for *Capitulum*, as well as the numbering in Roman numerals of the manuscript folios where they are found. There is a second numbering scheme throughout the entire manuscript in Arabic numerals, which is out by two compared to the foliation in Roman numerals and which I follow for identification purposes in the transcription of the glosses. Up to folio 6v, these glosses appear by themselves; they also appear on some later folios, though in fewer numbers, together with the glosses in smaller script that predominate in the rest of the manuscript.

The authorship of this first group of glosses has still not been established. Some authors who have been proposed, such as Ramon Martí or Ramon Llull, have been ruled out on the basis of comparisons of the handwriting.[6]

We should note that, until now, it had not been established that the author of these glosses was also familiar with and used the text of Mark of Toledo's *Alchoranus Latinus*. This becomes clear when we compare his glosses to this translation, which was also used by Riccoldo. This leads us to think that the author may have been a cleric, a Dominican connected to Florence's Santa Maria Novella who read and annotated this Qur'an before Riccoldo. That this translation was known in Florence is also supported by the discovery of a fragmentary Italian translation in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1910 (Codice Vaglienti), as has been noted by Luciano Formisano.[7] This demonstrates that Mark of Toledo's translation circulated more widely than was believed up to now. Some examples that illustrate that the anonymous glossator was familiar with Mark of Toledo's translation (MdT) are:

42r (+) Nos interfecimus Ihesum Christum Filium Marie et non occiderunt eum, nec crucifixeunt eum, sed uisum fuit eis.

MdT 4:157 Et quia dixerunt: "Cristum Ihesum, filium Marie, occidimus Prophetam Dei", et non occiderunt ipsum neque crucifixerunt, sed uisum fuit eis.

134r (+) Insuflamus in ea de Spiritu nostro.

MdT 21:91 Aperuimus in ea de Spriritu nostro.

223r (+) Stare fecimus Christum et dedimus ei Euangelium et posuimus in cordibus sequencium eum multa que secuntur.

6 Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010, 'Lire et traduire le Coran', pp. 1024–1025.

7 Formisano 2004; Martínez Gázquez 2007, pp. 88–89 and nn. 29–31; Petrus Pons 2016, p. 117.

MdT 62:27 Et post misimus Ihesum filium Marie et dedimus ei Euangelium et posuimus in corde eorum qui secuti sunt eum pietatem et misericordiam et religionem quam inuenerunt.

This first group of glosses, written in larger script, comprise two different sections, based on their contents.

The first section on fol. 1v contains eleven statements in which the glossator focuses especially on the Virgin Mary and characterizes the Saracens in disparaging terms, as well as highlighting the attitude toward the Gospel that is demanded of them.

(+) Quod angeli ceciderunt de celo et facti sunt demones quia ad preceptum Dei noluerunt adorare Adam. ii a capitulo ii^{o} b.

(+) Quod societas maligna demonum facta est saracenica. ccxxxvii^{a}, capitulo lxx ii^{o}.

(+) Quod Deus pretulit Beatam Virginem super omnes mulieres. xxii b capitulo iii c.

(+) Quod angelus nuntiauit uerbum Dei concipiendum in Beata Virgine. xxii a capitulo iii c.

(+) Quod Beata Virgo concepit uirgo existens. xxiii a capitulo iii c.

(+) Quod Deus insuflauit in Beata Virgine de Spiritu suo. cxxxii b capitulo xxi g.

(+) Quod christiani boni saluantur iiij a capitulo ii b.

(+) Quod saraceni omnes intrabunt infernum. cxxv b capitulo xix f.

(+) Quod saraceni debent confiteri peccata sua. cxci b capitulo x^{o}l b.

(+) Quod bene erit illis qui uolunt faciem Dei. clxv b capitulo xxx d.

(+) Quod unus dies apud Deum sicut mille qui computantur cxxxv a capitulo xxii d.

The second section emphasizes the fundamentals of the Christian faith, mainly the essence of the Trinity and the importance of Christ's death and resurrection, as well

as the need for Saracens to accept Christ God and his doctrine, and the notion that Saracens must follow the teachings in the Gospel in order to be saved.

(+) Quod Deus est trinus in personis et unus in eencia (*sic*) et quod uerbum Dei (*expunctuatum)* est incarnatum in beata Virgine mediante Spiritu Sancto et quod saraceni tenentur credere Domino Ihesu Cristo. xli b capitulo iiij g.

