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Context and the Use of Quotes from Robert of Ketton's Translation of the Qur'an in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*

Abstract: This chapter looks at the use of the Quranic translation of Robert of Ketton in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, the account of the pilgrimage undertaken by the Irish Franciscan Symon Semeonis in 1323–1324. In the first part, it is introduced both the textual tradition of the *Itinerarium* and the voyage made by Symon Semeonis. Secondly, it is analyzed in the *Itinerarium*'s context the use of various Quranic passages, which the Irish Franciscan utilized to define negatively the Islam. Lastly, it is presented the discovery of the use of a verbatim copy of a gloss present in the Robert of Ketton's translation of the Qur'an.¹

1 Introduction

The arrival of the Irish Franciscan Symon Semeonis in Alexandria on October 14, 1323 – during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land that began on March 16 of the same year – marks the moment when Islam and its followers are first introduced in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*. The narrative goes from describing the cities and marvels encountered throughout the Mediterranean to using two works from the *Corpus Islamolatinum*² to define and portray Islam (negatively): the *Liber de*

1 This study was undertaken as part of FFI2015-63659-C2-1-P, MINECO-FEDER, EU, and 2017 SGR 1787 at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, whose principal investigator is Cándida Ferrero Hernández; and AGAUR PhD Scholarship 2019.

2 José Martínez Gázquez, “Islamolatina: estudios sobre el Corpus Islamolatinum (1142–1143) y literatura de controversia islamo-judeo-cristiana,” in *Arabes in patria Asturiensium*, ed. Clara Elena Prieto Entrialgo, (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2011), 171–190; Celia López Alcaide, “Los Manuscritos del *Corpus Islamolatinum*,” in *Estudios del Latín Medieval Hispánico. Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Latín Medieval Hispánico* ed. José Martínez Gázquez et al. (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011), 651–654.

Doctrina Machumeti,³ translated by Hermann of Carinthia, and the *Alchoranus*,⁴ a translation by Robert of Ketton.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the use made of the Latin translation of the Qur'an in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*. To begin, I give the textual history of the work and describe the journey recounted in it, including the first encounter with Islam in the port of Alexandria. Then, I analyze philologically the use of Robert of Ketton's Latin translation, paying particular attention to the discursive-narrative context where quotations appear in order to determine the reason for their insertion. Lastly, I present the discovery of a gloss from Robert of Ketton's Qur'an translation in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*.

2 *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*

2.1 Text

The *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis* is preserved in a single manuscript, located in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where it has catalogue number 407.⁵ Previous scholars have divided the manuscript into two parts on the basis of thematic and chronological criteria.⁶ The first part is made up of

3 Cándida Ferrero Hernández, “Difusión de las Ideas Islámicas a partir del Liber de Doctrina Machumeti,” in *Arabes in patria Asturiensium*, ed. Clara Elena Prieto Entrialgo (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2011), 191–204; 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 et al. (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galuzzo, 2014), 353–358; James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 89–96; 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 et al. (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), 497–507.

4 Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable*, 97–100; José Martínez Gázquez, “Observaciones a la Traducción Latina del Corán (Qur’an) de Robert de Ketene,” in *Les Traducteurs au Travail: leurs Manuscrits et leurs Méthodes*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2001), 115–127; Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur’an in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 14–17; de la Cruz and Ferrero, “Robert of Ketton,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations*, 508–519.

5 The manuscript has been scanned and is accessible at: <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/mj309qh4224>. Last accessed June 18, 2020.

6 Mario Esposito, ed. and trans., *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam* (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1960), 1–3; Girolamo Golubovich, ed., *Biblioteca Bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell’Oriente Francescano* (Florence: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1919), 245.

three *itineraria*: *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis* (folios 1r–36v, with folios 34r–36v left blank); William of Rubruck's *Itinerarium ad partes orientales* (folios 37r–68v, with folios 66v–68v left blank) and Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerarium* (folios 69r–92v, with folios 91v–92v left blank). The second part (folios 93r–178v) contains three texts of different kinds: Book xv of Bartholomeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum*; the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber Secreti Secretorum* (folios 129r–176v); and the *De complexione humana* (folios 176v–178v).

The manuscript as a whole has been dated to the fourteenth century, although there are two features that make it possible to provide a more precise date for the first part: a signature on the first folio by Symon Bozoun, who was the prior at Norwich between 1344 and 1352⁷ and who gave the name *Liber Itinerariorum* to the group of three writings in his list of books;⁸ and secondly, the inclusion of Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerarium*, which was written in Padua in May 1330. On the basis of these two factors, the text's most recent editor, Mario Esposito, suggests that the manuscript was copied between 1335 – allowing for a lapse of five years for Odoric's text to arrive in Norwich, where it would have been copied – and 1352. Esposito also indicates that all of the texts were copied by the same hand.⁹ However, it has recently been suggested that each text was copied by a different hand and that they were later gathered together into a single quire.¹⁰

The *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis* has appeared in three editions to date, the first from 1778, by James Nasmith.¹¹ The second edition, by Girolamo Golubovich,¹² did not appear until the twentieth century, and the third and last, by Mario Esposito.

