

## REVIEWS

### *Robert of Ketton's Translation of the Qur'ān.*

The existence of a Latin translation of the Qur'ān commissioned by Peter the Venerable,<sup>1</sup> the ninth abbot of Cluny, and the influence which this translation exerted upon many later European translations, have long been known to scholars. Owing, however, to errors and omissions in late manuscripts, and, one regrets to say, incomplete use of the Latin sources, many facts concerning this translation have only recently come to light.<sup>2</sup> It was not until the rediscovery and preliminary study of the autograph MS. 1162 of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal by Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny,<sup>3</sup> in fact, that the way was prepared for a thorough investigation of the subject. Scholars of Islam may perhaps find it useful if I summarize those results of my further research on the manuscript<sup>4</sup> which are of particular interest to them.

Peter the Venerable's visitation of the Cluniac abbeys and priories in Spain in 1141 and 1142 was the proximate occasion for his planning an ambitious project, the first of its kind in western Christendom, to study Islam. I am persuaded that this project was not a chance notion, but was intimately related to singularities of Peter's

education and temperament, to his other apologetical and polemical works, and to his profound dissatisfaction with the direction taken by the Crusade movement in his time.<sup>5</sup> Peter was a learned man, who recognized frankly that little trustworthy information about Islam yet existed in Latin, and blamed Christian ignorance on the general loss of zeal for the study of languages.<sup>6</sup> Since he did not know Arabic himself, his first move was to employ translators to supply him with information.

Peter may have been assisted in the selection of his translators and translations by the scholarly archbishop of Toledo, Raymund de La Sauvetat,<sup>7</sup> himself a patron of a large corps of scholars. In any case, as Peter told Bernard of Clairvaux later, he learned of the existence of an Arabic work 'disputing' Islamic doctrine, and set a certain 'Master Peter of Toledo' to work translating it into Latin for him; 'but because the Latin tongue was not as familiar or well-known to him as the Arabic, I gave him as an assistant the learned man, our beloved son and brother, the *notarius* Peter.<sup>8</sup> This man polished and set in order the Latin words, which had for the most part been set forth by him [Peter of Toledo] in an unpolished and confused fashion, and thus he produced an epistle,

<sup>1</sup> There is no satisfactory scholarly biography of Peter; see J. Leclercq, *Pierre le Vénéralle* (Abbaye Saint-Wandrille, 1946), who refers to the earlier works. A volume of studies on Peter is planned for publication in the *Studia Anselmiana* in 1956.

<sup>2</sup> Valuable preliminary work was done by P.-F. Mandonnet, 'Pierre le Vénéralle et son activité contre l'Islam', *Revue Thomiste*, i (1893), pp. 328-42, and U. Monneret de Villard, *Lo studio dell' Islam in Europa nel xii e nel xiii secolo* (Studi e Testi 110), Città del Vaticano, 1944, pp. 8-35.

<sup>3</sup> 'Deux Traductions Latines du Coran au Moyen Age', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 22-23 années (1947-8), pp. 69-131, and 'Pierre le Vénéralle et la légende de Mahomet', *À Cluny* (Dijon, 1950), pp. 161-70.

<sup>4</sup> My doctoral dissertation, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, 1954 (Firestone Memorial Library, Princeton University, P685. 1954. 42), will be published to-

gether with my editions of the Arsenal manuscript and the *Liber contra sectam sive heresim Sarracenorum* from MS. 381 of the Bibliothèque de Douai.

<sup>5</sup> Kritzeck, pp. 10-40.

<sup>6</sup> J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 189 (Paris, 1890), 671b.

<sup>7</sup> They certainly met, if not before, when they accompanied 'Emperor' Alfonso VII to Salamanca in 1142; A. J. Bernard and Alexandre Bruel, *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Cluny*, v (Paris, 1894), n. 4072, 425, and n. 4076, 429. See also A. G. Palencia, *El Arzobispo Don Raimundo de Toledo* (Barcelona, 1942).

