

The European Qur'ān: The Place of the Muslim Holy Book in European Cultural History

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Napoleon Bonaparte, for Victor Hugo, was a »Mahomet d'Occident« when he appeared on the banks of the Nile. Goethe likewise expressed his admiration for the emperor by proclaiming him »der Mahomet der Welt«. Bonaparte liked to compare himself with the prophet, who was a source of inspiration for him: a brilliant general, inspired orator, sage legislator; in sum, the paragon of the »great man« who knew how to inspire the masses. On the *Orient*, the ship that brought him to Egypt, Napoleon read the Qur'ān, in the recent French translation by Claude-Etienne Savary. In his preface, Savary sketched a portrait of Muhammad as »one of those extraordinary men who, born with superior talents, appears now and again on the world's stage to change it and to chain simple mortals to their chariots«. Napoleon read the Qur'ān and saw in Muhammad a model for his conquest of Egypt. He ostentatiously carried his Qur'ān with him as he tried to win over Egypt's 'ulamā, had them instruct him in its doctrine and promised them that in Egypt he would establish a legal system based on the Qur'ān.

This is but one example of the surprising roles that the Qur'ān plays in European culture. I am the recipient, along with Mercedes García-Arenal (Spanish National Research Council, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid), Roberto Tottoli (University of Naples, Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale) and Jan Loop (University of Copenhagen, Københavns Universitet), of a synergy grant from the European Research Council on »The European Qur'ān. Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion 1143-1850« (or »EuQu«). We study the ways in which the Islamic holy book is embedded in the intellectual, religious and cultural history of medieval and early modern Europe. We are particularly interested in how the Qur'ān has been translated, interpreted, adapted and used by Christians, European Jews, freethinkers, atheists and European Muslims.

We seek to place European perceptions of the Muslim holy book and of Islam into the fractured religious, political, and intellectual landscape of the period from 1143 to 1850. We explore how the Qur'ān played a key role not only in polemical interactions with Islam but also in debates and polemics between Christians of different persuasions and, indeed, is central to the epistemological reconfigurations that are at the basis of modernity in Europe. The project studies how the Qur'ān was interpreted, adapted, used and formed in Christian European contexts – often in close interaction with the Islamic world, as well as with the Jewish populations living in both Christian and Islamic regions. Concretely, this means studying, for example, the Qur'āns which Europeans brought, collected and copied; the Qur'āns they translated and printed in Arabic and in translation, often using Muslim exegesis (*tafsīr*) and

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Arabic grammars and dictionaries; and the Qur'āns which Muslim minorities living in European Christian lands copied, interpreted and translated into local vernaculars, often in Arabic script (*aljamía*). It also means studying how non-Muslim European writers used the Qur'ān in their various writings, which included anti-Muslim polemics; inter-Christian polemics and apologetics (notably between Catholics and Protestants), scholarly studies in Arabic language, history, geography, theology and religious studies, and other disciplines; fiction and poetry.

We document the circulation and dissemination of Arabic Qur'āns and translations of the Qur'ān (in manuscript and in printed editions) and assess the ways in which the Qur'ān was exploited in religious, political, scholarly and cultural discourse in medieval and early modern Europe. We are doing this through in-person and online seminars, workshops and conferences. A book series with De Gruyter press will provide multiple volumes on our theme: proceedings from our conferences, dissertations by our PhD students, and monographs by our postdoctoral and senior researchers.

The EuQu research team consists of our four principal investigators, senior collaborators in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Budapest, Erfurt and Notre Dame (Indiana, USA), 14 postdoctoral researchers, 7 PhD students, and affiliated scholars from across the world. We are currently in the process of hiring other postdoctoral researchers and PhD students.

One of the principal activities of the EuQu team is the creation of a database of information about the circulation of Qur'ānic manuscripts in medieval and early modern Europe, as well as data about published and unpublished European editions and translations of the Qur'ān in Arabic, Greek, Latin and the European vernaculars. The database will also document anti-Qur'ānic polemical tracts written and published in Europe between 1143 and 1800. The EuQu database will become an important research tool, allowing scholars to trace the development, spread and transformation of the European Qur'ān from the Middle Ages to the modern period, and from Spain to Russia and to the borders of the Ottoman Empire.

