lex Saracenorum,” 174.

32 Ketton, “Lex Saracenorum,” 177.

33 Cecini, *Masā'il*, 202: “Quindecim, quoniam Alchoran continuo quidem descendit a summo caelo usque ad infimum; inde paulatim lapsus est usque ad quintum decimum diem Ramadan. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: “Mensis Ramadan, in quo descendit Alchoran.””

For the identification of this verse, we have to go back to manuscript P, as another explanation may be found in the appendix of the Gotha manuscript: “As the fifteen is concerned, it is the night in the middle of the month of Ša‘bān.”<sup>34</sup>

In the manuscript P we do indeed find:

As far as the fifteen is concerned, all the books were sent down from the Throne to the fourth Heaven after day fifteen of [the month] Ramadan had passed, and this is the word of [God] the Most-High: “The month of Ramadan, wherein the Qu‘ran was sent down to be a guidance to the people, and as clear signs of the Guidance and the Salvation.”<sup>35</sup>

The quotation is from Q. 2:185, which, once again, is not quoted entirely, but only a section<sup>36</sup> and which differs significantly from Robert of Ketton’s translation.<sup>37</sup>

We will examine quotation number six in a separate section, as it forms, together with the other four, a separate group. This is because it was not translated, but only transliterated and left in Arabic. For now, it should suffice to say that it refers to the heavenly board on which everything that happens in the world is written and to the pen that writes on it. Quotation number seven is also related to this board. In fact ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām asks Muḥammad [L26]: “How many

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**34** Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, A 1831, fol. 11r: “Wa-ammā al-khāmis ‘ashara fa-hiya laylat anniṣ min shahr ash-Sha‘bān.” Sha‘bān is the eighth month of the Islamic calendar and the month before the month of Ramadan. To understand the importance of this month and especially of the night of Mid-Sha‘bān, see the article *Sha‘bān* by Arent J. Wensinck in *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, ed. Clifford E. Bosworth et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), IX, 154, especially when he says: “In *ḥadīth* it is said that in this night God descends to the lowest heaven”. This shift in the name of the month is also a witness that the text of the *Masā’il ‘Abdallāh ibn Salām* may have changed depending on local traditions.

**35** Paris, BnF, Ar. 1974, fol. 7v-8r: “Wa-ammā l-khamsat ‘ashara fa-l-kutub kullu-hā unzilāt min al-‘arsh ilā s-samā’ al-rābi’ fi-khamsat ‘ashara yawman khalat min ramadān wa-dhālika qawlu-hu ta’ālā: shahru ramadāna l-ladhī unzila fi-hi l-Qur’anu hudan li-n-nāsi wa-bayyinātin min al-hudā.” (The translation of the quotation is from Arberry, *Koran*, 52: I have adjusted the orthography of Arberry’s word “Koran”).

**36** This is the complete verse: “Shahru ramadāna l-ladhī unzila fi-hi l-Qur’anu hudan li-n-nāsi wa-bayyinātin min al-hudā wa-l-furqāni fa-man shahida min-kumu sh-shahra fa-l-yaṣum-hu wa-man kāna mariḍan aw ‘alā safarin fa’iddatun min ayyāmin ukhara yuridu llāhu bi-kumu l-yusra wa-lā yuridu bi-kumu l-‘usra wa-li-tukmilū l-‘iddata wa-li-tukabbirū llāha ‘alā mā hadā-kum wa-la’alla-kum tashkurūna” (Arberry, *Koran*, 52: the month of Ramadan, wherein the Qu‘ran was sent down to be a guidance to the people, and as clear signs of the Guidance and the Salvation. So let those of you, who are present at the month, fast it; and if any of you be sick, or if he be on a journey, then a number of other days; God desires ease for you, and desires not hardship for you; and that you fulfil the number, and magnify God that He has guided you, and haply you will be thankful.)

**37** Ketton, “Lex Saracenorum,” 15: “uidelicet mense Romodam, in quo liber hic legifer, boni malique discretius, coelitus est datus.”

times does God look at the board during the day and the night?" The prophet answers: "One hundred and sixty [times] and with each single glance he elevates whom He will and lowers whom He will." This is followed by the Qur'an quotation: "So in fact it says in the Qur'an: 'Each day God in His will.'" <sup>38</sup> Thanks to the reference to "each day", we can trace back the quotation to Q. 55:29: "Whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth implore Him; every day He is upon some labor." <sup>39</sup> Once again, only part of the verse is quoted (*kulla yawmin huwa fī sha'nin*) as the key phrase which connects the quotation with the answer is "every day" (*cotidie* / *kulla yawmin*). <sup>40</sup> One understands it better by looking at the Arabic *Vulgata* in which we find 360 times, instead of 160 times, corresponding roughly to each day of the year. <sup>41</sup> This time, even if the question about how many times God looks at His creation is present in the *Vulgata* (Question 75 of the critical edition: "*Kam li-llāh min naẓra fī khalqī-hi kullī yawm wa-layla?*"), I could not find the supporting Qur'an quotation in the Arabic text. Neither could I find it in the *Vulgata*, nor in the other manuscripts I examined, including P and L<sub>BI</sub>.

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<sup>38</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 210: Ait: "Quotiens ergo respicit Deus eam tabulam per diem et noctem?" Respondit: "Centum sexaginta singulisque respectibus erigit quem vult et deponit quem vult. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Cotidie Deus in voluntate sua.'"

<sup>39</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 252 (Arabic: "Yas'alu-hu man fī s-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi kulla yawmin huwa fī sha'nin.") We may question whether Hermann translated *sha'nin* with *voluntas* (will) because he interpreted the word as coming from the root *sh-y-*, meaning "to want" (cfr. the expression "*In shā' Allāh*": "If God wills"), but, naturally, this is simply speculation.

<sup>40</sup> This key-word is missing from Robert's translation, once again ruling it out as Hermann's source: "Uniuersis creaturis coelorum et terrae noua contingunt" (Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 165.)

<sup>41</sup> [A75]: "How many are God's looks to his creation every day and every night?" He said: "360 looks. In every look he lets live and die, he executes and decides, he elevates and lowers, he makes happy and sad, subdues and vanquishes, makes rich and poor". (Cecini, *Masā'il*, 46-48: "Kam li-llāh min naẓra fī khalqī-hi kullī yawm wa-layla?" Qāla: Thalathami'a wa-sittūna naẓra fī kullī naẓra yuḥī wa-yumitu wa-yamḍi wa-yaqḍi wa-yarfa'u wa-yaḍa'u wa-yus'idu wa-yushqi wa-yudhillu wa-yaqharu wa-yughni wa-yufqiru.") It is true that there are significant differences between the Arabic and the Latin text, not only the absence of the Qur'an quotation, but also the object of God's look (in the Arabic text "creation" and in the Latin "the board"). Nonetheless it is likely that the source text of the Latin translation is related to this passage because of the similarities between the two and the position within the text, right after the description of the board and the pen (Question 74 of the Arabic Version and 24 of the Latin). It is also true that the 360 of the Arabic and the 160 of the Latin refer to the number of looks given *each day*, and not the total looks in one year (which would be one per day). Nonetheless, I believe that the "*cotidie*" of the quotation must relate to the number given in the answer, otherwise the quotation would be appropriate no matter what number is given in the answer, because the concept of each day is already in the question. This is why I believe that, even in the Latin, the correct answer should be 360 and the 160 in the Latin text is the result of a textual corruption, maybe in Hermann's *vorlage*.

