

Xavier Casassas Canals

The Bellús Qur'an, Martín García, and Martín de Figuerola: The Study of the Qur'an and Its Use in the *Sermones de la Fe* and the Disputes with Muslims in the Crown of Aragon in the Sixteenth Century

“Secundo, illos uocauit quia sunt Hispani, non Armenii nec Africani.

Tertio, eo quod sunt compatriote, et hic nati nutriti et conuersati inter nos.”¹

“trahet vuestro alcorán para el viernes que viene, que yo traheré el mio.”²

Abstract: The Bellús Qur'an is one of the few testimonies we have about the process of working and studying collaboratively on the text of the Qur'an. This manuscript preserves traces of all of the phases and the figures involved in this process, from the initial work of the Muslim scribe who produced a careful, professional copy, to the insertion of the explanatory glosses in the margins and the marking up of parts of the text that were considered of interest and that would later be used in sermons and different kinds of works written with the goal of converting Muslims. It is a very important piece of evidence that still awaits an exhaustive interdisciplinary analysis, which will enable us to understand much more clearly the method of studying the Qur'an that was followed in the Crown of Aragon by both Christians and Muslims or former Muslims.

¹ In one of his sermons, Martín García provides six reasons why he believes it is important or necessary to preach to the Muslims. See Manuel Montoza Coca, “Los Sermones de Don Martín García, Obispo de Barcelona. Edición y estudio” (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2018), 168.

² Francisco Guillén Robles, *Leyendas de José hijo de Jacob y de Alejandro Magno* (Zaragoza: Imprenta del Hospicio Provincial, 1888), LXII.

1 The study of Arabic and the Qur'an in the Crown of Aragon, a School with a Long Tradition

For centuries there was a tradition of studying Arabic and Islam in the Crown of Aragon, a tradition that can be traced back to Ramón de Penyafort (d. 1275). This Catalan Dominican, an expert in canon law and a confessor and advisor to James I and confessor to Pope Gregory IX, was a sponsor of the first schools of Arabic and Hebrew. He argued that Jews and Muslims should not be forced to convert but rather should be convinced to do so freely, through reasoning and argument, as he states, for example, at the beginning of his work *Summa de poenitentia*: “Jews and Muslims need to be brought to the faith of Christ more with reasons and gentleness than with harshness, but they should never be forced to do it, for God is not pleased with an obedience that is not free.”³ Prominent figures in this tradition include Ramón Martí (ca. 1284) and Ramón Llull (d. 1316), while Martín García (d. 1521) and Martín de Figuerola, I believe, can be considered its last representatives.⁴ All these authors studied the Arabic language, and particularly the text of the Qur'an, in order to understand as fully as possible the foundations of Islamic belief and to be able to demonstrate its errors and untruths on the basis of its own texts. There is very little information about how these schools of Arabic (*studium*) functioned, whether those founded by Ramón de Penyafort in Tunis (1245) and Murcia (1266) or by Ramón Llull in Miramar (1276), nor can we say much about the method and process that were followed for learning Arabic or the works that were used.

3 “Los judíos y los musulmanes han de ser llevados a la fe de Cristo más con razones y suavidad que no con aspereza, pero no se debe nunca forzarlos a hacerlo, pues a Dios no le place una obediencia que no sea libre.” Francesc-Xavier Marín, “Ramon Llull: Creure i entendre a través del diàleg,” *Aloma* 11 (2002), 46.

4 I consider Figuerola to be a member of this Aragonese group of Arabic and Qur'an scholars, though the combative and intransigent tone of his sermons and texts separates him entirely from the principles of this school. When the archbishop of Zaragoza, Alonso de Aragón, the natural son of Ferdinand II, summoned him on September 29, 1517, and rebuked him for the style and tone of his preaching, which had given rise to complaints by both Muslims and Christians, he said: “You must recall that the Bishop of Barcelona preached many times to the Moors, and he did not say what you say, and what is more, I saw that he made an impression on them” (*Acordaros deueis quel obispo de barcelona á predicado muchas vezes á los moros, y no les á dicho esto que vos, ni menos é visto que aya echo impresión en ellos*). Figuerola answered, “You say, Sire, that Master Martín García did not preach in the same way I do, I say, Sire, that God ordains something at one time rather than at another (*Dize, Señor, que Maestre Martín garcía no á predicado del modo que yo digo, Señor que Dios dispone en un tiempo alguna cosa más que en otro*). See Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, LXXVII-LXXXI.

Though we do not have information about these methods and processes, I believe that we can say that this tradition was possible and had the success that it did in part because of the existence of a numerous and firmly established Muslim community in the Crown of Aragon that was free to practice its faith from the eleventh to the early sixteenth centuries – in other words, a community that kept alive Islam's cultural legacy by writing, copying, translating, and disseminating the works that were customary and essential for organizing and structuring any Muslim society. Copies of the Qur'an are an essential part of this cultural legacy, and it is therefore natural that the tradition of both professional and private copies of this book was maintained for centuries without interruption.⁵ The Bellús Qur'an, copied in the year 1518, is testimony to this tradition.⁶ Unlike in other parts of Europe where it was difficult for Christian scholars to get their hands on works in Arabic, scholars in the Crown of Aragon could easily and conveniently acquire copies of the Qur'an, since such copies circulated freely among their fellow citizens, with whom they had more or less regular contact. In addition, because Christians and Muslims in the Crown of Aragon spoke the same language, it was possible for them to work together and in teams, or to engage in disputes, something that did not occur in other European societies. Christians in the Crown of Aragon were accustomed to interacting with Muslims, which was not the case in Savoy, for example. Juan de Segovia remarks that a visit by the *alfaqui* of Segovia's *aljama*, Yça Gidelli, caused a great sensation at the Aiton priory, since none there had ever had any contact with a Muslim before.⁷ Thus, it is not surprising that the first Latin translation of the Qur'an should be produced in the area around the Ebro Valley, or that Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo

