Negotiating Language and Religion in Umayyad Córdoba: Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭī's Arabic Psalter

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Under ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822-52 CE) and his successor Muḥammad I (r. 852-86), Córdoba witnessed the cultural splendor of the Umayyads ruling far from their native land. Their predecessor ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, heir to the Umayyad Dynasty, had abandoned Damascus a century earlier to find sanctuary from his Abbasid enemies in the Iberian Peninsula. He and his successors re-established the dynasty with Córdoba at its center. In the ninth century, the emirs sought to develop a culture corresponding to their growing influence in the peninsula. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II and Muḥammad I imported the artistic and intellectual trends of the Eastern Mediterranean, initiated administrative and tax reform, and promoted the Islamization of al-Andalus. According to one of the Emirate's well-known detractors, the priest Eulogius of Córdoba (d. 859),

> [Abdarragman] [urbem regiam/Cordubam] summo apice extulit, honoribus sublimauit, gloria dilatauit, diuitiis cumulauit cunctarumque deliciarum mundi affluentia ultra quam credi uel dici fas est uehementius ampliauit, ut in omni pompa saeculari praedecessores generis sui reges excederet, superaret et uinceret.[1] (397-98)

Indeed, as Brian Catlos has argued, the mid ninth century is "the period during which Islamic Spain truly became Islamic" (2018, 86). Amid this renaissance, strife also arose. Cities including Toledo and Mérida resisted and even openly rebelled against the centralizing influence of Córdoba, and the *muwallad* ʿUmar b. Ḥafṣūn (d. 918) would soon wage civil war from Bobastro in Málaga. Within the city, too, and its environs, unrest grew among the Christian *dhimmī*, who saw their political and cultural influence wane in the face of profound religious and cultural Islamization. The unrest lead to divisions in the Christian community and the execution of 48 martyrs.[2]

This was the cultural and political backdrop for the writings of Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Quṭī of Córdoba, who lived and wrote in the final decades of the ninth century and the first half of the tenth. He is the first known Christian intellectual of al-Andalus to write in Arabic, and the only Christian intellectual of any renown among Andalusí Muslims and Jews. Rabbi Moses b. Ezra (d. 1135) cited Ḥafṣ in his treatise on rhetoric and poetry, *Kitāb muḥāḍara wa-l-mudhākara* (*Book of Discussion and Memory*), and Imām Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Qurṭubī (d. 1258) cited Ḥafṣ at length in his *al-Iʿlām bi-mā fī dīn al-nasārā min al-fasād wa-l-awhām* (*The Making Known of the Corruptions and Delusions in the Religion of the Christians*).[3] The Rabbi appeals to the Christian-Arabic theologian on the nature of language and translation, and the Imām employs "kutub Ḥafṣ" ("the books of Ḥafṣ") in his attack against Christianity, particularly in his treatment of Christian

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[1] "[ʿAbd al-Raḥmān] exulted [the royal city/Córdoba] to the utmost heights, raised it with honors, magnified it with glory, increased its riches and exceedingly expanded the opulence of all other luxuries of the world beyond what is permitted to be believed or said, so that he exceeded, overcame, and conquered in all worldly pomp the preceding kings of his line." All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

[2] On this history, see the works of Eulogius of Córdoba and Albarus of Córdoba in *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, and, among others, the studies by Herrera Roldán, Coope, and Colbert.

[3] For more on RabbI Ibn Ezra's use of Ḥafṣ's work, see Schippers and Casiday. The full title of al-Qurṭubī's work is *al-Iʿlām bi-mā fī dīn al-nasārā min al-fasād wa-l-awhām wa-iẓhār maḥāsin dīn al-islām wa-ithbāt nubūwat nabīnā Muḥammad ʿalayhi al-ṣalāt wa-l-salām*.

ritual and tradition. Notwithstanding the pejorative tone already suggested in the title *al-Iʿlām, etc.*, al-Qurṭubī held Ḥafṣ in relatively high esteem: ”[حفص] من اكيسهم وافصحهم ... اذ كان قد نشأ في ذمة المسلمين، وتعلم من علومهم ما فاق به النصارى اجمعين“ (422).[4] Ḥafṣ authored a number of texts. At least two survive as fragments in al-Qurṭubī's anti-Christian polemic, namely, *Kitāb al-masāʾil al-sabʿ wa-l-khamsīn* (*Book of 57 Questions*) and a treatise on Christian rituals.[5] The most complete of Ḥafṣ's extant texts, however, is also the most original: his verse-translation of Jerome's Latin Psalter *ex Hebraico* (889). In addition to the translation proper, the text is framed by a preface in prose, a verse introduction or "urjūza" (a poem according to the poetic meter *rajaz*), and *argumenta* preceding each Psalm and guiding the reader in its interpretation.[6] The prose sections are preserved in two versions: the primitive version serves as the frame text for an earlier prose translation in Arabic that Ḥafṣ consulted, and he subsequently revised this frame text for his own verse translation (Van Koningsveld 2016, 51-61, 63-64, 83).[7] Though Ḥafṣ draws extensively on Latin sources and tradition in his work, he similarly portrays deep knowledge of the Qurʾān, the Arabic language, and its literary conventions. His translation of the Psalter best reveals this knowledge, and the profound degree of Islamization within the text also demonstrates the level of acculturation among the Christian intellectuals of his generation.

The present issue of *eHumanista*, *Places of Encounter: Language, Culture, and Religious Identity in Medieval Iberia*, asks how the communities of medieval and early modern Iberia preserved, transformed, negotiated, and/or crossed boundaries in light of the heterogeneous societies to which they were heir and in which they lived. The works of Ḥafṣ b. Albar provide rich ground for such an exploration. Ḥafṣ stands between the last major Latin-Christian writers of Islamic Iberia – Eulogius, Albarus (d. 861/62), and Samson (d. 891), all from Córdoba – and the great literary tradition in Arabic of al-Andalus. In Arabic, he carries on the Latin-Christian tradition of the previous generation through translation, scriptural commentary, and theology, but he also engages with the literary and intellectual traditions of the Islamic Mediterranean, Muslim and Christian. Scholars have most often approached Ḥafṣ's work in juxtaposition to the Latin writers of the previous generation highlighting the cultural and ideological consequences of abandoning Latin and adopting Arabic. The present analysis argues that Ḥafṣ's Psalter reveals a desire to preserve the Latin-Christian heritage of medieval Iberia rather than to abandon it. Ḥafṣ's understanding of the Psalter and of the nature of language establish an exclusive claim to truth. This claim to universal truth is made manifest *through* linguistic diversity and translation, not despite it. Further, though Ḥafṣ recognizes one truth in a diversity of languages, it is ultimately with the Latin-Christian tradition that he identifies. Ḥafṣ's cultural-religious commitments play out in both content and form, where Islamization actually accentuates Christian belief and practice.

Critical Context and Present Argument

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[4] "[Ḥafṣ] is among the subtlest and most eloquent of them [. . .] since he grew up among the *dhimmi* of the Muslims and learned from their sciences what surpassed the Christians altogether."

[5] On the attribution of these *kutub* to Ḥafṣ, see Van Koningsveld (2016); Tieszen, and Burman.

[6] On the authorship of the translation and its prose elements, which Van Koningsveld calls the frame text, see Van Koningsveld (2016). This frame text has primitive and revised versions best preserved in *Vat. Arabo. 5*, Vatican Library (primitive), and *Codex & 120 sup.*, Ambrosian Library (revised). The entire translation follows the conventions of *rajaz* meter, concerning which see Wright, 361-62, but the introduction of the text is referred to specifically as the *urjūza*.

