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Preaching, Polemic, and Qur'an. Joan Martí de Figuerola's *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán*

1 Introduction

Anti-Islamic polemic in the Iberian Peninsula, which was explicitly anti-qur'anic, reached a peak at the turn of the sixteenth century. The political environment of Castile and Aragon —after the long-awaited conquest of the Kingdom of Granada and the forced conversions of Jews and Muslims, and amid messianic dreams of spreading the Christian faith by defeating Islam everywhere both physically and theologically— created an urgent need for evangelization and its militant arm, religious polemic. The conquest of 1492 added to the Kingdom of Castile thousands of Muslims who were significantly different from the relatively few and peaceful Castilian Mudejars. In the Crown of Aragon Muslims were a much larger proportion of the population, in some places outnumbering Christians. Fernando and Isabel, aware that a conquest in itself did not change a people's faith, called a meeting in Granada to determine how to evangelize their new Castilian but Arabic-speaking subjects.

Some of the figures who met in Granada were well versed in Arabic, Islam, and the Qur'an. Hernando de Talavera and Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, who directed Granada's religious politics, both highly educated, were confronted with two possible models: that of Ramon Llull, who proposed conversion through persuasion and knowledge of the other, and that of Duns Scotus, who maintained that persuasion could be furthered by some degree of coercion. In principle, the conditions existed for a style of preaching that was peaceful and based on reason —but that was not to be. In a symbolic final gesture, Cardinal Cisneros ordered the public burning of copies of the Qur'an in Granada. The story may be apocryphal,¹ but it remained vivid in the cultural imaginary as a defeat of

1 Nicasio Salvador Miguel, "Cisneros en Granada y la quema de libros islámicos," in *La Biblia*

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the essential symbol of Islam —as well as the defeat of Ramon Llull’s apologetic method, based on the power of reason and faith in the word. The triumph of Scotus’s notions about religious coercion and forced baptism (which have lately received scholarly attention),² did not wholly extinguish the influence of Llull’s model, which lived on in the Peninsula with varying degrees of intensity. Nonetheless, while the fate of Lullian philosophy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has been fairly well studied, his views from that time on theology and preaching remain unclear and, paradoxically, have drawn little attention. His model of preaching shared conceptual space with other views on the evangelization of the Muslims, elements of which still remain.

Some of the experts in Arabic who had met in Granada did so again in Aragon, where after 1501 King Fernando had permitted the free practice of Islam, respecting medieval laws that were still in force. There the Granada protagonists and others continued their apologetic and polemical task, using translations as a weapon for assailing Muslims.³ Once again, in that northeastern region, the Qur’an became the symbolic target, through diatribes against its teachings and attacks on the Prophet Muḥammad. It was also the part of Spain in which Mudejars, and later Moriscos, shared copies of the Qur’an most widely;⁴ protected by their feudal lords, they were best placed to defend their religion against the preachers’ assaults. Before Islam was forbidden in 1521, polemicists attacked the arguments, the form, and the very nature of the Qur’an, deploying a strategy of quoting it in Arabic to demonstrate its falsity.⁵ In their minds, Muslims would realize that the whole structure must collapse under its own weight.

Políglota Complutense en su contexto, coord. A. Alvar Ezquerro (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2016).

² Isabelle Poutrin, *Convertir les musulmans (Espagne, 1492–1609)* (Paris: PUF, 2012). Especially important for its wide range of perspectives is Mercedes García-Arenal and Yonatan Glazer-Eytan (eds.), *Forced Conversion in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Coercion and Faith in Premodern Spain and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

³ Teresa Soto and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, “Authority, Philology and Conversion under the Aegis of Martín García,” in *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

⁴ Jaqueline Fournel-Guérin, “Le livre dans la communauté morisque aragonaise,” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 15 (1979).

⁵ Figuerola states the case as follows in his *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán*: “Next, you must go further in such a dispute: if you cite a passage from the Qur’an in your favor, be sure that you show them the text in their own book. If you cannot, show them the precedents that we have put into their own language in this book, so that they and others present may realize how the faqih has deceived them in not showing them just what Muḥammad says” (“Ítem as de azer más en dicha disputa, si alguna auctoridad traherás del *Alcorán* en tu favor, trabaja que en el mismo libro dellos les muestres el texto y si no, muéstrales las autoridades que en el presente libro ha-

2 Joan Martí de Figuerola and *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán*

In 1517 Joan Martí de Figuerola, a cleric from Valencia who had been preaching to Aragonese Mudejars in Zaragoza, returned home discouraged and angry. His sermons in the Muslim quarter and in the cathedral had not ended well. His preferred tactic—to enter the mosque on a Friday, Qur'an in hand, and dispute its teachings—had infuriated local Muslims.⁶ Scandalized by his total lack of respect for their holy book and their places of worship, they had complained bitterly to the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Those officials had had to remind Figuerola of the statute that protected the Mudejars of Aragon; he was allowed to continue preaching, but had to refrain from insulting Muslims and threatening them with forced conversion. Since he remained defiant, he was forced to leave Aragon and settled again in Valencia.

Thwarted in his public preaching but still burning with missionary zeal, Figuerola would devote his early years in Valencia to composing a lengthy anti-Islamic treatise, *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán* (“Light of faith against the Qur'an”), in which he brought to bear his full knowledge of theology and the Qur'an to combat and demolish, one by one, every lesson of Islam as expounded in the holy book.⁷ He spent four years immersed in qur'anic suras and the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad so as to argue, intellectually and theologically, how mistaken, absurd, and even indecorous many passages were. His direct experience with the Muslims of Zaragoza clearly had left its mark on him: he ap-

vemos puesto en su lengua para que ellos y los que presentes estarán conoscan el enganyo que el alfaquí les á puesto en no haver manifestado lo que Mahoma dize”; Martí de Figuerola, *Lumbre de fe*, fols. 246rb-246va.

⁶ Figuerola conceived of his theological disputes as genuine duels over the Qur'an: “It was not I who wrote the Qur'an and your books, rather they were written and taught by faqih; but to determine if these things are true, bring your Qur'an next Friday, I will bring mine, and then we will see if what I say is right. Look you, gentlemen, let none of you fail to come next Friday” (“Yo no é scritto ell *Alcorán* ni vuestros libros, antes los an scritto y declarado alfaquí, pero para conocer si son verdaderas estas questiones, trahet vuestro *Alcorán* para el viernes que viene, que yo traeré el mío, y aquí comprobaremos si es verdad lo que yo digo y mira[t], señores, no falte ninguno para el viernes que viene”); Martí de Figuerola, *Lumbre de fe*, fol. 259rb. ⁷ MS 1922/36 of the Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia [RAH]. F. Guillén Robles published the complete text of the *Disputaciones* in the introduction to his *Leyendas de José, hijo de Jacob, y de Alejandro Magno sacadas de dos manuscritos moriscos de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid* (Zaragoza: Imprenta del Hospicio Provincial, 1888). Elisa Ruiz and I have just completed an edition of Figuerola's two treatises.

pended to his long work a series of *Disputaciones* in which he defended his preaching in the mosque there, to justify and vindicate his earlier actions.