5 See Consuelo López-Morillas, *The Qur'an in Sixteenth-Century Spain: Six Moriscos Versions of Sura 79* (London: Tamesis Books, 1982); Consuelo López-Morillas, "The Genealogy of the Spanish Qur'an," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17 (2006), 255–294; and Nuria Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, "Qur'anic Manuscripts from Late Muslim Spain: The Collection of Almonacid de la Sierra," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16.2 (2014), 89–138.

6 Xavier Casassas Canals, "El Alcorán de Bellús: un Alcorán mudéjar de principios del siglo XVI con traducciones y comentarios en catalán, castellano y latín," *Alhadra* 1 (2015), 155–177.

7 ". . . but when it was announced that he had arrived in Savoy, where Muslims had hardly ever been seen before, many came to the Aiton priory, curious to meet him. And he, consistent with the good education he had received, behaved deferentially and measured with everyone." (. . . pero al divulgarse su llegada a Saboya, donde apenas habían visto nunca un musulmán, vinieron muchos al priorato de Aitón, por la curiosidad de conocerlo. Él, conforme a la buena educación recibida, se mostraba deferente y comedido con todos.) See Darío Cabanelas, *Juan de Segovia y el problema islámico* (Madrid: Imprenta y Editorial Maestre, 1951), 142.

(d. 1532) should also commission a translation of the Qur'an in Aragon.⁸ These two translations would have been impossible without the collaboration of Muslims or converts from Islam. This should be kept in mind, since we speak of Robert of Ketton's translation, but we sideline or even ignore completely the fact that he had the benefit of collaborating with a Muslim by the name of Mahumet, about whom we unfortunately do not have any information. In order for Robert of Ketton to produce his translation, or for scholars in the Crown of Aragon to be able to deepen their knowledge of the text of the Qur'an and translate it, they needed to have copies of the text of the Qur'an and other, complementary works, such as treatises on grammar and exegesis. In other words, they relied on the work of their Muslim fellow citizens, who made these copies. And they also needed collaborators to help them study and understand these works. Thus, even though we do not know the methods of study or the process of learning Arabic, what we can affirm is that, without the work and the collaboration of their Muslim fellow citizens, it would have been impossible for Aragonese scholars to produce these Latin translations, or at least it would have been very difficult, as difficult as for other scholars from elsewhere in Europe.⁹

It should be kept in mind that in the Crown of Aragon a large number of Islamic works were also either translated to or written in Castilian. Although they were written in Arabic-Aljamiado Castilian – that is, in Castilian using the Arabic alphabet – they must not have been difficult to read for Christian scholars who were familiar with this alphabet.¹⁰ Moreover, even if these scholars did not read these works themselves, their contents could have been communicated to them by their Muslim or formerly Muslim collaborators. Circulating in Aragon were not only partial Castilian translations not the Qur'an (up to now, no complete translation has been discovered, which suggests that none existed) but also translations of many other Islamic texts such as works of Islamic exegesis, narra-

8 See José Martínez Gázquez, “Las traducciones latinas del Corán, una percepción limitada del Islam en la Europa Medieval y Moderna,” in *Humanismo y pervivencia del mundo clásico. Homenaje al profesor Juan Gil*, ed. José María Maestre et al. (Madrid: CSIC, 2015), 663–682.

9 See, for example, the difficulties faced by Nicolas Clénard (d. 1542), who recounts a journey he made across Spain in search of works in Arabic and people to help him decipher them. Alphonse Roersch, *Correspondance de Nicolas Clénard* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1940–1941).

10 See Xavier Casassas Canals, “La literatura aljamiado-morisca en el marco de la literatura islámica española: siglos XIII-XVII (una variedad del castellano vinculada al hiero-sprachbund islámico),” in *Los moriscos y su legado desde ésta y otras laderas*, eds. Benlabbah, Fatiha y Chalkha, Achouak (Rabat: Instituto de Estudios Hispano-Lusos, 2010), 368–396. In this work, I propose a terminology that seems to me more appropriate and precise for referring to texts written in Castilian using alphabets other than the Latin alphabet. Thus, I use “Arabic-Aljamiado Castilian” instead of just “Aljamiado.”

tions of sacred history, works on the life of Muhammad and his forebears, works on Islamic dogma, Islamic juridical works, devotion manuals, lunar calendars, etcetera.¹¹

2 The Bellús Qur'an: An Exceptional Witness to the Process of Studying the Qur'an

Given this general lack of evidence and concrete information about the process of learning Arabic and studying the Qur'an, it seems to me that the Bellús Qur'an (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Arab. 7, s. XVI, an. 1518, 210 fols.) should be seen as an exceptional artifact. This copy of the Qur'an contains the traces left by all those who were involved in this process, and we can identify the several stages, whether successive or simultaneous, that were followed when the Arabic text of the Qur'an was studied.¹²

2.1 A Professional Copyist

The first stage in this process corresponds to the anonymous Muslim scribe who copied the text. In the case of the Bellús Qur'an, this was a professional copyist, one of the last representatives of the long-standing tradition of Qur'an copyists of the Valencia school, which reached its greatest splendor in the twelfth century with the Ibn Ghaṭṭūs family, whose copies were admired throughout the Islamic world and came to influence other copying traditions, for example in al-Andalus and North Africa.¹³ This copyist – it could also be a workshop of copyists – was probably commissioned by some wealthy Muslim or group of Muslims with the economic wherewithal to acquire a copy like this – that is, to pay for the copyist and the necessary high-quality paper and ink. It is also possible that this Qur'an

¹¹ See María José Cervera Frás, *Manuscritos moriscos aragoneses* (Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo, 2010).

