
RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Historical-critical Study of the First Latin Translation of the Holy Quran

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ABSTRACT

The Benedictine abbot Peter the Venerable started an effort to study the Holy Quran in the years 1141 and 1142 when he was staying at the Abbey of Cluny. Robert of Ketton was one of the groups he assembled to translate the Islamic scripture. The goal of this campaign was to introduce Islam, which by that time had become a significant political force, to Western Christians. The ultimate objective was to aid missionaries who were trying to convert the people in areas that Christians had recaptured. Based on predetermined goals and duties, the translation was pursued. This essay seeks to shed light on the details of this translation, one of the first in Europe, which was done by individuals with little to no knowledge of Islam, misinterpreting the identities and attitudes of its adherents and acting on false ideological assumptions in order to further their own and their sponsors' goals. A descriptive critical review is used in this work to illuminate the historical background that contributes to the understanding of the underlying problem. We take into account several viewpoints, most notably James Kritzeck's, whose critiques aid in clarifying the translation process, and strive to reach a fair conclusion regarding it. Analyzing the translation alone, from a linguistic and cultural perspective, is another important consideration. By providing a critical-historical analysis of the setting, this initiative hopes to make translators and other interested parties aware of the project's limitations. We defer verification and responses to subject-matter specialists since understanding the goals of this complex endeavor takes specialized knowledge, sufficient time, and consistent effort.

KEYWORDS

Latin translation, the Holy Quran, Peter the Venerable, Robert of Ketton, translating provisions, Orientalism, Crusades.

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1. Introduction

This study discusses the problematic history of the first Latin translation of the Holy Quran. In spite of the large number of *non-Arab* Muslims who were capable of translating literature of this kind, this Latin translation was completed by non-Muslims (Taibawi, 1983, p. 80). Non-Muslims were given the chance to translate the Holy Quran in the beginning for the possible goal of disproving Islam in the Middle Ages (cf. Tarazi, 1944; Bundaq, 1983, pp. 97-98). In actuality, the Muslims' reluctance to translate this holy Islamic text stemmed from its own lofty position, which at the time was thought to make translation impossible, rather than from any shortcomings, inadequacies or inabilities (Taibawi, 1983, p. 80). Muslims consider the Holy Quran to be the inspired word of God, and this idea stems from the unique qualities and styles of diction of the Arabic language itself, which are intimately linked to the sacredness of this scripture.

Thus, for fear of not being able to fully explain all of the Quran's verses, some people tended not to interpret it. This explains why non-Muslims translated the Holy Quran in the first place since they were unable to recognize the sacred nature of the text (Tarazi, 1944; Bundaq, 1983, pp. 97-98). Some of these translations also had unique agendas and malevolent intentions (Froukh & Khalidi, 1995, pp. 111-116). Therefore, the present study looks at one of the first translations of Islamic texts, which may have been created by someone who did not know enough about Islam. In order to have a thorough understanding of the conditions surrounding their output, the research aims to investigate the ideologies, intellectual biases, and ambitions of those translators, if any, with

James Kritzeck's critique acting as a vital resource to comprehend and evaluate this first Latin translation.

The present study is restricted to texts that are intended to be authentic writings and reflect a certain level of religious and political activism (cf. Krings et al., 1973). Because there exist links and causal chains in human relationships, it is possible to look at the topic translation's hidden layers from a different angle. In this sense, analyzing a historical work is similar to understanding "the world behind the text" by examining its historical context (Soulen & Soulen, 2001, p. 78). With a deeper understanding of the subtleties of this problem, fresh ideas can push numerous frontiers of knowledge, as demonstrated by this study. More studies ought to encourage people to question preconceived notions and ideas. Reconstructing the true nature of the events the Latin translation of the Quran describes aids in historical criticism's primary goal of discovering its basic meanings in its *sensus literalis historicus*.

