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Maxime Sellin

To Translate is to Interpret: Exegetic Annotations in the Qur'an of Bellús (Valencia c. 1518)

1 Introduction

In 1499, Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros started an intensive campaign of conversion of the Muslims in Granada. Among his strategies, he chose to target the elite to subject them to different measures of pressure and coercion.¹ His aim was to publicly convert the elite in the hope that the Muslim population of Granada might follow them in their conversion. Martín García, bishop of Zaragoza and later of Barcelona, was in Granada with Cisneros. Inspired by his experiences in Granada, he later started a campaign to convert the Muslims of Aragon. He began to actively confute Islam based solely on qur'anic material. He was conscious that in order to preach and convert the elite, a profound understanding of the Qur'an and Islam was needed. With that objective in mind, he commissioned a treatise on conversion that was published in 1515 in Valencia, the *Confusión o confutación de la secta mahomética y del Alcorán*, authored by Juan Andrés.² This text uses the Islamic tradition to refute the Qur'an.³ Martín García continued his strategy in his *Sermones*, in which he also seems to target the Muslim elite (mainly the *alfaquis*).⁴ In 1521, Joan Martí de Figuerola, who was also connected to Martín García, wrote a refutation of the Islamic faith called *Lumbre de Fe contra el Alcorán*, with the help of Juan Gabriel de Teruel. All these books

1 Isabelle Poutrin, *Convertir les musulmans: Espagne, 1491–1609* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2012), 49–76.

2 Juan Andrés, *Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán*, ed. Elisa Ruiz and M. Isabel García-Monge (Mérida: Regional de Extremadura, 2003).

3 Katarzyna K. Starczewska, “‘No es esto sino hystorias de los antiguos’: entre la narración medieval y la de la primera edad moderna en *Confusión* de Juan Andrés,” *Medievalia* 18, no. 1 (2015).

4 Manuel Montoza Coca, “Los sermones de don Martín García, obispo de Barcelona. Edición y estudio,” PhD Diss. (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2018).

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(and other after them also based in refuting the Qur'an) were known as the *Antialcoranes*. It seems likely, therefore, that in the surroundings of Martín García different persons were working on translating the Qur'an. In fact, Juan Andrés, Martín García and Juan Gabriel all claim to have translated the Holy Book, but no complete translation has reached us. Martí de Figuerola quoted exegetic material in the verses that he translated.⁵ He seems to have often relied on Ibn 'Aṭīyya's tafsir.⁶ Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo's Latin translation, edited by Katarzyna K. Starczewska,⁷ is the only complete translation connected to the *Antialcoranes* that has come down to us. By collating the works of Figuerola and Egidio da Viterbo, Mercedes García-Arenal and K. Starczewska demonstrated that Egidio's translator, Ioannis Gabriel Turolensis, and Figuerola's collaborator, Juan Gabriel de Teruel, the converted *alfaquí* of Teruel, were one and the same person.⁸ Indeed, the Italian cardinal came to Spain as papal legate (*nuncio*) in the spring of 1518 to convince the newly nominated Emperor Carlos V get involved in the fight against the Ottomans. While in Spain, where he was in Zaragoza and Barcelona, he requested, probably of Martín García, an Arabic Qur'an and somebody to help him to do a translation. He was in contact with Figuerola and with Juan Gabriel. The former *alfaquí* of Teruel may have sent or given his translation later on to Egidio da Viterbo.

It was during Egidio's visit to Aragon that the manuscript Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek [BSB], MS cod. arab 7, a complete codex of the Qur'an, was copied in the city of Bellús, near Valencia in 1518 (924 of the Hijri calendar according to the colophon).⁹ It is therefore one of the last Mudejar copies of the Qur'an.

In recent years this manuscript has been the subject of several studies, beginning with the publication of its marginalia by Xavier Casassas Canals and

5 Ryan Szpiech, Katarzyna K. Starczewska and Mercedes García-Arenal, "Deleytaste del dulce sono y no pensaste en las palabras'. Rendering Arabic in the Antialcoranes," *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018); García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic': Juan Gabriel as Quran Translator for Martín de Figuerola and Egidio da Viterbo," *Al-Qanṭara* 35, no. 2 (2014), 411.

6 García-Arenal, Starczewska and Szpiech, "The Perennial Importance of Mary's Virginity and Jesus' Divinity: Qur'anic Quotations in Iberian Polemics After the Conquest of Granada (1492)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 20, no. 3 (2018), 55.

7 Katarzyna K. Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'an (1518/1621): Commissioned by Egidio da Viterbo: Critical Edition and Case Study* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018).

8 Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'an*.

9 Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 202v.