(+) Quod Christus mortuus est et quod Deus eleuauit eum ad se et purificauit eum et quod secaces eius ponet Deus super omnes homines usque in diem resurrectionis. xxiij a (*expunctuatum)* capitulo iij°. Quod Christus mortuus est. L a capitulo V°.

(+) Quod Christus mortuus est et uenturus in mundum. c. xxiiij b capitulum xix°.

(+) Quod Christus non est mortuus, negatur, sed iudei concedunt quod interfecerunt eum. xli b capitul iiij g.

(+) Quod sequaces Christum habebunt in cordibus suis multas uirtutes que enumerantur. cc° xxiij a capitulo lvij° g.

(+) Quod saraceni nichil sunt, id est, in uia perditionis sunt, nisi compleant euangelium *uel* impleant, id est, secuantur dicta euangelii et faciant. xlvij b capitulo v d.

(+) Quod euangelium est directio et lux. xlvi b capitulo v d.

(+) Quod Saraceni sunt credituri Christo. xli b capitulo iiij f.

(+) Quod Christus predixit post se Machumetum futurum in euangelio xxcc xxviij capitulo lxi.

(+) Quod in paradiso habebunt uxores et multa alia et cetera. ij b capitulo ij° b.

The location and distribution of the introductory glosses make it possible to speculate that the glosses written in larger script are earlier than the other group of glosses, which are much more numerous, and which are written on the margins of all folios of the manuscript.

This would also explain a couple of peculiarities in the glosses on fols 47v and 237r. The gloss on fol. 47v begins in small letters (indicated here by (–)), and connects to

the gloss in larger script with the copulative particle *et* despite the fact that the gloss in larger script begins with a capital letter, indicating the beginning of a sentence:

> (–) Placuit uobis dirigere eos per Ihesum, filium Mariae ueracem et (+) Dedimus eum Christo, in quo est direccio et lux.

The opposite happens in the gloss on fol. 237r, where the gloss written first, in larger script (+) is followed by a period, but nonetheless it is continued and finished by Riccoldo's gloss (–) in the remaining space on the same line.

> (+) Audiuimus dixerunt demones Alchoranum mirabilem uel placentem nobis qui direxit et credidimus ei. (–) Et non damus consortem Deo nostro quia ipse est unus altissimus et non habet uxorem neque filium.

GLOSSES IN SMALLER LETTERS (–) ATTRIBUTABLE TO RICCOLDO DA MONTE DI CROCE

On the basis of J.M. Mérigoux's study of Riccoldo's handwritten notes in the text of his work *Contra legem Sarracenorum* in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Florencia, MS Conv. soppr. C.8.1173, fols 185r–218r,[8] which was followed by Thomas Burman's study comparing the writing in these autograph glosses in the Florentine manuscript to the glosses in the Arabic Qur'an, it was possible to identify the Italian Dominican as the author of the notes written in smaller letters (–) in the margins of BnF Arabe 384.[9]

Glosae initiales cum compendio surarum vel capitulorum

Riccoldo's initial glosses on fols 1v and 2r are inserted among the declarative glosses on the basic contents of the Qur'an, which attracted the attention of the first glossator.

The first gloss, at the end of fol. 1r, comments on the contents of sura 10, titled 'Jonah'. It points out that, despite the sura's title, this figure from the Bible barely appears in the text. He is named only once, while Noah, Moses and several other figures receive more attention. Riccoldo asks in this gloss why the sura has been given this title, and he stresses that many other suras likewise have titles that do not correspond to the topics they deal with. The text goes as follows:

8 Mérigoux 1986.

9 Burman 2007a, pp. 81, 212, 286; 2007b; Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010.

fol. 1v *in marg. inferiore*

(–) In toto capitulo de Ionas quod est capitulum decimum, non est aliquid de Iona, nisi unum solum uerbum. De Noe uero et de Moyse et de Faraone et de aliis est ibi multum, quare ergo intitulatur de Iona. Et similiter multa alia capitula intitulantur illis de quibus non tractant.

Next, there is a second gloss, in which Riccoldo wonders about the contradiction in extolling Muhammad as the first Saracen, adding that Abraham and Noah and their sons were Saracens.