2. Orientalism and the Holy Quran

During the Middle Ages, the Holy Quran was not an unfamiliar book to the Western world. In Andalusia, a large number of monks and orientalists received their education from Muslim masters. Among these monks were the renowned French scholar Gerbert, who, after receiving his education in Andalusian institutions, rose to become the Pope of the Roman Church in 995. Other notable alumni included Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187) and Peter the Venerable (1092-1156). These three individuals spread the writings, cultures, and creations of eminent Arab and Muslim intellectuals back home. As a result, universities became hubs for the study of Arabic, and schools and monasteries began teaching Arabic texts translated into Latin—the language of academia in Europe at the time. Arabic literary works continued to be used as primary academic sources by Western academic institutions for about six centuries.

This is the reason why some of them translated the Quran into Latin or other languages. These translations are regarded as some of the most significant accomplishments of Orientalists, who seek to understand the East—or rather, to construct an East that may be entirely untrue. According to Edward Said (1978), Arab scholars need to "look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate" (p. 62). Therefore, we may categorize the three main reasons why the Quran was translated problematically and inaccurately by Orientalists:

1. Orientalists have largely questioned the authenticity and divine origin of Prophet Muhammad's message. They argue that Islam has borrowed from the Jewish and Christian religious doctrines (Siba'i, 1999, pp. 19-36). Addressing these accusations of slander, defamation, and distortions as prevalent in the West, Shakib Arslan noted how some Orientalists propagated these misconceptions by characterizing Prophet Muhammad as a deceiver, Islam as a maneuver of the devil, Muslims as uncivilized individuals, and the Quran as a text full of fallacies.
2. A discussion around Islam's representation throughout history is said to be unnecessary by some critics. However, examining the work of individuals such as Pierre Le venerable, who took a significant step of translating the Quran into Latin in the 12th century, challenges this notion. Moving forward to the fourteenth century, Pierre Pascal also demonstrated a keen understanding of Islam, more so than many of his contemporaries. Such examples emphasize the continual and important discourse on Islam across centuries.
3. Pope Innocent III initially identified Prophet Muhammad as the Antichrist. Nevertheless, he began to be seen more as a heretical figure of the Middle Ages:
 - a) The sentiments towards Muhammad—peace be upon him—evolved as figures like Raymond Lull emerged in the fourteenth century, Guillaume Postel in the sixteenth, Roland and Gagner in the eighteenth, and Father Debrogli and Renan in the nineteenth.
 - b) The views towards these figures differed significantly, and the pace of their changes also varied. However, the "anti-Islamic sentiment still exists strongly in the modern era" (Arslan, 1971, pp. 84-85).

In this regard, Bundaq (1983) offers commentary on the work of those Orientalists in question, noting that it was not grounded in the idea of an unbiased examination or objective study. Then he discusses their haste to translate the Holy Quran, in particular, creating translations that Frankish intellectuals used to comprehend this sacred book of Islam. Therefore, these attempts were "incapable of fulfilling the meanings [of the Quran] inherited in supreme expressions and miraculous styles [of diction] as provided to humans" (1983, p. 100), and they only provide some of what the translator understands from them if he wants to clarify what he perceives. As we already know, some of them purposefully misrepresented the meaning of its words, even though their comprehension is rarely full and accurate—this is especially true of those who reject it. Both sides make the same two assumptions: that it understands and that its language is inadequate.

Orientalists may have multiple objectives when translating the Quran; their approach often reflects a method of free translation. This method allows them to manipulate the text based on their personal interpretations, the matter which can involve changing

the sequence, omitting parts of it and so forth. Moreover, some of them undertake the translation of the Quran with the explicit purpose of contradicting it. They operate on the premise of translating the holy text with an aim to dispute the Islamic teachings, often displaying a stance of puritanical opposition that is imbued with anti-Islam sentiments. We have an example of this in the Spanish translation by Morquindo E. O. Okratondo, clearly referred to as *"The faithful translation of the Quran into Spanish, commented upon and refuted according to the doctrine, the sacred teachings, and the perfect morals of the Roman Catholic Holy Apostolic Religion"* (Bundaq, 1983, p. 101-106).

Some Orientalists have a tendency to translate the Quranic scriptures incorrectly and with some degree of distortion and inaccuracy. The fundamental concern was that accurate and truthful translations of these writings might encourage Europeans to become Muslims. Some even went so far as to purposefully change the original text, demonstrating a dishonest inclination. When it came to publication and translation into other languages, some deceptive translations were prioritized, particularly those that contained any inaccuracies, distortions, or exaggerations laced with bigotry and hatred. These points of view are especially pertinent to Ketton's translation of the Quran and the peculiar circumstances surrounding it. The translation in question reflects these goals and points of view. Furthermore, shedding light on the objectives of Orientalists with regard to the Quranic translation(s) prepares the reader for the upcoming talks in this research.