<sup>8</sup> This is Peter of Poitiers, not the Chancellor of Paris or the Canon Regular of St. Victor's; see M. Lecointre-Dupont, 'Notice sur Pierre de Poitiers, Grand Prieur de Cluni, Abbé de St.-Martial de Limoges', *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest*, ix (1842), pp. 369-91.

indeed a little book, of much future use to many, I believe, on account of the knowledge it communicates of things unknown.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to see how so many scholars could have believed that Peter was speaking of the Qur'ān in this passage; the translation in question is that of the *Risālat 'Abdallāh ibn Ismā'il al-Hāshimī ila 'Abd-al-Masīh ibn Ishāq al-Kindī wa Risālat al-Kindī ila al-Hāshimī*, the famous Christian apology.<sup>2</sup>

'Apart from that', Peter continued to Bernard, 'I had translated from the Arabic into the Latin language also the . . . sectarian doctrine, the life of [Muhammad], and the law, which he called al-Qur'ān, that is, "a collection of precepts"<sup>3</sup> . . . [In the case of the latter translations] the translators were men skilled in both languages, Robert of Ketton<sup>4</sup> from England, who is now archdeacon of the church of Pamplona, and Herman of Dalmatia, a schoolman<sup>5</sup> of the most incisive and literary genius. I found them in Spain around the Ebro [River] studying the art of astrology, and brought them to do this by means of a large remuneration.'<sup>6</sup> In a later account Peter noted the presence of another translator: 'in order that the

translation[s] should not lack the fullest fidelity, nor anything be taken away by deceit from our attention, I also added a Saracen to the Christian translators . . . the name of the Saracen was Muḥammad'.<sup>7</sup> Herman and Robert translated two works each: Herman the *Masā'il Abi-al-Hārith 'Abdallāh ibn Salām*,<sup>8</sup> and the *Kitāb Nasab al-Rasūl* by Sa'īd ibn 'Umar;<sup>9</sup> Robert a still unidentified collection of Judæo-Islamic legends followed by biographical notices of Muḥammad and the first caliphs,<sup>10</sup> and the Qur'ān. Peter's mention of Herman and Robert together as the translators of the four last-named works led many authorities to believe that the two collaborated on all of them, but the titles in the Arsenal manuscript and two prefaces by Robert support these individual attributions.

The translation of the Qur'ān has proven itself, perhaps rightly, the most memorable part of the Toledan Collection. It probably required the longest time to complete, and is in any case the only part capable of being dated precisely. 'Robert of Ketton translated this book', the beautiful *explicit* of the Arsenal manuscript reads, 'in the year of the Lord 1143, the year of

<sup>1</sup> Migne, 649c-D.

<sup>2</sup> The Arabic text was edited by Anton Tien, London, 1880, but better manuscripts have been discovered and collated; see P. L. Cheikho, 'Catalogue raisonné des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Orientale. VI: Controverses', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, xiv (1929), pp. 43-46. José Muñoz Sendino published an edition of the Latin translation, 'La Apología del Cristianismo de al-Kindī', *Miscelánea Comillas*, 11-12 (1949), pp. 339-460, but did not use the Arsenal manuscript, which gives many better readings. On the work see G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, ii (Studi e Testi 133), Città del Vaticano, 1947, pp. 135-45, and W. Muir, *The Apology of Al-Kindī* (London, 1882).

<sup>3</sup> If, as seems clear from another text, Migne, 340B, Peter is giving a translation of the Arabic word and not a description of the contents, his translation needs correction; he copied it from the title in the Arsenal manuscript, f. 138.

<sup>4</sup> *Kettonensis* seems to be Ketton in Rutlandshire; later manuscripts give Chester or Reading. See A. M. Clerke, 'Chester, Robert', *Dictionary of National Biography*, x (London, 1887), p. 203; G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, ii. 1 (Baltimore, 1931), pp. 172-4.

<sup>5</sup> Translating *scholasticus* in the technical sense, following M. Alonso, 'Hermann de Carinthia, De

*Essentiis*', *Miscelánea Comillas*, v (1946), p. 13; see H. Bosmans, 'Hermann le Dalmate, traducteur des traités arabes', *Revue des questions scientifiques*, lvi (1904), pp. 669-72, and Sarton, ii. 1, pp. 173-4.

<sup>6</sup> Migne, 649D, 650C.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 671D.