¹² The manuscript of the Bellús Qur'an awaits an exhaustive study and interdisciplinary analysis, which will provide a whole series of new insights about the study of the Qur'an not only in the Crown of Aragon but also in other parts of Europe.

¹³ “Les créations de la famille Ibn Gattūs nous apparaissent donc exceptiønnelles, tant par le tømoinage qu'elles apportent sur l'activitØ d'un atelier d'enlumineurs à Valence que par leur rayonnement sur les ateliers d'Al-Andalus et du Maghreb.», Elisabeth Dandel, “Ibn Gaṭṭūs: une famille decopistes-enlumineurs à Valence (Espagne),” *Histoire de l'Art* 24 (1993), 21.

was commissioned by a Christian, since we have evidence that Figuerola commissioned at least one copy of the Qur'an.¹⁴ The copyist would have been able to do his work freely: Muslims in the Crown of Castile had already been forced to convert to Christianity in 1502, but in the Crown of Aragon they were still free to practice their faith until 1525, when they were converted by decree. If this copy was produced for internal use in the Muslim community, then a Muslim must necessarily have been involved in helping Christians to acquire the copy.

2.2 Interlinear Translations

Whether originally produced for a Christian or later acquired by one, once the Bellús Qur'an got into the hands of Christians who wanted to use it as a tool for studying Islam's sacred book, we have the first engagement with the text, which is recorded in the interlinear translations of individual words or groups of words. Whatever their knowledge of Arabic, these Christian readers looking at the text needed to understand the words that it contained. In order to understand them, it would have been necessary to have access to a dictionary or a convert from Islam to translate the different words. The Bellús Qur'an contains countless interlinear translations in Catalan, Castilian, and Latin.¹⁵ The fact that three different languages are used can be explained in several ways. Either the language of the translations corresponds to the working language, or the native language, of different scholars, or it corresponds to the language used by their Muslim collaborators. The use of the three languages shows that Aragonese society was multilingual and that the group of Christian scholars who used the Bellús Qur'an as a learning tool was a multilingual group of Catalan, Castilian, Latin, and Arabic speakers. In the future these interlinear translations should be carefully analyzed to see if any dialectal features can be detected that would help to identify the authors of the translations or at least the linguistic areas they came from.

Only after a preliminary examination of the text, after all the words it contained had been deciphered, would the text as a whole be translated. As a result of having studied the text, the Christians would have been able to translate the parts of the Qur'an of interest to them, and they would include these translations in their written works or use them in their preaching, their sermons, their debates, and their disputes with Muslims.

¹⁴ During his dispute with Muslims on June 5, 1517, Figuerola apologizes for not having been able to come earlier and says that the reason was "due to being occupied by having a Koran written" (por estar algo ocupado en aver escribir el alcorán). Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, LIX.

¹⁵ Casassas Canals, "El *Alcorán de Bellús*," 165 ff.

2.3 Translation of the titles of the Suras

The names of the suras in the Qur'an are not part of the revealed text. They were added later according to different criteria – sometimes a sura's title refers to one of its dominant themes, and at others a keyword or unique word contained in the sura is adopted as its title – with the result that a given sura may be known by different names. For example, sura number 38 is called both *Dāwūd* and *Šād*, and sura number 47 is called both *al-Qitāl* and *Muhammad*. Hence it is important to keep these titles in mind, as well as their translations, since they can help us to identify possible connections and interdependencies between different copies of the Qur'an and can even indicate the theological or dogmatic tradition that their copyists belonged to.¹⁶ In the case of the Bellús Qur'an, by comparing the translations made by Christian scholars with those that appear in works written by Christian authors, we may be able to establish links or influences or even to identify the person or people who wrote the translations in the margins of this manuscript. Thirty-four titles of suras are translated into Catalan or Castilian in the margins of the Bellús Qur'an. The translated titles are also important since they make it possible to locate them when reading or studying the text and to cite them in written works, in disputes, or in sermons. It is thus almost certain that the sura titles used by, for example, Martín García or Martín de Figuerola were the same ones as were used by Muslims in the Crown of Aragon; otherwise, there would have been misunderstandings or these Christian authors might even have been criticized by Muslims for not knowing the text of the Qur'an. Such criticism would have led to a loss of credibility on the part of the Christian authors.