7 MS CCC 407, fol. 1r : «Liber fratris Symonis, prioris Norwici».

8 Neil Ripley Ker, "Medieval Manuscripts from Norwich Cathedral Priory," in *Books, Collectors and Libraries. Studies in the Medieval Heritage*, ed. A. G. Watson (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 260.

9 Esposito, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, 2.

10 Malgorzata Krasnodebska-D'Aughton, "Inflamed with Seraphic Ardor: Franciscan Learning and Spirituality in the Fourteenth Century Irish Pilgrimage Account," *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012): 284–285. This suggestion would require a new dating for the first part of the manuscript, which remains to be confirmed and revised.

11 James Nasmith, ed., *Itineraria Symonis Semeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre. Quibus accedit Tractatus de metro. . . e codicibus MSS. edidit Jacobus Nasmith* (Cambridge: Typis Academicis excudebat J. Archdeacon, 1778).

12 Golubovich, *Biblioteca*.

sito,¹³ came out in 1960. There have been three translations of Symon Semeonis's work, two into English¹⁴ and one into French.¹⁵

2.2 Voyage

Symon Semeonis begins his pilgrimage, together with his companion, Hugo Illuminator, on March 16, 1323, setting out across the “most fierce and dangerous”¹⁶ Sea of Ireland and arriving at Caer Gybi (Wales), whence the two Franciscans begin their journey across the island of Great Britain. After reaching Chester on March 24 and celebrating Easter there on the 27 of the same month, the travelers visit London and Canterbury before reaching Dover, where they set sail for the Continent. They cross France and Italy and on June 28, 1323, reach Venice, where they remain until August 18. Travelling again by ship, they pass along the eastern coast of the Adriatic and visit the cities of Zadar, Dubrovnik, and Durrës, as well as some of the Ionian Islands. Reaching Crete, they pass through the cities of Chania and what is today Heraklion, where they sail on October 10 for Alexandria, arriving in the Egyptian city on October 14, 1323. After five days in Alexandria, the pilgrims resume their journey, taking the channels of the Nile River to Babylon (Old Cairo) and Cairo. On November 26, 1323, Hugo Illuminator succumbs to an illness in Cairo, dying in the house of a Muslim. Symon Semeonis then appeals to the sultan, along with two young men and another pilgrim (who are not previously mentioned in the *Itinerarium*).¹⁷ They are granted safe passage and depart on December 1 for Jerusalem, setting out across the desert.

13 Esposito, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*.

14 Eugene Hoade, trans., *Western Pilgrims. The Itineraries of Fr. Simon Fitzsimons O.F.M. (1322–1323), a Certain English Man (1344–1345), Thomas Brygg (1392) and Notes on Other Authors and Pilgrims* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1952); Esposito, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*.

15 Christiane Deluz, trans., “Le Voyage de Symon Semeonis d’Irlande en Terre Sainte,” in *Croisades et Pèlerinages. Récits, Chroniques et Voyages en Terre Sainte XIIIe-XVIIe siècle*, edited by Danielle Régner-Bohler (Paris: Laffont, 1997), 964–995.

16 For this study I use the edition that I am currently working on as part of my doctoral thesis. Since it has not yet been published, I will use references from the Esposito edition, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, where the text is divided into 100 paragraphs. Henceforward, I will use the abbreviation *It. Sym.* to cite the text, following Esposito’s numbering. Thus, in this case: *It. Sym.*, 1: “nauigauimus mare Hybernicum ferocissimum atque periculosissimum.”

17 *It. Sym.*, 77: “optinuimus liberum aditum cum duobus pueris nostris et uno peregrino ad Sepulcrum Domini et omnia oratoria et alia loca deuota absque tributo et per totam Terram Sanctam et Egipti etiam absque pedagio libere poteramus et pacifice transire.”

The *Itinerarium* ends abruptly in the middle of a description of the city, following Symon Semeonis's lament that Christians are not allowed to enter the Tower of David, since it is now a mosque.¹⁸

Since the text is abruptly interrupted, we do not know the route taken by Symon Semeonis on his return trip. We only have three details that the Irish Franciscan noted in his text that may refer to this return trip: first, a reference to a mass held in the church of "sancta Maria de la Cave" in Babylon (Old Cairo) on February 2, 1324;¹⁹ second, a reference to a meal with the Venetian consul in Alexandria on March 4, 1324;²⁰ and lastly, a reference to Saint Peter's obelisk in Rome, which might indicate that Symon Semeonis visited this city on his return voyage.²¹

The narrative of Symon Semeonis's pilgrimage can be divided into four sections, on the basis of not only geographic criteria but also narrative style and focus: the descriptions that Symon Semeonis gives of his passage through Western Europe are different from those that he provides of Eastern Europe, Egypt, or Jerusalem. In Western Europe, he is mainly interested in describing fortifications, cities, churches, and monasteries – and linking them to recent events²²

18 *It. Sym.*, 100: "Item ex opposito predictae turris ad orientem est locus in quo fuit olim castrum quod tantum distabat quod nulla ratione potuit a sepepredicta turri protegi nec defendi nisi forte cum machinis. [. . .] Vbi nunc est ecclesia Saracenorum que est spherice figure ad quam nullum Christianum permittunt accedere."