[7] The present author finds Van Koningsveld's argument for Ḥafṣ's authorship of both versions of the frame text convincing, but the subject is yet open for debate. See Van Koningsveld's discussion, 8-29 (2016).

In recent scholarship Ḥafṣ most often appears in studies addressing acculturation and assimilation of religious minorities in medieval Iberia. Central to this discussion of religious identity is language. As Catlos has explained, religious identity in the medieval Mediterranean reached beyond creed and ritual, though these played their part: language, culture, geography, and narratives of origin also intertwined to form communal frontiers (2014, 365-66). Of these factors, perhaps language was only second to confession. María Ángeles Gallego has shown how ethnolinguistic and religious communities coincided throughout the medieval period. The Christian *dhimmī* and their Arabized heirs residing in the Christian North exemplified this link between language and religious identity. Beginning in eleventh-century León, Christian authorities referred to this minority as "Mozarabs."[8] Originating from the Arabic *mustʿarab* or *mustʿarib*, passive and active participles of a verb "to be like the Arabs," the designation emphasized not so much a confessional as a cultural-linguistic difference. Indeed, in Islamic lands it simply indicated an Arabized non-Arab. Defined as Christian in al-Andalus and as "Arabized" in the Christian North, this ethno-religious community occupied the margins. Cyrille Aillet describes the dynamic thus: "Latins en terre d'Islam, les 'mozarabes' se définissent par un référent linguistique commun à l'ensemble des sociétés chrétiennes ibériques, mais s'en distinguent aussi par leur immersion dans une société dominée par le modèle arabe" (2010, 131). The tensions resulting from the association of language and religion exploded in mid ninth-century Córdoba, when Eulogius and Albarus condemned Christian neglect of Latin due to fascination of and assimilation into Arabic culture. Samson subsequently echoed the lament in his *Apologeticus*. For Aillet, Ḥafṣ stands opposed to this generation, an example of "une forme d'arabisme militant" (178-79, 131).

Aillet's analysis reflects the principal interpretive model in contemporary scholarship. For Aillet, the Arabization realized by Ḥafṣ constituted a compromise between the Latin past (resulting in Latin's ultimate abandonment as language) and the Arabic, Islamic present. Translation allowed for continuity while it also substantially transformed this legacy according to the demands of Islamic society. Scholars including Urvoy, Penelas, Roisse, and Potthast offer similar portrayals of Andalusí Christian-Arabic, with Ḥafṣ b. Albar signaling a decisive turning point. Other studies have expanded on the juxtaposition between the Eulogiuses, Albaruses, and Samsons of the 850s and 860s and Christian-Arabic writers (beginning with Ḥafṣ) in terms of anti-assimilationists and assimilationists. In this research, the Latin authors of the mid ninth-century promote cultural isolation as the means of Christian fidelity and survival. Arabized Christians, on the other hand, respond dynamically to their cultural and political reality and view Islam sympathetically.[9] These latter arguments are problematic. Most Christian-Arabic texts in Iberia reveal religiously conservative attitudes, particularly towards Islam.[10] Further, the Latin works allegedly advocating cultural isolation boast of the eloquence of Christian martyrs addressing opponents in Arabic.[11] Eulogius and Albarus possessed knowledge of the Qurʾān and Islamic traditions, and Albarus reveals some command of literary conventions in Arabic.[12] Finally, Samson, a recognized teacher and abbot, discusses his service in the *Apologeticus* as translator of diplomatic correspondence with the Latin North for the emir and theological debates in which he engaged Christians, Muslims,

[8] For the origin and use of the term, see Aillet (2010, 2-9) and Hitchcock (ix-x, xviii-xix).
[9] See, for example, Tieszen, Pérez Marinas, Casiday, and Coope.
[10] One only need read the extant texts to arrive at such a conclusion. Even allowing for Aillet's reading of several of these texts as evidence of Christological compromises in dialogue with Nestorian theology (2013, 2010, 2008), their authors yet defend Christianity and attack Islam.
[11] See, for example, Eulogius's version of Isaac's confrontation with the qāḍī in *Memoriale*, where he describes the monk as "apprime litteris Arabicis imbutus" (367).
[12] For further discussion, see González Muñoz (2008 and 2002); Mallette (180-86); and Urvoy (1994, xiv-xv).

and Jews, presumably in Arabic (554, 571). These practices do not corroborate a juxtaposition of authors based on language. They also beg the question of Ḥafṣ's intellectual relationship to them. The Christian-Arabic theologian cites the support of Christian ascetics (i.e., monks) and Bishop "Balans" in translating the Psalms. The monasteries were Samson's home and key supporters of the martyrs whom Eulogius and Albarus defended, and Balans is likely the Bishop Valentius who defended Samson against Bishop Hostegesis in the *Apologeticus* (VK, 190; *Apologeticus*, 552).[13]

Accordingly, is it sustainable to oppose Ḥafṣ's cultural production to that of the previous generation, with whom he shared supporters and whom he most likely knew? Ḥafṣ may even have been Albarus's son, hence, "Ibn Albar" or "Son of Albar."[14] Van Koningsveld is among the scholars who have advocated an alternative reading. Though he recognizes Ḥafṣ's work as a marked turn towards Arabization and Islamization of Christian intellectuals in al-Andalus, he has also argued that we might best understand his work in dialogue with the last Latin writers of Córdoba, especially Samson, who may have been Ḥafṣ's teacher (2016, 1994). Van Koningsveld and, to a lesser extent, Urvoy have also shown that Ḥafṣ's translation of the Psalms and their frame text implicitly polemicize against Islam (Van Koningsveld 2016, 29-37; Urvoy 1994, 514). Ḥafṣ not only maintains a doctrinal commitment to the Christian tradition in Latin – from its authorities to its Trinitarian and Christological theology –, he draws heavily from Latin source texts for his work, too. In the case of the Psalms, these sources are known: the prose introduction and *argumenta* are amplifications of Latin prefaces and *tituli* widely employed in medieval Iberia, and the Psalter is based on Jerome's translation *ex Hebraico*.[15] Like his predecessors, though with greater depth, Ḥafṣ draws on Islamic tradition, too. Qurʾānic language and style run throughout the Psalter, and the *urjūza* makes plain his familiarity with Islamic *kalām* (theology). Further, Monferrer Sala has highlighted possible sources for the Psalter beyond those noted, and Van Koningsveld demonstrates Syriac influence in the same, though indirectly via the Arabic Psalter of Vat. Arabo. 5 (Monferrer Sala 2000; Van Koningsveld 2016, 54, n. 51). This variety of sources indicate Ḥafṣ's erudition, but also his primary commitment to the Latin-Christian tradition.

This background portrays the cultural complexity of Ḥafṣ's work and time, a complexity whose consequences scholars yet debate. With the adoption of Arabic, modern readers might (and do) argue that Ḥafṣ compromised Christian identity by taking Islam's language, a language imbued with rich nuance, yet lacking the theological concepts with which Latin had become associated. Yahya Michot cites Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) to indicate Muslim elites' attitudes toward Arabic. He asserted that "its ability to express detailed meanings and to distinguish between the subtle ones and the main ones by special terms that enunciate the truth" surpassed that of any other language (188). Michot further notes that Arabic was so associated with the Qurʾān that it "impregnates [the language] to the point of making it impossible for non-Muslim Arabic-speakers not to be, in some way, linguistically Islamised" (189). Christian theologians writing in Arabic thus faced the challenge of expressing doctrines in a language ill-disposed to ideas such as Trinity and

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[13] When citing Ḥafṣ's Psalter, I use Van Koningsveld's edition (VK) for the preface and *urjūza* and Urvoy's (U) for the Psalms and their *argumenta*.