2.4 Glosses on the Text, the Tafsīr

In many cases, translating the text is not enough to make the meaning comprehensible. The Muslims themselves have developed an entire science of Quranic exegesis, known as *tafsīr*, that they appeal to for information to help them understand ayas or passages that, without the help of exegesis, are difficult or impossible to understand correctly. There is evidence of this process also in the Bellús Qur'an. We can see that the Latin glosses written in the margins mention several

¹⁶ See Juan Pablo Arias Torres and François Déroche, "Reflexiones sobre la catalogación de ejemplares alcoránicos (a proposito del ms. 1397 de El Escorial)," *Al-Qantara* XXXII, fasc. 1 (2011), 243–260; Casassas Canals, "El Alcorán de Bellús", 163–165; Lamyā Kandil, "Die Surennamen in der offiziellen Kairiner Koranausgabe und ihre Varianten," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orients* 69 (1992), 44–60.

works of Quranic exegesis and contain commentaries that help, or are intended to help, elucidate the text.¹⁷ Mainly they cite the Muslim exegetes ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (d. 541/1147)¹⁸ and az-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144).¹⁹ We do not know definitively if Christian scholars used these exegetical works themselves, reading the originals in Arabic, or if their Muslim collaborators provided them with information about these works that might prove useful or interesting. I think that one possibility is that Christian authors had access to one of the Castilian translations of Quranic exegetical works that circulated among the Muslims of the Crown of Aragon, such as the work of exegesis by Ibn Abī Zamanīn (d. 399/1009), two partial bilingual (Arabic-Castilian) versions of which have been preserved.²⁰

2.5 System for Locating and Citing Suras and Ayas

Another task that was important when studying the Qur’an was to mark the text in such a way as to create a system for referring to particular suras and ayas. This system had two different purposes: to facilitate study of the text by making it easy to locate ayas or suras, and to be able to provide an exact reference to the ayas cited in written works or sermons. All of the folios of the manuscript of the Bellús Qur’an have clear markings in the upper margin to indicate the number of the book and of the sura to which all of the ayas on that folio belong. Where a new sura begins in the middle of a folio, the reference to this sura is written in the margin. The ayas are not numbered, but the end of each aya is indicated with a small triangle made by three dots. The symbol of a snail is used to mark groups of five ayas, and a circle, to mark groups of ten. On the origins of the system for marking the text of the Qur’an, see my hypothesis below where I deal with Martín García’s sermons.

All these steps in the process of studying the text of the Qur’an could be done simultaneously or one after the other. Once this process is completed, or at least

17 An edition of these glosses, in: Xavier Casassas Canals and José Martínez Gázquez, “Scholia Latina, Arabica et in vulgari lingua ad Alphurcanum Mohamedis BSB-Hss Cod.arab. 7 (Corán de Bellús),” *Medieval Encounters* 27 (2021), 1–49.

18 See Delfina Serrano Ruano and Xavier Casassas Canals, “Sobre las supuestas inclinaciones mu`tazilíes de `Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn `Aṭīyya (Granada, m. 541/1147). Acusaciones medievales y exoneraciones contemporáneas”, in press.

19 See Amina González Costa, “Exégesis y exégetas en Al-Andalus”, in *Historia del sufismo en Al-Andalus*, eds. González Costa, Amina and López Anguita, Gracia (Córdoba: Editorial Almuzara, 2009), 75–91; and Adday Hernández López, “Qur’anic Studies in al-Andalus: An Overview of the State of Research on qirā`āt and tafsīr”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 19.3 (2017), 74–102.

20 See Nuria Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, “La transmisión de textos entre los moriscos: dos copias del tafsīr abreviado de Ibn Abi Zamanīn” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes*, 26 (2015), 147–161.

once the scholar has attained what he considers to be sufficient knowledge of the Qur'an – that is, of Islam, its dogmas, and its sacred history – he attempts to derive some benefit from this knowledge, whether in the context of oral disputations, sermons, or polemical or apologetic works.

The Bellús Qur'an was finished in 1518, a year that was remarkable for two reasons. First of all, in this year Egidio da Viterbo commissioned his translation of the Qur'an in Aragon.²¹ Secondly, it was the year when Figuerola withdrew from Valencia, discouraged by the failure of his preaching and disputation strategy for converting Muslims. It is quite likely that Figuerola was involved in acquiring this Qur'an in order to make it available to Christian scholars, and it is also entirely possible that he himself used it as a study tool. And since this copy of the Qur'an does appear, during its circulation outside of Spain, in Egidio da Viterbo's intellectual circle, and all evidence points to the Orientalist Johann Albrecht von Widmanstetter (1557), its last owner, having acquired it from the library of Egidio da Viterbo following the latter's death, I think that it is also possible that this copy was used in the preparatory work for the translation commissioned by Cardinal Egidio.²²

In other words, in one way or another the Bellús Qur'an was in the possession of scholars in the circle of the bishop of Barcelona, Martín García, for a certain amount of time after the year 1518. For this reason it is interesting to see how the knowledge of the Qur'an acquired by scholars in the Crown of Aragon in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century was used in their publications, or how copies of the Qur'an were used in disputes with Muslims.²³ In this respect we have two valuable pieces of evidence, Martín García's *Sermones*, which were published while the author was still alive, and the work *Lumbre de Fe*, by Martín de Figuerola, which remains unpublished to this day.

21 See Mercedes García-Arenal and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "'The Law of Abraham the Catholic': Juan Gabriel as Qur'an Translator for Martín de Figuerola and Egidio da Viterbo" in *Al-Qantara*, XXXV, 2 (2014), 409–459.

22 As part of her doctoral project, "Looted Letters: Arts of the Book in Late Ḥafṣid Ifriqiya and the Reception of Arabic Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe," Laura Hinrichsen of the Khalili Research Centre in Oxford is developing a database with all the manuscripts from the library of Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter, studying in particular the manuscripts originating in North Africa, and she considers my hypothesis that Widmanstetter acquired the Bellús Qur'an from the private library of Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo to be very plausible. While there is documentary proof that other manuscripts from Widmanstetter's library came from North Africa, there is nothing to indicate that the manuscript of the Bellús Qur'an passed through Africa during its journey from Bellús to Munich's Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in just forty years.