19 *It. Sym.*, 63; "In ipsa itaque ciuitate [sc. Babilonia] est ecclesia pulcherrima et gratiosa in honore beate Virginis constructa, que sancta Maria de la Cave nuncupatur, in qua sub maiore altare est locus deuotissimus in quo latuit, ut dicitur, Virgo gloriosa. vii. annis cum filio suo dulcissimo Ihesu [. . .] Et ex ipsius opposito ad leuam est altare in honore ipsius Virginis deuote consecratum, super quo frater Symon prescriptus in festo Purificationis eiusdem Virginis missarum solemniam celebrauit."

20 *It. Sym.*, 49: "Vidimus [sc. ficus recentes] dominica prima quadragesime apud Alexandriam in mensa consulis Venetiarum, qui etiam tunc in maxima copia per totam ciuitatem reperiebantur."

21 *It. Sym.*, 59: "Ad partem uero aquilonarem ipsius fontis est locus ubi fertur unum castrum Pharaonis fuisse, in quo sunt duo lapides quadri erecti, quorum unus, iudicio nostro saluo meliori, maior est illo Rome erecto, qui a uulgaribus acus sancti Petri nuncupatur."

22 For example, the news of the murder of two Franciscans, Mellanus de Conflent and Paschasius de Saliente, between March 3 and March 4, 1321, by heretics called *Paterinorum*. *It. Sym.*, 9: "Et inde properantes per Rodanum nauigauimus ciuitatem Valentie, ubi in ecclesia Fratrum Minorum corpora iacent fratrum eiusdem ordinis: Mellani de Conflent, inquisitoris heretice prauitatis; Paschasii de Saliente, qui in prouincia Burgundie, inter Tristam et Valentiam apud Montylium in claustrum Nigrorum Monachorum de nocte solempniter tempore, pacis singulari priuilegio martirii palmam per manus Paterinorum seu hereticorum adepti sunt, quos proximo precedenti, uidelicet. v. nonas Marti, in ecclesia publice predictus inquisitor, spreto mortis precipitio et fidei habitaculo iaculis euangelicis intrepide feriebat, anno domino millessimo. cccxxi."

or to turning points in the history of the Franciscan order²³ or in the history of Christianity – but after reaching Eastern Europe, he begins to show great interest in ethnography, and this will continue until he reaches Jerusalem. However, the ethnographic notes that Symon Semeonis makes during his visit to the Adriatic coast (such as, for example, the hats worn by the women in Zadar²⁴ or the hair of the *Albanenses* and *Greci* compared to the hair of the *Sclau*²⁵) do not focus (at least not exclusively) on religion, whereas the ethnographic descriptions of the inhabitants of Egypt and, especially, the Muslims do.

3 Encounters with Islam

The first contact with Islam takes place when the Franciscan pilgrims reach Alexandria on October 14, 1323. When they dock, port guards board the ship – as is customary, Symon Semeonis assures us²⁶ – to make a record of all the cargo and the names of all the people on board. Then, they convey the pilgrims and other passengers to the city gates to await the admiral of Alexandria. While they wait, the Franciscans are harassed for being Christian by passers-by.²⁷ When the admiral arrives, Symon Semeonis and Hugo Illuminator are questioned about the reasons for their visit (“nos de causa aduentus nostri examinavit”), and there

23 Such as the episode of Saint Francis of Assisi’s appearance to Saint Anthony of Padua in Arles. *It. Sym.*, 11: “Et inde per Rodanum nauigantes uenimus ciuitatem Arelatensem, ubi beatus Franciscus beato Antonio Patuanorum aduocato in fratrum Capitulo predicante apparuit.” On this fragment and the possible use of Bonaventure’s *Legenda Maior* in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, see Krasnodedska-D’Aughton, “Inflamed with Seraphic Ardor”, 305–306.

24 *It. Sym.*, 15: “Vbi mulieres mirabiliter ornantur: quedam enim portant in capite ornamentum cornutum uelut bobes, quedam oblongum et quadrum; quedam ingens et sphericus et in parte anteriori lapidibus pretiosis ornatum eleuatum et ad grandinum impetus ac uentorum impulsus et ymbrium spiculatorumque solis intercipiendos et sicut scutum repellendos.”

25 *It. Sym.*, 17: “Ipsi enim Albanenses scismatici sunt Grecorum utentes ritu, et eiusdem habitu et gestu in omnibus conformes, nam Greci raro uel nunquam utuntur caputio, sed capello albo quasi plano in parte anteriori humiliato et in posteriori eleuato, ut eorum crines intuentium oculis luculentius appareant, quoniam in crinum longitudine et pulcritudine summe gloriantur. Sclauu uero, de quibus superius dictum est, tamen capello albo oblongo et rotundo, in cuius summitate nobiles pennam longam figunt, qua facilius a rusticis et uillanis distingui ualeant atque cognosci.”

26 *It. Sym.*, 24: “Vbi nobis portum intrantibus statim, sic consuetudinis est, Saraceni portus custodes nobis nauigio occurrerunt et sine intermissione, nauem nostram ascendentes, uelum eius abstulerunt et nomina nostrae et nomina omnia in ea existentium scripserunt.”