José Martínez Gázquez.¹⁰ Martínez Gázquez also wrote a study that compares the Qur'an of Bellús with two other manuscripts, Paris BnF arabe 384 and Granada, Escuela de Estudios Árabes, A-5 – 2.¹¹

In 2015 Xavier Casassas Canals wrote a presentation of the codex and a new paper that appeared at the end of 2021.¹² In it he first showed that this Qur'an is divided into four parts,¹³ the same division that occurs in the sermons of Martín García, *Confusión o confutación de la secta mahomética, Lumbre de la Fe*, and the “Qur'an of Toledo”, and that originates in a preexisting Andalusian tradition.¹⁴

1.1 Codicological remarks

We can distinguish several paleographic and codicologic characteristics. The Qur'anic text is written on paper in a round Maghrebi script characteristic of Mudéjar and Andalusian manuscripts. Every folio presents 19 lines of text. After a quick study and a comparison with the help of the book *Al-Ta'rif fi Ikhtilāf al-Riwāyah 'an Nāfi'*,¹⁵ we find that the text seems to follow the reading of Warsh from Nāfi'. In the first folios of the codex, we see a watermark of a hand with closed fingers crowned with a five-petalled flower. The letters “P.M.” are inscribed in the center of the hand. With the exceptions of these letters, this watermark is similar to a group of watermarks pointed out by Briquet.¹⁶ Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter also owned codices with this type of watermark, such as Munich, BSB, MS

10 Xavier Casassas Canals and José Martínez Gázquez, “Scholia Latina, Arabica et in uulgari lingua ad Alphurcanum Mahumedis: BSB-Hss Cod.arab. 7 (Corán de Bellús),” *Medieval Encounters* 27, no. 1 (2021).

11 José Martínez Gázquez, “Glosas latinas al corán árabe 384 BNF París, al cod. arab. 7 de la BSB Corán de Bellús y al MS. A-5 – 2,” *EEAG* 46 (2021), 16.

12 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,” in *The Latin Qur'an, 1143–1500 Translation, Transition, Interpretation*, ed. Cándida Ferrero Hernández and John Tolan (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021).

13 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): 160–63.

14 Juan Pablo Arias Torres, “Sicut Euangelia Sunt Quatuor, Distribuerunt Continentiam Eius in Quatuor Libros: On the Division of Iberian Qur'ans and Their Translations into Four Parts,” in *The Latin Qur'an*.

15 'Uthmān al-Dānī, *Al-Ta'rif fi Ikhtilāf al-Riwāyah 'an Nāfi'*, ed. Muḥammad as-Saḥābī (Rabat: Muṭaba'a warāqa al-faḍīla, 1995).

16 Charles-Moïse Briquet, *Les filigranes: dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600* (Geneve: A. Jullien, 1907), vol 3, 567–68.

cod. arab 342, a commentary on Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī's *al-Risāla*, and Munich BSB cod.arab 234 first folio, an Arabic translation of the Pentateuch from Latin, with what seem to be Castilian annotations¹⁷. We also see traces of mistakes later corrected, and passages that were omitted and then inserted in the margins.¹⁸ The volume also lacks a *sarlowh* or frontispiece,¹⁹ a feature that normally denotes the beginning of a sacred text. The text is introduced only by a decorated rectangle and a marginal circle. These two facts may show that this manuscript did not have a high value in terms of sanctity: the person who commissioned it cared more for the time it would take to copy the Qur'an than for the sacred character of the text itself. Indeed, we can see that some of these mistakes were corrected afterwards by a hand different from the one in the colophon or in the core text, but similar to the marginal annotation that appears on folio 49v. On folio 17v the word *kāna* has been added by a different hand from that of the principal copyist. The ink, lighter than that of other corrections, seems to be the same color as the interlinear annotations.

1.2 Background and use of the MS

The first copyist made constant mistakes, mixed up words and missed out passages. These mistakes look like mistakes by someone who recites the Qur'an by memory. The copyist did not bother using another folio to correct and adjust the mistakes. Rather this has been done in the margins or between lines, which shows that it has been made in a rush. As it has been copied in Valencia, where the Mudejars still practiced Islam, we can deduce that it may have been commissioned by a Christian who urgently needed a copy of the Qur'an.

The more probable hypothesis is that this manuscript was sent or given by Juan Gabriel de Teruel to Egidio, who was asked to translate the Qur'an into Latin by Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo. He may have asked for other manuscripts, such as a complete Arabic Qur'an. At the cardinal's death his library was taken over by Girolamo Seripando, who gave this codex to Widmanstetter. Widmanstetter's library forms the core of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek of Munich.²⁰

17 At present I am doing more studies on these manuscripts and others from the Widmanstetter library.

18 Casassas Canals and Martínez Gázquez, "Scholia Latina," 8.

19 François Déroche and Annie Berthier, *Manuel de codicologie des manuscrits en écriture arabe* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2000), 258.

20 Casassas Canals, "El Alcorán de Bellús," 171–75.

The objective of this paper is to look closely at the interlinear annotations, more precisely the annotations that are not word-for-word translations. I have extracted the annotations that are preceded by *scilicet*, which can be translated as “it means.” Then I have compared these annotations with the three tafsirs from which the annotations could have come.

Before exploring the interlinear annotations, we will first consider three works of exegesis. They are often quoted by the Early Modern humanists, and later by Orientalists up to the present time. However, their significance in the exegetic literature and their popularity in the Iberian Peninsula is scarcely explained. Then we will study their links with the Iberian polemicists and translators, Muslim and Christian, Aragonese and Castilian, in Latin and Romance, and their peculiarities. Then we will look at the interlinear annotations and their different categories. To finish we will compare some annotations with these tafsirs.

2 Overview of the Tafsirs most likely used in the Qur’an of Bellús

Before looking at the exegetic annotations in the Qur’an of Bellús, we may look at the most common tafsirs used in some sixteenth-century works. Then we will consider the peculiarities of these exegetic works.