3. Discovering the Arab-Muslim World

Important academics have looked at the many objectives that Quran translators have pursued in the past. These goals include refuting the words of the Quran, taking advantage of the chance to demonstrate their proficiency in Arabic, and endorsing their opinions and viewpoints in their translations. Scholars who were orientalists were especially well-known for either using sectarian divisions that were external to Islam or for their noble attempts to translate the meanings of the Quran, which were reinforced by their fluency in Arabic and other languages. Bernard Lewis in his *Islam and the West*, shed light on an important aspect that those "medieval monks who translated the Quran into Latin in order to refute it were able to do so because Latin, by that time a Christian language, had the necessary terms" (1993, p. 5). This statement unveils the Christian Europe's complex approach to Islam, a mix of anxiety, intrigue, interest and hostility.

Accordingly, from the beginning of the Middle Ages, Christian Europe was plagued by the "religiously and territorially conquering Islam" wave, and by the end of the period, names like *Muhammadan*, *Moor*, and *Saracen* were used to define the 'Other' in both clerical disputes and wider literature (Daniel, 1979, pp. 233-240; Lewis, 1994, p.7). In the words of Dorothy Metlitzki, these terms evolved into "a crucial public theme," pervading the lives of Christian Europeans, both clerics and laymen (cited in Hermes, 2007, p. 137). Rife with tension, this environment was the very landscape in which Chaucer later prepared and recited his poetry, acutely conscious of his audience's anticipations. Certain Orientalists, including some Jewish sympathizers, delved into the Quran, translating and critiquing it under the guise of a systematic study. Their alleged goal was to challenge Islam or erode the veracity of its values (Biq'a'i, 1995, pp. 35-36).

A similar intent that permeated the first Latin version of the Quran at the onset of Muslim-Western clashes in Andalusia (Bundaq, 1983, p. 106; Bearman, et. al., 1969) was anonymous. Peter the Hermit, abbot of the Cluny Monastery, was entrusted with this task from 1122 to his death in 1156. Born in the Auvergne region of France in 1092, the monk was a committed Christian activist and a close affiliate of monarchs and archbishops. In 1141, he ventured to the Benedictine monasteries in Toledo, home to followers of Benedict, where he was largely impressed by the magnificence of the Arab-Islamic civilization. Peter the Hermit set out to comprehend how such a civilization had risen as a major rival to Christianity, the matter which led him to look into the roots of Islam by crossing paths with Robert of Ketton who allowed him to translate the Quran into Latin (Bundaq, 1983, p. 175; Biq'a'i, 1995, pp. 32-40; Bearman, et. al., 1969, p. 431).

Completed by 1143,¹ this Latin version of the Quran was imbued with troublesome footnotes and comments reflecting a Crusader's hostile attitudes towards Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), amounting to inflammatory slander. However, the Christian authorities declined an immediate appearance of this translation so as not to inadvertently help promote Islam due to prevalent extreme emotions. Despite its intolerance, the translation was seen and influenced by many Christian religious circles. The Bockmann Bibliardi, a publisher in Basel, Switzerland, printed the translation in 1543. It also had two reprints in Zurich in 1550 and 1556. The official goal of this translating venture was to learn about the Islamic scripture, yet its concealed intention was to serve as a Christian tool against Muslims during the Crusades. Concerning Robert's work on his translation, Norman Daniel noted that he:

"[a]lways went to extremes in translating a non-aggressive text in order to make it obnoxious or pornographic, or to prefer an improbable and aversive interpretation to a plausible and acceptable interpretation" (Bearman, et. al., 1969, p. 429).

¹ This translation of Robert of Ketton can be found in the Arsenal Library in Paris.