27 *It. Sym.*, 26: “Inter prefatas uero portas fuimus a transeuntibus pro nomine Ihesu consputi, lapidibus percussi et aliis contumeliis et obprobriis a mane usque ad horam sextam saturati.”

is a moment of tension when the guards examine their belongings and discover images of the crucifix, the Virgin Mary, and Saint John the Evangelist that they have brought with them from Ireland:

[. . .] First, as they examined the books and all our possessions among which, when the guards saw the images of the Crucifix, of the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist, that we brought with us from Ireland respectfully and devoutly, instantly they began to blaspheme and spit on these images, insulting us, saying with loud shouts: 'Wach! These are the vilest dogs and swine, who do not believe that Muhammad is God's prophet and messenger, but they continuously blaspheme him in their superstitious preaching. And they mislead other people to do the same, affirming falsities and insane stories, saying that God has a son and that he is Jesus, son of Mary.'²⁸

This is the first and last time that we hear the voice of a Muslim in all of the *Itinerarium*. However, the insults that we hear coming from the mouths of the guards ("scrutantes") will be used from this moment on to refer to Muhammad, with the disparaging "porcus" being particularly frequent in the *Itinerarium*.²⁹ In addition to these words of the guards', the text also records what was said by some renegades ("renegati") who accuse the Franciscans of being spies and suggest they should be expelled: "However, others, clearly renegades, fearing the fierceness of the Saracens said: 'We certainly know that these are spies and their arrival is not good for us. Let them be expelled from the city in shame and let them come back to the lands of the Christians' or *Refuytanorum*, whence they set sail.'"³⁰ Symon Semeonis and Hugo Illuminator respond to these accusations by following

28 *It. Sym.*, 26: "[. . .] primo perscrutatis libris et rebus omnibus inter quos, cum scrutantes uidissent imagines crucifixi, beate Marie uirginis, Johannis euangeliste, quas de Hybernie reuerenter et deuote nobiscum portauimus, statim blasphemantes et super ipsas spuentes clamorosis uocibus insultabant dicentes: 'Wach ! Hii sunt canes et porci uilissimi, qui non credunt Machometum esse prophetam Dei et nuntium, sed ipsum in suis predicationibus superstitiosis continue blasphemant. Et ad hec alios inducunt affirmantes uanitates et insanias fabulas, dicentes Deum filium habere et ipsum esse Ihesum, filium Marie.'"

29 In the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis* the noun *porcus* is used to refer to Muhammad seven times: *It. Sym.*, 28: "Et sic precepit predictus porcus uilissimus et mulierum amator", "uidelicet Machometum porcum uilissimum"; 29: "Machometum porcum putridum"; 30: "*De doctrina porci uilissimi Machometi*"; 37: "causam quare predictus porcus uinum prohibuit allegat [. . .]"; 51: "Hic porcus Machometus pudicitie et castitatis suffocator"; 83: "Mecham, ubi iacet corpus illi porci uilissimi". It is also used once to insult Muslims for the way they eat. *It. Sym.*, 55: "sicut canes uel porci uilissimi comedunt."

30 *It. Sym.*, 26: "Alii uero dicebant, uidelicet renegati, Saracenorum ferocitatem formidantes: 'Vere scimus quoniam exploratores sunt isti et non est in bonum eorum aduentus ad nos. Eiciantur de ciuitate cum confusione et reuertantur ad partes Christianorum siue *Refuytanorum*, unde egressi sunt'".

the Franciscan *Regula non bullata*, which stated that there were two ways to act among “Saracens and other infidels” (“De euntibus inter Saracenos et alios infideles”³¹): either to admit one’s Christianity and not enter into any dispute,³² or to attempt to convert the infidels to the Christian faith.³³ Symon Semeonis and Hugo Illuminator choose the first option:

If Muhammad is the true prophet and lord, have peace with him and persist in his praises. But to us, there is no other lord than Jesus Christ, who is God’s only begotten son born in the eternity and son of Mary born in time, whose adopted sons we are and not spies, wishing to visit devoutly his glorious sepulchre, to strike it with our knees, to kiss it with our lips and to wet it with our tears.³⁴

This first moment of contact is our introduction to Islam in the *Itinerarium*, which Symon Semeonis attempts to explain using two tools from the *Corpus Islamolatinum*: Hermann of Carinthia’s translation of *Masā’il ‘Abdillāh ibn Salām*, translated as *De Doctrina Machumeti*, and Robert of Ketton’s translation of the Qur’an (*Alchoranus*).

4 Context and use of Quotes from the Qur’an

Symon Semeonis draws repeatedly on these two works in his attempt to (negatively) define and explain Islam, using whichever one has a suitable quotation to support a given point in his argument, though the quotes taken from the Qur’an are much more numerous in the *Itinerarium*.³⁵ This indiscriminate use of one

31 *Regula non bullata*, XVI; See Isabelle Heullant-Donat, “Martyrdom and Identity in the Franciscan Order (Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries),” *Franciscan Studies* 72 (2012): 433–435.

32 *Regula non bullata*, XVI: “Unus modus est, quod non faciant lites neque contentiones, sed sint subditi omni humanae creaturae propter Deum (1 Petr 2, 13) et confiteantur se esse christianos.”