[14] The relationship is suggested by time, place, and name. However, no definitive evidence exists, and scholars have taken different positions in its regard for diverse reasons. The present author accepts the relationship as probable due to time, place, and name, but also due to Ḥafṣ's profound knowledge of and commitment to the Latin tradition.

[15] For the prefaces and *tituli*, see the section "Elementos extrabíblicos" of Ayuso Marazuela's *La vetus latina hispana*, 5.1, and section "Série III" of Salmon's *Les 'tituli Psalmorum' des manuscrits latins*. The *argumenta* that served as a base text for Ḥafṣ were associated specifically with Jerome's Psalter *ex Hebraico* (Salmon, 97). Van Koningsveld's introduction to his edition of the frame text identifies and describes these sources (28-29, 51-61), but also see Urvoy's introduction to her edition of the Psalter.

Incarnation. Ḥafṣ grasped the subtlety of the language and was aware of its implications of compromise. Still, modern readers might also argue that Ḥafṣ claimed the ability of Christianity to appropriate all languages and cultures through adoption of Arabic. This argument corresponds better with medieval Christian tradition. In *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine argued that believers could not reject truth even if in Pagan texts, “Immo vero quisquis bonus verusque Christianus est, Domini sui esse intellegat, ubicumque invenerit veritatem” (2.18).[16] He insisted that Christians benefited from study of secular sciences from philosophy to rhetoric and concluded, “Philosophi autem qui vocantur, si qua forte vera et fidei nostrae accomodat dixerunt [. . .], non solum formidanda non sunt, sed ab eis etiam tamquam ab iniustis possessoribus in usum nostrum vindicanda” (2.40).[17] This article posits that Ḥafṣ’s Psalter ultimately claims Christian universality, even the universal authority of the Latin tradition, through Islamization, not despite it.

The Psalter and the Nature of Language

Ḥafṣ begins his prose preface to the Psalter speaking of Christ as the universal key to scriptural interpretation, ”وفتح الكتب كلها ولم يغلقها احد وهو الذي اغلقها ولم يفتحها احد، وكل من آمن به فُتحت له وكل من لم يؤمن به لم تُفتح له“ (VK, 95).[18] Interpreting the Book of Revelation, he writes that Christ sealed (“khatama”) creation and revelation with the seven seals of his life: incarnation, birth, affliction, death, resurrection, glorification, and dominion (96). These lines expand on their Latin source while also situating the work in a new cultural context through translation.[19] The specificity of this context is made clear not simply in the language adopted (i.e. Arabic), but also in the introduction of new elements and a vocabulary with distinct nuance. For example, within the same passage the author identifies Christ with the Divinity through a Trinitarian confession absent in the Latin, ”لأن الاله رحيم والابن هي الكلمة التي خلقت السماء والأرض وما بينهما وروح القدوس هو العلم“ (96).[20] The confession echoes the Qurʾān, where “merciful” (“raḥīm”) is of God’s principle attributes, and the language Ḥafṣ employs to attribute creation to “the Word” comes directly from an oft-repeated phrase in the Qurʾān. Compare Sūrat al-Furqān, which reads, ”[ﷲ] الذي خلق السماء والأرض وما بينهما“ (25.59).[21] Though Ḥafṣ clearly adopts Qurʾānic language, he does so to make Christian claims: the work of creation, which pertains to God alone, is attributed to Christ. And whereas the cited primitive version refers to “God” (“al-ilāh”) as “merciful,” the revised version makes a stronger Trinitarian claim by replacing “God” with “Father” (“al-ab”) (VK, 96, n. 107). Ḥafṣ continues throughout this preface to translate and expand Latin sources, create new material, and weave Christian doctrine and Qurʾānic language into a complex whole. As Christ seals all salvation history, the Psalms tell of it. The faithful gain access to and enter into union with this history by adopting the Psalter’s words as their own in worship. Ḥafṣ explains that,

[16] “But rather whoever is a good and true Christian, let him understand that it is of his Lord, wherever he finds truth.”
[17] “But whoever are named philosophers, if by chance they have said some truths and it accords to our faith [. . .], not only are they not to be feared, but they are to be liberated from them as from unjust possessors for our use.”
[18] “and he opened all the books and no one closes them and he it is who closes them and no one opens them, and whoever believes in him, they are opened to him, and whoever does not believe in him, they are not open to him.”
[19] For the Latin, see Ayuso, 305-309. As discussed above, Van Koningsveld identifies these sources.
[20] “Because God is merciful and the Son is the Word that created the heavens and the earth and what is between them and the Holy Spirit is Knowledge.”
[21] “He [God] who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them.” Citations of the Qurʾān come from *Tanzil–Quran Navigator*, though I have simplified the text where meaning is clear without vocalization. In order to demonstrate similarities in vocabulary, I cite in Arabic, but I cite the English translation from *Tanzil* in footnotes.

from the beginning, Christians sung this one prayer, its universality made evident in the plurality of its languages, "لكيما يقرأ كل لسان بايمان الله، كذلك صلاة النصارى في مشارق الأرض ومغاربها [. . .] صلاتهم كلها بالزبور المترجم من العبراني في اللغات الكثيرة" (101).[22] Ḥafṣ contributes to this one chant and echoes its universality through translation.

Ḥafṣ develops this argument further in the prose preface through a creative interpretation of 1 Cor. 14. As scholars have noted, he reads Paul's teaching regarding the use of "tongues" in worship as though the apostle spoke of human languages.[23] Because the Psalms serve as vehicle of knowledge and prayer, Ḥafṣ explains, Paul ordered that the faithful chant them in a language known to them: "إذا لم تفهموا كلامكم وصلاتكم كيف تفهموا ما تصلّون به وتلفظون به الى الله" (98).[24] In such a case their speech becomes a "noise without soul" (98). The passage justifies translation, but it also reveals translation's broader significance for language. This significance, in turn, points to the universal claim that Ḥafṣ wishes to make. Language is inherently communicative while culturally limited, possessing meaning while lacking universality:

> فان أصناف اللغات وأجناسها كثيرة في الدنيا ولكل لغة صوت وإنشاد، قال الحواري فأنا إن لم أدر معنى الصوت وتأويله في تلك اللغة كنت عند الذي أخاطبه بالكلام بربرياً وكان الذي يكلمني بما لا أفهم بربرياً عندي.[25] (99)

Because of language's culturally subjective nature, Paul explains that the worshiping community must prefer prophesy to tongues, that is, speech that is understood to speech without sense, "فليكن كلما تفهّمتوه للبنيان والفوائد ونفعاً لغيركم" (100).[26] In its original context, Paul, of course, speaks of angelic tongues as opposed to human language. Ḥafṣ's new reading reorients the passage to emphasize the cultural specificity of understanding, which provides added nuance to the phrase denoting nonbelievers: "those other than you." Paul points to nonbelievers here, and Ḥafṣ adopts this meaning and broadens it. The Arabic expression he employs ("li-ghayrikum") emphasizes the distance between worshippers and non-worshippers. Through Arabic, the Christian community directs its doctrine and worship *ad extra*.