The European Qur'ān database will support and generate new insights in a number of areas. It will offer new understandings of the social history of oriental manuscript collections, providing comprehensive information about the uses of Qur'ān manuscripts, the social spaces in which they moved and the different actors involved in their production and procurement. It will make available information on the Arabic manuscripts European scholars had at their disposal and the reading(s) of the Qur'ān they were acquainted with; as well as on how they approached the challenges posed by different scripts and the numerous formal devices they employed (verse divisions, partitions of the Qur'ān, indications of variant readings, recitation signs, etc.) when reading, copying or printing the manuscripts. The information collected in the database will also permit new insights into the acquisition of manuscripts through travelers, diplomats, merchants, soldiers, and missionaries as well as through Muslims and converts. This will help us gain a better understanding of the role of Muslims and converts in producing copies of the Qur'ān in Spain, in the Habsburg borderlands, and in other parts of Christian Europe where Muslim slaves and captives often acted as scribes. The inventory compiled for the database will also allow us to assess the process of copying Qur'ān manuscripts by Europeans, including Christians.

The database will also foster better knowledge of the relationship of Latin, vernacular and *aljamiado* (vernacular written in Arabic script) translations. Only in the context of a comprehensive project like the EuQu database will it be possible to establish whether and how European translations and traditions of translations constitute a new text – i.e., the European Qur'ān. The chain of vernacular translations of Bibliander's Latin edition into Italian and from Italian into German, from German into Dutch, can serve as a case in point: Salomon

Schweigger's seventeenth-century German translation of Castrodardo's Italian text, which was edited multiple times, served as the basis of a Dutch translation published in 1641 and informed the image of the Qur'ān of a wide Northern European readership, is so far removed from the standard Arabic versions that it can be considered to be a different text. At the other end of the spectrum of the European Qur'ān are translations and editions that were produced in close collaboration with Muslim agents or converts. These were often intended for the use of Muslim minorities or crypto-converts (i.e., Muslims who had nominally converted to Christianity but still practiced Islam clandestinely) and might virtually converge with the Qur'ān tradition dominant in the Dar al-Islam.

EuQu's research spans the period from 1143 to 1850. This article for *Medieval Worlds* will concentrate on our ongoing research concerning the Middle Ages. We chose 1143 as the symbolic starting date of the European Qur'ān, because in that year Robert of Ketton produced, in Spain, the first full translation of the Qur'ān into Latin: this was the most widely-known translation in medieval and early modern Europe, extant in over 20 medieval manuscripts and published in Basel in 1543 with a preface by Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon. In March 2020, Cándida Ferrero Hernández and I organized a conference on Ketton's translation and its legacy at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; we have recently published the proceedings of this conference.¹

»*Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete, que arabice Alchoran, id est, collectio preceptorum uocatur*«, »The law of the false prophet Muhammad, which in Arabic is called the Qur'ān, which means collection of precepts.« This is the title that the scribe of the earliest extant manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal MS 1162) gave to Robert of Ketton's Latin translation of the Qur'ān. The title crystallizes some of the principal ways in which European Christian intellectuals, from the twelfth century onward, understood the Qur'ān and Islam. The Qur'ān is first and foremost a *lex*, a word which in twelfth-century Latin means both *law* and *religion*. For European jurists and theologians, human history is marked by a succession of legal configurations. From the time of Adam to that of Moses was the period before the Law (*ante legem*), ruled by natural law. From the revelation of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai to the birth of Christ was the period under the Law (*sub lege*). Finally, Christ came and initiated the period under grace (*sub gratia*), proclaiming »Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.« (Matthew 5.17). These three periods were associated with three types of law: natural law (*lex naturalis*), Mosaic Law (*lex Moysis*, codified in the Old Testament), and Christian Law (*lex Christi*, grounded in the New Testament). Confronted with another *lex*, that of Muhammad (or of »the Saracens«, as it is often called *lex Sarracenorum*), medieval European intellectuals tried to understand how it might fit into this schema.

The Qur'ān, according to this title, is the law of a false prophet. Whereas Moses received the Law from God on Mount Sinai and Christ, God's word incarnate, fulfilled and transformed the Law, Muhammad's law by contrast is illegitimate. The de-legitimizing of the Muslim prophet plays a central role in Christian responses to Islam. Robert of Ketton had been studying astronomy along the banks of the Ebro river when Peter, abbot of the rich and powerful Burgundian monastery of Cluny, hired him to translate the Qur'ān. Peter hired

1 Ferrero Hernández and Tolan, *The Latin Qur'an*.

a team of translators to translate, alongside the Qur'ān, various Arabic works (mostly by Christian authors) about Islam: the resulting compilation is known as the *corpus cluniacense* or *corpus islamolatinum*. Whereas for Muslims the Qur'ān is the word of God, the reader of Ketton's translation and the other Latin works in the *corpus cluniacense* would learn that it is merely a »collection of precepts« of a false prophet. Muhammad, for Ketton and for those who will read his translation, is the sole author of this *lex*, an illegitimate law based on feigned revelations. The choice of the term »collection« also emphasizes the human origins of this law, the hand of the false prophet who gathered diverse »precepts« into a single volume.