This long process culminated in a book that is very dense, sometimes incoherent and disorganized, but highly erudite and full of citations from Scripture, the Church Fathers, philosophers, theologians, and ecclesiastics. Many of his theological digressions are too subtle to be grasped by most readers, while others demand a strong intellectual foundation. The book is thick with quotations from the Qur'an in Arabic (with their transliteration and translation), lending it an air of originality and philological soundness. There is also material drawn from the classic commentators on the Qur'an and from the traditions of the Prophet (hadith). Clearly the intended audience for the work was the priests and monks who would be evangelizing Muslims; in it they would find apologetics and rich polemical arguments to use in their preaching and in religious disputations. The passages written in Arabic (in their original script and in transliteration) would help to address the Moriscos of the Kingdom of Valencia, who would remain Arabophone up to the time of their expulsion.

Lumbre de fe, however, never saw the light of day. Perhaps its size, and its abundance of Arabic-script quotations and illustrative drawings, made it too expensive to publish—especially since there were lighter polemical works, such as that of Juan Andrés, in circulation. Further, at about the time that Figuerola was completing his work, in 1521 all Muslims in the Crown of Aragon were forced to convert; he actually includes scattered references to the fact, probably added after he had finished the manuscript. The fate of the publication may have been sealed once there were no longer any Muslims with whom to dispute openly about their religion and their Qur'an.

3 A Preacher among Lullians

The story of Figuerola's life is already known, so we will only review a few features of it here.⁸ It is almost certain that he was born between 1475 and 1485, and studied in Valencia. Around 1507 he was in Naples, where he witnessed the ex-

⁸ Bernard Ducharme, "De Talavera a Ramírez de Haro: actores y representaciones de la evangelización de los mudéjares y moriscos en Granada, Zaragoza y Valencia (1492–1545)," in *I Encuentro de jóvenes investigadores en Historia Moderna* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2013); Mercedes García-Arenal and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "'The Law of Abraham the Catholic': Juan Gabriel as Qur'an Translator for Martín de Figuerola and Egidio da Viterbo," *Al-Qanṭara* 35, no. 2 (2014); Elisa Ruiz García, "Joan Martí Figuerola," in *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500–1900*, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2014), vol. 6, 89–92.

pulsion of the Jews from that kingdom. In about 1516 he was called to Zaragoza to replace Bishop Martín García Puyazuelo in preaching the so-called “Sermones de fe” in the cathedral, and it was there, in 1517 and 1518, that the events occurred that he later related in his *Disputaciones*. It is significant that he belonged to a very good family, with connections to highly placed civil and ecclesiastical authorities: he seems to have enjoyed ready access to the elite of Aragonese society, and even tried to meet King Carlos V shortly after the latter’s arrival in Spain. His relations with the Cardinal of Spain, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, appeared to be cordial: they spoke shortly before Cisneros’s death, while both men were hoping for a meeting with the new monarch.

We know little about Joan Martí de Figuerola’s education. He may have studied theology at the University of Valencia, where he perhaps earned the degree of *magister*. Either there or in Cocentaina, the probable seat of his family, he would have lived among a large Muslim population: Muslims were everywhere in the Kingdom of Valencia and maintained a flourishing Arab-Islamic culture. We also know that during his stay in Aragon a former *alfaquí* from Teruel, Juan Gabriel/Alí Alayzar, instructed him in Arabic and in Islamic doctrine.⁹

A piece of indirect evidence, however, tells us more about Figuerola’s intellectual background and the academic milieu he frequented in Valencia. In 1510 Alonso de Proaza, Llull’s renowned editor,¹⁰ published on the presses of Joan Joffre, in a single volume, four works by Llull: *Disputatio Raymundi Christiani et Hamar Sarraceni*, *Liber de demonstratione per equiparantiam*, *Disputatio quinque hominum sapientium*, and *Liber de accidente et substantia*. These, according to D.W. McPheeters, were the most “missionary” of the Majorcan scholar’s writings.¹¹ In 1512, again, Proaza issued from Jorge Costilla’s press another volume

9 Katarzyna K. Starczewska, “Juan Gabriel of Teruel,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 6, *Western Europe (1500–1600)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

10 Dean W. MacPheeters, *El humanista español Alonso de Proaza* (Madrid: Castalia, 1961); José Luis Canet, “Alonso de Proaza,” in *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Valencia, Juan Joffre, 1514). Estudios y edición paleográfica y facsimilar*, ed. Nicasio Salvador Miguel and Santiago López-Ríos (Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1999), vol. I, 31–38; Jordi Pardo Pastor, “Alonso de Proaza, ‘homo litterarum, corrector et excelsus editor,’” in *Convenit. Selecta-3* (Porto: e-dition-Editora Mandruvá, 2000).

11 “[...] [S]on tratados prácticos ‘misioneros’, esto es, el primero es una demostración famosa de la Trinidad; todos fueron dedicados a la conversión de los infieles y presentan elementos fundamentales del lulismo en su forma más sencilla” (“They are practical, ‘missionary’ treatises: that is, the first is a famous demonstration of the Trinity; all were devoted to the conversion of the infidels, and present fundamental elements of Lullism in its simplest form”); MacPheeters, *El humanista*, 167.

containing three Llullian works: *Liber de Logica Nova*, *Liber correlativorum innotorum*, and *Liber de ascensu et descensu intellectus*. Proaza appended to the book a letter addressed to his friend Joan Martí Figuerola: in it he praised the “Doctor Illuminatus” (Llull) for the superior intellectual value of his writings, and expressed gratitude to Figuerola for the latter’s efforts to see Llull’s works into print.¹²

This letter by Alonso de Proaza places Figuerola within a well-defined milieu, that of the Llullism that characterized academic circles in Valencia, and other parts of Spain, in the early decades of the sixteenth century.¹³ In 1500 Jaume Janer, a pupil of the Barcelonan Llullist Pere Daguí, had received permission from King Fernando to begin teaching Llull’s works in Valencia. There Janer had three main collaborators: Joan Bonllavi (who would later publish Llull’s *Blaquerna*), the Genoese Bartolomeo Gentile, and the Asturian Alonso de Proaza. This group promoted the spread of Llull’s works and teachings in Valencia, although their relationship to the university there is not clear. They were also in contact with other Llullian circles all over Spain.

Llullism, in fact, had been revitalized in Spain during the second half of the fifteenth century, after having been persecuted and having languished during the previous one. It was not until the first decades of the sixteenth that Llullism would be renewed as an academic subject in the universities of Barcelona, Majorca, Salamanca, and Valencia. Important names in the vanguard of that movement were Joan Llovet, Pere Daguí, and others.¹⁴

It would be Cardinal Cisneros, however—a Franciscan, like Llull himself—who would strive the hardest to protect and spread the master’s teachings in Spain. Under the influence of Pere Daguí’s lessons, Cisneros was powerfully drawn to Llull’s personality and doctrine. It was he who brought Nicolau de Pacs to the University of Alcalá to occupy the chair of Llull studies, and who

12 “And finally [this book is] for you, my dear Joan, thanks to whose support and protection this volume has been revised, has appeared in print, and has been offered in advance for the benefit of the public” (“Et tibi denique, mi Joannes, cuius impensis et auspicio aureum hoc opus recognitum, impressum et bono publico demandatum prius extitit. Ut gratias habeant immortales iterum atque iterum rogo. Bene vale”): *Raymundi Lullij Doctoris illuminati de noua logica, de correlatiuis, nec non et de ascensu et descensu intellectus*, (Valencia: Georgium Costilla, 1512), fol. 64r (of the third book).