The Christian claim to universality is thus already made apparent in the prose preface on the basis of language, and Ḥafṣ develops it to such a degree that he enters into implicit polemic with Islam on the basis of language. Ḥafṣ's interpretation of 1 Cor. 14 denies the universality of all languages, which he explains after alleging that Christian worship through the Psalms is universal due to its availability in a diversity of languages. These passages, taken together, implicitly juxtapose Christian doctrine and worship to Muslim doctrine and worship, which, in his time, were inextricably tied to the language of revelation, the language of the Qurʾān. As Ángeles Gallego argues, Christianity did not perceive the sacredness of language in the same way that Islam did (135-36). While Christian communities identified their traditions with certain languages, they did so because these languages developed with their traditions and thus best expressed them. Ḥafṣ

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[22] "So that every language might recite in the faith of God, and thus the prayer of the Christians in the East of the Earth and its West [. . .] all their prayer is in the Psalms translated from Hebrew into the many languages."

[23] See, v.g., Van Koningsveld (2016, 37-40), Casiday (236-37), and Urvoy (1994).

[24] "When you do not understand your speaking and your prayer, how do you understand what you are praying and expressing in it to God?"

[25] "For the classes of languages and their kinds are many in the world and each language possesses sound and rhythm, the Apostle said, so if I do not know the meaning of the sound and its interpretation in that language, I am barbarous in speech to him to whom I speak, and he who speaks to me in what I do not understand is barbarous to me."

[26] "[. . .] so that all that you have come to understand is for edification and profit, and for the advantage of those other than you [i.e. outsiders]."

recognizes as much when he refers to the Psalter's exposition by the Church Fathers in Latin *and* Greek – one is not inherently better than the other (VK, 105). Islam, however, held strongly to the Qurʾān in its original language. By the middle of the ninth-century, Sunnī Islam determined that the Qurʾān was the uncreated word of God, which further guaranteed divine status for Arabic.[27] Effectively, a translation was merely "tafsīr," "exposition." In his *urjūza*, Ḥafṣ implicitly attacks this idea when he criticizes "the Arabs" ("al-ʿarab"). They hold to the exclusivity of languages in regard to meanings, but he argues that objects remain the same regardless of their diversity of names (188). This criticism also opposes Islamic belief in the corruption ("taḥrīf") of Christian scripture, given that translation often entered into Christian-Muslim debates on *taḥrīf*.[28]

Ḥafṣ's explicit rejection of the divine status or universal nature of any language and his implicit opposition to the Islamic doctrine of *taḥrīf* give translators a central place in the economy of language and truth. However, *taḥrīf* implicated corruption of revelation as well as its interpretation. Ḥafṣ thus addresses interpretation, too, especially of difficult passages: "Some of it [the Vulgate] is difficult and intractable,/ perplexing both the imagination and interpretation" (201).[29] The translator is exegete. Ryan Szpiech has argued, "Within the multiconfessional world of the medieval Mediterranean, exegesis was always a double-valenced phenomenon that pressed against the boundaries between selfhood and otherness, community and outsider" (2). Ḥafṣ walks this boundary as he makes Jerome's Psalter available and explains it in a new language:

> I have translated his words in verse form/ embellishing it to the best of my ability,
> Aiming at the meaning, without change/ of the plain sense of the text and without alteration,
> Translating word for word,/ not interpreting it metaphorically or by changing it,
> Without addition or subtraction,/ except according to the need of the (Arabic) language.
> To make the meanings understood/ aimed at by the translator (Jerome),
> Except addition by way of embellishing/ giving a complete exposition and explanation,
> Or, for example, letters to complete the rhyme/ which are superfluous for the actual meaning,
> Or again ascription of glory, when the substance of the thought is finished/ to link up an isolated verse. (202-203)[30]

Ḥafṣ concedes two levels of interpretation: Jerome's Latin and his own Arabic. Jerome "aimed" ("qaṣada") at certain meanings. To remain faithful to these meanings, Ḥafṣ alters the Psalter by "increasing the beauty" ("ziyāda min al-taḥsīn") of the text and completing its "exposition" ("al-fassr") and "explanation" ("tabiyīn") as taught by Jerome. His work thus introduces the universality of the religious tradition of his own ethno-religious community into a new linguistic context, just as Jerome did. Ḥafṣ's Psalter "reveals" Latin-Christian tradition, and this revealing allows that tradition to more adequately respond to Islam and transcend its linguistic limits.

As is evident, Jerome plays a central role for Ḥafṣ, both as translator and exegete. This is so much the case that Ḥafṣ ultimately asserts the universal validity of the Latin Christian tradition. The mere fact that Ḥafṣ chooses to translate Jerome's Psalter and frame it on the basis of traditional

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[27] This doctrine was solidified among Sunnī Muslims following al-Maʾmūn's (d. 833) unsuccessful attempt to impose Muʿtazila doctrine to the contrary. For a fuller discussion, see Nagel (100-36) and Blankenship (47-54).
[28] Compare the relevant section of Ibn Taymiyya's *al-Jawāb al-Saḥīḥ*, transl. as "Ibn Taymīya on Christian Alteration of Scripture" by Michel in *Islamic Theological Themes*.
[29] Van Koningsveld provides a translation of the *urjūza*, which I follow here. For Arabic, see 186.
[30] Van Koningsveld's translation. For Arabic, see 187.

Latin prefaces and *argumenta* attributed to Jerome suggest such intention. However, the Christian-Arabic translator arguably makes this among his primary goals. Ḥafṣ first suggests it in the prose preface where he celebrates the diversity of languages in which the Psalter is sung. Here he (somewhat paradoxically) locates his understanding of the Psalms in but two linguistic traditions, Latin and Greek: "الزبور كله قول على ظاهر وباطن وذلك قول وتأويل قد فسرته العلماء رضي الله عنهم في أجزاء عظام في اللطينية والرومية" (105).[31] He speaks of the Church Fathers, but names only two in the preface: Jerome and Augustine, foundational intellectuals for Christianity in the Western Mediterranean. He cites Augustine on the power of the Psalms (110) and Jerome against a heretical sect that rejected vocal prayer (116). Jerome's influence, though, transcends even Augustine's in the *urjūza*:

> I have translated what Yarūnum (Jerome) interpreted,/ and he is given precedence for his learning-
> The interpreter of the Old Testament and New Testament,/ with understanding of the text and its exegesis.[32] (202)

Though Ḥafṣ recognizes the authority of the Greek tradition, the *urjūza* places the highest authority upon Jerome. Jerome "stands out for his learning" in the English translation, but the Arabic makes Jerome's authority more clearly felt: "And it is he who is at the head of his science ("ʿilmihi")." It is not altogether clear whether this "science" is translation or exegesis, but it seems that, for Ḥafṣ, they are the same. Ḥafṣ, in turn, articulates his own work as a continuation of Jerome's project, who serves as his model in translation and exegesis, form and doctrine.