Roberto Tottoli and Reinhold Gleis have published a book on »Marracci at work«, and our collective volume could be put under the rubric »Ketton at work«.² Olivier Hanne provides a close comparative study of the translation methods and strategies of Robert and of Adelard of Bath and shows how each of these twelfth-century translators sought to comprehend the texts and to adopt their translation methods to the specificities of the texts and of the intended readership. Reinhold Gleis explores the problems of trying to produce a »literal« or »word-by-word« translation of the Qur'ān in Latin and the choices that Robert of Ketton makes in trying to render the sometimes quite foreign concepts of the Qur'ān into comprehensible Latin.

Ketton's text cannot be understood without taking into account the manuscripts through which it was known, and in particular the rich and complex set of glosses. We await the coming critical edition of the translation by José Martínez Gázquez and Fernando González Muñoz. Oscar de la Cruz examines several examples of glosses showing hostile readings of the Qur'ān, involving *res turpissima* (sodomy) and the use of *velamen* (veil): in these cases Qur'ānic words are given specific Latin significations that facilitate their polemical use.

Central to many of the studies in the volume is Paris Arsenal MS 1162, which Marie Thérèse d'Alverny recognized as the source manuscript of the *corpus cluniacense*. Anthony Lappin's close study, notably focusing on Peter of Cluny's letter to Bernard Clairvaux, shows how the *corpus* is to be understood first as part of Peter's rhetorical defense of Cluny against a formidable spiritual and institutional adversary. When it was no longer necessary to defend the Cluniacs against the Cistercians, the *corpus* fell into relative neglect (reflected in the state of the Arsenal manuscript), only to be revived later. Fernando González's meticulous study of the deleted and corrected passages in the Arsenal manuscript confirms that it was a working copy, original of the collection, but not of any of the constitutive texts. Florence Ninitte's work dovetails nicely with that of Lappin and González. Her study of Vincent of Beauvais' use of the Latin *Risālat al-Kindī* shows that Vincent had access to a more complete version than the one in the Arsenal manuscript (and the other manuscripts of the *corpus cluniacense*), which confirms that this pre-Arsenal version of *Risālat al-Kindī* circulated independently (and was sent by Peter of Cluny to Bernard of Clairvaux.) Other studies in the volume compare Robert's translation with other medieval Latin translations (notably by Mark of Toledo in the 13th century and Egidio da Viterbo at the turn of the 16th century) and trace the use of Ketton's translation (and the other texts in the *corpus cluniacense*) by later medieval authors. In sum, *The Latin Qur'ān, 1143-1500* represents an important new synthesis on the first and most influential European translation of the Qur'ān.

2 Gleis and Tottoli, *Ludovico Marracci at Work*.

In March, 2021, EuQu hosted a conference in collaboration with the University of Notre Dame on »Qur'ān and Bible«: the conference was organized by Thomas Burman and Gabriel Said Reynolds for Notre Dame and Jan Loop and myself for EuQu. Originating in similar but not identical linguistic, geographical, cultural, and religious contexts, the Qur'ān and the Bible stand in a complex relationship to each other. They share stylistic, narrative and cultic features, but also differ in fundamental ways. The Qur'ān invokes the Bible and biblical stories repeatedly and positions itself in a relationship of confirmation and fulfillment to the Judeo-Christian tradition, occasionally amending what it claims was distorted and manipulated by Christians and Jews. This relationship of the Qur'ān and the Bible has intrigued and at times scandalized Muslim, Jewish and Christian scholars alike. The shared narratives of the Bible and the Qur'ān were both starting points for polemical interactions and platforms for dialogue. As products of the same linguistic family and of a similar cultural context, Qur'ān and biblical literature offers relevant information for Muslim, Jewish and Christian exegetes. They could function as linguistic archives, and provide historical information about the natural, geographical, cultural and religious world in which the Bible and the Qur'ān originated. Even stylistic and aesthetic characteristics of the Qur'ān and the Bible could be understood through the style of the other revelation. Our workshop explored the changing ways in which medieval and early modern Jewish, Christian and Muslim readers relate biblical literature and the Qur'ān, looking at how the relationship between the Qur'ān and the Bible was understood and exploited for apologetical, polemical and missionary purposes. Yet rival scriptures can also be a heuristic exegetical tool: Jewish, Christian and Muslim readers have made use of the Bible and the Qur'ān in order to better understand their own Scripture: biblical texts play a role in Muslim exegesis (*tafsīr*), just as the Qur'ān is used in Christian biblical studies. The topics ranged from ninth-century Basra to sixteenth-century Valencia and Basel to twentieth-century Novochoerkassk. A number of the studies involved the medieval period.