13 Jordi Pardo Pastor, “El cercle lu·lià de València: Alonso de Proaza y Joan Bonllavi,” *Zeitschrift für Katalanistik* 14 (2001); Rafael Ramis Barceló, “Un esbozo cartográfico del lulismo universitario y escolar en los reinos hispánicos,” *Cuadernos del Instituto Antonio de Nebrija* 15, no. 1 (2012).

14 José María Sevilla Marcos, “El lulismo en España a la muerte de Cristóbal Colón,” *Memòries de l’Acadèmia Mallorquina d’Estudis genealògics, heràldics i històrics* 18 (2008).

saw many of Llull's writings into print. He spoke openly about the pleasure he took in hearing the Doctor's teachings expounded and commented on, and Proaza testified to how many of Llull's books the cardinal owned. The two men were close: Proaza dedicated an epistle to Cisneros in another edition of Llull's writings, and served as a sort of secretary to the cardinal in the latter's declining years.

Figuerola's inclusion in this Llullian circle in Valencia, and his promotion of some of Llull's writings, throws an interesting light on his history. The many quotations from Llull in Figuerola's *Lumbre de fe* show how close he felt to the "Doctor Illuminatus": he cites nineteen of the Doctor's works in fifty-three different places, making the Franciscan the second-most-quoted author in the treatise, after the omnipresent Saint Augustine. Figuerola also, it seems, assumed ownership of the books by Llull that Alonso de Proaza left at his death. All this allows us insight into how well our author knew Llull, and obliges us to see Figuerola's work from the viewpoint of his familiarity with and use of the Llullian canon.

Llullism —understood as a heterogeneous, multiform current of interest in the works of Ramon Llull that was put to diverse uses— circulated widely in fifteenth-century Europe thanks to writers such as Ramon Sibiuda, Heymeric de Campo, Lefevre d'Étaples, and Nicholas of Cusa, some of whom were engaged in debates with the infidels. Ramis Barceló has observed that within the Iberian Peninsula, it was in the Crown of Aragon that the teaching of Llull took root officially in an academic context. The Aragonese monarchs always favored such teaching, and protected and patronized it throughout their kingdom.¹⁵ The principal figure of the time was undoubtedly Pere Daguí, a priest from Barcelona who moved to Majorca to teach Llull's *Arte*; he occupied the first chair in the school of higher learning that King Fernando founded there in 1483.

The Cistercian Jaume Gener, one of Daguí's star pupils, received permission from Fernando in 1500 to establish a school of Llull studies in Valencia. There he set about to spread the master's teachings, helped by three disciples: Alonso de Proaza, Bartolomeo Gentile, and Bonllavi. This Valencian nucleus played an important role in propagating Llull's works, by publishing careful editions and maintaining relations with Llullian circles elsewhere in the Peninsula. There was an especially strong tie with Alcalá and its university (as we saw above, Proaza was close to Cisneros and served as his secretary) after Nicolau de Pacs began teaching Llull's works there in 1508.

15 Álvaro Fernández de Córdoba Miralles, "El 'otro príncipe': piedad y carisma de Fernando el Católico en su entorno cortesano," *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia* 26 (2017).

This necessarily brief review of the extent of Llullism in Valencia and Alcalá in the sixteenth century demonstrates, first, that Figuerola was closely entwined with its study and propagation; and second, that he had ready access to Cardinal Cisneros through their mutual friend Alonso de Proaza. There can be no question, therefore, about his familiarity with Lull's work and thought.

In principle it may seem paradoxical that two men as imbued with Llullism as Cardinal Cisneros and Joan Martí de Figuerola should be remembered as ardent enemies of Islam, who used violence—physical in the first case, verbal in the second—in their dealings with the Mudejars of Granada and Valencia. This contradiction can be explained away, however. In the case of the evangelization of the Muslims of Granada after its conquest, a well-known opposition has been drawn. The first bishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera, chose to approach the Muslims by peaceful and empathetic means: he had his preachers study Islamic texts and accept the cultural realities of the territory. But when Talavera achieved few conversions, Jiménez de Cisneros was called in, and as a follower of Duns Scotus who believed in conversion through coercion, he employed harsher methods. A number of scholars, however, have now modified this framing of the issue. Talavera's labors did not cease upon Cisneros's arrival; they continued for several years, during which the two men worked in tandem. The contrast between them was chiefly a matter of style—Talavera's tolerance versus Cisneros's fanaticism—but they shared the goal of combating Islam. Neither showed the slightest sympathy toward that religion, and both accepted that some pressure could be brought to bear on its faithful.¹⁶

One additional element has rarely been considered: Talavera and Cisneros both knew the work of Ramon Llull and could use him as one model for their pastoral activity. García-Arenal has noted that we can discern, behind many of Talavera's actions and projects, Llull's legacy of approaching Muslims through reason, trying to make them sincerely convinced that Christianity was the one true faith.¹⁷ To that end he and his associates promoted the study of Arabic and the Qur'an—a copy of which, "in two volumes and in Romance," he owned at the time of his death.¹⁸ While we do not yet know all the details of Ta-

¹⁶ For brevity's sake I will cite only the recent brilliant article by Davide Scotto, "'Neither through Habits, nor solely through Will, but through infused Faith': Hernando de Talavera's Understanding of Coercion," in *Forced Conversion in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Coercion and Faith in Premodern Spain and Beyond*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Yonatan Glazer-Eytan (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

¹⁷ Mercedes García-Arenal, "Moriscos e indios. Para un estudio comparado de métodos de conquista y evangelización," *Chronica Nova* 20 (1992), 165–66.

¹⁸ Aldea, "Hernando de Talavera," 536.

lavera's intellectual formation or all the byways of his complex spirituality, it is reasonable to assert that Lull and Lullian doctrine were among his influences. He had read Ramon Sibiuda or Sabunde, who kept Lullian thought alive from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries,¹⁹ and he is known to have admired Francisco Eximenis and his defense of Franciscan spirituality.²⁰

We are much more certain about Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros's relationship to Lullism: aside from his contacts with eminent Lullists like Proaza and Nicolau de Pacs (who was appointed to teach the Doctor's works in Alcalá), he promoted the printing of Lull's works and collected them himself. The most important factor, however, may be that Cisneros first approached Lull's thought through Pere Daguí. That scholar from Barcelona taught Lullism occasionally at the court of the Catholic Monarchs, with Fernando's approval, and it was there that Jiménez de Cisneros heard him in 1487 and became devoted to the master's thought.²¹

The contact between Daguí and Cisneros is essential for understanding the form of Lullism that the cardinal absorbed, and would later pursue through the Valencian circle and through Nicolau de Pacs. Historians know Daguí principally for his original synthesis of the philosophies of Duns Scotus and Ramon Lull, which would dominate Lullian circles in Spain. Daguí had been shaped by the Scotist tradition of the Barcelona Studium, and in fact would grow closer to Scotism as the years went by.²²

19 Sibiuda's *Theologia naturalis [Liber creaturarum, seu Naturae seu Liber de Homine propter quem sunt creaturae aliae]*, much admired by Montaigne, also formed part of Talavera's personal library; Aldea, "Hernando de Talavera," 546.