(–) Quod Maccomettus fuit primus Saracenus. … clxxxvii. Quomodo ergo Habraam et filii eius et Noe et filii eius fuerunt saraceni.

On fol. 2r, Riccoldo introduces into the upper margin a longer and more important gloss with several sections in which he highlights specific ideas that are present in the Qur'an that correspond to the main points of disagreement between Christian doctrine and Islamic doctrine.

Riccoldo provides an outline of the main topics in the Qur'an, which Burman lines up with the contents of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (CLS), where Riccoldo writes:

CLS (9:17) *Reducuntur autem principales falsitates eius ad decem genera. Dicit enim falsa de seipso, de Christianis, de Iudeis, de Apostolis, de Patriarchas, de Demonibus, de Angelis, de Virgine Maria, de Christo et de Deo*.

In this ninth chapter of *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, titled 'Quod legem Sarracenorum continet falsitates apertas',[10] these different sections about Muhammad's errors are broadly explained. They had been announced by Riccoldo at the beginning of the introductory chapter 1 of his treatise, titled 'Qui sunt errores Alcorani'.

The contents of the glosses in BnF Arabe 384 are similar to the part in chapter 9 of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* dedicated to discussing these falsities. The parallel nature of the two undoubtedly emphasizes the connection between the text of the glosses and the terms used in the writing of the *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. We should note, however, that the glosses add some commentary that cannot be found in *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, such as 'Contra evangelistas' and 'Contra sanctos prophetas'.

10 Quotes from *Contra legem Sarracenorum* come from Panella's 2011 online edition.

The section 'De Christo' is formulated differently than the corresponding section in *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, 'Contra Filium Dei'. The section 'De Deo' is formulated differently, with three different sections for considerations relating to the three persons of the Trinity, 'Contra Filium Dei', 'Contra Spiritum Sanctum', and 'Contra Deum Patrem'. This might have been very intentional, in order to highlight the importance of the Mystery of the Trinity in Christianity.

A comparison of the glosses in MS BnF Arabe 384 with excerpts from *Contra legem Sarracenorum* that deal with the same questions shows how parallel they are:

Iste liber est:[11]

(–) Contra sanctos apostolos quia dicit quod ipsi fuerunt Saraceni et imitatores Macometti.

CLS (9:69) *De apostolis autem dicit in capitulo Aamram, qui fuit pater Moysi, quod ipsi protestati sunt et dixerunt Christo quod ipsi erant saraceni et imitatores legati uel nuncii, id est Mahometi*.

(–) Contra euangelistas quia imponit eis multa mendacia, ut patet per totum et maxime quia dicit quod Iudei non occiderunt nec crucifixerunt Christo, sed quendam ei similem, et cetera, xli. iiii capitulo.

(–) Contra sanctos prophetas quibus multa mendacia imponit, ut patet inspicienti per totum.

(–) Contra patriarcas, dicit enim quod Habraam fuit Saracenus et etiam Iacob et filii eius. viij, capitulo secundo.

CLS (9:82) *De patriarcis autem idem asserit Mahometus. Dicit enim in pluribus locis in alchorano quod Abraham, Ysaac et Iacob et filii eorum fuerunt Saraceni.*

(–) Contra sanctos angelos quia dicit quod Deus precepit eis quod adorarent Adam. ij capitulo ij et etiam lxi capitulo séptimo.

11 Burman 2011.

CLS (9:108) *De angelis autem dicit in pluribus locis quod adorauerunt Adam et quod omnes adorauerunt, nisi diabolus.*

(–) Contra beatam *Virgine*m quia in pluribus locis subtrahit ei honorem et ueritatem filii Dei. Dicit etiam esse filiam Amram et sororem Moysi. xxij capitulo 3º.

CLS (9:119) *De virgine Maria dicit expresse in capitulo Amram quod ipsa fuit filia Amram. Amram uero fuit pater Moysi et Aaron*.

(–) Contra Filium Dei, cui subtrahit diuinitatem. Dicit enim eum esse nuntium et seruum Dei, ut patet inspicienti per totum.

(–) Contra Spiritum Sanctum per quem et a quo omne uerum dicitur, ut patet in suratibus infinitis.