2.1 Polemic and Tafsir Literature

The translators of the Qur’an used to work with exegetical sources to achieve a better understanding of the Qur’an and to convey the exact meaning of difficult words or sentences in their translations. The polysemy of some Arabic words in certain syntagms, and the differences of opinion held by exegetes about these phrases, can help us to understand more about the translators of the Qur’an. Thomas E. Burman showed, for example, how Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo used the tafsir literature to translate the Qur’an.²¹ They sought to choose the right word not only to convey the meaning of an Arabic word or sentence but also to convey the understanding of the Muslim exegetes. The tafsir literature is helpful not only for a non-Muslim translator who can use it as a philological tool, but also for an authoritative figure who hopes to convince a Muslim public.

²¹ Thomas E. Burman, “Tafsir and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qur’ān Exegesis and the Latin Qur’āns of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo,” *Speculum* 73, no. 3 (1998).

Moreover, it is helpful for a Muslim translator who seeks to shed light on some difficult passages in the Qur'an. We know that the *alfaquí* of Segovia, Yça de Gebir, had a tafsir in front of him while he was translating the Qur'an from Arabic to Romance.²²

In the seventies, Juan Vernet already saw the use of Ibn 'Aṭīyya and al-Zamakhsharī in the sermons of Martín García, who might have had access to them through Juan Andrés, the former *alfaquí* of Xativa.²³ As for Egidio's translation, we know that the main references were the exegeses made by al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn 'Aṭīyya.²⁴ We also know that other exegeses were used in this translation but not quoted by name.²⁵

Juan Gabriel de Teruel, the former *alfaquí* who made the translation for Egidio da Viterbo, may have used other references from memory, showing that he had a good knowledge of Islamic literature. He may have learnt the Qur'an by heart and been able to explain it to the Mudejar *aljama* of Teruel. For example, in (Q. 2:1) an annotation gives as an interpretation of the verse "*Alif Lām Mīm*": Deus, Gabriel, Mahom.²⁶ This interpretation is absent from al-Zamakhsharī's and Ibn 'Aṭīyya's tafsirs.²⁷ Juan Gabriel de Teruel may have quoted it from memory. Ibrahim Izquierdo, in the translation of the Qur'an that he made in Salonica, offered the same translation.²⁸ As the two men came from almost the same time and place but then went to very different environments (Ottoman Salonica for Izquierdo, a Christian Spanish milieu for Juan Gabriel), it is possible that the Muslims of the Iberian Peninsula had learnt that interpretation in the sixteenth century. A study that compared Egidio's commissioned translation with the translations made by the Moriscos could isolate the common denominator that was learnt in Spain by the two translators.

22 Gerard A. Wiegers, "Isà b. Yabir and the Origins of Aljamiado Literature," *Al-Qanṭara* 11, no. 1 (1990), 158–59.

23 Juan Vernet, "Le Tafsir au service de la polémique antimusulmane," *Studia Islamica* 32 (1970), 305–9.

24 García-Arenal and Starczewska, "The Law of Abraham the Catholic," 414.

25 "Not all the commentators mentioned can be identified, but references to al-Zamakhsharī are frequent, and in at least two cases he is cited alongside one Abanatia or Bnatia. This very probably transliterates Ibn 'Aṭīyya." Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 161.

26 Starczewska, "Latin Translation of the Qur'an," 11.

27 This interpretation can be found in other Andalusi exegetes such as Ibn Abi Ṭālib and Ibn 'Arabi.

28 Paris, BnF, MS Arabe 447, fol. 2r.

Ibn ‘Aṭīyya and al-Zamakhsharī are also a reference for Joan Martí de Figuerola. In his work *Lumbre de la fe*, we can see a drawing of the Prophet Muḥammad describing a scene to Ibn ‘Aṭīyya and al-Zamakhsharī.²⁹

As Juan Gabriel de Teruel worked with both Egidio and Figuerola, he may be the one who introduced them to the two exegetes. The use of both al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn ‘Aṭīyya can be seen as a bringing together of two exegeses that contrast with each other in place of origin (one from Persia and the other from al-Andalus), in dogmatic school (the Mutazilite and the Asharite), in methodology (one more linguistic and the other more focused on narrative) and in school of tafsir (the Andalusi and the Nisaburī).³⁰ That is to say, each one completes the other. This is not the only case of the use of these two works together: for example, al-Qurtubī seems to have used both works when he wrote his own tafsir.³¹

The third tafsir that appeared to be known in sixteenth-century Spain and seventeenth-century Europe³² is Muḥammad Ibn Abī Zamanīn’s summary of Yaḥyā ibn Salām’s tafsir. It was known by the Muslim communities of Castile and Aragon. Clear evidence is found in two manuscripts from Madrid, BTNT MS RESC/51 and RESC/52.1, Aljamiado translations of the tafsir of Ibn Abī Zamanīn (d. 399/1008).³³ It may have circulated in the aljamas and it is possible that someone like Juan Gabriel de Teruel, who was the former *alfaquí* of Teruel, read or consulted it.

Now that we have selected the exegeses of Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn Abī Zamanīn as the three most likely used in the Qur’an of Bellús, we may look at their peculiarities.

2.2 About these Particular Tafsirs

As we have seen before, the three tafsirs seem to have been very popular in Early Modern Spain, used by the Moriscos and by the Christian polemicist from Spain

²⁹ García-Arenal, Starczewska, and Szpiech, “The Perennial Importance,” 59.