23 Along these lines, see Teresa Soto and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "Authority, Philology and Conversion under the Aegis of Martín García," in *After Conversion. Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal, Leiden: Brill, 2016, 199–228.

3 Martín García: The Use of the text of the Qur'an in the “Sermones de la Fe”

Martín de Figuerola tells us that at the end of the fifteenth century and beginning of the sixteenth the “Sermones de la Fe” were being delivered in the Crown of Aragon, specifically in the city of Zaragoza. These sermons, addressed to Jews and Muslims, were delivered four times a year on the order of the king by an official appointed by the king. They took place in the Zaragoza cathedral, and Jews and Muslims were required to attend. The official in charge of delivering these sermons at the beginning of the sixteenth century was Martín García, the bishop of Barcelona. He was succeeded sometime around 1515 by Martín de Figuerola. We do not know if the sermons continued to be given after Martín de Figuerola was withdrawn from the position – that is, if he had a successor. These were clearly institutionalized events that were part of the Jews' and Muslims' yearly obligations, though there does not seem to have been any great resistance to them on the part of these religious communities. Although we do not have any explicit information about whether these sermons were attended by Muslims and Jews together at the same time or whether some “Sermones de Fe” were delivered exclusively for one or the other group, everything seems to indicate that some were addressed to Jews, while others were addressed to Muslims. The objective of these sermons was to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity.

A man of prodigious intellectual and oratorical skill, Martín García had a distinguished career in the church, rising to become bishop of Barcelona and to hold the posts of Grand Inquisitor, the personal confessor of Queen Isabella I, official preacher of King Ferdinand II of Aragon, as well as the official preacher of the “Sermones de la Fe.” He delivered these sermons in Romance and later translated them into Latin and published them in 1520 under the title *Sermones eminentissimi totiusque Barchinonensis gregis tutoris acerrimi, necnon immarcessibilis sacre theologie paludamento insigniti Martini Garsie*, which contained many if not all of the “Sermones de la Fe”. An edition of this work was recently published by Manuel Montoza Coca.²⁴ It contains 156 sermons delivered between 1490 and 1510. The sermons are not presented in chronological order, and the work does not give the date they were written or delivered. Nor does it specify which of the published sermons were part of the “Sermones de la Fe,” but from the text and the titles, it is clear that the first twenty-one are addressed to Jews and that sermons 23 through 39 (plus 125 and 138) are explicitly addressed to Muslims, and thus, we can assume that the latter were part of the group of “Sermones de la Fe”

²⁴ Manuel Montoza Coca, “Los Sermones”.

addressed to the Muslims.²⁵ Martín García was an extremely erudite man, and his sermons are replete with quotations from Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic sources.²⁶ With respect to Arabic quotations, his sermons contain close to 350 quotes from the Qur'an, 44 from the Sunnah, 39 from works on Quranic exegesis (Ibn 'Atīyya, az-Zamakhsharī), and a few from Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), and other authors of Arabic works. The quotes from Arabic sources, especially references to the text of the Qur'an, have been the subject of a thesis by Ribera Florit, where they are analyzed closely and exhaustively,²⁷ and where some of them are also compared to the quotes from the Qur'an included in the work *Confusion de la secta Mahometica*, attributed to Juan Andrés.²⁸ One of Ribera Florit's conclusions is the Martín García's quotes from Qur'an are much more precise than the ones included in the *Confusion*. We can also see that the references to the suras and ayas in Martín García's sermons are much more precise, as Juan Andrés only gives the number of the sura but never the aya. Another way in which we see that Martín García's knowledge of the Qur'an is more exact than Juan Andrés's is his reference to the total number of suras that make up the Qur'an. Martín García understood that there are 114 – or 113, if you do not count

25 It is possible that Martín García delivered more “Sermones de la Fe” to the Muslims and decided not to include them in this collection of his sermons translated into Latin. On the other hand, according to Ribera Florit, there is a series of sermons of anti-Muslim polemics that do not seem to be part of the “Sermones de la Fe.” They are sermons V, XIV, XXXIX, LXVIII, LXL, LXXXVI, XC, CVI, CXXVII, and CXXX. See José María Ribera Florit, “La polémica cristiano-musulmana en los sermones del maestro inquisidor Don Martín García” (PhD diss., Universitat de Barcelona, 1967).

26 According to Montoza Coca in his edition of the work, the Latin sources include 11,000 references to the Bible, 4,000 references to Patristic authors, and numerous references to medieval authors. And with respect to Jewish sources, Montoza Coca tells us that they are comparable in number to the references to Muslim sources. See Montoza Coca, “Los Sermones”, XXI-XXXIX.

27 Ribera Florit, “La polémica cristiano-musulmana”.

28 There are different opinions about whether Juan Andrés was a real person or was created as a propaganda tool. As to whether he produced translations of the Qur'an and the main collections of Hadith, as is asserted in the prologue to the *Confusión*, there is no proof to be able to conclude that he did. As to the authorship of the *Confusión de la secta mahometana*, there is documentation about possible co-authorship. “On November 23, 1515, a three-year privilege was granted to the esteemed *mosén* Pou and *mosén* Juan Andrés, the authors of the work titled *Confusión de la secta mahometana*, making any reprinting or sale [of the work] in Valencia subject to a fine of 50 pounds and confiscation of the copies.” (En 23 de noviembre de 1515 se concede privilegio por tres años a los venerables *mosén* Pou y *mosén* Juan Andrés, autores de la obra intitulada *Confusión de la secta mahometana*, para que nadie pueda reimprimirla ni venderla en Valencia bajo pena de 50 libras y pérdida de los ejemplares.). See Francisco Martí Grajales, *Ensayo de un Diccionario Biográfico y Bibliográfico de los poetas que florecieron en el Reino de Valencia hasta el año 1700* (Madrid: Tipografía de la Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, 1927), 237.