Medieval Latin Christian readings of the Qur'ān were often guided by earlier Arabic Christian apologetical and polemical responses to Islam. David Bertaina, in his contribution to our conference, looked at two examples of how debates between Muslim theologians of the Abbasid period were taken up by Arab Christian polemicists and subsequently made their way into Latin Christian readings of the Qur'ān. He looked in particular at the question of the practice of idolatry associated with Muhammad's parents and with the young Muhammad himself, before his calling to prophethood at the age of about 40. Qur'ān 9.113 reads: »It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of Hellfire.« Some hadith, in the tradition of providing occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), explain that Muhammad was seen weeping at his mother's grave and said that he had wanted to offer prayers for the salvation of her soul, but that God had refused. Muhammad himself had been rescued from idolatrous practice by God's grace. Mu'tazilī activists created a series of polemical and apologetical responses to these questions. In particular, the *Book of Instigation* (*Kitāb al-Taḥrīsh*) by the hadith critic Ḍirār ibn 'Amr al-Ghaṭafānī (d. 815) included a chapter on Muhammad before his revelation, criticizing hadith supporters. Later, the respondent Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) responded to claims that certain hadiths were contradictory because they claimed that Muhammad had been both rightly guided by angels since his youth while also being a polytheist until he was forty years of age.

This Islamic debate about the status of Muhammad's parents and his state of grace prior to prophethood had implications for Medieval Latin theologians, due in large part to the Muslim convert to Coptic Orthodoxy known as Būluṣ ibn Rajā' (writing c. 1012) in his work *Clarity in Truth*. Having studied these polemical texts in Fatimid Cairo as a Muslim, Ibn Rajā' repurposed the Qur'ānic debate by agreeing that Muhammad (prior to his prophethood) and his parents were polytheists but doubting that his prophethood could have been authentic since he was not preserved from sin as was the case with Mary. Indeed, the Gospels assert the purity and freedom from sin of Mary and Jesus (in particular Luke 1-2) and the Qur'ān concurs (suras 3 & 19). Ibn Rajā' contrasts the purity of Jesus and his family with the sinful idolatry of the young Muhammad and his family in order to cast doubt on his status as a prophet. Ibn Rajā''s text made its way through Christian Arabic networks to Latin-speaking Spain and to the Italian Peninsula. Eventually the substance of his arguments was utilized by Latin writers such as Ramon Martí and Riccolodo da Monte di Croce in their assessments of the alleged earthly origins of the Qur'ān and its purportedly flawed Prophet.

Gabriel Said Reynolds examined another Arab Christian writer who had contact with Latin Christendom: Paul of Antioch, the Melkite Bishop of Sidon, who wrote an apologetic *Risālat ilā aḥad al-muslimīn* »A Letter to a Muslim«. Paul's letter provoked a response from the Egyptian legal scholar al-Qarāfi (d. 1285) but also an expanded Christian version known as the letter from Cyprus (written around 1316), which itself provoked two Muslim responses: from Muḥammad ibn Abī Ṭālib (written in 1321) and from Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328; his *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, the longest classical Islamic anti-Christian polemic). Intriguingly, Paul opens his treatise by discussing a visit to Byzantium and Europe and the arguments advanced by Christians there defending their choice not to accept Muhammad as a prophet. While it is possible that the European twist is a literary device (very little is actually known about Paul's life) the arguments which follow show a unique engagement with the Qur'ān and, in particular, a Christianizing exegesis of the text. Remarkably, it anticipates certain later European approaches to the Qur'ān which imagine (as Paul does) that Muhammad played a providential role in bringing monotheism to pagans.