³⁰ Walid Saleh, “Medieval Exegesis, the Golden Age of Tafsir,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur’anic Studies*, ed. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 675.

³¹ Saleh, “Medieval Exegesis,” 676.

³² Reinhold F. Glei and Roberto Tottoli. “Marracci and the Islamic Sources,” in *Ludovico Marracci at Work: The Evolution of His Latin Translation of the Qur’ān in the Light of His Newly Discovered Manuscripts. With an Edition and a Comparative Linguistic Analysis of Sura 18* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016).

³³ Nuria Martínez de Castilla, “La transmisión de textos entre los moriscos: dos copias del tafsir abreviado de Ibn Abi Zamanin,” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 26 (2015).

to Rome. At least one of these may have been used in the Qur'an of Bellús to explain the Qur'an with the interlinear annotations introduced by *scilicet*. In chronological order of appearance they are: Ibn Abi Zamanin's *al-Mukhtsar*, al-Zamakhshari's *al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq at-Tanzil*, and *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz fī Tafsir al-Kitāb al-'Aziz* by 'Abd al-Haq ibn Ghālib ibn 'Aṭiyya.

While all three are relatively well known,³⁴ we should first consider what seems to make them relevant, popular and well studied during Early Modern times by Christians and Muslims.

2.2.1 Ibn Abi Zamanin

Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdallah ibn 'Isa ibn Abi Zamanin was a poet, an ascetic and a Malikite jurist in Cordoba during the Califal period.³⁵ He may have been one of the judges of the capital city, as he is described as "The Sheikh of Cordoba" by al-Dhahabi.³⁶ He studied with some great scholars (such as Wahb ibn Masarra, 346/958) and had some students of genius (such as Abu 'Amr 'Uthmān al-Dani, who wrote abundantly on the different Qur'anic *variæ lectiones*).

During the fourth/tenth century, the summary genre was growing: Ibn Abi Zamanin summarized, in addition to tafsir of Ibn Salām, the Muwaṭṭā of Mālik ibn Anas and the *Mudawanna* of Saḥnūn. The purpose of the *mukhtaṣar* genre (abridgment) was to make an older work easier to grasp and be taught by correcting, adjusting and deleting redundancies. As Ibn Abi Zamanin said: "I have abridged in it some redundancies of the hadiths, and I have added to it what was not in the book of Yaḥyā and explanations that were not given by Yaḥyā."³⁷ The second purpose was to select some opinions, keeping only what might be correct according to the summarizer. From this core, Ibn Abi Zamanin came up with a totally new book.³⁸

³⁴ Al-Zamakhshari's *al-Kashshāf* is the only tafsir of the three that has been studied fully. See: Kifayat Ullah, *Al-Kashshāf: Al-Zamakhshari's Mu'tazilite Exegesis of the Qur'an* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

³⁵ Muḥammad ibn Abdallah Ibn Abi Zamanin, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'aziz*, ed. Hussein 'Akasha and Muhammad Mustafa al-Kanz (Cairo: al-Farūq al-Ḥaditha, 2002), vol. 1, 20–27.

³⁶ Shams ad-din Muḥammad al-Dhahabi, *Siyār a'lām al-Nubbalā'* (Beyrouth: Bayt al-afkar al-dawliya, 2004), vol. 3, 3521.

³⁷ Ibn Abi Zamanin, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'aziz*, vol. 1, 111.

³⁸ Ulrika Mårtensson, "Early Medieval Tafsir (Third/Ninth to the Fifth/Eleventh Century)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, 658.

As this tafsir is helpful for learning, we can understand why the Moriscos chose to translate the work. Shorter and easier, but still complete, it permitted them to learn and teach the interpretation of the Qur'an according to a direct student of Mālik ibn Anas. In the far West, under Christian dominion, they were in the process of forgetting the Arabic language; seven to eight centuries after the death of the famous Mālik ibn Anas, they might have felt the taste of the fresh dates of Medina from the transmission of Yaḥyā ibn Salām and with the help of Ibn Abī Zamanīn and their Morisco translators.

2.2.2 Al-Zamakhsharī

Jār Allah (Neighbor of God) Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī was a Persian scholar from the region of Khawarizm, in Turkmenistan. He learnt locally with his father before moving abroad, first to Jurjan and then to Baghdad and Mecca. He studied with numerous scholars, mostly Mutazilites and Zaydis.³⁹ He became famous for his contributions to numerous subjects such as exegesis, traditions, jurisprudence, grammar and lexicography.

Al-Zamakhsharī's exegesis, *al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq at-Tanzīl*, is one of the most renowned tafsirs of Islamic literature. For the Mutazilites it represented the "peak of intellectual achievement in Qur'an commentary."⁴⁰ The Sunnis criticized certain aspects of it, but approved the linguistic part of his commentary.⁴¹ Kifayat Ullah's thesis underlines the peculiarities of his magnum opus. He shows that this tafsir is unmatched, and that al-Zamakhsharī's methodology has some unique features: question-and-answer to clarify or refute, use of proofs based on language (grammar, rhetoric), explanations of the Qur'an with the Qur'an (*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*), and an original point of view on al-Muḥkam and al-Mutashābih that echoes Mutazilite doctrine. He also uses other known features in the exegetical field such as Tradition (*al-Ḥadīth*), and *variæ lectiones* (*al-Qirā'āt*).