Quotation number ten is found in the answer to the question (L37) about the sun and moon and why they are not equally bright:

He said: “What is with them, that they are not equally bright?” He answered: “God created them possessing the same power and the same brightness. Thus, the situation was that the alternation of day and night was not recognizable, [and it was so] until Gabriel flew by and while he was moving in the way required by flying it happened by chance that his wing touched the moon, and since then the moon was dimmed. So in fact it says in the Qur’an: ‘I put day and night under the control of lamps and I put out the nightly one and I brightened the daily one.’”<sup>42</sup>

Once again, we find the question and answer in the *Vulgata* without the Qur’an quotation [A108]:

He said: “You tell the truth, o Muḥammad. What is with the sun and the moon that they are not equal in brightness and light?” He said: “Because God, the Most High, extinguished the sign of the night and made the sign of the day recognizable: This was a blessing and a favor of God, otherwise the night would not be distinguished from the day.”<sup>43</sup>

We find the quotation, however, in manuscript L<sub>BI</sub>, together with the story of Gabriel, even if the correspondence is not perfect:

He said: “You tell the truth, o Muḥammad. Now tell me: what is with the sun and the moon that they are not equal in brightness and light?” He said: “O Ibn Salām, when [God] created the two of them they were both obedient and they did not disobey [does this mean that they were practically the same?, *n. Cecini*]. To be more precise, God, the Most High, ordered Gabriel +to hurry straight away upon them+,<sup>44</sup> because if the moon were to possess the same rank as the sun and Gabriel did not obliterate it, one would not recognize the night from the day and there would be no fasting – how would one fast? – and there would be no years – how would they exist? –, and this is the Word of the Most High: “We have appointed the night and the day as two signs; then We have blotted out the sign of the night, and made the sign of the day to see, and that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number of the years, and the reckoning; and everything We have distinguished very distinctly.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 214–216: Ait: “Quid ergo habent, quod non aequaliter lucent?” Respondit: “Aequali quidem virtute et splendore creavit eos Deus. Evenit igitur, ut incerta esset diei noctisque vicissitudo, quousque Gabriel praetervolans motu volitandi forte ut fit ala sua lunam tetigit, et exinde luna obscurata est. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: ‘Praeposui diei et nocti luminaria et extinxi nocturnum et illuminavi diurnum.’”

<sup>43</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 58–60: Qāla: “Ṣadaqta, ya Muḥammad, fa-mā bālu sh-shams wa-l-qamar lā yastawiyān fī ḡ-ḡaw' wa-n-nūr?” Qāla: “Li-anna llāh ta'ālā maḥā āyat al-layli wa-ja'ala āyat an-nahāri mubaṣṣara ni'ma min Allāh wa-faḍlan wa-lawlā dhālika la-mā 'urifa l-laylu min an-nahār.”

<sup>44</sup> Reading of the manuscript and translation of the text between crosses is unsure.

<sup>45</sup> Jakarta, Museum Nasional, CDXVII, fol. 13r: Qāla: “Ṣadaqta, ya Muḥammad, fa-akhbir-ni mā bālu sh-shams wa-l-qamar lā yastawiyān fī ḡ-ḡaw' wa-n-nūr?” Fa-qāla: “Ya Ibn Salām lammā

In this occurrence, too, we can appreciate the independence of Hermann's translation from Robert's:

prius a nobis duobus luminibus clarissimis, altero noctis, altero diei constitutis : illi noctis deinceps tenebrositatem, illique diei splendorem adiunximus, singula manifeste discernentes, ut homo cum sciat annorum caeterorumque temporum computum, tum sibi uictum commodumque perquirat.<sup>46</sup>

Immediately after this passage, we find the next quotation in a question about the origin of the name "night" (Ar. "*layl*") (L38):

He said: "Thus, why is the night called 'night'?" He answered: "Because the night is the veil of the male and of the female. So in fact it says in the Qur'an: 'I appointed the night as a garment and the day as a [time for] living.'"<sup>47</sup>

This time, we find the answer for the identification of the quotation in the *Vulgata*, even if quotation is hidden rather than explicit [A109]:

You tell the truth, O Muḥammad. Now let me know about the night: why was it called night?" He said: "Because it is men's attainment in relation to women, God made them an opportunity for company, tranquility and a garment".<sup>48</sup>

The key-word here is "garment" ("*libās*", "*vestimentum*") which we find, together with the verb "*ja'ala*" ("to make, to put") and the reference to the night (*layl*), in Q. 25: 47<sup>49</sup> and Q. 78:10–11.<sup>50</sup> In the latter, we also find the exact expression that

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khalāqa-humā aṭā'ā wa-lam ya'ṣiyā wa-dhālīka anna Allāh ta'ālā amara Jibrīla 'alay-hi s-salām an '+ajūla-hum bi-khuṭūṭ (?) + fa-law anna al-qamar yanzila 'alā manzila ash-shams wa-lam yamḥu-hā lam yu'rafu l-layl min an-nahār wa-lā aṣ-ṣiyām kayfa yaṣūm wa-lā as-sinīn kayfa takūna wa-dhālīka qawlu-hu ta'ālā: 'wa-ja'al-nā l-layla wa-n-nahāra āyatayni fa-maḥawna āyata l-layli wa-ja'al-nā āyata n-nahāri mubṣīratan li-tabtaghū faḍlan min rabbi-kum wa-li-ta'lamū 'adada s-sinīna wa-l-ḥisāba wa-kulla shay'in faṣṣalnā-hu tafṣīlan. Quotation translation from Arberry, *Koran*, 303.

<sup>46</sup> Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 91.

<sup>47</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 216: Ait: "Cur ergo nox dicta nox?" Respondit: "Quia nox velamen maris et feminae. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Posui noctem vestimentum et diem victum.'"

<sup>48</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 60: Qāla: "Ṣadaqta, ya Muḥammad, fa-akhbir-ni 'an al-layli. Li-mā summiya laylan?" Qāla: "Li-anna-hu manāl ar-rijāl min an-nisā' ja'ala-hu Allāh alfatan wa-saknan wa-libāsan."