CLS (15:68) *Secunda questio. Secunda questio est quia alchoranum facit mentionem frequentissime de Spiritu sancto et de Verbo Dei, quis est iste Spiritus sanctus, et quid est istud Verbum Dei?*

(–) Contra Deum Patrem quia dicit quod non potest habere filium, quia non habet uxorem. lxvi capitulo vj;

CLS (1:44) *Asserit etiam Machometus quod Deus non potest habere filium quia non habet uxorem.*

CLS (9:162) *De Deo uero simpliciter asserit quod nullo modo potest habere filium quia non habet uxorem.*

(–) Contra Deum simpliciter quia dicit [quia dicit] quod totus mundus erat unus, scilicet, populus et ritus, et Deus fecit eum diuersum per diuersos prophetas quos misit. viiij capitulo ij.

(–) Est autem acceptus demonibus quia ipse dicit quod demonibus placuit et multi ex eis facti sunt Saraceni. ccxxxvj capitulo lxxij. ccvii capitulo xlvi.

CLS (1:58) *Dicit etiam quod demones possunt saluari per alchoranum; et quod ipsi audito alchorano, multi ex eis facti sunt sarraceni.*

CLS (9:103) *De Demonibus autem est in alchorano speciale capitulum, ubi expresse dicitur quod demones in magna multitudine audiuerunt alchoranum et letati sunt, et testati sunt quod per ipsum poterant saluari. Et dixerunt se esse saracenos et saluati sunt.*

(–) Dicit etiam quod Deus et angeli eius salutant Maccomettum uel orant pro eo. Et hoc dicit clxxiij capitulo 33°.

CLS (9:209*) Preterea, Mahometus dicit in capitulo Elehzab quod Deus et angeli eius orant pro Mahometo et aliis saracenis.*

After the third line of text in Arabic in the initial glosses, Riccoldo inserted another brief gloss noting that when the Saracens have doubts about Islam, they must ask for help from those who read the Qur'an before them. This gloss corresponds to the text in 10:94, and it is an adaptation of Mark of Toledo's translation:[12]

(–) Quando saraceni dubitant de lege eorum, debent petere ab illis qui legerunt librum ante eos. lxxxviij, capitulo x.

MdT 10:94 Et siquidem in eo dubitaueris quod tibi destinauimus, eos interroga qui Librum legunt ante te. Iam quippe ueritas ad te peruenit a creatore tuo.

Rescriptum Christiani[13] 82,53 "Si ambiguus fueris de his que descendere fecimus super te, interroga eos qui legunt legem ante te. Iam tibi ueritas a Deo tuo uenit."

CLS (3:30–36) *Nam dicitur in capitulo de Iona: "Si fueritis in dubio de hoc quod reuelauimus uobis, petatis ab illis qui legerunt librum priusquam uos."*

12 Burman 2011, p. 607.

13 González Muñoz 2005, p. 121.

Glossae interlineales

(–) Quod si dixerint quia ibi loquitur Iudeis, contra ipse loquitur familie libri, et familia libri non sunt iudei, sed saraceni uel christiani, sicut ipse expresse uidetur prosequi. Capitulo xli capitulo iiij.

CLS (3:118) *Familia vero libri sunt saraceni, sicut ibidem ostendit.*

CLS (3:130) *Familia libri sint saraceni, ostenditur expresse in capitulo Lem,* in *fine libri.*

(–) Et idem etiam exponere uidetur xlvij capitulo v.

(–) Et idem etiam expressissime et ccxlviiij capitulo xcviij.

Fragmenta extracta ex Alchorano Latino Marci Toletani

The second group of glosses written by Riccoldo, the ones that are fragments taken from Mark of Toledo's translation, become significantly more interesting when we consider that many of them are only a direct translation of the Arabic text, with small modifications in only a few cases. This means that Riccoldo, who could have translated them himself, given his broad knowledge of Arabic and Islam, chose to use as the source of his commentaries the second Latin translation of the Qur'an.