20 Albert G. Hauf i Valls, "Fray Hernando de Talavera, O.S.H., y las traducciones castellanas de la *Vita Christi* de Fr. Francesc Eiximenis, O.F.M.," in *Essays on Medieval Translation in the Iberian Peninsula*, ed. Tomás Martínez Romero and Roxana Recio (Castelló de la Plana, Omaha: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, Creighton University, 2001); Josep Puig Montada, "Francesc Eiximeniç y la tradición antimusulmana peninsular," in *Pensamiento medieval hispano: homenaje a Horacio Santiago-Otero*, ed. J. M. Soto Rábanos (Madrid: CSIC-Junta de Castilla y León, 1998); Isabella Iannuzzi, *El poder de la palabra. Fray Hernando de Talavera* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y Leon, 2009). Further, Díaz Marcilla claims that in the fifteenth century it was the Hieronymites (Talavera's order) who most promoted the reading and teaching of Lull's doctrine: Díaz Marcilla, "Una 'disputatio' no resuelta: ¿fue franciscano el lulismo castellano?" *Archivo Ibero-americano* 76, no. 282 (2016).

21 Teresa Jiménez Calvente, "Raimundo Lulio, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros y la política de Fernando el Católico," *Revista de lenguas y literaturas catalana, gallega y vasca* 25 (2020).

22 Rafael Ramis Barceló, "En torno al escoto-lulismo de Pere Daguí," *Medievalia* 16 (2013); Fr. Xavier Calpe, "Sentido histórico y perspectivas del Escoto-Lulismo," *Boletín de Historia de la Tercera Orden Franciscana* 7 (2018).

We therefore find in Granada after the conquest two religious authorities who professed great respect for Ramon Llull, but who arrived at it from two different directions. While Talavera accepted Llull's classic proposals about openness to and knowledge of the other, Cisneros inclined toward the Llull who was compatible with Scotus: willing to convince, but not opposed theologically to a strong dose of coercion.

Two men, and two Lulls, who differed from each other and took separate approaches to the Muslims of Granada. They shared the Doctor's ideal of converting the infidel. Both breathed the messianic zeal that had dominated the Peninsula since the late fifteenth century, inspired by the fall of Granada and the chance to seize more territory from Islam. They each knew that to fight against the enemy, one had to know him: Talavera owned a Qur'an, while Cisneros ensured that the library he founded in Alcalá contained Qur'anic and other Islamic texts.²³ Talavera, however, wanted New Christians who were sincere, convinced converts; Cisneros's Lullism leaned on Scotus in dealing with the urgent political issues that arose in Granada in the early sixteenth century.²⁴

23 Cecilia Fernández Fernández documents, in the first inventory of the library from 1512, one Qur'an and 65 other books in Arabic. Several of those are listed in the second inventory of 1523: "Doctrina de enseñar algaravía; Leyes de repartimiento de herencias; Libro de matrimonio, de como se han de casar y descasar los moros; Glosa sobre ell Alcorán una parte de las deziseis; Como juzga el Cadí et de los derechos que lleua; La octava parte de venyanuz de leyes; Libro de lógica et philosophia del sabio Alicena [sic]; Libro de leyes; Libro de la theología de los moros; Glosa de una parte de las catorce del Alcorán; Leyes de cautivos y como los han de ahorcar; Libro de medicinas; Libro de leyes de cómo han de justiciar a los que matan; Libro de ley, de cómo han de tomar los testigos; Libro de cómo se han de casar y descasar; Libro de cómo deben de pelear los moros; Glosa dell Alcorán sobre una parte de dos; Glosa de una de las cinco partes dell Alcorán; Glosa del almohata de leyes; Libro de leyes de Procuradores; Quinta parte de ebux, la gramática de los alárabes; Leyes de los jornales de los trabajadores; Prima parte de las cirimonias de los moros; El cuarto libro daben ruyz de leyes; Libro de cómo se han de hacer las oraciones; Libro de leyes; Tercero libro de algaz el que se llama vida de la sabiduría; Libro de los captivos cómo los han de tractar; Libro de cómo habían de pagar los derechos a Dios; Glosa sobre el libro del apartamiento de los casados; La segunda parte de benharaphe; De lo que han de hacer los moros cuando van a Mecha; Glosa sobre la cuarta parte de las leyes del almohata; Libro de la salua de Mahoma que escusa muchos errores que Mahoma dixo; Libro de justicia sobre una de diez partes; Glosa dell Alcorán sobre una parte de seis; Octavo libro de la çuna de Mahoma; El segundo sobre ell Alcorán; El cuarto libro del Alhatiz de leyes; La cuarta parte del Benharaph de cómo deben de repudiar; Glosa del Alcorán sobre una de quatro partes; Glosa dell Alcorán de un cuerpo"; Cecilia Fernández Fernández, "La labor educadora de Cisneros y la primera biblioteca del renacimiento en España," *Anales de Documentación* 5 (2002).

24 Antonio Cortijo Ocaña, *Conquistar o convencer. De Llull a Cisneros en la conversión del otro* (Madrid: Pórtico, 2021), 158–59.

4 Figuerola the Polemicist

The spread of Scotism-Llullism in Spain, especially in Valencia, helps us to understand Figuerola's positions in his anti-qur'anic diatribe. First, we should note that Figuerola, after he was expelled from Zaragoza and forced back to Valencia, probably felt just as discouraged as his idol Ramon Llull had been: his loud calls to inspire rulers and churchmen to his mission and crusade had fallen on deaf ears. Like the master, he was not only fighting against Islamic dogma: in *Lumbre de fe* he also addressed the ecclesiastics²⁵ who had not provided—as true Christians should—the tools required for conquering the infidel.²⁶

At the same time, Figuerola's knowledge of the adversary's beliefs and ceremonies conforms to the Llullian model, while his desire to learn Arabic, and to obtain a Qur'an and works of the sunna for personal study, bears Llull's stamp. We see how Figuerola, like the master, in his disputes in the mosque in Zaragoza did not try to confute the Qur'an with teachings of the Church; he preferred to confound the *alfaquíes* with evidence from their own holy text. Also in the style of Llull were his focus on muftis and religious leaders, so that they would later persuade their followers; his disappointment with the lukewarm stance of nobles, governors, and ecclesiastics; and his dismay at having failed in his mission. His zeal to learn Arabic to support his preaching echoes the *Llibre de la contemplació*: the truth of Christianity should be couched in terms that Muslims could understand.²⁷

25 “And so I beseech theologians, or those who read the present work, to insist that kings and officers recall the honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and think and consider how much scandal this sect of Mohammed commits, writes, and preaches. Let those Christians who cannot write, preach; let those who cannot preach, lead those infidels to abandon their faith and sect; and if they do not wish to do so, let [Christians] speak with the lords of those lands and remind them of the unspeakable harm that our holy Christian faith suffers on account of these Moors” (“Y, así, supplico a los teólogos, o a los que la presente obra leyeren, insisten a los reyes y presidentes que se acuerden del honor de nuestro señor Jesuchristo y piensen y miren cuánto desonor esta dicha secta de Mahomet haze, scrive y predica. Y los christianos que scrivar no pudieren, prediquen, y los que predicar no supieren, condusqan a los dichos infieles que dexen la tal credulidad y secta y, si dexar no la quizeren, hablen con los señores de lugares y encárguenles el impensado danyo que nuestra sancta fe christiana recibe por estos moros”); Figuerola, *Lumbre de fe*, fols. 8rb-9va.