<sup>49</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 60: "It is He who appointed the night for you to be a garment and sleep for a rest, and day He appointed for a rising". Arabic: Wa-huwa l-ladhī ja'ala la-kumu l-layla libāsan wa-n-nawma subātan wa-ja'ala n-nahāra nushūran.

<sup>50</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 320: "and We appointed night for a garment, / and We appointed day for a livelihood.". Arabic: "Wa-ja'al-nā l-layla libāsan / Wa-ja'al-nā n-nahāra ma'āshan."

Hermann uses about the day: “and We appointed day for a livelihood.” Hermann’s word “*victum*”, connected to the verb “*vivo*” (“to live”), certainly translates the word “*ma‘āshan*” (“livelihood”). This, in fact, is connected to the verb “*‘āsha*” (also, “to live”), which helps us decide for the verses of sura 78. We can thus appreciate Hermann’s effort to stay close to the original and, once again, identify the difference between him and Robert.<sup>51</sup>

The following quotation is found in the next question (L39), again about the stars:

[L39] He said: “This, too, is according to the truth. In the following, please, explain: How many ranks of stars are there?” He answered: “Three. The first [is the rank] of [the stars] hanging on chains from the throne of God, whose brightness reaches the seventh throne; The second [is the rank] of stars that adorn the sky and, when the devils prepare themselves to enter and attack the celestial councils, go against them and put them to flight. So in fact it says in the Qur’an: “And we adorned the sky with them and we threw them against the devils.” The third [rank] concerns the signs and the stars.”<sup>52</sup>

We find this question and answer in the *Vulgata* (A111), but in most of the manuscripts the quotation is omitted. However, it is present in the manuscript L<sub>BI</sub>:

And [a second] group is hanging in the sky of the world, shining like lamps on its inhabitants and throwing sparks at the devils when they eavesdrop, and this is the Word of the Most High: “And We adorned the sky of the world with lamps, and made them things to stone devils.”<sup>53</sup>

This permits us to identify the quotation as Q. 67:5.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Ketton, “Lex Saracenorum,” 181: “uestraeque quieti somnoque noctem, lucro motuique diem disponens.”

<sup>52</sup> Cecini, *Masā’il*, 216: Ait: “Et hoc quoque prout veritas habet. Consequenter itaque, si placet, edissere: Quot sunt ordines stellarum?” Respondit: “Tres. Primus dependentium per catenas a solio Dei lucentium usque ad septimum thronum; secundus stellarum, quae et caelum ornant et, quando diaboli ad insidiandum caelestibus consiliis subintrare parant, occurrentes fugant. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: ‘Et caelum cum eis ornavimus et diabolis eas obiecimus.’ Tertius est in respectu signorum et stellarum.”

<sup>53</sup> Jakarta, Museum Nasional, CDXVII, fol. 14v: Wa-juz’ mu‘allaq fī samā’ ad-dunyā ka-amthāl al-qanādīl tuḏī’u ‘alā sukkāni-hā wa-tarmī ash-shayāṭīna bi-sharārīn min-hā ‘inda stirāqi-him al-sam’a wa-dhālīka qawlu-hu ta’ālā: “Wa-la-qad zayyannā s-samā’a d-dunyā bi-maṣābiha wa-ja’alnā-hā rujūman li-sh-shayāṭīni”.

<sup>54</sup> The quotation is not of the entire verse, which continues “and We have prepared for them the chastisement of the Blaze.” (Arberry, *Koran*, 290; Arabic: “wa-a’tad-nā la-hum ‘adhāba s-sa’iri.”) Robert (Ketton, “Lex Saracenorum,” 174): “Ipse coelum sideris ornauit lucernis, quae diabolos expellant, illis timorem iniiciendo.”



The 13th quotation responds to the questions about the abode of the dead infants of unbelievers, who cannot be blamed for having such fathers, and who lacked the time to choose the right path for their lives (L89):

He said: "And what will He do with the children of the unbelievers?" He answered: "On the judgment day the children of the unbelievers will come before the presence of God and He will tell them: 'Who is your Lord?' They will say: 'You, Lord, who created us.' 'Therefore, whom did you serve? Whom did you worship?' 'Our Lord, we could neither make use of the faculty of hearing or speaking nor follow your messenger.' He will say to them: 'Therefore, will you do as I command you?' They will say: 'Worthy Lord of ours, whatever you would command is good.' Then, He will command to one of the rivers of Hell to flow out and He will say to them: 'Jump into this stream!' Those, who obey, will come out uninjured and go over to Paradise, those who refuse, will go into Hell with their fathers. In fact so it says in the Qur'an: 'Those who obey, will be in Paradise, those who refuse, [will be] in Hell.'<sup>55</sup>

Even if the question is present in the *Vulgata* (A134), we did not find in any manuscript we examined – whether pertaining or not to the *Vulgata* – an explicit Qur'an quotation. There is a trace in a *Vulgata* manuscript from Bursa (13th c. / 6th c. H.), which toward the end of the passage contains the following sentence: "Those who refuse to throw themselves: you [sic] will be following their fathers in Hell; as for those who [will be] the happy ones, they will be in Paradise, where they will dwell forever."<sup>56</sup> The last part of this sentence, concerning the "happy ones", reproduces word for word a part of Q. 11:108,<sup>57</sup> which has its counterpart, about "the wretched ones", in Q. 11:106.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, given the presence of the verbs

55 Cecini, *Masā'il*, 236: Ait: "Et de filiis infidelium quid faciet?" Respondit: "Venient in die iudicii filii infidelium ante faciem Dei et dicet eis: 'Quis est Dominus vester?' Dicent: 'Tu Domine, qui creasti nos.' 'Cui ergo servistis? Quem adorastis?' 'Domine noster, neque aurium neque linguae officio uti neque nuntium tuum sequi potuimus.' Dicet eis: 'Faceretis ergo aliquid, si praeciperem vobis?' Dicent: 'Digne Domine noster et iuste, quicquid praecipere placet.' Tunc effluere praecipiet unum de fluviis inferni et dicet eis: 'Prosilite in gurgitem istum.' Hii ergo, qui oboedierint, illaesi exibunt et in paradisum transibunt, qui vero renuerint, ibunt cum patribus suis in infernum. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Qui obedierint, erunt in paradiso, qui renuerint, in inferno.'"

56 Bursa, *Ūlū cāmi*, 2462, Bl. 82r.: "Al-ladhīna mtana'ū an yulqū anfusa-hum fa-takūnū [sic] taba'an li-ābā'i-him fi jahannam wa-ammā l-ladhīna su'idū fa-fi l-jannati khālidīna fi-hā."