There are two classes in this large *corpus* of glosses, which appear throughout the entire text of the Qur'an. They are almost entirely glosses taken from Mark of Toledo's translation, but some are direct and word-for-word transcriptions from the Latin translation of the Arabic fragment under analysis, while others introduce some changes into Mark of Toledo's text. These may be the simple replacement of a word by a synonym, reinterpretations of the meaning of a passage, or summaries of the contents maintaining the terms from the Latin translation.[14]

Burman has analysed some of these glosses, comparing them to passages from Mark of Toledo that Riccoldo later went on to use when he wrote the *Contra legem Sarracenorum.*

When Riccoldo speaks of man's creation, on fol. 248v, he accepts the text of Mark of Toledo's translation literally and without any changes:

14 Déroche & Martínez Gázquez 2010, p. 1024.

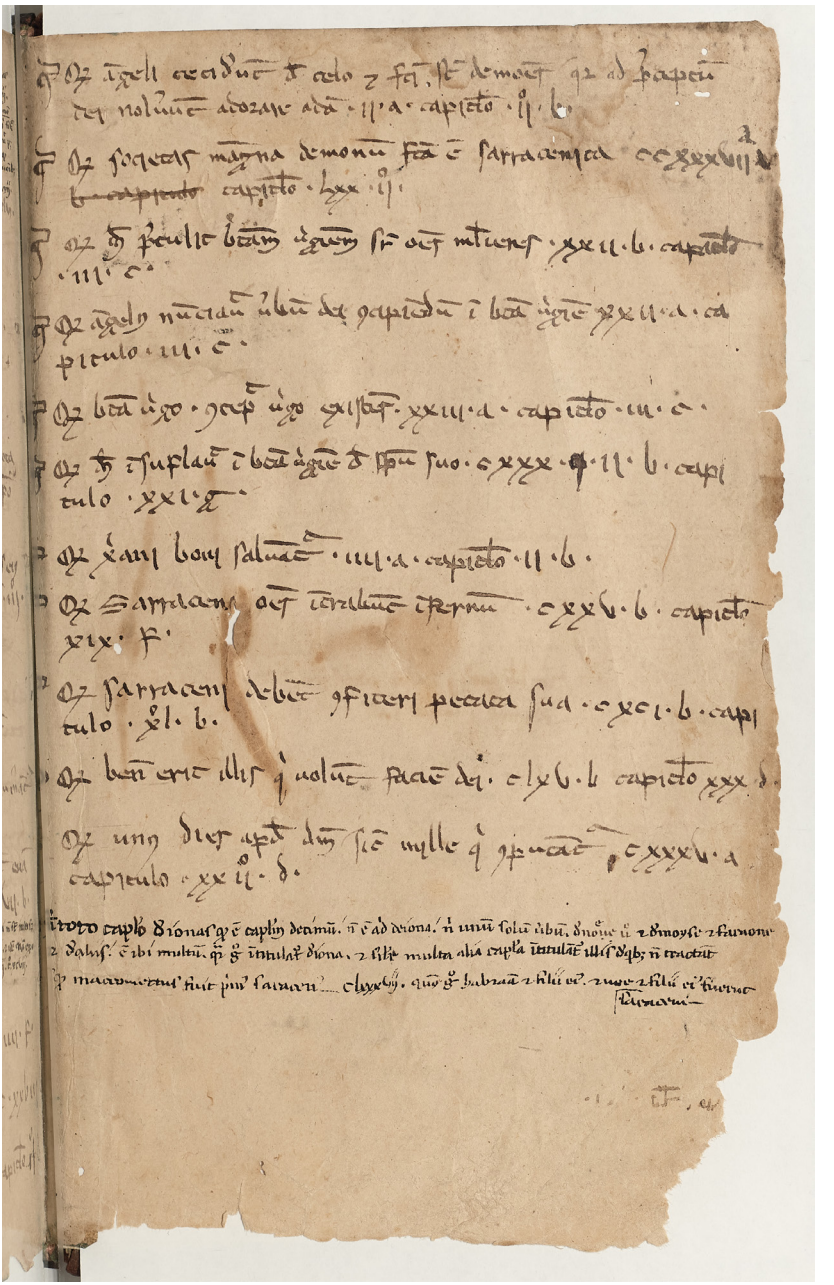

Fig. 1. MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 384, fol. 1v.

Fig. 1. MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 384, fol. 2r.

(–) Iuro per ficum et oliuetum et per Montem Synai et per urbem fidelem, quod creauimus homines in nobiliori imagine, demum conuertimus ipsum infimum infimorum, sed qui crediderunt et bona fecerunt habent mercedem absque improperio. Nec dicent te falsatorem amplius in lege. Nonne Deus est omnibus iudicibus melior iudex?