The unfolding of this translation presents an undeniable contradiction, given that it occurred simultaneously with violent incidents in the East stemming from the hostile Crusades against Arabs and Muslims. This was also the time when a reform-focused intellectual and religious movement emerged in the West in response to the Crusades and other varied factors. Notably, a few scholars, such as Muhammad Abu Talib, have noted this aspect and remarked on the unusual timing of certain translations of the Holy Quran. These translations were released during specific events in Western intellectual, social, and religious history. The pioneering translation correlated with a movement for religious reform that originated in Cluny, France, between the 11th and 12th centuries. This movement sought to enforce church institution laws while freeing the individual from diverse constraints.

An example of such historical overlap is the schism enacted within the Church between the Greeks and the Romans in 1054. One of the early influential figures in this movement was the prominent priest, Peter the Hermit, who managed this translation project in 1143. The following edition surfaced during the pivotal point in the Christian history led by Martin Luther (1483-1546). Having a notably distinct interest in Islam, Luther was one of those who adamantly advocated for this translation and even penned its introduction. Irrespective of the prevailing anti-Islam sentiment, it is undeniable that this translation had a dynamic role in shaping the German and wider Western thought (Taleb, 1999, pp. 12-13). This work aimed to delve into the paradoxical nature of a Crusader-Reformist dichotomy, and demonstrated its influence on Robert Ketton's Latin translation of the Quran.

4. Time of the Crusades

Occurring in 1096-1146, the First Crusade initiated the conflict between Crusader Europe and Islamic East. It commenced following Pope Urban II's sermon in Clermont on November 27, 1095. Concurrently, Peter the Hermit journeyed across France in 1095-1096, propagating the Pope's cause and leading the crusading force in 1096 towards eastern cities. Numerous cities were successfully captured (e.g. Nicaea, Antioch and Jerusalem). Worth noting are the devastating consequences of this expedition as evident in numerous murders and instances of plunder.² The Crusaders too, extended their influence over most Mediterranean coasts; Tire and Ashkelon were exceptions. During this era, numerous battles and encounters occurred. Imad-ud Din Zanki, who ruled Mosul in 1127, emerged as the leading Muslim warrior in resisting the Crusader invaders and successfully unified Muslims and inflicted heavy damage on the Crusaders.

After a 28-day long siege, Zanki triumphed over Edessa after defeating the Crusaders there. Edessa held the distinction of being the first Crusader emirate established in the Arab and Islamic East; ironically, it was destined to be the first to be free. The capture of Edessa sent a shockwave among the Crusaders which resonated across the East and West since the city bore significant early Christian heritage. Nearly half a century after it was seized by the Crusaders, its fall was an ill fortune for them. Two years after Edessa's liberation, Nur-ud Din Zanki ascended to power following the assassination of his father in 1146. As the new ruler of Mosul, Zanki committed to the cause of consolidating the Islamic emirates in the East with an aim to eradicate the Crusader establishment and regain control over Jerusalem. The downfall of Edessa provoked a widespread shock across Europe, inciting a deep feeling of defeat amongst the eastern Crusaders.

Reclaiming the lost Edessa, representatives journeyed to Pope Ignius III and Armenian delegates rallied the popes and Western monarchs. This effort was catalyzed by Saint Bernard's tireless advocacy as his religious sermons were then delivered to barons in France, proclaiming the loss of Edessa was a divine test compelling them to reunify and regain it. Bernard enthusiastically blessed France's barons and the "pilgrims" in an extremely religious movement (or new Crusade to the East) as a universal endeavor—inciting all Christians to unite in their assault on Muslims for eradicating Islam (Armstrong, 1988, p. 146). As a consequence, a massive contingent of seventy-thousand French soldiers guided by Louis VII of France and another equal number of German troops to be led by Emperor Conrad III assembled:

1. Dropping anchor at Minor Asia's coast as they arrived in Seljuk territories, the German troops were compelled to retreat towards Jerusalem. Conversely, the French forces took a land route to Constantinople and, for avoiding any direct military clash, also rerouted towards Jerusalem as they learned of Muslim troops awaiting in Edessa.
2. In Jerusalem, an accord was made with King Baldwin III of Jerusalem for the capture of heavily fortified Damascus. However, the reclaim of Edessa was unsuccessful:
 - a) Driving the Crusading forces back to Europe, and
 - b) Experiencing not only defeat but also crippling humiliation in late 1149 (Wehba, 1997; Armstrong, 1988).