57 Arberry, *Koran*, 252: "And as for the happy, they shall be in Paradise, therein dwelling forever, so long as the heavens and earth abide, save as thy Lord will -- for a gift unbroken." (Arabic: "Wa-ammā l-ladhīna su'idū fa-fi l-jannati khālidīna fi-hā mā dāmāti s-samāwātu wa-l-arḍu illā mā shā'a rabbu-ka 'aṭā'an ghayra majdhūdhin")

58 Arberry, *Koran*, 252: "As for the wretched, they shall be in the Fire, wherein there shall be for them moaning and sighing " (Arabic: Fa-ammā l-ladhīna shaqū fa-fi n-nāri la-hum fi-hā zafirun wa-shahiqun). Note that in the Bursa manuscript, immediately before the text we quoted we find also the root *s-q-y* ("being unhappy", which we find in Q. 11:106 in the verb "*shaqū*"), fol. 81v-82r:

“obey” and “refuse” in Hermann’s quotation – and we have seen that Hermann is usually literal in his translations – we suppose that he may have found in his *vorlage* an abridged quotation from Q. 4:13–14: “Those are God’s bounds. Whoso obeys God and His Messenger, He will admit him to gardens underneath which rivers flow, therein dwelling forever; that is the mighty triumph. / But whoso disobeys God, and His Messenger, and transgresses His bounds, him He will admit to a Fire, therein dwelling forever, and for him there awaits a humbling chastisement.”<sup>59</sup>

The next quotation (14) occurs in a question about the origin of the mountains. These originate from the mount Qāf, which surrounds the Earth, and are the pillars of the sky, as the Qur’an explains:

[L92] He said [responding to the previous answer, *n. Cecini*]: “So it is. But the mountains, where did they come out from?” He answered: “From the mount Qāf. God planted them as poles in the ground. So in fact it says in the Qur’an: ‘I placed the ground as a plain and put the mountains as poles of the Earth.’”<sup>60</sup>

We find both question and answer in the *Vulgata* [A140], even if they are slightly different. In the preceding question [A139], Muḥammad explained how Earth was created from the hardened foam (Ar. “*zabad*”) of the sea and made flat by God<sup>61</sup> (cfr. the Latin “*posui terram planam*”). Then ‘Abdallāh asks: “. . . What did He hold it with?” He said: “With mount Qāf, which surrounds the world. And this gives origin to the poles of the Earth on which we are.”<sup>62</sup> There is no Qur’an quotation in the Arabic text, although we can extrapolate from both texts the key-words: Earth (Ar. “*arḍ*”), mountains (Ar. “*jibāl*”) and poles (Ar. “*awtād*”). The result of our search, using such key-words, is Q. 78:6–7: “*A-lam naj‘ali al-arḍa mihādān /*

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wa-man sabaqa la-hu fi ‘ilmi llāhi ta’ālā an yakūna shaqiyyan amtana’a an yulqī nafsa-hu fi tilka an-nār (and for whom it was anticipated in God’s knowledge that they would be unhappy [*shaqiyyan*], they refuse to throw themselves into that fire. . .)

59 Arberry, *Koran*, 102. (Arabic: “Tilka ḥudūdu llāhi wa-man yuṭī’i llāha wa-rasūla-hu yudkhil-hu jannātin tajrī min taḥti-hā l-anhāru khālīdīna fī-hā wa-dhālika l-fawzu l-‘aẓīmu / wa-man ya’ṣi llāha wa-rasūla-hu wa-yata’adda ḥudūda-hu yudkhil-hu nāran khālīdan fī-hā wa-la-hu ‘adhābun muhinun”). Robert (Ketton, “Lex Saracenorum,” 30): “Omnis horum praeceptorum obseruator, paradisum, quod est maximum : inobediens omnis et praeuaricator ignem atque gehennam, mala contemptumque passurus, possidebit.”

60 Cecini, *Masā’il*, 238: Ait: “Ita est. Sed montes unde exierunt?” Respondit: “De monte Kaf. Fixitque eos Deus palos in terra. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: ‘Posui terram planam et montes palos terrae.’”

61 Cecini, *Masā’il*, 92: Answer to [A139]: “. . . *fa-saṭaḥa-hā arḍan wa-mahhada-hā*” (then He unfolded it as earth and flattened it).

62 Cecini, *Masā’il*, 92-94: [A140] “. . . Bi-mā amsaka-hā?” Qāla: “Bi-jabal Qāf al-muḥiṭ bi-l-‘ālam wa-huwa aṣṣala awtād al-arḍi l-latī naḥnu ‘alay-hā.”

*Wa-l-jibāla awtādan?*”<sup>63</sup> Hermann’s translation is almost word for word: *naj’ali* – we placed – *posui*<sup>64</sup>; *al-arḍa* – the Earth – *terram*; *mihādān* / cradle – *planam*;<sup>65</sup> *Wa-l-jibāla* – and the mountains – *et montes*; *awtādan* – poles / pegs – *palos*. Robert’s translation shows again its independence, but with a similar element in the “etymological” translation of *mihād* as “*plana*”: “*qui terram planam montibus quasi cardinibus firmaui*”<sup>66</sup>

Quotation number sixteen is located in the description of the different layers found below a certain mountain of Hell from the Judgment Day (see below, quotation 15). Below it are different layers of earth and sea, each with its own name. One is called “*Agiba*, white as milk, fragrant as musk, tender as saffron, bright as the moon.” The text continues: “On it God will gather all the good-ones. So, in fact, it says in the Qur’an: ‘On that day He will change the Earth for another Earth.’”<sup>67</sup> This time the Arabic text does not help much: the passage containing the description of the different layers is present (A145–155), but the corresponding earth “white as the sun, with fragrance of musk, with the brightness of the moon and plants like saffron”,<sup>68</sup> on which “the God-fearing will be gathered on the Day of Resurrection”,<sup>69</sup> has another name, “*Fasiḥa*” (“ample / spacious”).<sup>70</sup> By searching the keywords “day” (Ar. “*yawm*”), “exchange” (Ar. root *b-d-l*) and “earth” (Ar. “*arḍ*”), one finds Q. 14:48, which is certainly the verse Hermann translates here: “Upon the day the earth shall be changed to other than the earth, and the heavens and they sally forth unto God, the One, the Omnipotent.”<sup>71</sup> This time we do not find in the

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**63** In Arberry’s translation (Arberry, *Koran*, 320): “Have We not made the earth as a cradle and the mountains as pegs?”

**64** As it may have been noticed by the reader, often we find the singular for the plural in Hermann’s translation when the subject is God.