MdT 95:1 Iuro per ficum et oliuetum 2 et montem Synay 3 et per hanc urbem fidelem 4 quod creauimus hominem in nobiliori ymagine, 5 deinde conuertimus ipsum infimum infimorum. 6 Sed qui crediderunt et bona fecerunt, habent mercedem absque improperio. 7 Nec dicent te falsatorem amplius in lege. 8 Nonne enim Deus est omnibus iudicibus melior iudex?

CLS (8:274–275) *Quod autem iuret [Deus] "per ficetum et oliuetum", friuolum uidetur omnino et irrationabile.*

SOME OF THE MAIN SUBJECTS ADDRESSED

We will briefly discuss, by way of example, three important subjects in the doctrine set forth by Muhammad.

The death of Christ

The death of Christ is an important topic in Riccoldo's glosses, and a recurring argument in the glosses has to do with the alleged contradictions in the Qur'an regarding the death of Christ.

Riccoldo presents this subject in the gloss on fol. 38r:

(–) Si Alcoranus non esset a Deo, inuenirentur in eo contrarietates multe.

(–) Sed expresse contradicit sibi de morte Christi, quia aliquando dicit eum mortuum et aliquando non. Hoc etiam argumentum debilissimum est.

MdT 4:82 *Nunquid excogitant Alchoranum? Et si non uenisset a Deo, plures quidem diuersitates inuenirentur in eo*.

(–) Fui eis testis quamdiu mansi cum eis, postquam uero fecistis me mori. Tu fuisti custos super eos et tu es testis super hec omnia. Si punis eos tui sunt serui, et si parcis eis, tu es iudex legitime.

MdT 5:117 Et fui testis eis quamdiu cum eis mansi. *Cumque me fecisti abire, tu custos super eos extitisti et tu es super omnia testis.* 118 Si punis eos, tui sunt serui; et si parcis eis, tu es iudex, *gloriosus*.

As was mentioned above, the earlier glossator, who used a larger script, also wrote about the death of Christ and used Mark of Toledo's text in his glosses:

42r (+) Verbum eorum siue Iudeorum fuit quod nos interfecimus Ihesum Christum Filium Marie et non occiderunt eum, nec crucifixeunt eum, sed uisum fuit eis.

MdT 4:157 *Et quia dixerunt: "Cristum Ihesum, filium Marie, occidimus Prophetam Dei*", et non occiderunt ipsum neque crucifixerunt, sed uisum fuit eis.

Adam, Abraham and the other Patriarchs

We saw this subject previously in the 'Contra Patriarcas' section of glosses at the beginning, which includes the gloss to 2:131, on fol. 10r, where Riccoldo insists on the idea that Abraham, Jacob and their descendants are already Saracens, an idea that also appears in *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. Otherwise, in this case, Riccoldo summarizes or adapts Mark of Toledo's text.

(–) Dixit Habraam Deo: "Ego sum saracenus Deo." Et dixerunt Habraam et Iacob filiis suis: "O filii, non credatis aliquid aliud, nisi quod sitis saraceni." Et dixerunt etiam filii Iacob: "Nos sumus saraceni."

MdT 2:131 Ait: "Oblatus sum creatori gencium. 132 Et premonuit Abraham filios suos et Iacob dicens: "Filioli, Deus elegit quidem uobis legem, nolite mori priusquam sitis oblati." 133 Numquid presentes extitistis quando moriebatur Iacob dicendo filiis suis?: "Quid adorabitis post me?" Dixerunt: "Deum adorabimus tuum et Deum patrum tuorum Abrahe et Ysmaelis et Ysaac Deum unum, et nos sumus ei oblati."

CLS (9:82) *De patriarcis autem idem asserit Mahometus. Dicit enim in pluribus locis in alchorano quod Abraham, Ysaac et Iacob et filii eorum fuerunt Saraceni.*

And this is restated on fol. 101r, speaking of when Joseph, in Egypt, begs God, who has defended him, to allow him to die as a Saracen:

(–) Gloss Ista uidetur etiam conclusio totius capituli quod Iosep rogauit Deum quod non sineret eum mori nisi saracenum.

MdT 12:101 Tu es in hoc seculo defensor meus et in futuro. Fac ut in fide decedam Sarracenorum et perduc me cum iustis.

