



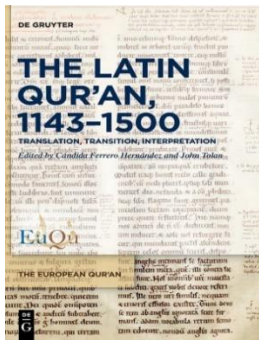
Book Review



Candida Ferrero Hernández, and John Tolan, eds., *The Latin Qur'an, 1143-1500: Translation, Transition, Interpretation*, Berlin/ Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021. Pp. vii+498.

The origin of the book under review dates back to an academic event held at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona on 9-11 March 2020 within the framework of the project "The European Quran: Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion, 1150-1850". This seven-century-long timespan witnessed certain major changes and upheavals in Europe .

The volume in question contains 21 academic papers that highlight the background of Europeans' familiarity with Islam, the Holy Quran, and the Prophet Muhammad. The book offers revised versions of the papers presented at the conference, hence quite thoughtful and markworthy. The volume contains a general and informative introduction by Dr. Candida Ferrero Hernandez, one of the volume's co-editors .



The significance of the book lies in shedding light on the background to the manner the West has come to know the Islamic religion. Robert of Ketton (fl. 1141-1157) was an English monk and scholar who tried his hand at producing the first Latin translation of the Holy Quran. Given the fact that the West never forgets its various historical encounters with the Muslim world, Western scholars are keenly interested in bringing to light how their ancestors, particularly leading fathers of the church and renowned monks came to study the Holy Quran as the essence of Islam and the Muslim world .

It needs little justification that the earliest translation leaves its historical impact (sometimes incorrigible) on the collective mind and



worldview of the target or recipient community. Though a pioneering work, Robert of Ketton's Latin translation was no exception. Despite being the intact Word of Allah, the Holy Quran was mistakenly introduced as a compilation of the Prophet Muhammad. It laid an undeniably wrong basis for later misconceptions of Islam, the character and career of the Prophet Muhammad, and the Holy Quran.

The 21 papers anthologized in this proceedings shed light on a range of topics that assist the reader dive deep into the historical roots of typical European historical and doctrinal misconceptions of the Holy Quran. In a paper contributed by Thomas Burman, the four oldest Latin quotations of the Quran worked out in al-Andalus are closely examined. Al-Andalus was a region where Muslims and Christians lived together. Burman cites certain fragments in Arabic, followed by their Latin renditions .

Next, Anthony John Lappin's paper deals with the genesis of the Latin Qur'an called "Alchoran Latinus" and its related texts .

It is worth mentioning that alongside Quran-oriented translations and scholarship, some scholars chose to concentrate on the life and legacy of the Prophet Muhammad, while others were eager to develop glossaries and Arabic-Latin wordbooks.

Olivier Hanne's paper makes the scope a bit broader. He mentions examples of Arabic works in the realm of sciences, whether essentially religious or otherwise, that were rendered into Latin. Another big name encountered is Adelard of Bath (ca. 1080- ca. 1150) who translated Arabic works, including the Quran and Euclidean geometry into Latin. Clearly, the translation approaches adopted by Robert of Ketton and Adelard of Bath were different, each with its strengths and weaknesses .

The rest of the volume contains informative studies. They shed light on this intriguing background of Europeans' familiarity with Islam. For the



sake of brevity, this review skips some studies but focuses on that of Xavier Casassas Canals. His paper shows how the Latin renditions of the Quran received side notes and were indexed to assist polemists in their debates with Muslims.

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