2.2.3 Ibn 'Aṭīyya

'Abd al-Haqq ibn Ghālib ibn 'Aṭīyya came from an Andalusī family of scholars. His father, Abu Bakr Ghālib ibn 'Aṭīyya, was known to be a *Ḥāfiẓ li-l-Ḥadīth*,⁴²

³⁹ Ullah, *Al-Kashshāf*, 14–19.

⁴⁰ Ullah, *Al-Kashshāf*, 2.

⁴¹ Ullah, *Al-Kashshāf*, 4–6.

⁴² Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 4002.

meaning that he was among the greatest scholars of hadith in his place and time. The son learnt most of what he knew about hadith sciences from his father, but he also had other teachers in this discipline, in law, and in language. In contrast to his father, he remained all his life in al-Andalus. He was appointed Judge of Almeria under the Almoravids and was recognized as a great jurist. He later became popular for his tafsir *Al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz*.⁴³

Some scholars came to compare his tafsir with that of al-Zamakhsharī:⁴⁴ for example, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmād ibn Taymiyya views it as a better exegesis in precision and research. But little has been written in Western academia on this monument of Islamic exegesis.⁴⁵

It is clear that Ibn ‘Aṭīyya was inspired by earlier tafsirs such as those of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ṭālib, even if he took issue with some of their opinions. Ibrahim al-Mashanni showed the different tools that he used.⁴⁶ Among them were linguistic tools such as grammar, and Arabic poetry to make an analogy between a word and its traditional meaning. He also used the opinions of Muḥammad’s companions and their followers (*al-ṣaḥāba* and *at-ṭabi‘īn*). From a methodological perspective he quoted less oral tradition than al-Ṭabarī; but he compensated by quoting other tafsirs from books, starting with al-Ṭabarī himself but also consulting the companions and their students. What strikes us is the diversity of opinions on Arabic language and the *variæ lectiones* that he quotes, despite the fact that he did not travel and remained on the borders of Islamic civilization.

3 The Interlinear Annotations of the Qur’an of Bellús, an Example of Teamwork

To get closer to the original text of the Qur’an, Christian readers, acting as intermediaries, needed to comment on and translate at least some parts of the Arabic text and even to comment on some translations. One evocative example is the manuscript Troyes, Médiathèque Grand Troyes, 1235, which is a copy of Ketton’s translation of the Qur’an full of marginalia. In the Qur’an of Bellús the annotations are scattered throughout the manuscript, and may answer some Christian

⁴³ Mustafa Ibrahim al-Mashanni, *Madrassa al-Tafsīr fī al-Andalūs* (Beyrouth: Muasasa al-risala, 1982), 851.

⁴⁴ Al-Mashanni, *Madrassa al-Tafsīr*.

⁴⁵ Saleh, “Medieval Exegesis, the Golden Age of Tafsir,” 667.

⁴⁶ Al-Mashanni, *Madrassa al-Tafsīr*, 680–90.

queries that sought to understand certain verses of the Qur'an. This copy and its annotations may have had two goals, as Xavier Casassas Canals accurately showed.⁴⁷ The Qur'an of Bellús and its annotations may have been used as an aid in composing a polemic text or a sermon to the Muslims. It could also have been used in disputes between Muslim and Christian preachers. But rather than a supplementary tool for another work, the Qur'an of Bellús and its annotations may have been used as an ultimate authority among the Muslims themselves. In a debate, it would have been difficult to argue against the Qur'an and against the most highly regarded scholars.

I have identified two groups of interlinear annotations in the Qur'an of Bellús. The first group is composed of raw annotations that I have called annotations without "*scilicet*." The second group is composed of annotations introduced by an abbreviated "*scilicet*" written ".S." in the text.

3.1 Without "*scilicet*"

These annotations compose the majority in this manuscript. They can be divided into two categories: word-for-word translations and interpretative annotations.

Word-for-word translations:

These annotations are very common. They comprise a simple translation of an Arabic word of the Qur'an with a Castilian-Aragonese, Latin or Catalan word with the literal meaning. For example, the word *al-ṣayf* in Q. 90:12 is translated *verano* (summer),⁴⁸ the word *al-shahwāt* Q. 3:14 (desire) is translated *apetitos*,⁴⁹ the syntagm *ya'murūn bi-l-qisṭ* (order with/for justice) is translated *en lo just*⁵⁰ in Q. 3:21, and a slightly different syntagm, *qā'imān bi-l-qisṭ* in Q. 3:18, is translated *de los justo matenidor*.⁵¹

The translators clearly chose to render some words that they didn't understand directly or were not familiar with. They were more given to translating the verses that appealed to them as Christians or polemicists. What is actually difficult to interpret is the choice of the different languages. It is possible that these are the languages of different scholars or different Muslim collaborators.

⁴⁷ Casassas Canals, "The Bellús Qur'an," 460.

⁴⁸ Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 199v.

⁴⁹ Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 17r.

⁵⁰ Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 17r.

⁵¹ Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 17v.

A paleographic and comparative analysis should tell us more about the choice of these languages.