In the Latin Church, the Dominican order played an important role in promoting the study of the Qur'ān and in forging apologetic and polemical responses to it. Pierre Courtain, EuQu PhD candidate at the Université de Nantes and the Université Catholique de Louvain, is writing a dissertation on the »Dominican Qur'ān«, studying the engagement of the Order of Preachers with the Muslim holy book, including prominent figures such as Riccolodo da Montecroce. He is producing a new critical edition of Ramon Martí's texts on Islam. In his contribution to our conference in March, Pierre Courtain examined the use of the Qur'ān in Martí's *De Seta Machometi*. Martí relies on the works of earlier Christian polemical tracts, such as those of Paul of Antioch, the 9th-10th-century *Risālat al-Kindī* and *Al-Saif al-Murhaf fī al-Radd 'alā al-Muḥaf*, an anonymous tract by an Egyptian Copt. Like these and other Christian authors, he has a double and apparently paradoxical approach to the relations between the Bible and the Qur'ān: he uses the Bible to discredit the Qur'ān, then uses the Qur'ān to legitimate the Bible (and his Christian reading of it).

In the first part of the *De Seta Machometi*, Martí provides a biographical sketch of Muhammad in order to defame the Prophet of the Muslims, assigning him a life that is contrary to the life of a true and virtuous prophet. In the second part of this work, which is called the »fourfold reprobation of Muhammad«, he divides the law of the Muslims between what is true or false, criticizing the »errors« of the Qur'ān while also citing some fragments that he considers truthful. Then he underlines the »impurity« of Muhammad's life with anecdotes

from the Muslim holy book. The next parts, about the fact that the Prophet of Islam did not perform any miracle and about the impure laws that he left for his worshippers also make thorough use of the Qur'ān. Yet Martí also mines the Qur'ān for proofs of the truthfulness of the Bible and of Christian doctrine, illustrating his propensity to use a book of authority among the Muslims in order to serve his missionary objective. He refutes the Muslim accusation of *tahrif*, the corruption of Jewish and Christian scriptures, which, he affirms would have been impossible, since Jews and Christians worldwide disagree on the interpretation of their holy books but agree on the text.

Another thirteenth-century Dominican took a very different approach to the Qur'ān, as Rita George Tvrtković's contribution to the conference showed. William of Tripoli (d. 1273) devotes about 40% of his anti-Islamic book *Notitia de Machometo* to verbatim quotes of Qur'ānic verses on Mary, with comparisons to their biblical counterparts. Another text associated with William (possibly written by an associate), *De statu Sarracenorum*, similarly devotes eleven out of 55 chapters to Qur'ānic Mariology. The Qur'ān thus plays an ambiguous role in these works: it confirms the central place of Mary and Jesus in sacred history and suggests that Islam is close to Christian truth. This sentiment is confirmed by William's admiration for Muslim piety, for their heartfelt prayers and tears and their pious admiration of Mary, Jesus, and other biblical figures: their piety pleases God, William affirms.

My contribution to this conference focused on the Bible and the Qur'ān at the Council of Basel (1431-1449). Basel is at the center of any map of the European Qur'ān: it is the city where the Qur'ān was first published, in Latin translation, in 1543, before it was ever printed in Arabic. The Swiss protestant Humanist Theodor Bibliander had at his disposal in Basel a number of manuscripts containing the Qur'ān and other texts concerning Islam. At least two of those manuscripts had come to Basel during the Council of Basel in 1431-1449, participants at which (or »Church fathers«) took an interest in the Islamic holy book. The Council of Basel represented the high-water mark of the conciliar movement, which sought to achieve peace and unity through collective governance of the Church. The Gospels and Epistles provided conciliarists with a model of collective authority to oppose the papal notions of the pope as the vicar of Christ. Two of the most fervent advocates of the conciliar model, Juan de Segovia and Nicolas of Cusa, met at Basel and studied the Qur'ān together. We know of at least six manuscripts of the Qur'ān that circulated in Basel during the Council: one in Arabic, and five containing all or part of Robert of Ketton's Latin translation.

While the Latin Christian authors who read and discussed the Qur'ān in Basel often reproduced standard polemical and apologetical approaches, they also read it in new and surprising ways. Heymericus de Campo, representative of the University of Cologne (where he had taught Nicolas of Cusa), uses citations from the Muslim holy book to provide arguments for the superior authority of the Council over the pope. In theological debates over the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, Jean de Rouvroy and Juan de Segovia cite the Qur'ān among their proof texts of the purity of the Virgin Mary: Juan defines the Qur'ān as »*scripturas Sarracenorum*«, »Saracen scriptures«, an unusual use of the term »scripture«. The Dominican Juan de Torquemada, Pope Eugene IV's envoy to the council, would have none of this: he correctly accuses his opponents of citing these Qur'ānic passages out of context and says that his opponents have deployed a »*turpissimum argumentum*«, »most shameful argument«: one should cite saints, not Saracens.