**65** A *mihād* is actually “a resting-place, a place for lying down” (cfr. Arne A. Ambros, *A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic* [Wiesbaden: Reicher, 2004], 260), but we should not forget that it is connected to the root *m-h-d*, meaning, among others, “to flatten, to make even or level” (cfr. the preceding “*hammada*”, “he flattened”, see n. 61), so probably a sort of bed which is unfolded and laid on the ground. This would explain Hermann’s translation as “*planam*”.

**66** Ketton, “*Lex Saracenorum*,” 181.

**67** Answer to L103, Cecini, *Masā’il*, 240: “. . . alia terra nomine Agiba alba ut lac, redolens ut muscus, mollis ut crocus, lucida ut luna. Super hanc congregabit Deus omnes iustos. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: ‘In die illo mutabit terram pro alia terra.’”

**68** Answer to A155 (“Describe to me, o Muḥammad, this earth”; “*fa-ṣif li yā Muḥammad tilka l-arḍ*”), Cecini, *Masā’il*, 98: “*Hiya arḍ bayḍā’ ka-sh-shams wa-rīḥu-hā ka-l-misk wa-ḍaw’u-ā ka-l-qamar wa nabātu-hā ka-z-za’farān. . .*”

**69** Cecini, *Masā’il*, 98: “. . . yuḥsharu ‘alay-hā al-muttaqūna yawma l-qiyāma.”

**70** Answer to A154 (“And what is its name?”; “*Wa-mā smu-hā?*”), Cecini, *Masā’il*, 98: “*Fasiḥa*.”

**71** Arberry, *Koran*, 279. Arabic: “*Yawma tubaddalu al-arḍu ghayra l-arḍi wa-s-samāwātu wa-barazū li-llāhi l-wāḥidi l-qahhār*.” One has to say that this verse is hinted at in a further passage

quotation words corresponding to the answer, and the quotation seems linked to it only by its context. As far as Robert's translation is concerned, while it is certainly different, there is some correspondence again in the translation of single words, such as the root *b-d-l* with "*mutare*": "*Quoniam terra mutabitur in aliam, et coelum similiter, fietque coram Deo solo cunctipotente conuentus omnium.*"<sup>72</sup>

Apart from the separate group of transliterated quotations we address below, the last quotation (17) is found within the description of the Last Judgment, when everybody will be killed by the Angel of Death, before being resurrected:

[L123] He [ʿAbdallāh said:] "Now, then, by your God, I beseech you [. . .] to describe to me clearly the Day of Judgment." He answered: "I agree, as long as you pay attention. On that day God will order to the Angel of Death to kill every creature having a soul [. . .]. So in fact it says in the Qur'an: 'Everything [will be] dead but God.'"<sup>73</sup>

We can identify the quotation in the corresponding passage in the *Vulgata* of the Arabic Version [A208], even if in this version, it is not employed as a direct quotation but is pronounced, slightly changed, directly by God. After the Angel of Death has executed God's order, God asks the Angel who has remained alive, to which the Angel answers no-one but himself. God says then that He already knew that, and continues: "Indeed, all things perish, except My Face".<sup>74</sup> This corresponds to Q. 28:88 : "All things perish, except His Face".<sup>75</sup> The quotation fits well with Hermann's translation, who only takes the liberty to replace the translation of "*waḡha-hu*" (His Face) with the One it refers to, i.e. God. We can, however, observe that Hermann accurately keeps an adjectival-participial form when translating the present participle "*hālikun*" (literally "being destroyed"), which distances him from Robert, who translates it with a verb: "Except whom only [i.e. God] everything dies."<sup>76</sup>

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of the Arabic *Vulgata*, in the answer to A205: "Tell me about the Day of Resurrection and how the creatures will resurrect" He said: "O Ibn Salām, when the resurrection comes [. . .] another earth will have substituted Earth" (Arabic, Cecini, *Masā'il*, 132-134: "Fa-akhbir-nī 'an yawm al-qiyāma wa-kayfa taqūmu l-khalā'iq." Qāla: "Yā Ibn Salām, idhā kāna yawm al-qiyāma [. . .] baddalat al-arḍ ghayr al-arḍ")

72 Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 85.

73 Cecini, *Masā'il*, 258: "Nunc itaque per Deum tuum obsecro, ut [. . .], diem iudicii plane mihi describas." Respondit: "Placet, dum attentus adsis. In die illo mandabit Deus angelo mortis, ut omnem creaturam spiritum habentem interimat [. . .]. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Omnia mortua praeter Deum.'"

74 Cecini, *Masā'il*, 140, [A208]: "Inna kulla šay'in hālikun illā waḡhī."

75 Arberry, *Koran*, 96 "kullu šay'in hālikun illā waḡha-hu."

76 Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 125: "Praeter quem solum omnia pereunt."

## 2.1 Transcribed Quotations (6; 8–9; 15)

As we mentioned before, some quotations are merely transcribed and not translated. I was able to identify them by comparing them with the Arabic manuscripts, or by comparing their resemblance to known Qur'an verses. They are the following: (Nr. 6): "*Nun wacalam wa me asturum*",<sup>77</sup> corresponding to Q. 68:1: "*Nun. By the Pen, and what they inscribe*"<sup>78</sup>; Nr. 8: "*Walme amwegehu*", which does not correspond to any Qur'an verse but is linked to Q. 44:10: "*So be on the watch for a day when heaven shall bring a manifest smoke*",<sup>79</sup> as I will show; Nr. 9: "*Kaf walcoram elmegid*" corresponding to Q. 50:1: "*Qaf. By the glorious Qur'an.*"<sup>80</sup>; Nr. 15: "*Sourhichu azohot*" which will turn out to be a quotation from Q. 74:17: "*and I shall constrain him to a hard ascent.*"<sup>81</sup>

The first occurrence (6) appears in a passage which deals with the already mentioned board, on which "is written what in heaven and on the earth was, is and will be",<sup>82</sup> and the pen, made of "brightest light"<sup>78</sup>, that writes on the board. During the description of the pen, after saying that it has 80 tips that write relentlessly all that happens in the world until the Day of the Judgment, the quotation is added to support the idea of the writing pen, conveyed by the verb "*asturum/yasturūna*" (= "they write").<sup>83</sup>

Quotation number 9 is very similar to this one. It appears within a series of questions concerning the sky, and precisely in the one which asks from where the sky gets its green color:

He said: "How is it, that it [i.e. the sky] is green?" He answered: "From mount Kaf. In fact mount Kaf [is made] of the emeralds of paradise. Such mountain surrounds the globe of the Earth and supports the sky. In fact so it says in the Qur'an: '*Kaf walcoram elmegid.*'"<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 208: "Sic enim ait in Alchoran: "Nun wacalam wa me asturum"."

<sup>78</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 293. Arabic: *N.* [i.e. the Arabic letter nūn] "wa-l-qalam wa-mā yasturūna."