Translating Christian Doctrine and the Latin Tradition

Translation involved more than providing a faithful text: it also included defending determined interpretations of the text (i.e., exegesis). For the churches in the Mediterranean, this apologetical aspect of translation moved against Islam as well as against competing Christian groups. Two major issues pushing in both directions were Christology and Trinitarian doctrine. Christology deeply divided Christianity. The Council of Chalcedon (451) declared that Christ was one person in two natures, fully human and fully divine. The declaration alienated "Nestorians," who confessed two persons in Christ, one human and another divine, and "Jacobites," who emphasized the union of divinity and humanity in Christ and believed Chalcedon compromised that unity.[33] Islam, in turn, rejected any tradition assigning Christ a role beyond that of "rasūl," i.e., prophet or apostle. Consequently, Christian-Arabic treatises addressed the nature of the union between God and humanity in the Incarnation and the Trinity at length. In the case of the Trinity, the major Christian communities agreed that God was three persons (hypostases) sharing one divine substance (ousia). Islam, of course, rejected the Trinity as opposing God's unicity: "ولا تقولوا ثلاثة انتهوا خيرا لكم إنما الله إله واحد" (4.171).[34] Yet a Trinitarian confession could mark a text as particularly "Latin" if it included the "*filioque* clause." Introduced by Isidore

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[31] "All of the Psalter is doctrine apparent and hidden, and the learned ["'al-ʿulumāʾ', i.e. the Church Fathers], may God be pleased with them, have already explained the doctrine and exposition in great volumes in Latin and Greek."
[32] Van Koningsveld's translation. For Arabic, see 187.
[33] I have necessarily simplified these controversies for the purposes of the article; the doctrines, politics, etc. dividing "Chalcedonian" and "non-Chalcedonian" Christians vary according to time and place.
[34] "And do not say 'three'; desist – Indeed, Allah is but one God."

of Seville (d. 636) into the Nicene Creed, it declared that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father *and the Son*." The Latin churches adopted the language, but the churches of the Eastern Mediterranean maintained that the Spirit proceeded solely from the Father per Nicene tradition. Ḥafṣ addresses these matters in depth in his Psalter through translation and amplification opposing Islam and non-Chalcedonian Christian communities. In relation to the Trinity, he also defends the *filioque*.

Van Koningsveld has addressed the implicitly polemical value of Christological passages present throughout the Psalter vis-à-vis Islam (2016, 29-33). He focuses specifically on Islamized vocabulary and concludes, "[T]hese Islamic concepts are always and without any exception, used to convey genuinely Christian notions" (35). As noted with respect to the prose preface and per Christian tradition, Ḥafṣ views the Psalter as primarily relating the story of Christ, from the Incarnation to his second coming and eternal reign. In order to maintain this vision, Ḥafṣ needed do little more than translate his sources for the prose sections of the Psalter verbatim. This would have allowed him to frame the Psalter and the individual Psalms with Christological meaning. However, he amplifies the Latin *tituli* in his work in order to elucidate or altogether add Christological interpretations ambiguous or absent in his source. In the Psalms proper, too, Ḥafṣ amplifies certain passages with the apparent goal of conveying Christological interpretations. These two techniques often appear together, further suggesting Ḥafṣ's doctrinal commitments. For example, the Latin source for Psalm 11's *argumentum* says that the Psalm treats of the unity of the body of the Church ("corpus Ecclesiae") (Salmon 101). Ḥafṣ, however, reads the Psalm as a prophecy of condemnation for the evil and, "النبؤة عن قدوم المسيح يوم القيامة" (U, 33).[35] This "coming" ("qudūm") is further emphasized together with its Christological consequence in the Psalm through amplification: "الرب قال سأقوم عاجلا/ لهم عونا في اليسوع شاملا// مقال ربنا مقال طاهر،/ شام وخلص فنار زاهر" (33).[36] The translator has profoundly altered Jerome's *ex Hebraico*, which makes no mention of "the Jesus" and portrays God's speech as purified silver, not a savior.[37] In dialogue with the *argumentum*, Ḥafṣ's translation suggests Christ's coming forth as radiant savior upon the resurrection and its salvific effect.

Ḥafṣ defends the salvific nature of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection throughout the Psalter alongside other Christian communities of the Mediterranean. Christian-Arabic apologists often ignored or downplayed Christological differences when addressing Islam. Ḥafṣ might have stopped here and made common cause, but his commitments did not allow it. Sometimes this is subtle. The *titulus* for Psalm 44 speaks of the voice of the Father "about his Son" ("de Filio"), but Ḥafṣ changes this to "voice of the Son" ("ṣawt al-ibn") (Salmon, 103; VK, 78). He also adds material, including, "في جمال المسيح وفي الإزدواج البيعة والعروس" (78).[38] This Psalm is traditionally read as the uniting of Christ and the church, but Ḥafṣ goes beyond this when he alters the Psalm. Latin and Arabic speak in apostrophe to a ruler ("rex" and "amīr," respectively) and his bride. The Latin calls the bride to forget her people and house and turn to the king "et concupiscet rex decorem tuum/ quia ipse est dominus tuus et adora eum" (14.12).[39] Ḥafṣ writes,

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[35] "[. . .] the prophecy about the coming of the Messiah the day of his resurrection."

[36] "The Lord said, 'I shall quickly rise/ aiding them in the Jesus [al-yasūʿ] completely// the speech of our Lord is a pure speech, exalted and savior, a radiant light."

[37] Cf. Ps 11.6-7: "nunc consurgam dicit Dominus/ ponam in salutari auxilium eorum/ eloquia Domini eloquia munda/ argentum igne probatum separatum a terra colatum septuplum." Citations of the Psalter *ex Hebraico* are from Gryson and Weber's edition, *Biblia sacra*.

[38] "On the beauty of the Messiah and the uniting of the church and the groom."

[39] "[. . .] and the king will desire your beauty/ because he is your lord and adore him."

"فيعلن الأمير حسنك، فهو/ رب إله، فاسجدي طوعا له" (79).[40] The Latin calls the bride to "adore" the king, since "he is your lord." Ḥafṣ designates the divinity of this "lord," "he is Lord God," and subsequently uses the verb "sajada," which unequivocally means "to worship, bow down." The adverbial "obediently" ("ṭawʿan") bears Qurʾānic undertones of divine worship, too. Given the *argumentum*, this "Lord God" is Christ. Mostly, though, Ḥafṣ is more explicit. The *argumentum* of Psalm 109, for example, expands on the Latin's "utraque Filii natura commemorat" to "الكلمة متولدة من ذات الاب وان الابن اله وانسان، خالق ومخلوق" (Salmon, 107; U, 177).[41] Christ is human and divine, creator and created. Ḥafṣ explains the these two natures' relationship in the *argumentum* of Psalm 138 expanding "Christus ex persona humana [. . .] divinam insuans majestatem" to "صوت المسيح عن قيومة اللاهوت والناسوت" (Salmon, 111; U, 211).[42] In Dozy's *Supplément*, "qayūma" means "persona" or "uqnūm," which is precisely the term used in Arabic for "hypostasis."[43] Ḥafṣ's thus clearly defends Chalcedonian Christology.