These examples show how the Council of Basel witnessed the emergence (timid and tentative) of a very new approach to Islam and to the Qur'ān. The protagonists of this story obtained Qur'ān manuscripts, exchanged them, copied them, and discussed them. They also read other polemical texts that guided their reading of the Qur'ān, in particular the 12th-century Latin translation of the *Risālat al-Kindī* and Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra sectam Sarracenorum*. In part, their readings reflect an interest in Islam, which was useful to their reflections on how a council that purports to represent the Church universal might unite Christendom against the Ottoman threat and eventually reach out to Muslims in dialogue (as both Nicolas of Cusa and Juan de Segovia would subsequently suggest). But even more telling is that as these churchmen and scholars stripped away the layers of canon law and exegesis to ground, in citations from the Bible, their idea of collective conciliar Church government and their definition of doctrine (including the Immaculate Conception), they also looked to the Qur'ān to find passages that confirmed their ideas.

The papers dealing with the early modern period revealed important continuities and new departures. Theodore Bibliander's publication of Robert of Ketton's Latin translation in Basel in 1543, along with the *corpus islamolatinum* (including in particular the *Risālat al-Kindī*), and along with other works including Riccoldo da Montecroce's *Contra sectam* and Nicolas of Cusa's *Cribratio Alkorani*, assured the continuing influence of medieval Latin approaches to the Qur'ān. This is clearly seen in the works of seventeenth-century Catholic missionaries writing of the Church's *Propaganda Fide*, such as Tomas de Jesus, Bonaventura Malvasia and Filippo Guadagnoli, as Javier de Prado Garcia showed. This is even true in the Greek world: as Octavian-Adrian Negoită demonstrated, the Athonite monk Pachomios Rousanos (1508-1553) relied heavily on Riccoldo for his anti-Islamic polemics. Arabic-speaking Christians such as the Syriac Orthodox priest Moses of Mārdīn (d. 1592, discussed by Sara Fani) and converts from Islam such as Baldassarre Loyola Mandes (1631-1667, the object of Federico Stella's research) also played a key role: as teachers of Arabic, purveyors of manuscripts, and as transmitters of *tafsīr*. The Qur'ān could also be of use to European Jews such as the Venetian rabbi Leon Modena (1571-1648), who deployed Qur'ānic arguments against Christianity, as Aleida Paudice showed.

Those European Christians who studied the Qur'ān continued to read it »through Biblical glasses«, as Maxime Sellin showed in his analysis of the Qur'ān of Bellus, an Arabic Qur'ān copied in Bellus (near Valencia) in 1518 containing annotations and glosses in Latin, Catalan and Castilian. These glosses showed that what most interested the annotator was the relation of the Qur'ānic text with that of the Bible, either as a confirmation of biblical truth or as a rejection of it. The German orientalist Levinus Warner (the subject of Kentaro Inagaki's presentation), whose 1643 *Compendium historicum* relies on an array of sources in Arabic and Persian, also offers a Christian reading of the Qur'ān: he questions the convergences and divergences between biblical and Qur'ānic narratives, but also made a pioneering use of Zamakhshari's *tafsīr* in his reading of the Qur'ān. Biblical scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries increasingly saw the Qur'ān as an exegetical tool, a key to understanding the »oriental« civilization that produced both the Bible and the Qur'ān: Christian Benedict Michaelis, for example, sees the Qur'ān as an ethnographical document shedding light on the habits and foibles of oriental Arabs and Hebrews (as Asaph Ben-Tov and Jan Loop demonstrated). At the same time, other orientalists, while not forsaking their preference for

what they see as biblical truth, revel in the literary, poetic and folkloristic dimensions of the Qur'ān, as we saw in Emmanuelle Stefanidis' analysis of Michel Baudier's *Histoire générale de la religion des Turcs* (1625). The nineteenth-century Danish orientalist Nikolai Frederick Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872) similarly viewed the Qur'ān as a fount of fairy tales reflecting the »Arabian spirit«, as Thomas Hoffman showed.