5. European Pre-renaissance Scientific Spirit

In the West, markedly in France, a shift towards intellectualism was observed to complement the existing Christian religious ethos.

² Several informed sources in Arabic and English in relation to the First and Second Crusades and Middle East history exist (e.g. The Lessons by Ibn Khaldun; The Crusaders in the East by Michael Zaborov; The Crusaders in the Levant by Musa'ab Alzaydi; The Crusaders Through Arab Eyes by Amin Malouf; The Atlas of the Crusades edited by Jonathan Riley-Smith; Lost History by Michael H. Morgan).

This was a stark contrast to a more hostile pursuit of conquest and materialism. A spiritual journey seeking something beyond physical rewards began to gain momentum. This concept is explored in Chretien's *The Story of the Holy Grail*, a tale of chivalry and heroism, where knights pursue the Grail, thought to be used by Christ at the Last Supper carrying His actual blood. Subsequently, the Grail transits from a holy relic to a spiritual vision, leading the knights to the celestial city of Aras—not the earthly city of Jerusalem—without a concrete location in our world. The shift in focus from capturing territories by returning to specific origins indicates a movement towards liberating the sacred from the materialistic. An alternative not to rely on the deadly violence associated with any Crusading ideologies is aimed.

Chretien's *Cliges* commences with a nod to the past:

"From the books that are left to us from the past, we look to the great deeds of men who lived in ancient times. Our books tell us that in the past examples of chivalry and science belonged to the Greeks. Then chivalry moved to Rome. With the great science coming to France now. May science have a place here, be welcomed here, and may the East which we have gained in France does not depart from us due to this. God has given it a new opportunity, but we hear no more of the Greeks and Romans, as their time has passed, and their flame has died" (Armstrong, 1988, p. 156).

A shift in the Frankish sentiment is almost perceived, highlighting more than a reverence for Charlemagne. It shows the effort made by Chretien and his contemporaries to draw connections with Greeks and Romans—the classical heroes renowned for their both military prowess and intellectual mastery. It was their goal to breathe life into a new type of Frankish intellect by extending the historical legacy. Concurrently, scholars (e.g. Armstrong, p. 156; Lyons, 2010, pp.154-56) strove to form a vital link to classical history that got lost during the Dark Ages. Every time the Franks claimed control over territories ruled by Byzantines or Muslims, they encountered local adepts in Greek or Arabic, being aware of the ancient world's sciences the West had disconnected from. Consequently, Latin-speaking scientists eagerly travelled to regions like Spain and Sicily for enhancing their knowledge.

In 1150-87, scholars like Gerard of Cremona and his disciple Daniel Morley came across a profusion of texts and an immense scientific legacy translated by Arab scholars. Their aim was to ensure that European students could access this information. In fact, books started being translated from Arabic, unearthing the scientific contributions of Aristotle and numerous Arab scholars. Toledo served as a significant hub for translation, where Daniel Morley located the works of Arab scholars, whom he held in high regard. In this environment devoid of religious prejudice, scholars of all faiths—particularly Muslims and Christians—exchanged ideas without bias. Arabs had absorbed and adapted knowledge from the Hellenistic and classical world, enabling seamless transmission to scholars of different faiths. By translating and studying Arabic books, Westerners rediscovered Europe's ancient origins and intellectually wealthy heritage not forgotten.

They acquired substantial knowledge from such Arab scientists and philosophers as Ibn Sina (d. 1037) and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) and their significant discovery in Córdoba. These names were simplified to Avicenna and Averroes as they became the new guides of the West, channeling scientific progress and establishing an academic tradition based on the Arab curriculum focusing on logic and mathematics. In an intriguing switch during the Crusades, some Christians chose to learn from Arabs instead of killing them for their faith. Fueled by the generous and tolerant spirit of the Arab-Muslim exposure, this novel intellectual vitality emerged. Armstrong (1988, p. 157) also notes how the Muslim Arabs were highly respected by the Christian West, yet the latter started to divest themselves from what they saw as a confusing connection with Islam. So, they became equivocal in their attitudes as though they had no prior connections with them.