CLS (6:44) *Amplius ipse dicit quod Noe, Abraham, Ysaac et Iacob et filii eorum fuerunt saraceni; et tamen ipse dicit quod mandatum est ei quod ipse esset prior saracenus. Sed quomodo illi fuerunt saraceni si Mahometus fuit prior saracenus?*

The role of women in Islam

The role of women in Islam is a subject with wide implications related to men's freedom in their sexual relations with women. On this subject, Riccoldo writes on fol. 16r:

(–) Mulieres uestre, aratura uestra, arate eas ut uultis.

MdT 2:223 *Uxores enim uestre sunt uobis tamquam uinea, excollite ergo eas qualitercumque libuerit*.

(–) Gloss Hic uidetur concedere sogdomiam.

On fol. 66r, the gloss to 7:80 seems to present a clarification about Islam's acceptance of the practice of sodomy with a woman:

(–) Hic uidetur contradicere sibi quia superius concedit sogdomia, et hic eam uidetur detestari.

MdT 7:80 Et Loth quando dixit populo suo: "Comittistine flagicium in quo nullus de gentibus uos anticipauit?"

CLS (1:80) *Videtur etiam concedere sodomiam, tam cum viro quam cum muliere, in capitulo de Vacca, licet ipsi talia pallient quibusdam honestis expositionibus*.

All of these subjects are emphasized by Riccoldo in the sixth chapter of *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, 'Quod lex sarracenorum est contraria sibi ipsi', which also is of particular significance in the context of this gloss:

> *CLS* (4:38) Item in capitulo de *Vacca* concedit sodomiam tam cum masculo quam cum femina. Dicit enim saracenis quod "non polluant se cum infidelibus nisi credant"; et de mulieribus dicit: "Mulieres uestre aratura uestra, arate eas ut uultis." Et tamen in eodem capitulo prius dicit quod illi sodomite tempore Loth operati sunt abominabile uicium et pristinis nationibus insuetum.

CONCLUSION

Many other important topics in the doctrine and customs of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad are commented upon by Riccoldo da Monte di Croce. There are also brief, even monosyllabic glosses, which have a descriptive or denotative function: a synonym, an identification of a figure, etc., for example:

18v (–) De Christo. Hic incipit de Christo. (2:32)

67r (–) De missione Moisi ad Pharaonem et signa. (= 7:103)

68r (–) Nota pestes Pharaonis et quale et quales eas connumerat. (= 7:133)

121r (–) Nota paradiso Maccometi. (18:31)

120v (–) Et dormierunt in cauerna trecentis annis et adde nouem. (18:25)

All of these interpretations can be analysed in detail with the publication of the text of the glosses to the Arabic Qur'an in BnF Arabe 384. Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, one of the most prestigious Christian scholars of medieval Latin Europe, used the entirety of this ample collection of commentaries for composing his important work in refutation of Islam, the *Contra legem Sarracenorum*. These commentaries provide us with an extraordinary group of data points and clues for the study of the perception of the Qur'an and the Muslim religion, which, moreover, had a significant impact on Christendom in the following centuries.

Thus, for example, Nicholas of Cusa mentions Riccoldo and uses the *Contra legem Sarracenorum* in his glosses to the *Alkoranus Latinus*; for writing his *De pace fidei* in Berlin, Kues-Bibliotech, MS 108, in 1453; and in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica

Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 4071, for writing the *Cribratio Alkorani* in 1461–1462.[15] In his *Prologus* Nicholas of Cusa mentions that he was familiar with Riccoldo's work and appreciated it more than the work of other authors: "Vidi post hoc Romae libellum fratris Ricoldi Ordinis Praedicatorum, qui Arabicis litteris in Baldaach operam dedit, et plus ceteris placuit."[16] Nicholas of Cusa wrote a gloss to *Alkoranus* II 223 in Vat. Lat. 4071, in which he mentions Riccoldo repeatedly

> Habetur in libello fratris Ricoldi, habet omnem azoram de uacca et quod sic dicatur quod non polluant se cum infidelibus nisi credant. Item mulieres uestre aratura uestra arate ut uultis. Hic autem translator dicit mulieres uobis subiectas penitus pro modo uestro ubicumque uolueritiss parate. Inteligit frater Ricoldus sodomiam hic permittere, sed in eodem capitulo reprehendit cum dicit quod illi sodomite tempore Loth operati sunt abhominabile uicium pristinis nacionibus insuetum.[17]

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DAVIDE SCOTTO

A Spiritual Reaction to Islamic Prosperity

The Power of Sorrow in Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's Letters to the Triumphant Church

"L'appel de l'Eglise militante est d'abord expatriement,
puis élection de la patrie."