Along with Christology, Ḥafṣ addresses Trinitarian theology. This treatment opposes Islam but also identifies Ḥafṣ more specifically with the Latin-Christian tradition. The Islamized Trinity of the prose preface, discussed earlier, already shows that Ḥafṣ addresses the Trinity in dialogue with Islam: God the Father is "the merciful," his Son is "the word that created the heavens and the earth and what is between them," and the Holy Spirit is knowledge. He further expands on this Trinity throughout the Psalter. For example, the *argumentum* of Psalm 102 amplifies "Vox Ecclesiae per baptismum renovatae" to "وصوت البيعة إذا تجددت وعمدت بالمعمودية باسم التثليث" (Salmon, 107; U, 160).[44] Whereas the Latin takes for granted that Christian baptism evokes the Trinity and makes no mention of it, Ḥafṣ avoids ambiguity by explicitly referencing it. For a more developed exposition of the Trinity, though, we turn to *Book of 57 Questions*: "هذه الثلاثة الاقانيم متوحدة لأجل الاب، متساوية لأجل الابن، منتظمة لأجل الروح. فنؤمن: ان الاب: اب، لأجل انه ذو ابن. والابن: ابن، لأنه ذو اب. والروح القدس: منبثق لأنه من الاب والابن" (al-Qurubī, 80).[45] The Spirit here proceeds from Father and Son, which associates the author with the *filioque* clause. It also associates him with Latin Trinitarian apology that explains the Spirit as the love uniting Father and Son.[46] In light of *Book of 57 Questions*, Psalm 67 may allude to the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Son, too. The Latin *titulus* tells the reader that the prophet speaks "de [. . .] Spiritus Sancti dono apostolis" (Salmon,

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[40] "For the amīr declares your beauty, for he/ is Lord God, so worship him obediently."

[41] "[. . .] recalling the two natures of the Son" and "the Word is born from the essence of the Father and the Son is God and man, Creator and created," respectively.

[42] "Christ in the human person [. . .] insinuating the divine majesty" and "Voice of the Messiah about the hypostasis of the divinity and the humanity." Urvoy translates "résurrection," but see present discussion.

[43] Dozy draws on a number of Latin-Arabic glossaries. This definition comes from the tenth-century Cod. Or. 231 of the University Library of Leiden, see Dozy (vol. 1, VIII). Van Koningsveld argues that Ḥafṣ consulted (and may have composed) this *Glossarium Latino-Arabicum* (2016, 61-67), of which the Leiden manuscript would be a copy.

[44] "Voice of the Church renewed by baptism" and "And the voice of the church when it is renewed and baptized in baptism in the name of the Trinity," respectively.

[45] "These three hypostases are unifying on the account of the Father, equating on account of the Son, joined on account of the Spirit. So, we believe that the Father is Father on account of his possessing a son, and the Son is son on account of his possessing of a father, and the Holy Spirit, proceeding because he is from the Father and the Son.

[46] Compare, v.g., Samson's *Apologeticus*: "Nam sicut Deo non attinet non esse, sic Spiritu Sancto non pertinet non processisse; quia enim Pater et Filius numquam se non dilexerunt, sine Spiritu Sancto, qui amborum karitas est, numquam fuerunt" (523). "For just as not being does not obtain to God, so not proceeding does not pertain to the Holy Spirit; because, since the Father and Son never have not loved each other, they have never been without the Holy Spirit, who is the love of both."

104).[47] The Arabic reads, "وإعطائه [المسيح] روح القدس للحوارين" (U, 107).[48] Ḥafṣ specifies the giver of the Spirit, who is Christ, through amplification. There is biblical basis for the phrase in the Vulgate (John 16.7), but the amplification of the *argumentum* and the tensions between East and West on the relationship of Spirit to Father and Son suggest a Latin angle here.

Ḥafṣ's translates and writes in the multi-confessional environment of the medieval Mediterranean. He therefore expectedly addresses major themes that divided competing communities, Christians from Muslims as well as Christians from Christians. Among these themes, the two most decisive are arguably Christology and Trinity. In the case of Christology, Ḥafṣ promotes Chalcedonian doctrine, with which the Latin-Christian tradition identified. In the case of the Trinity, Ḥafṣ demonstrates a conscious attempt to formulate Trinitarian confession in dialogue with Islam. However, this does not equate doctrinal compromise. Indeed, his Islamization of the Trinitarian invocation in the prose preface uniquely affirms the divine quality of each person. He further develops this theology in the Psalter and his *Book of 57 Questions*, where he explicitly identifies with Latin Trinitarian tradition. Translation of the Christian scriptures into Arabic began, in part, as a counterclaim to Islam. Since the Qurʾān was *the* impetus for developing Arabic as a written, literary language, the translation of non-Muslim scriptures required pushing the limits of the language of the Qurʾān in order "to set the biblical record straight," as Sydney Griffith has argued (53). This dialogue took place in light of Qurʾānic representations of the Bible and pseudo-scriptures authored by Muslims. Indeed, Muslim authors had already fabricated pseudo-Psalters in Ḥafṣ's time, as Van Koningsveld discusses (2019, 30-33). But Ḥafṣ also writes in opposition to other Christian confessions. Thus, through his translation, Ḥafṣ participates in a wider movement among non-Muslims across the Mediterranean and, like them, does so within his tradition.

Form and Translating Christian Worship

If translation transfers one tradition into another, language is as important as the ideas to which it points. In the religious context, translation or otherwise, eloquence matters. In his *Apologeticus*, Samson attacks Bishop Hostegesis for his ignorance of Latin and failure to express himself clearly: it leads to ignorance and, consequently, heresy (508-509, 561-62, 594). This attitude is not unique to Christian authors. Al-Qurṭubī attacks his opponent, the author of *Tathlīth al-waḥdānīya*, at length for his poor Arabic. Like Samson before, the Imām finds himself obliged to correct and clarify the priest's grammar for his reader before rebutting his argument (v.g., 47-54). Ḥafṣ recognizes the association between linguistic and intellectual preparation, too, when he emphasizes the accomplishment of translating the Psalms in verse and expounds on the similarities of Latin and Arabic, iambic and *rajaz* meter in the *urjūza* (VK, 184-86, 188-90). Ḥafṣ's boasting seems less a matter of pride than an assertion of his linguistic preparation and erudition, thereby establishing his authority. An aesthetic conscience undergirds these passages, which rises to the surface when Ḥafṣ criticizes a prose translation of the Psalter (presumably that contained in Vat. Arabo. 5): "He who previously translated it (the Psalter) in prose/ spoiled its poetry and interpretation. // So that the style of speech became absurd/ and the charm of versified arrangement left it" (197-98).[49] The prose translation that he criticizes is inadequate, because, for all its literalness, it fails in form: "The wording spread abroad in his translation/ has neither

[47] "[. . .] of [. . .] the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles."
[48] "[. . .] and his [the Messiah's] giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles."
[49] Again, I follow the translation of the *urjūza* provided by Van Koningsveld. For the Arabic, see 184-85. Van Koningsveld shows that Ḥafṣ borrowed from this translation for his verse Psalter (2016, 58-61).

consecutiveness nor order,// Neither characteristic nor luster of style/ not even the indispensable meaning" (198).[50] If he refers to the translation witnessed in Vat. Arabo 5, then he is not fair in terms of meaning. It is faithful to the Mozarabic Psalter, and more so than Ḥafṣ's translation is to Jerome. But for Ḥafṣ, the formal component of the Psalms is as important as their content. Since this is the case, we might expect form to complement Ḥafṣ's religious commitments.