With the Arab Muslims combating them in the Crusades, the Europeans seemed utterly unable to reconcile those they learned from. They classified them as 'pagans' or 'gentiles', as categories reserved for ancient Greeks, Assyrians and Chaldeans. Infrequent are the assertions that Arabs were neither pagans nor gentiles, or that they shared belief in the same God as Abraham. Peculiar inconsistencies often surfaced in their thoughts. Admiring Avicenna and Averroes, Thomas Aquinas dismissed their Islamic faith, deeming it a fault or a pagan lapse. Others attempted to use Avicenna's teachings to counteract Islam (Ibid., p. 157). Likewise, when Dante envisioned the dwelling place for souls barred from Paradise, reserved for virtuous 'pagans', he counted Avicenna and Averroes among them; however, he relegated them to a lower rank compared to esteemed Greek and Latin scholars whom he regarded as pensive forebears.

Since the classical heritage was firmly established during the Renaissance, Arabic was disregarded in the European educational syllabi. A strained relationship with the Arab Muslims was then caused: a detestable part of the Western identity due to the historical significance of the Crusades. Academics of that era struggled to acknowledge their Greek ancestry without linking to the despised Byzantines. This movement of art and science—initially *inspired* by Arab Muslims—almost declined due to the Crusaders' brutal actions and massacres. Even at its pinnacle, the movement had a hypocritical outlook on their one-time mentors and role models. This biased perspective is also noticed in Western research about Islam, as apparently seen in James Kritzeck's critique of Robert of Ketton's translation, which is affiliated with the opinion of the movement to which the monk Peter the Hermit seemed to belong.

6. Intellectual Fruits of Pre-renaissance Spirit

As a significant Christian activist, Peter the Hermit was born in Auvergne in France in 1092. He chaired the Cluny Monastery from 1122 to 1156, making significant contributions to the spread of the religious fervor of Christianity as well as Western enlightenment through his spiritual command and alliances with monarchs and archbishops. In search of understanding the Arab-Islamic advancements he heard of in 1141, he ventured to the Benedictine monasteries in Toledo. There, he had the chance to meet two fellow monks, an Englishman named Robert of Ketton and Herman of Dalmatia. Interested in Arabic mathematical and astronomical manuscripts, they agreed to join forces with Peter the Hermit on a project intending to translate crucial Islamic books, aided by a Peter of Toledo and Muhammad the Saracen. A series of vital documents were then translated and held strong interest among the educated Europeans until the end of the 16th century.

The translated documents were remarkably various. They included the Quran itself, a worldview history from an Islamic perspective, a collection of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) hadiths, Islamic stories and an early philosophy debating Islam (namely, *Al-Kindi's Defense*). Some alterations happened to occur to the works by a subsequent reviewer, yet they remained essential references or, say, significant forward leaps for Europeans. However, despite initiating dialectical traditions, it fell short of grasping Islam's true essence, the matter which caused a warped, fantastical image igniting the Crusades. The presumably kind-hearted monk, Peter the Hermit, for instance, wrote a treatise hoping to reach Muslims with a message of love, but his work's title remarkably unveiled his thought of Islam as a 'Heretical Synopsis of the Satanic Doctrine of the Saracens'—in essence, a twisted form of Christianity.

During the Middle Ages, a negative discourse towards Muslims greatly shaped the Western perception of Islam. Similar to the episode of the so-called martyrs of Cordoba, another comparable discourse referring to Christians challenging Islam and facing harsh consequences from the Muslim leaders subsequently emerged. This led to the portrayal of Muslims as an abhorrent mirror image of Christian West, marked by unparalleled neurotic and irrational intolerance. As the 12th century progressed, people started to distance themselves somewhat from Crusade mentality, seeking a less confrontational experience. A few intellectuals in Europe started to question the merit and efficacy of holy wars. The fear felt by an Anglo-Norman Crusader, participating in the Christian annexation of Lisbon in 1147—and subsequently authoring a description of the campaign—serves as an example.