<sup>79</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 207; Arabic: Fa-rtaqib yawma ta'ti s-samā'u bi-dukhānin mubīnin.

<sup>80</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 233 (adjusted orthography); Arabic: *Q.* [i.e. the Arabic letter qāf] "wa-l-Qur'ani al-majidi."

<sup>81</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, p. 310; Arabic: "Sa-urhiqu-hu ṣa'ūdan."

<sup>82</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 208: [L23] Ait: "Quam tabulam et quem calamum?" Respondit: "Tabulam quidem, in qua scriptum est, quicquid fuit est et erit in caelo et in terra; calamum vero de luce clarissima."

<sup>83</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 208: [Answer to L24]: "Qui octoginta dentes habet, qui non cessabunt scribere, quicquid fit in mundo usque in diem iudicii. Sicenim ait in Alchoran: "Nun wacalam wa me asturum.""

<sup>84</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 210-212: [L28] Ait: "Quid ergo habet, quod viride est?" Respondit: "Ex monte Kaf. Mons enim Kaf ex smaragdis paradisi. Qui mons orbem terrae cingens caelum sustinet. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Kaf walcoram elmegid.'"

The Qur'an quotation in this case does not really support the argument and is related to the answer only because it contains, at its beginning, the letter *Qāf*, the name of which is identical to that of the mountain that surrounds the Earth and supports the sky. Curiously, it is something that the verse has in common with quotation number six, which also has one of the so-called "mysterious letters" at its beginning. Since the letter *Qāf* is associated with the proper name of the mountain, we wonder if perhaps the letter *Nūn* is considered to be the proper name of the pen and this is why the verse was not translated. We should also remind ourselves that the so-called "mysterious letters" were also considered to have a sort of mystical value.<sup>85</sup> Was this the reason why the verses containing them were not translated?

Let us see if the remaining non-translated quotations shed more light on this subject. Quotation number 15 surely supports the theory of the absence of translation due to a proper name, as it is explicitly said in the text. The passage in which it appears is about the bull that carries the seven earths and the stone on which it stands. After having talked about them, the text continues:

He said: "And what is under the stone on which it stands?" He answered: "A mountain, whose name is *Zohot*". He said: "To what belongs this mountain?" He answered "To Hell" He said: "What is its size?" He answered: "As long as the distance covered in a journey of a thousand years. The multitude of the infidels will climb it and once they have arrived at the top, the mountain will begin to shake and let everyone fall in the depth of Hell". So in fact it is said in the Qur'an: *Souricuhu Azohot*, which means: "*Azohot* will push them down"<sup>86</sup>

We can find this passage in the *Vulgata* as follows:

"You told the truth, o Muḥammad, but tell me now: what is under the stone, on which the bull stands?" He said: "Under it there is a mountain, called *Ṣa'ūd*." He said: "And for whom does this mountain prepare the Day of Resurrection?" He said: "For the people of Fire. The polytheists will climb it inside the Fire for a period of fifty thousand years until they reach the top. Then the mountain will shake them down (*nafaḍa*) and they will fall down to its lowest place and be dragged on their faces."<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Cfr. Keith Massey, "Mysterious Letters," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an. Volume 3*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 473.

<sup>86</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 238: [L96] Ait: "Et sub lapide, super quem stat, quid?" Respondit: "Mons cui nomen Zohot." [L97] Ait: "Cuius hic mons?" Respondit: "Inferni." [L98] Ait: "Quae ei amplitudo?" Respondit: "Itineris mille annorum. Hunc ascendet omnis turba infidelium, cumque in verticem consederint, omnis intremiscet mons omnemque turbam deiciet in profundum inferni. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Sourhicuhu azohot', quod est: 'detrudet eos azohot.'" This mountain is the one referred to above, in the passage that explains the quotation number 16.

<sup>87</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 94-96: [A143] Qāla: "Ṣadaqta, yā Muḥammad, fa-akhbir-nī: mā taḥta ṣ-ṣakhra l-lati 'alay-hā th-thawr?" Qāla: "Taḥta-hā jabal yuqālu la-hu Ṣa'ūd." [A144] Qāla: "Wa-li-man

Even if the passage corresponds to Hermann's text, we do not find an explicit Qur'an quotation in it, although the last part of the text surely hints at Q. 54:47–48: "Surely the sinners are in error and insanity! / The day when they are dragged on their faces into the Fire."<sup>88</sup> Even if we cannot find in the *Vulgata* the exact quotation we find in Hermann's translation, it is nonetheless clear that the "Azohot" of the Latin version is derived from the Arabic "*ša'ūd*", connected to the verb *ša'ada*, which means "to climb". The mountain is named thus because the sinners will climb it at the End of Times. If we now look in the Qur'an for such a word, we find the verse Q. 74:17 ("*Sa-urhiqu-hu ša'ūdan*": "and I shall constrain him to a hard ascent"), which is indubitably the source of Hermann's "*Sourhicuhu azohot*."

Hermann, in this case, convinced that he is dealing with a proper noun, does not translate the word "*ša'ūdan*" according to its meaning and leaves it in transliteration. Moreover, with regard to the translation of "*sa-urhiqu*" to "*detrudo*", *arhaqa* does not only mean "to oppress, to make s.o. undergo s.th. to make s.o. suffer", but also "to bring down". For other shifts in the translation (third person [*detrudet* = "it will push down"] instead of first person [*sa-urhiqu* = "I will oppress"], plural ["*eos*" = "them"] instead of singular ["*-hu*" = "him"] of the object), we may think of the effort to match the translation with the context, as the "proper noun" *Azohot* as a subject of the sentence requires a verb in the third person and as the object are the infidels (plural) that will be shaken of the mountain. While we did not find the quotation in any Arabic manuscript witness we examined, we may say that Q. 74:17 was the Qur'an passage present in Hermann's source text. Indeed, it had the keyword appropriate to the passage, *ša'ūdan*, understood by Hermann to be the proper noun of the mountain mentioned in the *Masā'il 'Abdallāh ibn Salām* and translated accordingly.

If, until now, the proper-noun theory seems to work, quotation number eight adds a little bit of mystery to the matter. It appears in the answer to the question as to why the sky is named as such, in Arabic "*samā*". The answer is that it was created from smoke and that such smoke was, in fact, the steam of the sea. At this point the text adds: "In fact so it says in the Qur'an: '*walme amwegehu*.'"<sup>89</sup> We did not find, however, such an expression in the Qur'an. Nonetheless, we were able to

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a'adda dhalika l-jabal yawm al-qiyaama?" Qāla: "Li-ahl an-nār. Yaṣ'adu-hu l-mushrikūna fī n-nār fī mudda khamsīn alf sana ḥattā, idhā balaghū a'lā-hu, nafaḍa-hum al-jabal fa-yatasāqutūna ilā asfala-hu wa-yushābūna 'alā wujūhi-him.