Al-Fatiha – whereas Juan Andrés gives a total of 212 suras. It is commonly asserted that Martín García used or was influenced by Juan Andrés’s *Confusion*, which is the only extant work by this author (the works that he claims in his prologue to have written are not mentioned in any other source, thus there is no independent evidence that he ever wrote them). It seems to me that this supposed influence needs to be reconsidered, for two reasons. First, Martín García’s sermons are prior to the publication of the *Confusion*, which was first published in 1518, and as I have noted, the sermons published by Martín García had been delivered between 1490 and 1510. Keeping in mind that there are about twenty sermons addressed to Muslims and that Martín García delivered four “Sermones de la Fe” to the Muslims per year, the first of these sermons must have been delivered, at the latest, in about 1505. This chronology clearly demonstrates that Martín García’s sermons cannot have been influenced by or rely in any way on the *Confusion*. Second, as noted above, these sermons reveal a more precise knowledge of the Qur’an, with references to suras and ayas that are more exact. This shows, again, that Martín García cannot be following Juan Andrés, even granting the possibility that he somehow received a manuscript of Juan Andrés’s work prior to its publication.

The system for citing sura and aya in Martín García does not seem to have been used previously, as there is absolutely no evidence of its use by other authors, whether Christian or Muslim. The system is based on the principle, derived from a Muslim editorial tradition that divides the Qur’an into four volumes or parts, that the text is made up of four independent books.²⁹ However, the notion that the Qur’an is made up of four books was not invented by Martín García: previous Christian authors, among them Juan de Segovia, mention this way of dividing or editing the Qur’an. Martín García’s innovation was to establish an independent numbering system for each of the four parts of the Qur’an – that is, each of the four books, as they were thought of by Christians. In other words, the suras are not treated as a single sequence that goes from sura 1 to sura 114; rather, within each book, Martín García created an internal numbering system that begins each time with sura (“chapter” is the term used by Christian authors) number one. Thus, book one goes from sura 1 to 5; book two, from sura 1 to 12; book three, from sura 1 to 17; and book four, from sura 1 to 79. Since this way of numbering the text of the Qur’an means that there are, for example, four suras number one, it becomes necessary to mention the number of the book to which it belongs when a particular sura or aya is cited. According to this method, sura number 5 of the

²⁹ See, in the present volume, Juan Pablo Arias, “‘Sicut Euangelia sunt quatuor, distribuerunt continentiam eius in quatuor libros’: On the Division of Iberian Qur’ans and Their Translations into Four Parts”.

Qur'an would be referred to as sura 4 of book one, and sura 20 would be referred to as sura 2 of book three. Since we have not yet been able to find any text earlier than Martín García's "Sermones" that uses this system of reference and numbering, I believe that we can say that he created this system. It will also be used later Martín de Figuerola in his work *Lumbre de Fe*, where in my opinion he follows Martín García,

Why does Martín García refer in this way to the suras and ayas of the Qur'an, which might seem to complicate the matter unnecessarily? I believe that the answer to this question has to do with the audience for which the sermons were written. The sermons that are full of quotations from the Qur'an were addressed to Muslims, and in them Martín García called their attention to certain ayas that were central to the validity of his argument, and it is clear that for him it was very important that his Muslim audience be able to easily locate the cited texts in their own copies of the Qur'an. Martín García, who was clearly an extremely intelligent man, would not have used a citation system that was unsuitable or useless for Muslims. This leads me to think that most Aragonese Muslims, at least those living in Zaragoza whom Martín García addressed in the "Sermones de la Fe," must have used copies of the Qur'an in four volumes or divided into four parts, because otherwise the citation system used by him would not have made sense, just as it would not have made any sense to mark the Bellús Qur'an using this system, since this copy of the Qur'an does not show how complicated and impractical it is to use this system of dividing and numbering in a copy of the Qur'an that is not divided into four parts.

Thus far, there have been no studies of Martín García's "Sermones de la Fe" that provide a detailed analysis of its structure and form, of the way it addresses Muslims, or of its strategy for converting them to Christianity. In general, these sermons attempted to convince their audience that the truth of the Christian religion was the only means of salvation by making reference to the text of the Qur'an, while trying not to provoke unnecessary debates or friction with Muslims. Martín García followed the tradition of his precursors in the Crown of Aragon, which argued that conversion should be achieved by appealing to Muslims using their own tradition and texts and not through coercion. This "loving" stance will be harshly criticized by Martín de Figuerola, who followed and propounded a more radical, combative strategy.³⁰

³⁰ The archbishop of Zaragoza, Alonso de Aragón – who as we have seen asked Figuerola to adopt Martín García's gentle tone in his preaching – told him during the admonitory conversation referred to above (see note 4), "that he should preach, but with much love" (que predicasse; pero con mucho amor). Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, LXXXI.