Nonetheless, the perspective that Islam was acknowledged as a religion of the sword persisted in the West as an undeniable truth. The killings of Muslims led an author to recall the horrific slaughter he had witnessed, making a plea Lord, Raise Your Hand Now, It Is Enough (cited in Armstrong, 1988, p. 158). Also, Isaac, a monk of Etoile, was deeply disturbed when he learned of a military order condoning murders and plunders on religious grounds (p. 158). Isaac referred to this as a *monstrum novum* or new barbarity, which strikes down Christ's teachings of patience and forgiveness. Walter Mapp, a trustee of Eleanor Aquitaine who passed away in 1209, was also deeply disturbed by these military orders. He argued that the Apostles conquered such cities as Damascus and Alexandria with only God's word. However, the Crusades were never condemned, despite the observed incongruity between the Crusades and Christ's teachings.

7. Crusading Spirit Going to Continue

Islam, as a religion, is inherently more peaceful than other sacred religions. In fact, it has established a remarkable example of peaceful cohabitation, evidenced in the conversion of various nations, dating back to its origin. The conceptions formed by Western scholars in the 12th century bore no real relation to Islam; instead, they were heavily biased representations fueled by the predominant Christian aggression of that time. This is exemplified in Robert of Ketton's translation of Surah 88 from the Holy Quran, where he mentioned: "So, remind them all, for your duty is only to remind. You are not there to compel them" (Ghashiah, 21-22). We find that the commentator begins to comment in the footnote with an amazing attack on the Prophet (PBUH) by writing: "Why then are you trying to persuade people to convert to your religion by using the sword? (Armstrong, 1988, p. 158).

While it might appear unusual, the analyst of the text criticizes phrases that overtly and unambiguously claim Islam as a peaceful religion. This person observes Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) positive approach towards the People of the Book and his guidance on interacting with them as mentioned in the Quran. Moreover, this commentator takes into account how the Prophet instructs his followers to remain patient during their initial struggle against the Quraysh tribe in Makkah as their *jihad* is not offensive in nature. Armstrong (1988) dismisses the Quran as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is, in his words, "untrustworthy", thus invalidating the Quran as a credible source. Islam is seen as a violent religion to him only because some European scholars have constructed and perpetuated this image. Armstrong also perceives Peter the Hermit to be a forgiving person who accused St. Bernard of being harsh and brutal.

He emphasizes his intention to reach out to Muslims in a loving manner, as he envisions Muslims, stating:

"I prefer words to weapons, reason over hatred, love above all... I appreciate you; I write to you out of love, beckoning you to salvation" (p. 158).

In essence, the path is favorable, paralleling his begun translating project to Spanish. However, Peter often disregards the text,

opting to base his comprehension loosely on what he identifies as 'knowledge' and the truth of Islam. However, while going through Ketton's version of the Quran, he came across various passages stating that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised Muslims to treat the People of the Book compassionately and highlighted the shared origin of religions, saying: "our God and your God is one" ('Ankabut, 29). Still, Peter remained convinced that only the Quran dismissed any religious discourse, contrasting the Persians, Greeks and Romans, whom he felt were all peacefully in search of truth. This preconception is factually unsupported. The reality is that Muslims would penalize Christians who affronted or disparaged Islam or the Prophet although they remained open to discourse on religious ideas from individuals of any faith.

Instead of studying the Quran in its complete translation, Peter would cherry-pick specific verses, misconstrue their context(s) and engage in profound structural discussions about the same. He examined a sacred verse that reads: "*So, if they disagree with you, say, 'I and my followers have devoted ourselves to Allah. And question those who possess the Scripture and the unlettered, 'Have you devoted yourselves to Allah? If they devote themselves, they will achieve guidance. However, if they deviate, your only obligation is conveying the message'*" (Al 'Imran, 20). Armstrong comments that if you claim to have adopted Islam, you assert that you and your followers have wholly surrendered to God when disputes arise. But as a retort to the previous verse, the Prophet is addressed: What's your point? [...] How can I be convinced that you are a genuine messenger of God? (Armstrong, 1988, p. 159).