European orientalists brought their erudition to bear on processes of contact and exchange in the far-flung empires of the Dutch, French, British and others. Naima Afif looked at the fascinating example of how the Qur'ān, translated first from Arabic to French by André de Ryer (1647) then from French into Dutch by Jan Hendrik Glazemaker (1657), was finally translated from Dutch into Hebrew in the mid-eighteenth century by Jacob von Dort, a Jewish merchant in Cochin (Kochi), India. Von Dort was apparently a convert from Judaism to Christianity, as he often reshaped his translation according to stylistic and even theological elements from the Bible. Vevian Zaki looks at how the Arabic-speaking convert Nathaneal Sabat and the Anglican missionary Henry Martyn translated the King James Bible into Arabic, using Qur'ānic language to present Christianity in a familiar and acceptable guise to Arabic-speaking potential converts from Islam to Christianity in the early nineteenth-century British Empire.

In the nineteenth century, Jewish and Muslim »reformers« and »modernizers« looked to scripture, the Bible and the Qur'ān, to give solid new foundations to religious understanding and practice. Abraham Geiger, a rabbi and in many ways founder of reform Judaism in 19th-century Germany, saw the Qur'ān as an expression of purified monotheism that had borrowed extensively from rabbinical sources, particularly Midrash, though, as Michael Pregill shows, some of those sources were, in fact, written later than Geiger had thought and may have been influenced by Islam. Rather than attempt to determine chronological priority to establish who borrowed from whom, Pregill emphasizes the common concerns and shared exegetical culture of Jews and Muslims in Late Antiquity. Jewish reformers like Geiger, inspired in part by German Protestantism, looked to scripture as the fount of religious reform. Gulnaz Sibgatullina places Mūsā Bigī's 1911/12 Turki-Tatar translation of the Qur'ān into the context of this same »biblical turn«: reformist Muslims, like their Jewish and Christian counterparts, sought to bring scripture (in this case, the Qur'ān) to the people in the vernacular. Scholars such as Bigī also used their knowledge of biblical texts to help them understand the Qur'ān, as we see in their works of *tafsīr*.

I have given detailed descriptions of these two conferences held in 2020 and 2021 to give an idea of the scope and diversity of the scholars associated with EuQu and of the subjects we take on. In the coming years, until the end of the project in 2025, we will organize conferences, workshops, and other events across Europe. We are also planning on bringing the fruits of our research to a broader, non-academic audience, through collaborations with associations of schoolteachers, through publications aimed at non-academic audiences, and through a series of exhibitions on the Qur'ān in European culture to be held in participating museums across Europe.

EuQu's PhD students and postdoctoral researchers will continue on their individual research projects, which will lead to the publication of dissertations and monographs in our European Qur'ān series with De Gruyter. Here I will briefly describe the projects of those working on the medieval period. Pierre Courtain will continue his research on the »Dominican Qur'ān«. He is producing a critical edition of two key works on Islam: *Explanation*

simboli apostolorum and *De seta Machometi*, by the thirteenth-century Dominican friar Ramon Martí. He is also studying the reception of the Qur'ān among Dominicans, including Ramon Martí and Riccoldo da Montecroce. An important part of his work involves the study of Qur'ānic manuscripts, in both Arabic and Latin, from Dominican collections, which often offer clues as to how they were read and what elements of the text interested its readers.

Postdoctoral researcher Octavian-Adrian Negoită's project is entitled *The Holy Book of the Ishmaelites in the World of Greek Christianity (XIIth-XVIIIth Centuries)*. He is studying the place occupied by the Qur'ān in Greek discourse, in writings by authors ranging from emperors to simple monks, who attempted to discuss, refute and engage with the Islamic holy book, while pursuing their own religious and political agendas. Negoită is conducting a diachronic analysis of the place of the Qur'ān within the cultural and religious history of the Greek world from Byzantine times until the dawn of modernity, with particular attention to understanding how the Qur'ān was conceptualized by the Greek intellectuals, and how it has been embedded in the polemical discourse. Part of the project will involve assessing the availability of the Qur'ānic text (in the original Arabic or translation). All these research directions will bring to light the specifics of Greek engagement with the Qur'ān. Hence, the project addresses a wide range of sources, from theological treatises to chronicles or hagiography, in both modern editions and manuscript form. It also aims to evaluate the role that the Qur'ān played in the Greek world in order to enrich our understanding of how this fits in the larger historical and cultural context of the intellectual developments concerning oriental studies in Europe.