4 Martín de Figuerola: The Use of Copies of the Qur'an in his Disputes with Muslims

Martín de Figuerola also held the position of official preacher of the “Sermones de la Fe.” In about 1515 he took over this post from Martín García, whose advanced age prohibited him from continuing to carry out his duties.³¹ Figuerola’s sermons have not been preserved, but we know in general what their tone and contents were like from the references the author makes to them in his description of the disputes he held with the Muslim alfaquis in Zaragoza.³² Figuerola broke with the strategy of showing respect and consideration towards the Muslims that Martín García had pursued. His preaching was combative and extreme, and his tone met with criticism not only from the Muslims themselves but also from the nobles and the civil and ecclesiastic authorities.³³ Figuerola was rebuked by the archbishop of Zaragoza, Alonso de Aragón (d. 1520), the natural son of Ferdinand II, who asked him to go back to the preaching style used by Martín García. Figuerola refused, sought support for his strategy among different members of the court, and on failing to find it, withdrew to Valencia, giving up his preaching and dedicating himself to writing his *Lumbre de Fe*. At the end of this work, which remains unpublished, we find an interesting diary, or a recounting of his disputes with some of the Zaragoza alfaquis, in which he explains his use of the Qur’an and other texts in Arabic, the physical use of manuscript copies of the texts.

31 See Bernard Ducharme, “De Talavera a Ramírez de Haro: actores y representaciones de la evangelización de los mudéjares y moriscos en Granada, Zaragoza y Valencia (1492–1545)”, *De la tierra al cielo. Líneas recientes de investigación en historia moderna*, ed. Eliseo Serrano Martín (Zaragoza: Fundación Española de Historia Moderna, Institución Fernando el Católico, 2012), 45.

32 “And thus, following my sermon, in corpores sermonis, I said that that they should be compelled by indirect compulsion such as taxes, sales taxes, and taking away their mosques, and that in Christian lands there should not be places devoted to blaspheming against the most holy name of Christ Jesus; and moreover, that their alfaquis should be taken away, because they do not tell them the truth of what is written but rather keep them lost (Y assi, prosiguiendo mi sermón, in corpores sermonis, dixi que los compelliessen, por compulsion indirecta, como eran pechas, alcabalas, que les quitassen las mesquitas, y que en tierra de xpianos no hubiesse lugar dedicado para blasfemar al nombres sanctíssimo de Jesuxpo; y más, que les quitasse los alfaquís, y esto porque no les dizen la verdad de lo que tienen scritto, antes los leuan vendidos), Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, LXXVI.

33 See note 4 above.

First, Figuerola either commissioned or acquired copies of the text of the Qur'an and other Arabic texts. We do not know by what exact means he acquired these works or from whom. Only once does he mention in an indirect way that he was overseeing the commissioning of a copy of the Qur'an.³⁴ What he does say several times is that he was in possession of copies of the Qur'an that he used on the one hand as study tools and on the other in order to dispute with Muslims. This proves that it was possible for Christians to get their hands on Arabic texts in the Crown of Aragon. However, we have no information about whether they were easily acquired, how they were acquired, or how much they cost.

Figuerola carefully studied the text of the Qur'an with the help of Muslim or formerly Muslim collaborators, as well as other, complementary texts such as works on Quranic exegesis and works on the life of Muhammad.³⁵ The main objective of his studies was to be able to identify those parts of the Qur'an that demonstrated its errors and therefore its falseness or texts that revealed the truth of the Christian religion as the only path to salvation. Once he identified these texts, he would take notes and prepare the topics that he wanted to address in his disputes.³⁶ In Zaragoza, after having been given permission by Martín García, Figuerola conceived the strategy of going to the mosques to debate with the alfaquis in front of Muslim believers.³⁷ He took with him to these disputes his manuscript copies, which were marked up and annotated in a way similar to the Bellús Qur'an, which may have been used in a dispute in Valencia. He wanted to make clear to the Muslims that everything he was saying had been taken from

³⁴ See note 14 above.

³⁵ "having been well instructed in [Islamic] history and how he was born [Figuerola is referring here to Muhammad], by one called Johan Grabiél, an alfaquí from Teruel who is now, by the grace of God, a Christian . . . their own Koran says this; which I have looked at very closely and read, and many other things that I took [with me] to dispute (siendo bien informado de la historia y de cómo nació, por uno que se decía maestre Johan Grabiél, alfaquí que era de teruel, y ahora, por la gracia de Dios, xpno, . . . su mismo alcorán se lo dize; el cual yo tengo muy bien visto y leydo, y otras muchas cosas que traya para desputar). Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, 66.

³⁶ "And I took the Koran and began to page through it looking for the texts and my questions required" (Y yo tomé ell alcorán, y empecé de cartear para buscar los textos que mis questionen tenían). Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, 74.

³⁷ Figuerola threatens the Muslims of Zaragoza, saying that he wants to implement this disputation strategy throughout the Crown of Aragon: ". . . surely they would be made to go to all the alfaquis in the kingdom, and in their very mosques, with their books, we would engage in disputes, to make them aware of how they were lost and apart from the road to salvation." (. . . que cierto á todos los alfaquís del regno les harían venir, y que dentro de sus mesquitas mismas, con sus libros, entraríamos en las disputas, para dar á conocer como iuan perdidos y fuera de camino de saluación). Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, 65.

the text of the Qur'an.³⁸ Using the citation system invented by Martín García, he pointed out to his listeners which ayas he was talking about as he went along, so that they could find them in their own copies of the Qur'an and confirm that what Figuerola was saying was the truth. Figuerola disputed with the Qur'an in his hands and encouraged the Muslims to also have their Qur'ans at hand and to verify in them what he was saying. For this reason, he would announce ahead of time that he was going to bring his Qur'an and that the Muslims should not forget to bring theirs: "Bring yours and I will bring mine."³⁹ In his description of the disputes he makes constant reference to this fact. Sometimes, Muslims accused Figuerola of having copies that were incorrect or that included texts that were not part of the canonical Qur'an. In these cases, Figuerola insisted that they bring their own copies so that they would be able to tell whether his copy was correct or not, whether it corresponded to the original text, and whether what he said about the contents of the Qur'an was true.