Peter has interpreted some internal Islamic affairs as general concepts, disregarding other perspectives. He asserts Islam advances solely by extreme violence: "Words are useless in such a state of savage cruelty" (p. 159). Even a rational man like Peter the Hermit, he finds it difficult to maintain objectivity while perceiving Islam as a faith of cruelty and intolerance. Neither the translator's commentator nor Peter the Hermit took the Crusades into account. For instance, the translator only recalled St. Bernard's statement that his battle with Islam involved the usage of the sword. Apart from Peter the Hermit's explicit condemnation of violence and advocacy for treating Muslims with love, he expressed hope to King Louis VII of France to slay as many Muslims as possible on his Crusade, just as Moses and Joshua had done to the Assyrians and Canaanites. Indeed, this represents a peculiar, contradictory and neurotic psychological dynamic.

Christians historically found it challenging to perceive Islam as anything beyond a warped version of their own faith. From a young age, the stereotype of the Muslim became a central piece of the Western Christian worldview. This image was compelled to carry the weight of Western anxieties over Christian violence. Contemporary books, media outlets and TV programs continue to perpetuate such terms as 'the sword of Islam' and 'terrorist Islam' maintaining this one-dimensional representation of Islam. Persisting fondness of the narrative of Islam as a "religion of violence" shows a requirement to uphold this belief. Clearly, the Western prejudices about Islam have been shaped by religious biases and the legacy of their medieval Christian culture. This leaves them not in a role of defending Christianity, but actively opposing Islam, the matter which perpetuates the idea that Islam was forcefully propagated (Hoffman, 2001, p. 22).

Notably, such figures as Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu in the current state of Israel still justify the use of force against Palestinians, arguing that Islam instructs its followers to violently eliminate people from other religions. The narrative that peace agreements between the Jewish state and the Arab Muslims are unattainable is then reinforced, giving Israel an apparent right to employ drastic measures including violence and destruction, for self-protection. In this vein, General Allenby's proclamation upon his 1917 arrival in Jerusalem, "Today the Crusades have ended," continues to resonate among Muslims. Coupled with modern events, there is an escalating concern vis-à-vis the alleged threat of a new Crusade due to the West's aggressive attitude towards Islam and its followers (Taibawi, 1991, p. 70). These sentiments were echoed by George W. Bush's statement, "This crusade [...] is going to take a while" (Lyons, 2014, p. 1).

8. Conclusions

For translators and academics interested in this topic, this critical evaluation aims to emphasize the important role historical settings play in great works. It recognizes that these duties require specialized knowledge, adequate time, and continual effort to address this issue and assigns research and response assignments to trained researchers and translators. In this context, it is important to highlight an important critique and elucidation of Robert of Ketton's translation that was given in 1955 AD at the Harvard University Fellows Association by James Kritzeck, an American expert in Arabic and Islamic studies. At Princeton University, Kritzeck finished his doctoral dissertation on Peter the Hermit in 1954 AD. Peter the Hermit and Islam, a book based on the thesis, was released in 1964. He attempts to summarize the most important conclusions from his analysis of Robert Ketton's Quranic manuscript translation in his review.

Researchers interested in this work and maybe focusing on the significance of this European translation of the Quran, its influence on later Western translations, and the underlying defense of Peter the Hermit will find this knowledge to be significant. Based on methodological neutrality, Kritzeck offers significant context and facts about the translation that is particularly intended for Western Christian academics or readers. In a milieu full of tension and overt hostility, the review also sheds light on any religious and cultural bias against Islam and Muslims for readers and researchers who are Arab-Muslims. As regards Kritzeck's critique, valuable insights can be gained into the reasons and processes behind this particular translation. This understanding could extend

to other translations that carry their distinct pros and cons in a history marked by unwarranted conflicts and hostility towards Islam.

This analysis offers a helpful perspective on the reasons behind a non-Muslim's decision to translate the Quran, so promoting a fair and scientific understanding of Arab-Islamic relations. It is imperative that media organizations, as well as Arab and Muslim academics, carefully and objectively examine the information that is offered about the Quran and Islam in social media, newspapers, television shows, international forums, and other venues. To uncover the truth, it is also necessary to closely examine, translate into Arabic, and analyze the writings of Orientalists. It is the charge of evaluating Quranic research and translations as well as other important Islamic literature, approving only the reliable work. Given that these translations are essential for comprehending Islam and that their globalization makes them unavoidable, it is critical to assess these endeavors from a linguistic, cultural and political standpoint.

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