Interpretative annotations:

Even without *scilicet*, some annotations remain interpretative, a concept I define as a translation of an Arabic word from the Qur'an in its figurative meaning. For example: the word *al-sharī'a* (literally the path) is translated in its figurative meaning *regla o lley* (rule or law).⁵² This type of annotation implies more than a linguistic knowledge of Arabic, also a cultural knowledge. It implies that the annotator had an understanding of the connotations that this word has in the Islamic world.

Some other annotations are exegetical. For example, the figure of Dhū-l-Qarnayn in Q. 18:83 is annotated as Alexander.⁵³ Here again, knowledge of Arabic is not sufficient to supply this translation, but the annotator clearly was helped by a Muslim who consulted an exegesis. We can see that this interpretation of Dhū-l-Qarnayn as Alexander is given by Ibn 'Aṭīyya and al-Zamakhsharī in their works.

Another example out of dozens illustrates this notion. In Q. 43:31 the word *al-qaryatayn* (the two cities) is annotated with "*Meca u Tayf*."⁵⁴ As in the previous example, the reference of this verse is present in the tafsirs of al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn 'Aṭīyya and Ibn Abī Zamanīn.

These few examples out of many clearly illustrate the fact that the annotator worked with a Muslim scholar, a Morisco or Mudejar who was quite knowledgeable and at least had access to an exegesis of the Qur'an.

3.2 With "*scilicet*"

The *scilicet* annotations are fewer in number than the raw annotations, but central for our subject. They are meant to comment on the Qur'an according to the requirements of the commissioner. We can separate them into two subgroups: some annotations consist of interpretations extrapolated from the context of the verse, while others are extracted from the tafsir literature.

Interpretations extrapolated from the context of the verse:

⁵² Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 165v.

⁵³ Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 101v.

⁵⁴ Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 162v.

These use a previous verse (or sometimes an earlier part of the same verse) to clarify a part of the Qur'an. Most often they explain who is actually speaking in the verse. Most of the time we do not find these comments in the tafsirs, but can understand them by looking back at the context.

For example, in verse 2:71 we read in the Qur'an of Bellús: “*Qāl (scilicet Moyses) innahu yaqūl (scilicet Dios).*”⁵⁵

We see that the verb *Qāl* (he said) designates Moses as the speaker and *innahu yaqūl* (indeed He says) designates God. These interpretations can be explained by looking back a few verses: we read in Q. 2:67: “And remember Moses said to his people: “God commands that...” In a passage where the verb *Qāl* is used numerous times, these annotations are written down to prevent the reader from being lost and let him handle the text quickly and easily without looking at the preceding pages.

If this example illustrates what happens in the majority of the annotations, some others have slightly different peculiarities. Some words are translated and interpreted according to a syntagm in the verse. For example, in Q. 99:7:⁵⁶ “*fa-man ya'mal mithqāla dharrat (formiga scilicet de be) khayrān yarāhu.*”⁵⁷ The word *dharrat* (ant) is annotated according to the word just after *khayr* (good). We can see that the annotator translated the word (*dharrat* by *formiga*) and followed it with an explanation (*scilicet de be*).

These two types of interpretation replicate a concept of exegesis that exists in the Islamic exegetic literature: *tafsir al-qur'an bi-l-qur'an* (explaining the Qur'an with the Qur'an). It consists of an interpretation of an ambiguous verse according to another verse. If in the exegetic literature this concept is used to comment on and clarify some difficult verse with a verse which is usually in another chapter, here it is used at a basic level to clarify the subject or the person speaking according to a verse which has been seen before.

The last type of interesting commentary that can be seen is interpretation that uses logic and deduction. For example, in Q. 78:33⁵⁸ we read: “*wa kawā'ib (de tetas scilicet mujeres) atrābān.*”⁵⁹

55 Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 5r.

56 “Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it!” Abdallah Yusuf Ali (trans.), “Az-Zalzala [99:7],” Tanzil-Quran Navigator [accessed 24-03-2022]. <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.yusufali/99:7>.

57 Munich, BSB, cod arab 7, fol. 200r.

58 “And voluptuous women of equal age.” Yusuf Ali, “An-Naba' [78:33],” <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.yusufali/78:33> [accessed 24-03-2022].

59 Munich, BSB, cod arab 7, fol. 193v.

Here the word *kawā'ib* (literally meaning breasts) is first translated *de tetas* and interpreted as women (*scilicet mujeres*), with a simple deduction and understanding of a figure of rhetorical style. Al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya and Ibn Abī Zamanīn did not address this particular word in this way. It shows the profound understanding of an annotator who can use his knowledge of rhetorical figures to derive a closer meaning of a word without the need of any tafsir. But the fact that it is annotated also shows that it was not obvious, and that it needed to be clarified for the person who commissioned the translation. These annotations helped a Christian reader to handle the qur’anic text easily and quickly.

These annotations show the profound and intrinsic knowledge of the annotators. Without the use of a tafsir they could have composed the majority of the interlinear annotations written in this manuscript. The “word-to-word translations” show that they did not fall into the trap set by cultural differences. They imply that the team was composed of at least one Muslim, Mudejar or Morisco, who helped to grasp directly the meaning implied by the text. The use of a dictionary or a glossary alone might have led to some misinterpretations.

The annotations with *scilicet* show also that the tafsir literature was not the only set of references. References to a past verse, and the use of logic without reference to a tafsir, also show that the annotator was helped by a Muslim scholar. But some annotations can be traced back to the tafsir literature.