The issue of form is in fact central to the claims already highlighted in the content of Ḥafṣ's Psalter, particularly vis-à-vis Islam and the Qurʾān. The Qurʾān has a marked poetic quality, and its style and rhetorical beauty often figured into Muslim apology regarding its divine status. When Muḥammad's opponents dismissed the revelations as his own inventions, the Qurʾān responds, ”قل لئن اجتمعت الانس والجن على أن يأتوا بمثل هذا القرآن لا يأتون بمثله ولو كان بعضهم لبعض ظهيرا“ (17.88).[51] It may be that Ḥafṣ's preoccupation with form and harsh criticism of the prose Psalter are a response to Muslim apology for the Qurʾān. By placing the Psalter in verse, he "reveals" its power and beauty. Ḥafṣ begins this implicitly polemical approximation to Islam in the prose preface, perhaps in dialogue with *aḥādīth* (Islamic traditions) then being codified. One *ḥadīth*, attributed to Abū Hurayra, relates that Muḥammad said, "Indeed al-shayṭān does not enter the house in which Sūrat al-Baqara is recited" (al-Tirmidhī, 2877).[52] Another *ḥadīth*, attributed to ʿĀʾisha, says, "The one who recites the Qurʾān and he is proficient with it, then he is with the noble and blessed angels" (2904). Ḥafṣ asserts that whoever recites the Psalms, ”يستدعي الملائكة الخيار الى نفسه ويطرد الجن عن نفسه وقلبه“ (VK, 110-11).[53] Another *ḥadīth* attributed to Abū Hurayra relates, "And no people sit in a *masjid* reciting Allāh's Book, studying it among themselves, except that the tranquility descends upon them and they are enveloped in the mercy, and surrounded by the angels" (2945). Ḥafṣ writes, ”فإن قراءة الزبور قصائد الرب فمن كان تهليل الرب بين شفتيه كان الروح القدوس فيه لان سرور الله في لسانه“ (114).[54] To recite the Psalms is to know God, and to reject them (recite them in an unworthy form?) leads to alienation from God: ”من كان جاهلا بدفائن الله وشريعته يجهله الله ويكرهه“ (97).[55] The association of the Psalter's power with right recitation explains Ḥafṣ's most severe criticism of the earlier prose Psalter, "One could almost say/ that the like of it is not praise [tahlīl] at all" (199).[56] The underlying matter was, for Ḥafṣ, apologetical: the prose translation made the Psalms accessible to an Arabized Christian community, but it also made the Psalms and therefore Christian worship (aesthetically) inferior in light of the Qurʾān.

Ḥafṣ never explicitly mentions the Qurʾān in the Psalter (or any of his extant work), but the above parallels suggest that he translates the Psalter *against* it through his consideration of form. This is apparent when the Christian-Arabic theologian narrates the Psalter's revelation and recording, which, per Latin tradition, occurred on the nights that David dedicated to worship,

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[50] Van Koningsveld's translation. For Arabic, see 185.

[51] "Say, 'If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qurʾān, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.

[52] *Jāmiʿ at-Tirmidhī*, vol. 5., ed. by Abu Tāhir Zubair and transl. by Abu Khallyl. I have cited *aḥādith* judged sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*). References are to the number of the tradition. I have followed the English translation of the bilingual text.

[53] "He summons the most good angels to himself and drives the jinn from his soul and heart."

[54] "And the recitation of the Psalter is the songs of the Lord and whoever has the praise of the Lord upon his lips, the Holy Spirit is in him because the joy of God is in his mouth."

[55] "He who errs in the treasures of God and his law, God makes him err and hates him."

[56] Van Koningsveld's translation. For Arabic, see 185.

> كان ينزل عليه روح القدوس فيأخذ الكيثرة وينقر فيها يدعو الى الله بالتهليل والتمجيد بصوت رقيق حنين وكان الهج العالمين، فكان يقول الآية والبيت ثم يسكت وكان يستجيب له أصحابه وجلساؤه، وكان له الأربعة الكتاب الذين ذكرنا أسمائهم، الاثنان عن يمينه والاثنان عن شماله يسمعون قوله ويكتبونه، ثم يسمعون من الذين يجيبونه بالغنا فيوثّقون كتابهم حتى لا يشكون فيه. (VK, 106-107)[57]

This narrative is markedly distinct from tradition on the Qurʾān's revelation and compilation. Several traditions on Muḥammad's state during revelation are attributed to ʿĀʾisha. When the first revelation came, he returned to Khadīja, and "his heart was trembling [. . .] and said: Wrap me up, wrap me up! So they wrapped him till the fear had left him" (Sahih Muslim, 160a).[58] In another, ʿĀʾisha describes his state in subsequent revelations, "He was sweating so much so that the drops of the sweat were dropping like pearls though it was a wintery day" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2661). It was after these states that Muḥammad would relate the *ayāt*. Finally, al-Tirmidhī relates a tradition attributed to Ibn Saʿid, whom Abū Bakr and ʿUmar pressed into collecting the *ayāt* of the Qurʾān after a battle for fear of losing the remaining reciters ["qurrāʾ al-Qurʾān"] who had memorized it (3103). The comparison implied by Ḥafṣ was commonplace in Christian apology and anti-Muslim polemic by his time. Whereas Muḥammad, according to tradition, suffered upon revelation and only subsequently narrated it, David sweetly and joyfully narrated the Psalms as they were revealed. Whereas Muḥammad's companions memorized the *ayāt* and gathered them in writing after Muḥammad's death, David's companions recorded the Psalms as they were revealed. Ḥafṣ's claim for the integrity of the revealed text rests on the form of revelation as well as its transfer.

Ḥafṣ views the Psalter as an affirmation of Christian doctrine and, in the case of worship, *the* validating source. This is the case down to chanting "with gentle voices," traced to David and his companions. Ḥafṣ manipulates the form itself, too, for affect and content. One way in which he does this is through the employment of a markedly Qurʾānic phrase: "subḥānaka/hu," "May you/he be exalted." It occurs some forty-one times in the Qurʾān and usually occurs as a rhetorical device opposing false descriptions of God. Thus, "قالوا اتخذ الله ولدا سبحانه هو الغني" (10.68).[59] And again, against belief in multiple gods, "فسبحان الله رب العرش عما يصفون" (21.22).[60] Ḥafṣ employs this device, but modifies it. For example, Psalm 9 reads, "الرب صار رافع المظلوم،/ رافعه في الكرب والغموم// سبحانه من خالق كريم/ ذي رأفة بخلقه رحيم" (U, 29).[61] The phrase appears incessantly in the Psalter interrupting the narrative and drawing out God's attributes according to context. The cited verses demonstrate this: Psalm 9 praises God for his justice and assures that he will act on behalf of the oppressed. Each Psalm tells

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[57] "The Holy Spirit would descend upon him so he took up the zither and he would play on it calling to God in praise and worship in a gentle, yearning voice, and it was the most loving of the worlds, and he would say the sign/revelation [aya] and the verse then fall silent and his companions and colleagues would respond to him, and the four scribes whose names we recorded, two upon his right and two upon his left, would listen to his speech and write it, then they would listen from those who replied to him with melody, so they authenticated their book so that they would not doubt concerning it."

[58] This and the following *ḥadīth* come from *Sunnah.com*, which provides access to a rich collection of sound *ḥadīth* in Arabic with English translations, which I follow here. I also follow the site's transliteration of sources and give in-site references (author, *ḥadīth*). Original published sources are cited for each tradition within the database.

[59] "They have said, 'Allah has taken a son' Exalted is He, He is the [one] Free of need."

[60] "So exalted is Allah, Lord of the throne, above what they describe."