<sup>8</sup> The Arabic text was lithographed in Cairo, 1867, and there are numerous manuscripts with widely different variants. There are two translations, both rare and neither very useful: Nathan Davis, *The Errors of Mohammedanism exposed: or, A Dialogue between the Arabian Prophet and a Jew* (Malta, 1847), and F. Pijper, *Het boek der duizend vragen* (Leiden, 1924). On the work see J. Horowitz, 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām', *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, i. 1 (1954), p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Ribera and M. Asín y Palacios, *Manuscritos Arabes y Aljamiados de la Biblioteca de la Junta* (Madrid, 1912), pp. 44, 50.

<sup>10</sup> Parts seem to be contained in manuscripts in the Biblioteca de la Junta, but I have not yet had an opportunity to study them carefully; Robert is at least partly to be blamed for omitting the *isnād* on the grounds that 'the names are absolutely foreign to the Latin language, so to enumerate them all diligently would remain wholly fruitless, unless one esteems prolixity of words and augmentation of folios as fruitful!' Arsenal manuscript, f. 5.

Alexander 1403,<sup>1</sup> the year of the Hijrah 537, the year of the Persians 511.<sup>2</sup> This permits us to establish the date of its completion between 16 June and 15 July 1143, the beginnings of the Persian year 511 and the year of the Hijrah 538 respectively. Robert indicated in his preface to the translation that he had experienced considerable difficulty with it, though he insisted that he had altered 'nothing in the sense except on account of intelligibility'.<sup>3</sup> He interpreted this rather loosely, however. Among the most important liberties he took with the text was a re-division of the *sūrāt*; he began by not numbering the *Fātihah* and dividing the second through the sixth into fifteen, so that he ended finally with *nine* more *sūrāt* than the official numbering calls for. He occasionally omitted phrases and made rather bad mistakes in translation, but his most serious failing was his tendency to express causes and conclusions left unexpressed in the original, and otherwise to introduce logical connexions between independent *sūrāt*. His choice of phrases based on liturgical and literary reminiscences are sometimes rather bizarre.

In the Arsenal manuscript, the translation of the Qur'ān is very heavily annotated; the first ten folios, for example, contain 364 marginal and interlinear notes. A few of these notes may have been made by Robert of Ketton, but I am inclined to believe that most are the work of Peter of Poitiers; they range from an outraged 'o quantum mendacium' to informed commentaries, hundreds of words in length, on the Ka'bah and Islamic customs. My full study of this translation will include an edition of all these notes, and a glossary of Latin and Arabic terms.

The first aim of Peter the Venerable's

project had been to remedy European Christian ignorance of Islam, and the Toledan Collection was an admirable beginning. But because Peter found its contents sometimes 'prolix, and for the most part difficult to understand',<sup>4</sup> he later prepared a brief, simple, and generally accurate handbook of Islamic doctrine entitled *Summa totius heresis Sarracenorum*.<sup>5</sup> His own role, as he first and long considered the project, was to have stopped precisely at this point, but when he observed that neither Bernard of Clairvaux nor anyone else appeared willing to use his translations in writing a book of refutation of Islamic doctrine from a Christian viewpoint, he finally wrote such a book himself, the *Liber contra sectam sive heresim Sarracenorum*.<sup>6</sup> It differs from many earlier—and later—Christian books on Islam both in its calm and respectful tone and in its treatment of only a few basic theological problems in a greatly expanded way. 'It seems strange, and perhaps it is, indeed', it opened, 'that I, a man so very different from you in place, speaking a different language, having a state of life separate from yours, a stranger to your customs and life, write from the far west to men who inhabit the lands of the east and south, and that, by my speech, I attack those whom I have never seen, whom I shall perhaps never see. But I attack you not, as some of us [Christians] often do, by arms, but by words; not by force, but by reason; not in hatred, but in love . . . I love you; loving you, I write to you; writing to you, I invite you to salvation.'<sup>7</sup>

Peter's *Liber* was not fated, as he hoped it might be,<sup>8</sup> to be translated into Arabic, nor did it have any detectable influence on later Christian polemics. The Toledan Collection, however, enjoyed the success of

and myself in the *Studia Anselmiana* volume.

<sup>1</sup> This should read 1453, which I judge to result from an omission in copying rather than an error in calculation.