4 Interpretations Exegetical in Nature, from Ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s Tafsir

These annotations with *scilicet* consist of interpretations that are external to the qur’anic text, and can be found only by looking at the qur’anic commentaries. For example, verse Q. 66:3: “when he told her thereof, she said (*scilicet* Hafsa), ‘Who told thee this?’”⁶⁰ The subject of the verb *qālat* (she said) is interpreted as Hafsa. In contrast to the aforementioned group, we cannot find any clear mention of Hafsa in the Qur’an nor deduce it by logic. But we find that al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Abī Zamanīn and Ibn ‘Aṭīyya explained in their commentaries on the Qur’an that this verse speaks of Ḥafsa bint ‘Omar.

⁶⁰ Yusuf Ali, “At-Tahrim [66:3],” <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.yusufali/66:3> [accessed 24–03–2022].

Other examples:

Number of the folio	Number of verse	Verse in Arabic	Annotation concerning the bold part of the text	Interpretation present in the tafsir of:
fol. 149r.	37:100 ⁶¹	رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ	<i>Me da scilicet filium</i>	al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Abī Zamanīn, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya
fol. 83r.	13:18 ⁶²	لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ	<i>scilicet parays</i>	Ibn Abī Zamanīn, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya
fol. 181v.	58:14 ⁶³	أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ	<i>Toman amigos scilicet judeos</i>	al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya
fol. 153r.	39:22 ⁶⁴	أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ	<i>scilicet hemze tio ali ibine abi talib</i>	Ibn ‘Aṭīyya

In the first example the word “son” is omitted but implied as complementing the word *ṣālihīn*. It recalls the story of Abraham asking God to give him a (pious) son. This interpretation can be found in the three exegeses studied, with the syntagm “it means a son” or “he wants a son.”

In the second example the word *ḥusnā* is interpreted as paradise. Here again nothing clearly says that this word designates paradise, since it can be synonymous with worldly good. While al-Zamakhsharī makes a linguistic analysis, Ibn Abī Zamanīn and Ibn ‘Aṭīyya interpret it as meaning paradise.

The third example, the syntagm *tawala qawmā* (literally: “making ally with a people”), is interpreted: *toman amigos scilicet judeos*. The word interpreted, *qawm*, designates the Jews in the tafsirs of al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn ‘Aṭīyya.

In the last example, the word *ṣadrahu* (his chest) is interpreted in the Qur’an of Bellūs as the chest of “*Hemze tio ‘Ali ibine Abi Talib*.” Ibn ‘Aṭīyya is the only commentator who associates this verse with Hamza ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. He also

61 “O my Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!” Yusuf Ali, “As-Saffat [37:100],” <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.yusufali/37:100> [accessed 24–03–2022].

62 “For those who respond to their Lord, are (all) good things.” Yusuf Ali, “Ar-Ra’d [13:18],” <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.yusufali/13:18> [accessed 24–03–2022].

63 “Turnest thou not thy attention to those who turn (in friendship) to such as have the Wrath of Allah upon them?” Yusuf Ali, “Al-Mujadila [58:14],” <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.yusufali/58:14> [accessed 24–03–2022].

64 “Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam, so that he has received Enlightenment from Allah.” Yusuf Ali, “Az-Zumar [39:22],” <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.yusufali/39:22> [accessed 24–03–2022].

refers to ‘Alī ibn Abu Ṭālib, who is designated in this annotation. Al-Zamakhsharī speaks of the openness of the heart: that is, when the light of Allah enters one’s heart. Ibn Abī Zamanīn speaks of the opposition between one whose heart is open and one whose heart is closed. They do not mention if this verse was revealed for a particular person.

Commentaries from Ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s Tafsir?

If we compare all the annotations of the Qur’an of Bellús with the tafsirs, as we did in the previous table, we see that most of the time the exegetical annotations fit with Ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*. I have counted 40 exegetical annotations with *scilicet* throughout the manuscript, and 37 of them correspond to an explanation that is in the tafsir of Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, while 30 can be found in Ibn Abī Zamanīn’s tafsir and only 18 in the tafsir of al-Zamakhsharī. Indeed, there is much more similarity to the two Andalusi and Maliki tafsirs than to the exegesis of the Persian Mutazilite scholar. The doctrinal differences and the methods are the main reasons why *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* coincides with Ibn Abī Zamanīn’s summary much more than with *al-Kashshāf*.

Moreover, some annotations fit almost perfectly with the tafsir of Ibn ‘Aṭīyya. If quantitative data indicate that these annotations have a high probability of being from Ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s tafsir, qualitative data can confirm our assumption.

For example, in Q. 58.14 the word *alladhīna* is annotated *scilicet al-munāfiqīn*. This word can be found in the three tafsirs but not written in the same way: the word is transliterated in its *manṣūb* or *majrūr* form with the letter *ya*, which is not a lemma form. We can deduce that it is transliterated directly from a text with a sentence in the *manṣūb* or *majrūr* form. When we look at the three analysed tafsirs we see that Ibn Abī Zamanīn and al-Zamakhsharī use the *marfū’* form of the external plural with the letter *waw*: Ibn Abī Zamanīn comments: “*hum al-munāfiqūn*” and al-Zamakhsharī comments: “*Kāna al-munāfiqūn*.” But Ibn ‘Aṭīyya says: “*nuzilāt fī qawmi min al-munāfiqīn*.” We can deduce that this word in this form is more likely transliterated directly from the tafsir of the qadi of Almería.