26 As García-Arenal observed in “The Double Polemic of Martín de Figuerola's *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán*,” in *Polemical Encounters: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and Beyond* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

27 Llull, *Llibre de la contemplació*, vol. II, 16.

By using the qur'anic text directly —quoting it, translating it, refuting it— Figuerola follows the method of Juan de Segovia (though his tone is less conciliatory than Juan's), Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, and, closer to home, Bishop Martín García and his collaborator, the converted *alfaquí* Juan Andrés.²⁸ He cites some of the same Islamic texts as the latter two, and sometimes adopts a similar tone. The originality of Figuerola's works lies in their great variety: their several levels of polemic were written at different times and addressed to different kinds of audiences. We have the Figuerola of the *Disputaciones*, who dared to preach inside the mosque and force Muslims to hear him —who hoped to discredit the mufti by leading him into a contradiction or an error, but who does not launch a diatribe, far less insult the figure of the Prophet. As Ramon Llull and Juan de Segovia had done in their time, he tries to approach the Muslims carefully, seeking to base his polemic on the qur'anic text itself. But there is also the Figuerola of *Lumbre de fe*, a harsher text that deploys two methods: a discussion (addressed to Muslims) of qur'anic passages based on reason that contrasts them with Christian “truth,” and a theologically based frontal attack on those same selections, meant for missionaries who would be preaching to the infidels.

Naturally Figuerola, like Cisneros, chooses his own preferred Llull: the one who had abandoned his early optimism and hardened his view of Islam. It is no coincidence that *Lumbre de fe* should contain not one quotation from *Llibre del gentil i los tres savis* (1276), the work by Llull that is most neutral on the subject of Islam and Judaism. In it, wise men from the three monotheistic religions explain their respective creeds to the Gentile; they do not choose to hear his preference, leaving the decision “open,” as if to place the three on an equal plane. Though it might appear that Llull accepted that result, many details reveal —as the author later made explicit— that Christianity was the winning faith. Even so, such a neutral exposition of the three creeds was a daring step in the thirteenth century. Perhaps it was still so in the sixteenth, for Figuerola ignores that work entirely while citing, in reference to Islam, Llull's *Disputatio Raymundi Christiani et Hamar Sarraceni* (1308), a much more aggressive and pessimistic treatise. Llull's openly apologetic tone would coincide with that of Duns Scotus, and together they would dominate the textual space from the late fifteenth century onward.

Figuerola could not use Llull to construct his violent anti-qur'anic argument, because the master never composed an organized diatribe against Islam. As Óscar de la Cruz has shown, while Llull was clearly familiar with Islam, he

²⁸ Ryan Szpiech, “A Witness of Their Own Nation: On the Influence of Juan Andrés,” in García-Arenal, *After Conversion*; Juan Andrés, *Confusión o confutación de la secta Mahomética y del Alcorán* [Valencia, 1515], ed. Elisa Ruiz García and María Isabel García-Monge (Mérida: Editora Regional de Extremadura, 2003).

very rarely quotes the Qur'an directly. Although he sometimes repeated the negative medieval clichés about Muḥammad, his chief aim was to offer his Muslim adversary the absolute conviction of his own truth.²⁹ Figuerola did not, however, ignore entirely the potential inherent in Llull's polemic; he made abundant use of the Doctor's descriptions of Christianity's blessings while contrasting them with passages from the Qur'an, although Llull had never done so. Sometimes he selects phrases or suggestions by Llull and applies them to his own case:

I said: "Sir, it is better to dispense with worldly goods in order to gain glory and spiritual goods, than for a man to displease God by using worldly goods to sustain such blasphemy. Because, sir, master Ramon Llull says in his *Proverbios*, in the chapter 'De infidelitate': *Quod parum diligit Deum, qui infideles sustinet*,³⁰ etc. With which, sir, you should be content with this reasoning of mine."

Thus, the illuminated master Ramon Llull says in the second book of his *Proverbios*, in the chapter "De infidelitate": *Eo retardatur dies iudicii quia sunt infideles in mundo*. Which means, "This is why the Day of Judgment is delayed, because there are so many infidels in the world."³¹

Figuerola also cites Llull to criticize Christians' unseemly behavior in their churches and contrast it to Muslims' decorum in their mosques. Both authors share this concern, a classic trope of polemic:³²

In the Kingdom of Aragon women come to the mosque, and elevated choirs are set aside for them, with screens so they cannot be seen by the Moors. Would to God that Christians did the same, because less dishonor would be done to God! And so says master Ramon Llull in a book called *Blanquerna*, when speaking of religions, and Francisco Eximenis says the

29 Óscar de la Cruz Palma, "La información sobre Mahoma en la *Doctrina pueril* de Ramon Llull," *Taula: Quaderns de pensament* 37 (2003); De la Cruz Palma, "Raymundus Lullus contra Sarracenos: el islam en la obra (latina) de Ramon Llull," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 28 (2005).

30 Ramon Llull, "De infidelitate," vol. III, 89; *Liber proverbiorum, Raymundi Lulli Opera omnia*, Tomus VI, (ex Officina Typographica Mayeriana, 1787), 414.

31 "Dixe: 'Señor, más vale çoffrirse de los bienes temporales por ganar la gloria y bienes espirituales que con los bienes temporales hombre desirva a Dios en sostener tanta blasfemia. Porque, señor, dize mastre Ramon Lull en sus *Proverbios*, en el capítulo *De infidelitate: Quod parum diligit Deum, qui infideles sustinet*, etc. En que su señoría por estas razones más bien es quede muy contento"; Figuerola, *Lumbre de fe*, fol. 262rb. [...] "Por tanto, dize el iluminado mastre Ramon Lull en el segundo libro de sus *Proverbios*, en el capítulo *De infidelitate: Eo retardatur dies iudicii quia sunt infideles in mundo*. Quiere dezir: 'Por esto se retarda el día del Juhizio Final, porque ay tantos infieles en el mundo'; Figuerola, *Lumbre de fe*, fol. 38va.

32 Riccoldo employs it as well: Tolan, *Saracens. Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 284.

same, in the first book, chapter 223:³³ that because of the great abuse and discourtesy performed in those temples, a time will come when men will not see women *nec e contra*, as was done in the Temple of Solomon.