33 *Regula non bullata*, XVI: “Alius modus est, quod, cum viderint placere Domino, annuntient verbum Dei, ut credant Deum omnipotentem Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, creatorem omnium, redemptorem et salvatorem Filium, et ut baptizentur et efficiantur christiani, quia quis renatus non fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu Sancto, non potest intrare in regnum Dei.”

34 *It. Sym.*, 26: “Si uerus propheta est Machometus et dominus, pacem habetote cum illo et eius laudibus insistite. Nobis autem alius Dominus non est nisi Dominus Ihesus Christus, qui est unigenitus Dei, filius eternaliter genitus, et filius Marie in tempore natus, cuius filii per adoptionem sumus et non exploratores, ipsius sepulchrum gloriosum deuote uisitare uolentes, tundere genibus, osculari labiis et lacrimis rigare.”

35 In the *Itinerarium*, Robert of Ketton’s translation is used twelve times, and Hermann of Carinthia’s is used twice. See Agustín Justicia Lara, “The Corpus Islamolatinum as Auctoritas

work or the other seems to arise from the notion that they have the same religious value, insofar as both were written by Muhammad, according to what we can deduce from Symon Semeonis's text.³⁶

Symon Semeonis uses the Latin translation of the Qur'an to describe, on the one hand, things that he has seen himself or heard from a "reliable source"³⁷ or, on the other, to try to describe Islamic doctrinal matters, such as the status of Jesus and Mary in Islam. In both of these situations, Symon Semeonis uses the *Alchoranus* in three different ways: verbatim quotes, paraphrasing, or stringing together a selection of quotes to support his argument.

Verbatim quotes (which are not altered in any way by Symon Semeonis) are used in five places: in the description of the ritual of ablution,³⁸ in the explanation the way that women dress,³⁹ and in the discussions of the prohibition against wine,⁴⁰ the number of wives that a Muslim man can take⁴¹ and Friday as a holy day.⁴² In each case, the quote from the Qur'an is preceded by a description that is explained using the quote. For example, in the case of the description of the ritual of ablution, Symon Semeonis explains how Muslim men dress, pointing out that they do not use a belt but rather a cloak that they tie around their waists (and that they spread out before them when they pray), except for gentlemen and noblemen, who do use belts "in the way women do"; they also do not wear leggings but

in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*," in *Propaganda and (Un)covered Identities in Treatises and Sermons: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Premodern Mediterranean*, ed. Cándida Ferrero Hernández et al. (Bellaterra: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2020), 52–53.

36 See note 29 above. In most quotations from the Qur'an, Symon Semeonis closes the quotation with a clear reference to Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an, attributing to him every single one of its precepts. He does likewise with the *Liber de Doctrina Machumeti*, as can be seen, for example, on *It. Sym.*, 30, where Symon Semeonis uses a passage from that work to explain the concept of Paradise in Islam, introducing the quote in the following terms: "De paradiso autem et uita eterna credunt (sc. Saraceni) secundum quod continentur in libello *De doctrina* porci uilissimi *Machumeti*, ubi continentur sic: [. . .]"; he ends the quote by explicating attributing the statement to Muhammad: "Hec Machometus, porcus mulierum amator." See Ferrero, "El Liber de Doctrina Machumeti," 363–364.

37 *It. Sym.*, 51: "ut relatu fide digno audiuiimus". See Justicia, "The Corpus Islamolatinum," 47–49.

38 *It. Sym.*, 35.

39 *It. Sym.*, 36.

40 *It. Sym.*, 37.

41 *It. Sym.*, 51.

42 *It. Sym.*, 70.

rather broad, very long undergarments.⁴³ They wear these clothes, according to Symon Semeonis, “because they have to wash their legs and posterior parts five times a day”.⁴⁴ Following a digression about the voice they use and the direction they face when praying – which I will comment on below – Symon Semeonis explains the ritual washing that the Muslims practice, including how this is done in places where there is no access to water,⁴⁵ and emphasizing twice the belief that ablution brings the remission of sin.⁴⁶ Following this statement, Symon Semeonis quotes sura 11⁴⁷ (Q. 05:06):

From which it is written in the Qur’an, in the eleventh sura (i.e. chapter): ‘Good men, when you will rise up to prayer, you must wash your faces and hands and arms to the elbows, and your feet to the shins; you must wipe your head tossing your hair and you must bathe when coming after coitus with women. Those who are ill and those who are travelling and those who come from emptying or from coitus with women and can not find water, they must clean their faces and hands with the dust of a clean soil. For God loves your cleanness and the religious observance’s perfection with the recompense of his favours and the invocation of the Divinity.’⁴⁸

43 *It. Sym.* 35: “Saraceni autem raro uel nunquam cinguntur nisi tualia, quam cum oratum uadunt coram se extendunt, exceptis nobilibus et equitibus, qui cingulis cinguntur ad dominarum modum latis et de serico totaliter factis et auro et argento nobilissime ornatis, in quibus summe gloriantur. Nec caligas portant, sed femoralia rugosa circa tibias largissima et ampla a minori usque ad maiorem, a puero unius anni usque ad canum et annosum.”