Moreover, we saw earlier that the word “*ṣadrahu*” in verse 39:22 is annotated “*Hamze tio ‘ali ibine Abi Talib*” in the Qur’an of Bellús. The word *alqāsiya* is annotated in the same Qur’an “*ibu laheb tio y son fill*.” These two annotations can be found only in the tafsir of Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, who says: “It has been sent [down] upon ‘Alī and Hamza, Abu Lahab and his sons are those whose hearts are hardened.”

In this sentence alone, we can trace the annotation that is written in the Qur'an of Bellús. Not only can this annotation be found only in *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz*, but it fits perfectly with this exegesis.

We can also see that the word *tío*, uncle, is an addition to the tafsir of Ibn 'Aṭīyya. For a Mudejar or a Morisco who knows Islamic literature and history, like this annotator, this addition may be superfluous. The sons of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib are well known by the Muslim community. But for someone who does not know it, who is unfamiliar with the Islamic faith and its history, as an Early Modern Christian polemicist might be, this addition can teach more about the prophet's family. Thus we can see that these annotations are more likely to be commissioned by a Christian polemicist from a Mudejar or Morisco. It is possible that the commissioner or his scribe, while reading the Qur'an of Bellús, asked someone knowledgeable for some indications about the identity of the people in the tafsir of Ibn 'Aṭīyya and then had them written down. Sometimes he certainly must have used the tafsir of Ibn 'Aṭīyya as an aid. For this annotation, the commissioner might have asked who Hamza and Abu Lahab were, and the commentator may have answered that they were the uncles of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. When we add this to the examples given before, we can see that it is more than probable.

Finally, the last indication of the use of the Ibn 'Aṭīyya's tafsir is the marginalia in Arabic,⁶⁵ which have been copied from his tafsir as has been demonstrated by Martínez Gázquez and Casassas Canals.⁶⁶ Except for two or three words that differ between the editions, a divergence between copyists, the annotation is exactly the same as in Ibn 'Aṭīyya's tafsir.

5 Conclusion

We saw that the tafsir literature was used since the Middle Ages in the Latin translations of the Qur'an. The exegetes of the Qur'an sometimes held different opinions on the meaning of a verse. They chose an interpretation that conformed to their dogmas, their understanding, and the narrations that they preferred, or according to their places and times. These differences of opinion, when studied with a comparative methodology, can give us some indication of the processes of translation and the references used in the translation.

After having studied the different types of annotation, we have compared the exegeses that most likely could have been used for annotating the Qur'an of Be-

⁶⁵ Munich, BSB, MS cod. arab 7, fol. 48v.

⁶⁶ Casassas Canals and Martínez Gázquez, "Scholia Latina," 31.

llús. We have seen that it agrees with Ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s tafsir in number of annotations and in similarity of expression.

To conclude, we can try to construct a profile of the team that carried out these annotations. We see that they were made with the help of someone who was knowledgeable in Arabic, the tafsir literature, and qur’anic rhetoric: in short, someone who knew the Qur’an very well. A current or former *alfaquí* such as Juan Gabriel de Teruel fits this profile. Sometimes the annotator does not even need the tafsirs to explain a verse; knowledge of the Arabic stylistic figure is sufficient. We also see that the commissioner needed clarification regarding some particular passages that repeated the verb *qāl/yaqūl* (he said, he says), in order to follow some parts that interested him from beginning to end. For an individual study of the Qur’an it is not necessary to repeat who is behind these verbs. But it can be helpful in the case of a public debate, with the pressure and adrenaline felt by the person who is debating in front of a crowd, to find a passage quickly and not lose track when someone quotes a passage. We know that both Martín García during his sermons, and Joan Martí de Figuerola and his team, used to display the Qur’an and its passages directly to convince the crowd of Mudejars to whom they were preaching.

But these Qur’ans were certainly not used only to preach but also to study. We can sense the curiosity of the commissioner, as many passages translated and commented are not especially polemical. We see that the tafsir was used simply to understand some passages of the Qur’an.

The identity of the annotators and the places of annotations are not known for sure. The similarities between Egidio da Viterbo’s translation of the Qur’an and the annotations of the Qur’an of Bellús may indicate that Juan Gabriel made the majority of them. The existence of different languages in the annotations (Catalan, Castilian, Latin, and one in Hebrew), of different hands in the margins (three at least in Latin letters, with two inks —one black, one red— two at least in Arabic with the exception of the qur’anic text)⁶⁷ may suggest that the annotations had been done in at least two or three different places (Spain, Rome, and Rome or Munich by Widmanstetter), therefore at different moments. Moreover, it is possible that Juan Gabriel sent some other manuscripts to Egidio along with his translation, such as Munich, BSB MS cod. arab 234, an Arabic translation of the Pentateuch with Castilian annotations, written in a different hand from the one in the Qur’an of Bellús or Munich BSB cod. arab 342, a commentary on Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawani’s *Risāla*.

⁶⁷ The colophon’s hands differ from the hand at fol. 49, which is similar to the different corrections made in the margin.

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