The illuminated master Ramon says in that book³⁴ that in a certain city there was a most holy bishop who, on going to church one day, saw many people standing and gazing at a lady who had come to mass richly dressed and thickly painted. The bishop approached her and fell on his knees before her, at which she and all the others were amazed that such a worthy and holy person like the bishop should kneel in that way. He told them not to marvel, for he had thought that she was some varnished saint who had descended from the altarpiece, and he assumed that all the people were praying to her. At that the lady was forced to leave the mass in confusion and shame, and the bishop laid down a rule: that no woman dare to come to church in such garb, and that the women be separated from the men and not be seen during the service.³⁵

All this means that although Figuerola knew Lull's writings fairly well, he must have found his anti-qur'anic materials elsewhere. His chief source was Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, whose classic polemical work circulated in Spain in both Latin and Spanish.³⁶ His *Improbatio Alcorani*, published by Estanislao Polonno in 1500, had been translated as *Reprobación del Alcorán* and published in Seville

33 Eiximenis, *Lo Crestià*, vol. I, 223.

34 Lull, *Blaquerna*, vol. III, 78, 5.

35 “En el regno de Aragón las mugeres vienen a la mesquita y tiénenles hechos unos choros altos con unos raxados que no pueden ser vistas de los moros. ¡Ploguesse a nuestro señor Dios que los christianos lo hiziessen assí, porque no se seguiría tanto deshonor a Dios! Y assí lo dize mastre Ramon Lull en un libro que se dize *Blanquerna*, en la materia de religiones, y esto mismo dize Fransisco Eximenis, en el primero libro, capitulo 223, que por la grande abusión y descortesía se haze en dichos templos, verná tiempo que los hombres no verán las mugeres *nec e contra*, como se hazía en el templo de Salomón.”[...] “Recuenta el iluminado mastre Ramon en el dicho libro que en una ciudad había un obispo muy sancto, el qual, hyendo un día a la yglesia, vio mucha gente que estaban parados mirando una dama que era venida a missa muy vestida y muy pintada. Llegó el obispo azia ella y pónesele de rodillas delante, de lo qual ella y todos fueron muy admirados, que una persona tan digna y tan sancta como el dicho obispo se había puesto assí de rodillas. Díxoles que no se maravillasen, que cierto se pensó que era algún sancto que era abaxado del retablo, que estava envernizado, y que por esso pensó que la tanta gente le azia oración. En que la dicha dama, confusa y de vergüença, se huvo de hir del officio, y el dicho obispo hizo un statuto: no fuesse hosada muger alguna venir a la yglesia de tal arte, y que las mugeres estuviessen apartadas de los hombres y no se pudiessen ver haciendo el officio”; Figuerola, *Lumbre de fe*, fols. 58rb-59va.

36 Cándida Ferrero Hernández, “De la *Improbatio Alcorani* a la *Reprobación del Alcorán* de Riccoldo da Montecroce, o la fortuna hispana de un texto apologético,” *Miscellanea Latina*; Ferrero, “*Lectio et disputatio* en el prólogo del *Contra legem Sarracenorum* de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce,” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 49, no. 1 (2019); Kate Waggoner Karchner, “Deciphering the Qur’an in Late Medieval Europe: Riccoldo da Montecroce, Nicholas of Cusa and the Text-Centered Development of Interreligious Dialogue,” *Journal of Medieval History* 46, no. 2 (2020).

(Magno Herbst and Juan Pegnitzer, 1501) and Toledo (Pedro Hagenbach, 1502). Hernando de Talavera had encouraged and patronized its translation and publication, and one of his fellow Hieronymites had made the Romance version.³⁷ Riccoldo offered Figuerola the polemical tools that he had not found in Lull: a mixture of Qur'anic verses with episodes from the life of Muḥammad, mockery of "absurd" Islamic beliefs found in the Qur'an (like the foods that the faithful would eat in paradise), and the contrast of those absurdities with the "rational" Christian scriptures. While Figuerola cites Riccoldo explicitly a mere four times, he takes other passages (such as the names of suras and references to Aristotle and Averroes) directly from the Italian's work.

Figuerola had other anti-Islamic sources even closer at hand in the work of Bishop Martín García and his collaborator, the convert Juan Andrés. The bishop had become famous in Aragon for his sermons larded with quotations from the Qur'an in Arabic, which he proceeded to refute; Queen Isabel then invited him to preach in Granada. The convert translated the Qur'an and works of the sunna for García's use, as well as composing his own polemic, *Confutación del Alcorán*, which would enjoy great success in Spain and Europe.³⁸ Figuerola copied Martín García's outwardly friendly tone, addressing his Muslim interlocutor as "Próximo mío de moro" —an approach belied by everything else he said.³⁹ From Juan Andrés he borrowed specific Qur'anic passages for debate, as well as his general polemical argument. However, Figuerola must get his controversial material on Muḥammad from other sources, since the figure of the Prophet is hardly attacked in Juan Andrés' book.

A further source for Figuerola, especially for his knowledge of Arabic and the Qur'an, must have been the convert Juan Gabriel de Teruel. From him he may have learned to open his treatise with the twenty-three articles of the Islamic faith, as set down by Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī in a *ʿaqīda* that circulated among the Moriscos of Aragon.⁴⁰ In *Lumbre de fe* he undoubtedly adopted Juan Gabriel's Qur'an translations, drawing on the version that the convert

37 "...romançada por un religioso de la Orden del bienaventurado Sant Jeronimo"; Monte di Croce, *Reprobación del Alcorán*, fol. 44r.

38 Szpiech, "A Witness of Their Own Nation."

39 In Martín García, *proximi mei ismahelite or proximi mei*. M. Montoza Coca, "Los sermones de Martín García, obispo de Barcelona. Edición y estudio," PhD Diss. (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2018), vol. I, 6, 204, 236, 242, 248, 289, 296; vol. II, 1063, 1196, 1198, 1343.

40 Xavier Casassas Canals, "Las *ʿAqīda*-s entre los musulmanes castellanos y aragoneses de época mudéjar y morisca: las *ʿAqīda*-s de Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (s. X), Ibn Tūmart (s. XII) e Isa de Jebir (s. XV)," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Historia Medieval* 33 (2020).

from Teruel had made for Egidio da Viterbo.⁴¹ It is also possible that the Qur'an copy that Figuerola requested for himself reached him from, or with the help of, Juan Gabriel in Aragon.

Figuerola's work differs from its sources in its systematic refutation of the suras he chooses from the four quarters into which his Qur'an was divided. His polemical argument, which proceeds chapter by chapter, is based on three preestablished notions: 1) Muḥammad was an impostor who wrote a book full of falsehoods (a view shared by the whole polemical tradition); 2) the religion of Islam is full of absurdities that cannot stand up to reason or to comparison with Christian scripture; and 3) Muslims are an ignorant people and have been tricked by equally ignorant religious leaders, whose nature must be unmasked. Figuerola disputes his chosen passages one by one on the basis of these premises, making an exception only for those that praise Jesus or the Virgin Mary, or that make clear to Muslims that Jews and Christians share a particular belief. In these last cases, Figuerola assails Muslims for having strayed from the right path.

His attacks on the Qur'an can be classified into three types. The first is a contrast between its verses and Christian scripture, or opinions of fathers of the Church. Though Riccoldo da Monte di Croce used the same technique, with Figuerola it is his strongest suit: his knowledge of Christian sources is exhaustive and sometimes even overwhelms other aspects of his discourse. The second type consists of passing the verse under discussion through the filter of "natural reason," as Llull used to do, to prove that there is only one truth in religion. Both strategies are directed both to missionaries —who had been Llull's chief object, and who required this ammunition for successful preaching— and to Muslims, who would be impervious to the words of the authorities but who might heed reason-based arguments that could shake their simple faith.⁴²

Figuerola's third *modus operandi* goes further than merely modulating his message for different audiences. He actually alters the text, twisting the meaning of a verse deliberately: he may find contradictions where none exist, mistranslate the verse to his own advantage, or interpret its meaning to favor Christianity. It is here that we find him most zealous in polemic, and here that he goes be-

41 Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "Los primeros orientalistas frente al islam: la traducción latina del Corán del círculo del cardenal Egidio de Viterbo (1518)," in *Religio in labyrintho. Encuentros y desencuentros de religiones en sociedades complejas*, ed. José J. Caerols (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Ciencias de las Religiones – Escolar y Mayo Editores, 2013); Mercedes García-Arenal and Katarzyna K. Starczewska, "'The Law of Abraham the Catholic': Juan Gabriel as Qur'an Translator for Martín de Figuerola and Egidio da Viterbo," *Al-Qanṭara* 35, no. 2 (2014).