<sup>88</sup> Arberry, *Koran*, 249. Arabic: "Inna l-mujrimīna fī ḍalālin wa-su'ur / yawma yushābūna fī n-nāri 'alā wujūhi-him."

<sup>89</sup> Cecini, *Masā'il*, 210: [L27]"Cur caelum dictum caelum?" Respondit: "Ideo quippe, quia de fumo creatum, fumus vero vapor maris. Sic enim ait in Alchoran: 'Walme amwegehu.'"

find the origin of this expression. Once again, the solution came from the Arabic manuscripts and particularly from the manuscript L<sub>BI</sub>, in which was written:

He said: “Why was it called ‘sky’?” He said: “Because it was created from water and smoke.” He said: “And what is the smoke and what is the water?” He said: “The smoke is the steam of the sea and the water is waves (*wa-l-mā’ amwāj*),<sup>90</sup> such is the word of the Most High: ‘So be on the watch for a day when heaven (*samā’*) shall bring a manifest smoke (*dukhān*).”<sup>91</sup>

Here, again, the Qur’an quotation supports the answer, as the quoted verse contains the words for “sky” and “smoke” and relates them to each other. What happened in the translation? Our hypothesis is that, in this case, Hermann’s *vorlage* was corrupted and, where the quotation from Q. 44:10 should have been, Hermann found the words “*wa-l-mā’ amwāju-hu*”, which were actually part of the answer *before* the quotation. In this case it is possible that he was not able to translate the sentence in a logical connection with what preceded and he may have noticed that the quoted text was not part of the Qur’an, which could be the reason why he chose not to translate in this case.<sup>92</sup>

### 3 Conclusion

After having presented all the quotations from the Qur’an in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*, let us draw some conclusions. Concerning Hermann’s translation of Qur’an quotations in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*, we can say that they are made independently of Robert of Ketton’s translation of the Qur’an. We have,

<sup>90</sup> Other manuscripts, such as Bursa, Ülü câmi, 2462, fol. 77v have, even more similarly to Hermann’s transcription “*wa-l-mā’ amwāju-hu*” (“and the water is its waves”). We chose to quote from L<sub>BI</sub>, even if it has a small variant (which looks likely to be an error of the copyist, because in the absence of the possessive suffix “-*hu*”, we would expect an article before the substantive) because it contains the whole passage with question and answer in its most complete version, including the Qur’an quotation, while other manuscripts, including Bursa, show signs of corruption in other parts of the passage and do not have the quotation.

<sup>91</sup> Jakarta, Museum Nasional, CDXVII, fol. 12r: Qāla: “Fa-li-mā summiyat samā’?” Qāla: “Li-anna-hā khuliqat min mā’ wa-dukhān.” Qāla: “Wa-mā ad-dukhān wa-mā al-mā’?” Qāla: “Ad-dukhān bukhār al-baḥr wa-l-mā’ amwāj wa-dhalika qawlu-hu ta’ālā: ‘Fa-rtaqib yawma ta’ti s-samā’u bi-dukhānin mubīnin.’”

<sup>92</sup> Given that the quotations dealt with in this section have not been translated, there is no doubt that there is no dependence from Robert of Ketton, who on the contrary translated them (but left out of the translation the “mysterious letters”!). For the sake of completeness, Robert’s translations of these quotations are present in the table at the end of this contribution.



however, found leads suggesting that Hermann knew and consulted the translation while doing his own. He had a good knowledge of Arabic and was able to adjust the text to avoid incongruity or syntactic breaks.

The analysis of the Qur'an quotations also gave us important leads concerning the textual tradition of the *Masail 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*, the source text of the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*. We have seen that, far from being a fixed text, transmitted only by means of copy, it had a tradition which was very fluid, in which we have different versions and in which the very same version can have significant variants. Among the variants we can count the Qur'an quotations, which may change from witness to witness for the same question related to the same matter. All the different quotations are, however, pertinent to the same question. It should also be seriously considered whether we should handle the *Masail 'Abdallāh ibn Salām* and its versions and translations as a text, according to the traditional canons of philology. It may be that a more appropriate alternative would be to handle it as a popular repository of motives, for the representation of which we should find new ways and approaches that would do justice to the spreading and relevance of this text not only in the Latin West, but also in other cultural environments, from the Ottoman empire to South-East Asia. But this, as the poet says, is another story.

Appendix: The Qur'an quotations in the *Liber de doctrina Mahumet*

Quotation number and localization	<i>Liber de doctrina Mahumet</i>	Qur'an verse(s)	Translation	Arabic	Robert of Ketton
1. L1/A1	<i>Partem misi super te, partem non misi.</i>	Q. 40:78	We sent Messengers before you; of some we have related to you, and some we have not related to you.	<i>Wa-la-qad arsalnā rusulan min qabli-ka min-hum man qaṣaṣnā 'alay-ka wa-min-hum man lam naṣṣuṣ 'alay-ka.</i>	<i>Omnium prophetarum ante te missorum, quorum nullus quicquam nisi diuinum praeceptum attulit, quosdam nominauimus, quosdam autem non.</i>
2. L1/A2	<i>Nec est possibile homini colloqui Deo nisi per internuntium.</i>	Q. 42:51	And it is not possible for a man, that God speaks to him except by revelation, or from behind a veil or He sends a messenger and he reveals whatsoever He will, by His leave; surely He is All-high, All-wise.	<i>Wa-mā kāna li-basharīn an yukallima-hu Allāhu illā wahyan aw min warā'i ḥijābin aw yursila rasūlan fa-yūḥiya bi-idhnī-hi mā yashā'u inna-hu 'aliyyun ḥakimun.</i>	<i>Non accidit cuiquam hominum, quod cum eo Deus sublimis et sapiens loqueretur nisi per uisionem et uelamen interpositum, uel per internuntium, omnia pro uelle suo praeceptoque dicentem.</i>
3. L11	<i>In nomine Dei misericordis et miseratoris.</i>	Q. 1:1 ( <i>Basmala</i> )	In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate.	<i>Bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥimī.</i>	<i>Misericordi pioque Deo / In nomine domini pii et misericordis.</i>
4. L18	<i>ordinauitque septem caelos.</i>	Q. 67:3	Who created seven heavens one upon another.	<i>Al-ladhī khalaqa sab'a samāwātīn ṭibāqan.</i>	<i>septem coelos disposuit.</i>
5. L18	<i>Mensis Ramadan, in quo descendit Alchoran.</i>	Q. 2:185	The month of Ramadan, wherein the Qu'ran was sent down to be a guidance to the people [...]	<i>shahrū ramaḍāna lladhī unzila fi-hi l-Qur'anu hudan li-n-nāsi [...]</i>	<i>uidelicet mense Romodam, in quo liber hic legifer, boni malique discretius, coelitus est datus.</i>