<sup>2</sup> Arsenal manuscript, f. 138.

<sup>3</sup> Migne, 658C-D; the preface has disappeared from the Arsenal manuscript.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 340B.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 651C-D, 652C-657B, 658A-B. Two late manuscripts, one belonging to the Chapter of Le Puy, and MS. 2261 of the Bibliothèque de Troyes, contain interesting variants in the first sentences of the text; they will be discussed by Giles Constable

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 663D, 664D-719B, 720A-B. As far as I can tell, the only reason for the widespread belief that there once were four books in the outline of chapters prepared by Peter of Poitiers, *ibid.* 662B-663C, 664A-C; but these chapters were not strictly followed by Peter the Venerable, and all the important matters they contain are taken up in the two books; Kritzeck, pp. 212-217.

<sup>7</sup> Migne, 673B, 674C.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 672A.

a rich manuscript tradition and several printed editions (one with a preface by Martin Luther) in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> If it failed to educate Europe about Islam very noticeably, it remains as testimony, nevertheless, to the intelligence and zeal of one medieval Christian who preferred peace and understanding to warfare and ignorance.

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SIR HARRY LUKE, *The Old Turkey and the New (From Byzantium to Ankara)*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955. xii + 233 pp. Illus. Index. 8½ × 5½. 16s.

Sir Harry Luke is a prolific writer with a keen interest in history. The range of his interests is very extensive indeed, touching not only the Ottoman Empire and its successors in the Near and Middle East but also the South Seas and the Caribbean where official duty had taken him. The present work, in the words of the author, is 'a product of a study of Turkish conditions' which began in 1904 and has continued ever since. It is admittedly not a history of Turkey. Its object, again in the words of the author, is 'to describe the nature of the Turkish State under the Ottoman Sultans, its nature today and the cause (and to some extent the manner) of the transition'. The book is a reissue of an earlier work entitled *The Making of Modern Turkey* published in 1936. Such revision as has been made is very slight, but there is a new chapter (pp. 219-29) which seeks to bring the story of the book down to 1954.

The series of essays which make up this book give glimpses of Ottoman history from the conquest of Constantinople to the present time. In the first chapter the author examines an attractive thesis that the Ottomans adopted and continued certain fundamental Byzantine traditions. The second and third chapters deal with the inception of modernization commonly

known as *tanzimat*. This is followed by a chapter on the Christian communities (*millet*s) in Turkey and another on Islam. All this amounts to more than half the book. The other half is devoted to light touches on the international and inter-racial character of the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of Pan-Turanism, the collapse of the Empire after the First World War, the rise of the Nationalist Turkish Republic and the revolutionary secular changes it introduced.

It is difficult to be so extensive and escape making mistakes either on points of fact or interpretation. While the facts are on the whole accurately stated there are a number of points of interpretation which call for comment.

A main thesis of the book is put forward on the first page of the first chapter, and repeated elsewhere. It seeks to demonstrate that the Ottoman conquest proved to usher continuity, not break, with Byzantine tradition. 'The underlying principles', says the author, 'upon which the Eastern (i.e. Byzantine) Empire had been based remained unaltered under the new dispensation.' Three specific instances are given to illustrate this continuity: the *millet* system of administration, the pomp and organization of the Court, and the sacredness surrounding the holder of the office of Emperor or Sultan.

Under the *millet* system, native religious communities or foreign Christian trading settlements within the Ottoman dominions enjoyed the privilege of internal autonomy subject to certain conditions. Sir Harry Luke asserts (pp. 6-7, 9) that in this matter the Sultans were following the precedent set by Emperors. There is no question of the similarity between the Byzantine practice which, for example, sanctioned the presence, even in the capital, of autonomous Italian trading communities, and the Ottoman practice of according to their Christian and Jewish subjects wide internal autonomy. But surely the Ottomans were more inspired by long-established Muslim tradition which was first devised

<sup>1</sup> See d'Alverny, 'Deux Traductions', op. cit., pp. 109-13; there were three separate versions of the first edition published in Basel in 1543, and a

second edition in 1550; W. Koehler, 'Zu Bibliandern Koran-Ausgabe', *Zwingliana*, iii (1929), pp. 345-50.