Florence Ninitte is studying the knowledge of the Qur'ān in medieval French texts. So far her work has focused principally on two French texts containing Qur'ānic material, Jean de Vignay's *Miroir historial* and Jean Germain's *Trésor des simples* (also known as the *Débat du Chrétien et du Sarrasin*). She is undertaking an analysis of the various stages of translation and rewriting of the Qur'ānic material from the Arabic *Risālat al-Kindī* to their French rendition in Jean de Vignay and Jean Germain's texts. Her work shows how the Qur'ān was often received through multiple filters in Europe: first, the 9th- or 10th-century Christian author of the *Risālat al-Kindī*, which deploys selected verses from the Qur'ān to defend Christian belief and practice and to provide polemical arguments against Islam: questioning the prophethood of Muḥammad, denying the divine origin and nature of the Qur'ān by turning the accusation of *tahrīf* (textual corruption) against the Qur'ān itself, and demonstrating the inadequacy of its content. Peter of Toledo then translates this text into Latin in the twelfth century (as part of the *corpus cluniacense*). Peter's Latin text, the *Epistula Saraceni et rescriptum Christiani*, is then used by Vincent de Beauvais for his encyclopedic *Speculum historiale* (mid-13th century), which Jean de Vignay translates as the *Miroir historial* (c. 1332), and by Jean Germain for his *Trésor des simples*. Florence Ninitte's close textual analysis of the transmission and transformation of Qur'ānic passages between these texts provides examples of how the Muslim holy book was understood by medieval readers and how they made sense of what partial and partisan information was available to them.

Irene Reginato is producing a critical edition of Jean Germain's *Trésor des simples* (1448-1451). Germain was the bishop of Chalon sur Saône and a close advisor to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, whom he represented at the council of Basel. There he probably discussed the Qur'ān with fellow council-participants Nicolas of Cusa and Juan de Segovia, and may have seen Robert of Ketton's translation. Reginato has so far been working principally on the first two books, which offer the first French translation of Peter of Toledo's *Epistula sarraceni et rescriptum christiani*, enriched with a number of Latin sources, including Petrus

Alfonsi, Thomas Aquinas, Vincent of Beauvais and many others. Reginato will provide a much-needed critical edition of a key source in the fifteenth-century European response to Islam. She will accompany the edition with a study of Germain's use of his sources and of the manuscript tradition of the *Trésor des simples*, showing its diffusion and impact in fifteenth-century Europe.

Davide Scotto's research project is entitled *The Rise of a Christian Hermeneutics of the Qur'ān: The Medieval Latin Debate (Twelfth to Fifteenth centuries)*. He is tracing the origins and the early development of the Christian theological debate on the Qur'ān in Europe by closely comparing a variety of Latin sources (theological treatises, handbooks for missionaries, travel books, letters, prefaces and annotations to Qur'ān translations) produced from the early twelfth to the late fifteenth century in territories ranging from the Iberian Peninsula to Savoy, and from southern Germany to the Near East. He tries to overcome the static historiographic concept of religious polemics by looking at the Christian reception of the Qur'ān from a different angle. To do so, a series of transreligious or Abrahamic narratives which, with different variants and meanings, Christian scholars identified in the Qur'ān and understood through the lens of the Bible, will be detected and analyzed. Investigations will be shaped according to three lines of research: 1) Defining the Qur'ān and post-Qur'ānic materials (*hadīth*, *tafsīr*, popular narratives) starting from the Christian concept of revelation as a divinely inspired book; 2) Interpreting the Qur'ān resorting to four types of biblical exegesis (literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical); 3) Christianizing the Qur'ān by adopting a comparative perspective based on the competition, conflict, or coexistence between salvation histories. Ultimately, the goal is to see how the translation and the dissemination of the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom urged Christian scholars to acknowledge – in order to either contest it or incorporate it – the Abrahamic legacy behind the Qur'ān, thus urging contemporary scholars to question a monolithic view of European/Western religious history and cultural identity.

Other PhD students and postdoctoral researchers are pursuing projects on the Qur'ān in European culture between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries: on the circulation of Arabic Qur'ān manuscripts, on the edition and publication of the Arabic text of the Qur'ān, on translations into Latin and various European vernaculars, on the use of the Qur'ān in religious polemic, biblical studies, and in other fields of the humanities. What I have traced in these pages is only the beginning of the story of the European Qur'ān, a subject that the EuQu team of scholars will be studying over the coming years. We are organizing conferences and workshops across Europe and beyond, our European Qur'ān database will soon be online, and the successive volumes in our European Qur'ān series with De Gruyter will be published in the coming years. Readers can track the progress of our research via our website: euqu.eu.

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