6. L24/A74	<i>Nun wacalam wa me asturum</i>	Q. 68:1	<i>Nun.</i> By the Pen, and what they inscribe.	<i>N.</i> [i.e. the Arabic letter <i>nūn</i> ] <i>wa-l-qalam wa-mā yastūrūna.</i>	<i>Per calamum et lineas atque scriptum</i> (Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum", 175.)
7. L26/A75	<i>Cotidie Deus in voluntate sua.</i>	Q. 55:29	Whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth implore Him; every day He is upon some labour.	<i>Yas'alu-hu man fī s-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi kulla yawmin huwa fī shā'in.</i>	<i>Uniuersis creaturis coelorum et terrae noua contingunt.</i>
8. L27/A80	<i>Walme amwegehu</i>	[Q. 44:10]	So be on the watch for a day when heaven shall bring a manifest smoke	<i>Fa-rtaqib yawma ta'tī s-samā'u bi-dukhānin mubīnin.</i>	<i>Expecta diem, qua coeli fumus manifestus teget gentes</i> (Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 153.)
9. L28/A77	<i>Kaf walcoram elmegid</i>	Q. 50:1	<i>Qaf.</i> By the glorious Qur'an.	<i>Q. wa-l-Qur'ani al-majīdi.</i>	<i>Per Alchoran disertum</i> (Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 160.)
10. L37/A108	<i>Praeposui diei et nocti luminaria et extinxi nocturnum et illuminavi diurnum.</i>	Q. 17:12	We have appointed the night and the day as two signs; then We have blotted out the sign of the night, and made the sign of the day to see, and that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number of the years, and the reckoning; and everything We have distinguished very distinctly.	<i>wa-ja'al-nā l-layla wa-n-nahāra āyatayni fa-maḥawna āyata l-layli wa-ja'alnā āyata n-nahāri mubṣīratan li-tabtaghā faqlan min rabbi-kum wa-l-ta'lamū 'adada s-sinīna wa-l- ḥisāba wa-kulla shay'in faṣṣalnā-hu tafṣīlan.</i>	<i>prius a nobis duobus luminibus clarissimis, altero noctis, altero diei constitutis : illi noctis deinceps tenebrositatem, illique diei splendorem adiunximus, singula manifeste discernentes, ut homo cum sciat annorum caeterorumque temporum computum, tum sibi uictum commodumque perquirat.</i>

(continued)

(continued)

Quotation number and localization	<i>Liber de doctrina</i> <i>Mahumet</i>	Qur'an verse(s)	Translation	Arabic	Robert of Ketton
11. L38/A109	<i>Posui noctem vestimentum et diem victum.</i>	Q. 78:10–11	and We appointed night for a garment, and We appointed day for a livelihood.	<i>Wa-ja' al-nā l-layla libāsan / Wa-ja' al-nā n-nahāra ma' āshan.</i>	<i>uestraeque quieti somnoque noctem, lucro motuique diem disponens.</i>
12. L39/A111	<i>Et caelum cum eis ornauimus et diabolis eas obiecimus.</i>	Q. 67:5	And We adorned the lower heaven with lamps, and made them things to stone Satans; and We have prepared for them the chastisement of the Blaze.	<i>Wa-la-qad zayyannā s-samā'a d-dunyā bi-maṣābīḥa wa-ja' alnā-hā rujūman li-sh-shayāṭīni [...]</i>	<i>Ipse coelum sidereis ornauit lucernis, quae diabolos expellant, illis timorem iniiciendo.</i>
13. L89/A134	<i>Qui obedierint, erunt in paradiso, qui renuerint, in inferno.</i>	Q. 4:13–14 (Q. 11:106/108?)	Whoso obeys God and His Messenger, He will admit him to gardens [...]/ But whoso disobeys God [...]/ him He will admit to a Fire.	<i>wa-man yuṭī' i llāha wa-rasūla-hu yudkhil-hu jannātin [...]/ wa-man ya' šī llāha [...] yudkhil-hu nāran.</i>	<i>Omnis horum praeceptorum obseruator, paradisum, quod est maximum : inobediens omnis et praeuaricator ignem atque gehennam, mala contemptumque passurus, possidebit.</i>
14. L92/A140	<i>Posui terram planam et montes palos terrae.</i>	Q. 78:6–7 (cfr. Q. 50:7; 15:19)	Have We not made the earth as a cradle and the mountains as pegs?	<i>A-lam naj'ali al-arḍa mihādān / Wa-l-jibāla awṭādan?</i>	<i>qui terram planam montibus quasi cardinibus firmaui.</i>

15. L96/A143	<i>Sourhichuhu azohot</i>	Q. 74:17	and I shall constrain him to a hard ascent.	<i>Sa-urhiqu-hu şa'üdan.</i>	<i>Illum enim in ignem sursum tendentem ascendere faciam</i> (Ketton, "Lex Saracenorum," 179.)
16. L103/[A155] cfr. A205	<i>In die illo mutabit terram pro alia terra.</i>	Q. 14:48	Upon the day the earth shall be changed to other than the earth.	<i>Yawma tubaddalu al-arḍu ghayra l-arḍi.</i>	<i>Quoniam terra mutabitur in aliam, et coelum similiter, fietsque coram Deo solo cunctipotente conuentus omnium.</i>
17. L123/A208	<i>Omnia mortua praeter Deum.</i>	Q. 28:88	All things perish, except His Face.	<i>Kullu şay'in hālikun illā waḡha-hu.</i>	<i>Praeter quem solum omnia pereunt.</i> <sup>93</sup>

<sup>93</sup> There is one further Qur'an reference in Hermann's translation, which we chose not to include in the counting, as it is not introduced by the usual words: "it says so in the Qur'an" and it is not an exact quotation. It occurs in the part in which the numbers from one to 100 are explained. Corresponding to number 90 we read: "Ninety, because the angel sent to David said: 'This fellow of mine had ninety sheep and I had one, which he took away from me'" (Cecini, *Masā'il*, 206: *Nonaginta, quia angelus missus ad David ait: 'Nonaginta oves habebat hic socius meus et ego unam, quam ipse abstulit mihi'*). It is surely referred to Q. 38:23, even if there the number is not ninety, but ninety-nine, but, as it was said, it is not an exact quotation, but rather a para-phrase, especially at the end (cfr. Arberry, *Koran*, 159: "Behold, this my brother has ninety-nine ewes, and I have one ewe. So he said, "Give her into my charge"; and he overcame me in the argument'.").

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