42 *Disputatio eremitae et Raymundi super aliquibus dubiis quaestionibus* (MOG IV, 226).

yond his predecessors. While in some cases he might simply have been mistaken, closer analysis usually reveals an intentional attack on Islam and a defense of Christian “truth.”

García-Arenal and Starczewska had already called our attention to the term “Catholic” that Figuerola applies to Abraham in his translations of Q. 3:66, 3:95, 15:40, and 16:23.⁴³ “Catholic” as an epithet for Abraham seems to span the semantic fields of Arabic *ḥanīf* (“sincere Muslim” or “believer in one God”),⁴⁴ *mukhlāṣ* (“devoted servant”),⁴⁵ and *ṣiddīq* (“true, righteous”).⁴⁶ When *ḥanīf* modifies *muslim* (“one who submits to God”), the Spanish translation is “verdadero Moro.” By choosing these translations Figuerola (like Juan Gabriel) attacks one of Islam’s fundamental beliefs, that the only religion acceptable to God is the one He revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad. Since God’s revelation to humanity is eternal, Muslims revere the Old Testament prophets and identify them as “ones who have submitted” and therefore as followers of Islam: Abraham, Jacob, Ishmael, and Jesus’s apostles are all so described in the Qur’an (Q 3:52, 5:111).

Joan Martí Figuerola, cognizant of this belief, combats it from the viewpoint of Christianity, in which God’s revelation is likewise unchanging. He notes that these figures were considered prophets long before the advent of Islam, and calls them “Catholics” when translating *ḥanīf* and *mukhlāṣ*. Therefore, the connotations of those words, which suggest sincerity and submission to God, are attributed to the Catholic religion—the only true “end” of the revelation granted to the Old Testament prophets.

Lumbre de fe (f. 90) furnishes another interesting example. Figuerola quotes Q. 16:103: “And We know very well that they say, ‘Only a mortal is teaching him.’ The speech of him at whom they hint is barbarous; and this is speech Arabic, manifest.”⁴⁷ The verse was revealed in response to Meccans’ accusations that Muḥammad had been inspired by a Christian blacksmith or carpenter. The

43 García-Arenal and Starczewska, “The Law of Abraham the Catholic.”

44 The term *ḥanīf*, which has received multiple explanations in qur’anic exegesis, implies a person who holds a true belief in the face of the erroneous beliefs of others; perhaps for that reason it is applied to Abraham but not to Moses or Jesus. Cf. Q 2:129, 3:60, 3:89, 4:124, 6:79, 6:162, 10:105, 16:121, 16:124, 22:32, 30:29, 98:4.

45 The root *kh-l-ṣ* is frequent in the Qur’an, always related to notions of devotion and sincerity: 2:133, 7:28, 10:23, 29:65, 31:31, 39:2, 39:14, 39:16, 40:14, 40:67, 98:4; 12:24, 15:40, 19:52, 37:39, 37:72, 37:128, 37:160, 37:169, 38:84.

46 The epithet *ṣiddīq* applied to a prophet in the Qur’an confirms the exemplary character of his life and message. Cf. Q 4:71, 5:79, 12:46, 19:42, 19:57, 57:18.

47 English Qur’an quotations are from Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Allen & Unwin, 1955).

Qur'an counters that he could not have been led by such a one because the Christian did not speak Arabic. Juan Gabriel and Figuerola, however, both translate the words *lisānu-lladhī yulhidūna ilayhi aʿjamiyyun* as “ellos dicen que un hombre es el que le aveza la lengua christianega,” making “non-Arabic language” (*aʿjamī*) into “Christian language.” In this context, the substitution can open the way to immense controversy: it affects the fundamental concept of the Qur'an as Arabic (as the text itself insists), and declares that any non-Arabic tongue must be Christian. Qur'an therefore equals Arabic, while Christianity equals any other language. Simultaneously, Arabic and the Qur'an are linked to falsehood, or departure from the Christian message that came before Muḥammad. Identifying Islam with the Arabic language is a *locus classicus* of Muslim-Christian polemic, and was certainly a hotly debated question in sixteenth-century Spain. It affected the evangelization of the Moriscos, raised doubts about whether Arabic was a valid vehicle for science and history, and muddied perceptions of Arabic-speaking Eastern Christians.⁴⁸

Another instance of translation that is biased for polemical ends occurs on folios 223va and 223vb of Figuerola's treatise. There he first cites Q. 52:30: “Or do they say, ‘He is a poet for whom we await Fate's uncertainty?’ I shall be awaiting with you.” This is a verse often quoted traditionally to show both the Qur'an's and Muḥammad's distrust of poets. But Figuerola offers a personal interpretation:

It means, “And if they say that you are a poet, etc.” Here Muḥammad could not suppress what was suspected about him, and it was true, for he couched his whole Qur'an in rhymes and rhythms, which do not appear in the laws of God. But, as the other said, he did not conceal his thought: in this text he stated that those who called him a poet would receive their punishment after death.

Figuerola goes on to explain that the Prophet, to deny his own versifying, issued another verse (Q. 53:48) suggesting that this was God's form of speech: “وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشَّعْرِ” *Guainuu uguarabu ulxira*. This means: ‘And He is the Lord of meters, etc.’ See what a deceiver! He wished to claim that it was not he who made the rhymes, rather that God revealed them.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Mercedes García-Arenal, “Is Arabic an Islamic Language? The Religious Identity of the Arabic Language and the Affair of the Lead Books of Granada,” *Arabica*, 56 (2009); Mercedes García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain: Converted Muslims, the Forged Lead Books of Granada, and the Rise of Orientalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

⁴⁹ “Quiere dezir: ‘Y si ellos dirán que eres trovador, etc.’ Aquí Mahomet no pudo callar de lo que se sospechava d'él y era verdad, que todo su Alcorán puso en versos y coplas, lo que no parece en las leyes de Dios. Pero él, como dezía el ageno, no calló lo suyo: dixo en este texto que los que le dezían trovador a la muerte pagarían su pena [...] وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشَّعْرِ” *Guainuu uguar-*

Both Muslim traditionists and commentators on the Qur'an agree that this verse refers to a bright star (*shi'rā*) that the ancient Arab pagans had worshipped; some translations call it Sirius.⁵⁰ But *Lumbre de fe* chooses to read it as *shi'r*, "poetry." This was Juan Gabriel's choice, since it also occurs in the Qur'an translation by Egidio da Viterbo.⁵¹ Since it is hard to imagine that Juan Gabriel, a former faqih, would have misunderstood the verse, this was undoubtedly a translation twisted so as to stress the Qur'an's poetic character as proof of its falsity.⁵² Riccoldo and other polemicists⁵³ had already insisted that God's true revelation cannot take the form of meter and rhyme.