44 *It. Sym.*, 35: “et hoc quia sibi totiens lauant tibias et posteriora, nam quinque orationes in die naturali ex legis precepto diabolice dicere tenentur.”

45 *It. Sym.*, 35: “Ante quarum horarum quamlibet lauant sibi manus, brachia et pedes et posteriora, firmiter credentes quod in aquarum ablutione percipiunt remissionem omnium peccatorum. Et quando sunt in deserto uel loco inaquoso, ubi aque copia non habetur, antequam adorandum accedere presumant, sibi super caput terram mundam spargunt, credentes etiam sic a peccatorum sordibus se expiare.”

46 This notion is common in anti-Islamic polemics: Daniel, *The Islam and the West. The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997), 236.

47 Sura 12 in the Bibliander edition: Tristian Vigliano, and Henri Lamarque, eds., *Le Coran en Latin et Autres Textes sur l’Islam : La Traduction Latine du Coran, tel qu’éditée par Theodore Bibliander en 1550* (Université de Lyon: GRAC, 2010), 94 (online resource).

48 *It. Sym.*, 35: “Vnde scriptum est in Alchorano azoara, capitulo, XI.: ‘Viri boni, cum oratum surrexeritis facies uestras ac manus et brachia usque ad cubitum et pedes usque ad tibias abluere et capillos reuoluendo caput abstergere, et post coitum mulierum uenientes et aquam minime reperientes, facies suas atque manus terre munde puluere tergant. Deus namque uestram diligit munditiam officique diuini perfectionem cum gratiarum sibi retributione et diuinitatis inuocatione.’”

Although in this case Symon Semeonis does not close the quote with his customary disparagement of Muhammad (perhaps, given the context, because of the fact that so many Christian authors praised Muslim piety and devotion, as a way of reproaching the laxity in Christianity⁴⁹), he does when he describes Muslim women's clothing. Here, Symon Semeonis describes their clothing and ornaments (which he perceives as "singular and very extraordinary"⁵⁰) in order to add a quote from sura 23⁵¹ (Q. 24: 31), which he closes by insulting Muhammad and attributing the authorship of the Qur'an to him. Keeping in mind that in the previous passage the clothing of Muslim men was explained by the ritual of ablution, the implication here is that the women dress in this way because they are ordered to do so by Muhammad.

The second device that Symon Semeonis uses is adapting the text of the quote from the Qur'an through paraphrase. We find a clear example of this in the same passage about the ritual of ablution commented on above: following the description of the men's clothing and the reason behind it, Symon Semeonis gives two paraphrastic quotations. The first, about vocal intonation during prayer, is taken from sura 27⁵² (Q. 17: 110): "For they have to say five prayers everyday *not with shouts but with a moderate voice* according to an order of their diabolical law, as it is written in the Qur'an, twenty-seventh sura (i.e. chapter)".⁵³ Here, the paraphrase expands on Robert of Ketton's text⁵⁴ by adding the adverb "clamorose," which throughout the *Itinerarium* is used exclusively in reference to Islam,⁵⁵ especially

49 Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 220–228; 239–240.

50 *It. Sym.*, 36: "Que omnes in ornatu modum habent singularem et ualde mirabilem."

51 Sura 24 in the Bibliander edition: Vigliano, *Le Coran en Latin*, 112–113. *It. Sym.* 36: "Vnde in Alchorano scriptum est azoara, capitulo, .XXIII.: 'Bone femine suos uisus quamlibet tegant membraque genitalia similiter. Hoc enim est optimum apud Deum, omnes suos actus dinoscen-tem. Mulieres itaque bone se curent ut linialiter aspiciant suos, peplo tegentes collum et pectus, omnem pulcritudinem suam, nisi quando apparere necessitas cogit. Celent omnibus speciem-que pedum etiam eundo nisi maritis suis, eorumque suisque parentibus et filiis atque fratribus, et nepotibus et ancillis omnibus, que non suspectis siue subiectis manui uel impolluti. Ad Deum omnes conuertimini, quod est uobis optimum'. Hec porcus Machometus, mulierum amator."

52 Vigliano, *Le Coran en Latin*, 94.

53 *It. Sym.*, 35: "nam quinque orationes in die naturali ex legis precepto diabolice dicere tenentur, non clamorose sed uoce mediocriter, prout scribitur in Alchorano azoara, capitulo, .XXVII."

54 Vigliano, *Le Coran en Latin*, 94: "Orationes autem uoce mediocri funde."

55 With clamorous voices the Muslim guards insulted the Franciscans (*It. Sym.*, 26); with clamorous voices they praise the prophet from the minarets "Vbi eum (sc. Machometum) inter alia laudant clamorosis uocibus et magnificant quod una nocte cum mulieribus nouem nonaginta uicibus turpiter operatus est" (*It. Sym.*, 28); with clamoring the spectators cheer the Sultan in the polo match "[. . .] Soldanum, quia semper, quando pilam per uices excutit, omnes eum laudant

the call to prayer.⁵⁶ The second paraphrase of a quote is much more problematic, because in it Symon Semeonis seems to merge the text of the Qur'an and text that comes from a gloss.⁵⁷ The passage in question deals with the direction Muslims face during prayer:

Many of them say these prayers – according to our opinion, with due respect for a better one – in a devoted enough manner, kneeling on the mentioned towels and bending towards the temple of God (according to them), *that is towards Mecca*, which is in the east, where *Abraham* first *founded a temple* in God's honour and there he wanted to immolate his son Isaac at a divine order, according to as what it is said in the Qur'an, in the second sura.⁵⁸

Symon Semeonis cites the second sura⁵⁹ (Q. 02: 143–145) from which he seems to excerpt (or paraphrase) the phrases “*uersus templum Dei*” and “*Abraham primo templum fundauit*”.⁶⁰ However, the sentence dealing with the sacrifice of Isaac corresponds to a gloss that is also present in the second sura, though it references the term “*Abrahe precepta*” in Q. 02: 124: “*Fabulose incipit loqui de Abraham, tangens neniam quam ipsi dicit quod, scilicet, Abraham templum Mecce fundauerit, eo quod ibi precepto Dei uoluerit immolare Isaac*”.⁶¹ The use of the gloss is clear in another passage. Here, however, Symon Semeonis's paraphrase gives rise to doubts as to whether this gloss is indeed the source.

Lastly, Symon Semeonis sometimes strings together a selection of quotes in such a way as to demonstrate his own proposition. The best example of this can be found in the way he structures the passage about violence in Islam. While Symon Semeonis is in Cairo, he witnesses the sale of slaves, among whom he

et magnificanti tubis innumerabilibus clangentibus [. . .] et uocibus clamoribus in tantum quod motum Arcturi impedire uidentur [. . .]” (*It. Sym.*, 52).

56 *It. Sym.*, 70: “Vnde in *Alchorano* de modo illius obseruationis sic dicitur azoara.LXXI.: ‘Quando die ueneris oratum uocatur’ supple uocibus clamorosis in campanilibus memoratis in quibus minime sono campanarum gaudent [. . .]”

57 See point 4 in this work. José Martínez Gázquez, “Glossae ad Alchoranum Latinum: Roberti Ketensis translatoris, fortasse a Petro Pictauiense redactae: an Edition of the Glosses to the Latin Qur'an in BNF MS Arsenal 1162,” *Medieval Encounters* 21 (1) (2015): 81–120.

58 *It. Sym.*, 35: “Quas (sc. orationes) eorum multi cum genuflexionibus super memoratas tualias et inclinationibus, iudicio nostro saluo meliori, satis deuote modo suo dicunt *uersus templum Dei* secundum eos, *uidelicet Mecham*, se uertentes, quod est situm in oriente, ubi *Abraham primo templum fundauit* in honore Dei, et ibidem iussu diuino filium suum Ysaac uoluit in sacrificium immolari, prout dicitur in *Alchorano* secundo azoara.”

59 Vigliano, *Le Coran en Latin*, 13.

60 Vigliano, *Le Coran en Latin*, 13: “[. . .] et idoneum deo testificante, *uidelicet uersus Mecham*, templeque sui medium, quod *Abraham primo fundauit*, firmabo [. . .]”

61 Martínez Gázquez, “Glossae ad Alchoranum Latinum,” 94.

notes a larger proportion of Ethiopians (“*Indiani scismatici*”⁶²) and Nubians (“*Danubiani*”). He explains the large number of the former by saying that they are always at war with the Arabs and Nubians, and so when they are defeated, they can only be sold or ransomed.⁶³ This serves as a pretext for Symon Semeonis to quote – verbatim – sura 56 (Q. 47: 04–06),⁶⁴ followed by sura 17 (Q. 08: 15–16), to which he appends aya 57:

Also, the seventeenth sura says: “No good man attacking the disbelievers should turn his back to them, except for a better reception and preparation. But if he does, he will fall in His deserving anger and in the perpetual fire and in the wrong path”. “But take captive or kill those seized in battle so their descendants might be punished for this”. This says the first-born of Satan, Muhamad, enemy of the human genre.⁶⁵

This scrambling of Robert of Ketton's translation – presented as a unit in Symon Semeonis's text – exemplifies how he adapted the text of the Qur'an and selected the ayas that lent the most support to his descriptions and the negative portrait of Islam that he wanted to create.

5 Using the Glosses

Though earlier editors ascertained the use of the polemical translations mentioned above,⁶⁶ until now the use of glosses to the Quranic text in the *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis* has gone unnoticed. Above I mentioned that a gloss was possibly used

⁶² See Esposito, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, 91–93.

⁶³ *It. Sym.*, 71: “Item sciendum est quod in sepe dictis ciuitatibus de omni secta alia ab illorum secta, uiri, mulieres, lactantes, iuuenes et cani, publice uenditioni ad instar bestiarum exponuntur, et signanter Indiani scismatici et Danubiani, qui omnes utriusque sexus in colore cum coruis et carbonibus multum participant. Quoniam hii cum Arabis et Danubianis semper guerram continent, a quo cum capiuntur redemptione uel uenditione euadunt.”