Louis Massignon, *Les trois prières d'Abraham père de tous les croyants*, 1949

DID RICCOLDO EXPERIENCE A CRISIS OF FAITH?

On 18 May 1291, after a bloody siege of 43 days, the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil and his army conquered St John of Acre (today Akko, Israel), the last outpost of the crusader states in the Near East. After the Christian occupation of the city following the First Crusade (1104), Acre had become the main seaport in the Eastern Mediterranean, working as a pivotal trade hub for the provision of goods and food for Jerusalem and the Latin Levant. At the same time, it was one of the main headquarters of the Knights Templar, the Hospitallers, and the Teutonic Order, which among other tasks were entrusted to grant Christian pilgrims safe access to the Holy Land.[1] The loss of Acre was understood by Latin Christians as both a political catastrophe and an upsetting turning point in salvation history. Since the rise of Islam in the early 7th century, the capture of Christian capitals by Muslim forces had left a deep imprint on the Western Christian imagination: in the perception of Christian chroniclers and religious writers, the Mamluk conquest of Acre was just the most recent of a huge series of stunning defeats that Muslims had inflicted on Christianity over the previous 700 years, from Damascus to Jerusalem, and from Antioch to Lebanese Tripoli. Prophetical proclamations and eschatological expectations overflowed in the West.[2]

1 See Tommasi 1996; Lotan 2012; Musarra 2017.
2 See Musarra 2018, pp. 15–32, 65–79.

Ten years after the fall of Acre, the Italian Dominican friar Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (*c.* 1243–1320) wrote about Islamic doctrine and Muslims' religious practices, basing his arguments on refined scholastic knowledge as well as his own experience in the Near East. With his four Latin works concerning non-Catholic peoples—among which the "Saracens" have a key role—he places himself among the learned ecclesiastics who, through the late Middle Ages, attempted to decipher and withstand the rapid expansion of Islam by writing treatises against its doctrine, translating the Qur'an, and preaching against Muslim belief and practices in both Christian territories and Islamic lands. His literary corpus, though produced at the Convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence between 1300 and 1301, draws extensively on his ten-year mission from Jerusalem to Baghdad (1289–1299). It consists of (1) a book of travels describing his route, the places he visited, the peoples he met and engaged with in the Near East (*Itinerarium* or *Liber peregrinationis*); (2) a handbook for missionaries willing to leave for the East to evangelize Oriental peoples (*Libellus ad naciones orientales*); (3) a collection of five imaginary letters conceived as a reaction to the fall of Acre into the Mamluks' hands (*Epistole ad Ecclesiam triumphantem*); and finally, (4) a systematic polemic against the Qur'an, well known among scholars as *Contra legem Sarracenorum*.[3]

This latter treatise achieved, in Europe and beyond, an impressive popularity amongst Christian readers between the late medieval and the modern times, exerting a great influence upon the Christian understanding of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an. Two examples shall suffice: the German humanist Nicholas of Cusa mentioned Riccoldo's *Contra legem* in the preface to his *Cribratio Alkorani* dedicated to Pope Pius II (1462) and used it to frame his arguments on the relation between faith and rites, claiming that it was the most authoritative source amongst the books on Islam he had collected between Rome and Byzantium; 80 years later, Martin Luther translated it into German (1542) and relied on it for his polemical invectives against the Turks. As the third part of these proceedings show, starting from the early 16th century, humanists and ecclesiastics (both Catholic and Orthodox) employed manuscript or printed Latin versions of *Contra legem* to write about Islam and, in a series of relevant cases, translated it into vernacular and Slavic languages to outline their analysis of the Muslims they met or imagined in their own days—Arabs, Moriscos, Tartars and Ottoman Turks.[4]

3 Dondaine 1967; Mérigoux & Panella 1986; Mérigoux 1986, including (at pp. 60–142) an edition of *Contra legem* according to one manuscript only, i.e., MS Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Conv. soppr. C 8.1173, f. 185r–218r; Panella 1988.

4 See the respective contributions in this volume.