Another of Figuerola's strategies, demonstrates his knowledge of the Qur'anic text, is his ability to manipulate verses —combining, abridging, or contrasting them— where it suits his purpose. In fols. 32va-34rb of *Lumbre de fe* he comments on the last article of the Islamic faith, which forbids Muslims from disputing on matters of religion. Figuerola insists that the Qur'an contradicts itself, here as elsewhere, on this point, confronting Q. 29:46 with Q. 16:125:

[Q. 29:46] Dispute not with the People of the Book save in the fairer manner, except for those of them who do wrong; and say, "We believe in what has been sent down to us, and what has been sent down to you; our God and your God is One, and to Him we have surrendered."⁵⁴

[Q. 16:125] Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way. Surely thy Lord knows very well those who have gone astray from His way, and He knows very well those who are guided.⁵⁵

abu ulxira. Quiere dezir: 'Y Él es el Señor de los metros, etc.' Mira el enganyador cómo se quería desculpar que él no azía las coplas, sino que Dios las embiava."

50 Arberry: "He who is the Lord of Sirius."

51 "Et ille est dominus uersuum": Katarzyna K. Starczewska, *Latin Translation of the Qur'an (1518/1621) Commissioned by Egidio da Viterbo. Critical Edition and Case Study* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2018), 597.

52 As Soto and Starczewska observed: "Authority, Philology and Conversion," 218.

53 "Quarto sciendum est quod alchoranum non est lex Dei quia non habet stilum nec modum consonum legi Dei. Est enim metrica uel rithmica in stilo, blanditoria in uerbis et fabulosa in sententiis": Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra Sectam Sarracenorum*, chap. 4, ed. Jean-Marie MÉRIGOUX and Emilio Panella (2011). <http://www.e-theca.net/emiliopanella/riccoldo2/cls001.htm> [Consulted 12 March 2021].

54 "Quiere dezir: 'Y no queráys disputar con los que tienen la Scriptura, sino con lo que es mejor, sino a los que injuriaron dellos', y dezid: 'Nosotros havemos crehído en lo que fue descendido a nos y fue descendido a vosotros, y nuestro Dios y vuestro Dios es un solo, al qual somos moros.'"

55 "Quiere dezir: 'Ruega tú por el camino de tu creador con la amonestación y con la sabiduría sancta y disputa tú con ellos en lo que es mejor, car tu creador es sabidor de los que hierran en su camino y Él es sabidor de los bien encaminados.'"

From the Islamic point of view these verses are not contradictory but wholly complementary: both insist that if an argument over religion should arise, it should be pursued in the fairest manner possible. Figuerola, however, through a biased translation of the first one, hammers home a basic point of his polemical, anti-Islamic vision: that the qur'anic text is full of internal contradictions. At the same time he contrasts this supposed aspect of Islam with Christians' drive to proclaim and expand their faith.⁵⁶

Another clear example of biased translation of a verse comes in chapter 32. Here Figuerola again takes up Q. 29:46 and compares it to 2:61 (“Surely they that believe, and those of Jewry, and the Christians, and those Sabaeans, whoso believes in God and the Last Day, and works righteousness —their wage awaits them with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow”)⁵⁷ and 42:11 (“He has laid down for you as religion that He charged Noah with, and that We have revealed to thee, and that We charged Abraham with, Moses and Jesus”).⁵⁸ He concludes that, since God sent the Christians a true revelation, Muslims should abandon Muḥammad’s teachings and return to the truth. Here he rejects one of Islam’s central tenets, that Jews and Christians altered (*tahrif*) Holy Scripture:⁵⁹

It is very clear that these Muslim neighbors of mine should abandon their obstinate belief in their Scripture, for there are things in it that they cannot follow: they say, very truly, that they cannot be saved without holding and keeping the law of Abraham and Jesus, as is said in their Qur’an.⁶⁰

56 “Jesus our Redeemer did not order it so, as is written by Saint Matthew in his tenth chapter and Saint Luke in his twelfth: preach ‘upon the housetops,’ so that all may see and know it. Not like Muḥammad, who says that they should not dispute” (“No lo mandó así Jesuchristo nuestro Redemptor, como está scritto por sanct Matheu, en el capítulo décimo, y sanct Lucas en el capítulo dotzeno: ‘Lo que yo digo predicaldo ençima de los tejados, para que todos lo vean y conoscan’, y no como Mahomet, que dize que no disputen”); fol. 32vb.

57 “Y todos los que creyeron en Dios y los que fueron judíos y christianos y los que adoraron a los ángeles creyendo en Dios y en el día del Juicio y hizieron buenas obras, ellos avrán su gualardón de su creador y no avrán miedo ni tristura, etc.”; fol. 77va.

58 “Y mando a vosotros de la ley lo que mando con ello a Noé y a los que revelamos a ti y lo que mandamos a Abraham, a Moysén y a Jesuchristo, etc.”; fol. 77vb.

59 Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, “Taḥrīf,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. X, 111–12.

60 “[S]e parece muy claro cómo estos próximos míos de moros devrían dexar la obstinación que tienen en querer guardar su Scriptura, porque hay cosas en ella que no las pueden observar, en que dicen y de muy cierto que no se pueden salvar sin que tengan y guarden la ley de Abraham y de Jesuchristo, como parece por su *Alcorán*”; Figuerola, *Lumbre de fe*, fol. 77vb.

5 Conclusion

In the motley Spanish spirituality that spanned the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, certain religious authorities who had laid the foundations of Early Modern sensibility in Spain were transformed, filtered through other authors, or quoted selectively. This is what happened to Saint Augustine, for example, who symbolized at the time both tolerance and maximum rigor against heretics.⁶¹ Likewise, few of these authorities were considered in themselves, but rather underwent interference from other writers who had, over the years, left their mark on the spiritual realm. This was especially the case with Ramon Llull, who was widely read and studied in the sixteenth century but whose doctrines were received through the filter of some of his readers and commentators like Daguí, Janer, Pacs, etc. Llull's message competed with those of Duns Scotus, Juan de Segovia, Nicholas of Cusa, and others whose works were devoted to relations with non-Christians. Even the political conditions of those years might, and in fact did, come to bear on how a message such as Llull's was received. Joan Martí de Figuerola had to consider all these conditioning factors as he composed his anti-qur'anic polemic. While he admired Llull's work greatly, his personal situation had frustrated him; he consoled himself for his failed preaching by looking to Cardinal Cisneros, who was as Lullian as he but had acted decisively in Granada. Figuerola believed in about 1517 that few were as capable as he of disputing with Muslims, and he hoped that future missionaries could meet his standard. But when it came to refuting verses of the Qur'an he did not rely on either Llull or Cisneros, but reached into the tradition of polemic, which he hoped to enrich with his lengthy anti-qur'anic diatribe. He attacked the qur'anic text from every angle that tradition and his own fund of knowledge offered him. While *Lumbre de fe contra el Alcorán* is not the most readable of anti-Islamic polemics, it is certainly the most complete in its scope and in its strategies of textual and religious disputation.

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⁶¹ J.M. Forte Monge, "San Agustín, vencedor de herejes en el siglo XVI español," *Criticón* 118 (2013).

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