⁶⁴ *It. Sym.*, 71: “Vnde in Alchorano dicitur sic, azoara .LVI.: ‘Increduli’, uidelicet Christiani seu alii huic legis non obedientes, ‘a uobis in litibus uicti usque quo multa fiet cedes, capita perdant. Captiuitati uero firmiter stringantur ut se bene redimant. Lis non cesset ante telorum depositionem in terra, pugnantibus utrobique fatigatis. Deus quidem ab illis uindictam sumere posset, sed plus uult hos per illos experiri. Omnibus Dei dilectione pugnantibus, Deus facta sua remunerabit et eis paradysum bonis ditatum tribuat.”

⁶⁵ *It. Sym.*, 71: “Item dicitur azoara .XVII.: ‘Nullus uir bonus incredulos aggrediens eis terga uertat, nisi causa commodioris adoptionis et premunitionis. Sin autem iram dignam ignemque perpetuum malamque uiam incurret.’ ‘Sed in lite captos uel captiua uel perime ut per hoc sui castigentur posteriori.’ Hec primogenitus Sathane, Machometus, humani generis inimicus.”

⁶⁶ Golubovich, *Biblioteca Bio-bibliografica*, 241; Esposito, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, 12.

in the context of the discussion of the direction Muslims face during prayer. In the case that I am about to introduce, there is a verbatim copy of the gloss to the term “*dies ueneri*” (Q. 16: 152).⁶⁷ At this point in the text, Symon Semeonis is describing the practice of fasting in Islam, which only happens, according to him, during Ramadan:

They rarely or ever fast except when they celebrate their Ramadan, that it is the thirty days during which they say the Qur’an descended upon Muhammad. Then, they fast the whole day until they see the night’ first star and then they eat and drink and are occupied dishonorably with women until the day shines enough that it is possible to distinguish between a white and a black thread. The mentioned vilest pig and lover of women ordered this. It is in the Qur’an.⁶⁸

In Symon Semeonis’s reading, the gloss is introduced into the Quranic text, without differentiating the one from the other in any way. He even imitates the end of the gloss (“*sicut precepit Mahumet*”), though he adds his customary epithets for Muhammad. The discovery that Symon Semeonis used the glosses in his *Itinerarium* underscores the importance that these glosses had in guiding the reading of the Qur’an,⁶⁹ as well as in efforts to refute Islam or characterize it negatively. Although no further cases have been identified as of yet, the find gives us a glimpse of Symon Semeonis’s polemical model – as yet unidentified – and brings us a little closer to the family of manuscripts of the *Corpus Islamolatinum* used by the Irish Franciscan.

67 Martínez Gázquez “Glossae ad Alchoranum Latinum,” 106: “Dies ueneri: ‘Dies, scilicet, quando precipitur eis incessanter concumbere, scilicet, quando celebrant ramazan uel ramazana, id est, triginta dies in quibus dicunt descendisse Alchoran super Mahumet et ieiuent tota die usque quo primam stelam notis uideant et exinde comedunt et bibunt et concumbunt usque tantum diei luceat quo discerni possit fillum album a nigro, sicut precepit Mahumet.’” This gloss is also found in the manuscript at Yale University, Beinecke Library, 979. See Fernando González Muñoz, “Latin Texts on Islam in a Manuscript at Yale University,” in *Propaganda and (Un)covered Identities*, 26.

68 *It. Sym.*, 28: “Raro uel nunquam ieiuant nisi quando suum celebrant Ramathan, id est triginta dies in quibus dicunt descendisse Alchoran super Machometum, et tunc ieiuant tota die usque quo primam stellam noctis uideant, et exinde comedunt et bibunt et cum mulieribus turpiter operantur usque tantum diei luceat quo discerni possit filum album a nigro. Et sic precepit predictus porcus uilissimus et mulierum amator. Hec in Alchoran.”

69 Burman, *Reading the Latin Qur’an*, 60–87.

6 Conclusions

Symon Semeonis composed his *Itinerarium* when he was back in Europe following his pilgrimage, possibly in the Franciscan convent at Norwich, as the most-recent editor of the text, Mario Esposito, suggests;⁷⁰ the highly structured narrative, as well as the abundant use of sources and stylistic devices, lead me to the same conclusion.⁷¹

Throughout this study, we have taken a look at the different ways that Symon Semeonis uses quotes, all of which have the same polemical goal: to create a negative portrait of Islam. As we have seen, nowhere in the *Itinerarium* do we find an attempt to understand the other religion, nor any attempt to refute it. Regardless of which of the three ways of quoting the Qur'an that Symon Semeonis uses, his intention is always clearly polemical.⁷² In all the cases analyzed here, a description (whether of men's clothing and women's clothing, the direction faced during prayer, the sale of slaves in Egyptian cities) is linked to a quote from the Qur'an that is understood according to the context where it is inserted: thus, the clothing of Muslim men is the way it is because they do ritual washing five times a day, and slaves are numerous because of Islam's violence. Only where the gloss is used (and in those passages where Symon Semeonis tries to describe a doctrinal issue in Islam⁷³) is the quote explained by itself, with the customary deprecation of Muhammad at the close of the quotation.

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⁷⁰ Esposito, *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*, 3.

⁷¹ Ferrero, "El Liber de Doctrina Machumeti," 361.

⁷² Burman, *Reading the Latin Qur'ân*, 66–67.

⁷³ Justicia, "The Corpus Islamolatinum," 49–52.

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