This account of the disputes shows not only that Aragonese Muslims helped Christians to get copies of the Qur'an (it is not customary for a Muslim to copy the Qur'an for a Christian or to sell him a copy) but also that it did not seem to bother them that Christians held these copies in their hands as they disputed at the mosque. Within other Muslim communities, such a scene is almost unimaginable or would be almost unimaginable. In Aragon, contact, collaboration, and also disputes between Muslims and Christians – which were unusual in other parts of the Islamic world – were made possible by several centuries of coexistence.

38 Figuerola says during one of these disputes, addressing the Muslims who were present: "and with your doctors and books, after having finished preaching, I will prove all to be true" (y con vuestros doctores y libros, en auer acabado la predicación, probaré esser verdad todo). Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, 70.

39 On September 20, 1517, during a dispute between an alfaqui and Martín de Figuerola, the former says to the latter: "Sire, these matters that you bring up are not in the Koran, and whoever wrote for you wrote wrong" (Señor, estas cuestiones que vos trais no están en ell alcorán; y quien vos á escrito esso scrivió mal). To which Figuerola responded: "I did not write the Koran, or your books, your alfaquis have written and proclaimed them before; but in order to know whether these matters are true, bring your Koran on Friday of next week, and I will bring mine, and we will confirm here whether what I say is true, and look, Sires, that none of you be absent next Friday" (Yo no é scricto ell alcorán, y vuestros libros, antes los an scricto y declarado alfaquí; pero, para conocer si son verdaderas estas questionnes, trahet vuestro alcorán para el viernes que viene, que yo traheeré el mio, y aquí comprobaremos si es verdad lo que yo digo, y mira, Señores, no falte ninguno para el viernes que viene). Guillén Robles, *Leyendas*, 73.

5 Conclusions

In the Crown of Aragon, a prominent group of Christian scholars maintained a centuries-long tradition of studying the Qur'an in its original Arabic, as well as other works that aided their comprehension of both the Qur'an and the foundations of the Islamic faith. The fact that in Aragonese territory the Christian and Muslim communities had lived side by side for centuries and used a common language to communicate with one another worked to the advantage of these Christian scholars. Acquiring Arabic or Islamic works was much easier for them than it was for other European scholars interested in studying the Qur'an, and they had much greater opportunities to engage Muslim or formerly Muslim collaborators to help them study than they would have had elsewhere in Europe. With these collaborators they were able to speak in their own language, which eliminated the problems that can arise from translation. The mere fact of being able to hold a dispute in Romance, even though the dispute may have been contentious, could potentially have enriched the Christians' knowledge of Islam and Muslim thinking.

The Bellús Qur'an is one of the few testimonies we have about the process of working and studying collaboratively on the text of the Qur'an. This manuscript preserves traces of all of the phases and the figures involved in this process, from the initial work of the Muslim scribe who produced a careful, professional copy, to the insertion of the explanatory glosses in the margins and the marking up of parts of the text that were considered of interest and that would later be used in sermons and different kinds of works written with the goal of converting Muslims. It is a very important piece of evidence that still awaits an exhaustive interdisciplinary analysis, which will enable us to understand much more clearly the method of studying the Qur'an that was followed in the Crown of Aragon by both Christians and Muslims or former Muslims.

The purpose of the school whose prominent representatives included Ramón de Penyafort, Ramón Martí, Ramón Llull, and Martín García was to attain, through the study of Arabic and Islamic texts, a more complete knowledge of the Qur'an and the Islamic faith, of Islamic thought, in order that they might succeed in converting Muslims. Without losing sight of this objective, without tempering their criticism of Islam and particularly of the Qur'an, and without compromising in the least, still they strove to hold the line initially drawn by Ramón de Penyafort, that conversion could not be forced and needed to be a free act, achieved through argument while showing respect to the Muslims. Although Martín de Figuerola belonged to this school in the sense that he was interested in gaining direct knowledge of the Qur'an and he was successful in converting Muslims using arguments based on their own texts, arguments about the errors contained in those texts, he diverges from this school by virtue of his advocacy for a strategy

of violent attacks, his total lack of respect for his interlocutors, and his proposal to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in favor of using extreme force.

The study of the Arabic language, the Qur'an, and the basic tenets of the Islamic faith among authors belonging to this school in the Crown of Aragon bore fruit in works such as Ramón Martí's *Pugio Fidei*, Ramón Llull's *Llibre de gentil e dels tres savis*, Martín García's *Sermones*, and Martín de Figuerola's *Lumbre de Fe*. What is needed at this point is an interdisciplinary study of all these works as a group, including, importantly, an Islamological analysis, which seems to me something that has been neglected up to now, in order to determine what the result was of this interest in the Qur'an, how the discourse about and against Islam was created in the Crown of Aragon, and what influence this school had on the rest of Europe.

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