[61] "The Lord has become the defender of the oppressed,/ his defender in fear and distress.// May he be exalted who is a generous creator/ endowed with compassion for his creation, merciful."

a story; through translation, even Islamization, Ḥafṣ appropriates this story – here of oppression and ultimate deliverance – for his community. Vincent Barletta has studied similar narrative strategies in Morisco-*Aljamiado* literature from the sixteenth century and argues, "[T]hese narrative recenterings [. . .] situate narrative *as a practice* within the daily life of Morisco communities, serving to give shape to human action, belief, and understanding" (58). In like manner, the "subḥānahu" phrases invite the community to join the story narrated in the Psalm. The phrases also create space within the Psalms for catechesis on God's attributes (*ṣifāt allāh*), from creator and omniscient to just and merciful, which he treats at length in the *urjūza* against those who deny God real *ṣifāt* (VK, 182-83). Catechesis sometimes turns to Christology, too, assigning divine attributes to the Messiah, v.g., Psalm 107. Per the *argumentum*, the Psalm prophesies Christ's ascension and sending of the Spirit: ”رقي علی سماء ، السماء من البدء/ وسوف يُعطی صوته صوت قوي [. . .]والله كثيرا سرمد/ سبحانه سبحانه مؤبد“ (U, 109-10).[62]

Ḥafṣ weaves form and meaning together into a consistent argument. He invites his reader to worship in a unique way that imparts Christian doctrine. This is further demonstrated by Ḥafṣ's use of meter and rhyme. The *argumentum* of Psalm 106 explains, ”الوصاة بالبيعة التي سلمها الله بدم المسيح وخلصت بالاستشهاد من ايدي اعدائها الذين اذلوها“ (171).[63] The Psalm narrates God's repeated deliverance of Israel, and praise formulae regularly interrupt the narrative. The Latin refrain is, "confiteantur Domino misericordiam eius./ et mirabilia eius in filios hominum."[64] Ḥafṣ gives this meter and rhyme, ”فالتعترف للرب مرحماته ،/ نعم وفي بني الورى آياته“ (171-73).[65] The "marvels" ("mirabilia") of Latin become "signs" ("ayāt"), which bear double meaning: they indicate miraculous wonders, but they also mean "revelations" in the Qurʾānic sense, the "verses" of the Qurʾān proclaimed by Muḥammad. The refrain appears after each occasion of divine deliverance, and Ḥafṣ emphasizes the terms "mercies" and "signs" through meter and rhyme. He thus forces the reader to associate the two words in meaning, whereas this association is formally absent in the Latin. The repetition (as in the Latin) stresses God's help, but in Ḥafṣ's Psalter the reader further associates this refrain and its key words with the *argumentum*, the "ordinance" given by God "by the blood of the Messiah." *Ayāt*'s dual meaning opens new interpretive horizons: Christ's act of redemption is a divine "marvel," but "ordinance" and "ayāt" also suggest the Psalms that prophecy this redemption and the Gospels that proclaim it. Through form and Qurʾānic vocabulary, Ḥafṣ effectively focuses the Psalm to speak of Christ *and* scripture. He also pushes the Christological reading in verse 24 by changing the grammar of verse 20 in the Vulgate, "misit verbum suum et sanavit eos et salvavit de interitu." The Arabic reads, ”كلمته ارسل بالشفاء ،/ فلقد ابرتهم من الظماء“ (172).[66] God is still the one who sends "his word" ("kalimatahu"), but it is the word itself that "saved them" ("abrathum"). The Latin is grammatically vague: either "verbum" or "God" could be subject of "salvavit." However, since God is subject of "misit," God is likely also subject of "salvavit." Ḥafṣ clearly makes "his word" the subject of "to free" (both are grammatically feminine). Ḥafṣ also emphasizes "his word" by fronting it in the sentence, whereas beginning with the verb makes more grammatical sense.

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[62] "He has ascended over the heaven, the heaven from eternity/ and he will give his voice, a voice of power// [. . .] and God is praised greatly forever./ let him be exalted, let him be exalted forever."

[63] "The ordinance in the church that God gave her by the blood of the Messiah and she was saved in martyrdom from the hand of her enemies who humiliated her."

[64] "Confess to the Lord his mercy/ and his marvels to the children of men."

[65] "Confess to the Lord his mercies,/ yes, and among the sons of man his signs [ayātahu]."

[66] "He sent his word with healing,/ and it freed them from thirst."

In addition to doctrinal matters such as Christology, Ḥafṣ exalts the sacraments through Arabization. Al-Qurṭubī shows the theologian's dedication to Christian ritual in *al-Iʿlām*. He cites Ḥafṣ on fasting, feasts, the blessing of homes with salt, the sign of the cross, and the Mass. Of these, Ḥafṣ most adamantly defends the Mass. He traces the Sacrifice to Melchisedech who offered bread and wine. This, per tradition, prefigures Christ, of whom Psalm 109 speaks, "وانزله منزلته، واحله محله، وجعله قسا الى الابد" (427).[67] Christ fulfilled his role by the cross and establishing the Sacrifice, as related in John 6, "من اكل لحمي، وشرب دمي، كان في، وكنت فيه، وانا الخبز النازل من السماء، فمن آكلني يحيا بي" (427).[68] Ḥafṣ adds aesthetic appeal to the sacraments in the Psalter. Psalm 22 stands out. The Latin *tituli* reads, "Ecclesia post baptismum, de communicatione sacramenti" (Salmon, 101).[69] The translator adopts the title almost verbatim, "نبؤة في المؤمنين بعد معموديتهم ومشاركتهم للسرائر،" and, thus, its "sacramental" reading (U, 47).[70] Christian tradition interpreted the waters as baptism, the table as the Eucharist, etc. The Vulgate reads, "pones coram me mensam ex adverso hostium meorum// inpinguasti oleo caput meum/ calix meus inebrians" (22.5).[71] Ḥafṣ versifies and amplifies this for rhetorical effect, "تجعل أمام وجهي مائدة/ مخالفا أعدائي المعاندة// أرطبت بالزيت الكريم رأسي،/ فمسكر فد صار مني كأسي" (47).[72] "Before my face" makes the preparation of the table intimate, the rhyme of "table" ("māʾida") and "stubborn" ("muʿānida") emphasizes the exclusion of the Psalmist's enemies from the table, and the sense of abundance increases with the "*precious* oil" and "*intoxicating* cup" by rhyming "my head" ("raʾsī") with "my cup." Ḥafṣ enriches the imagery and creates associations absent in the Latin. Perhaps he also emphasizes the heavenly aspect of this banquet with the word "intoxicating" for "inebrians," which is, according to tradition, the type of drink (wine) promised to the Muslim faithful in paradise. Whatever the reading, the formal aspects demonstrate, yet again, Ḥafṣ's religious commitments.

Conclusion: Christian Identity and Language in Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭī

Ḥafṣ occupies a space in-between two traditions with distinct cultural and religious values. But to stand in-between requires a connection to both. This Christian-Arabic theologian knows and holds to Latin Christianity; he even insists on its authority in matters of exegesis, though in a new language. In *Indiculus luminosus*, Albarus concludes his treatise – a mix of hagiography and polemic – with a condemnation of fellow Christians who have taken on the "mark of the beast" ("nomen bestie"). This passage has most often been read as a condemnation of acculturation and/or assimilation, as though the two were one and the same. The terms are related but distinct processes: the first is cultural and the second, social.[73] Albarus appears to condemn the latter:

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[67] "And he revealed him his revelation, and he adorned him his adornment, and he made him 'priest' forever."
[68] "Whoever eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, he is in me, and I am in him, and I am the bread descending from heaven, so whoever eats me lives in me."
[69] "The Church after baptism, about the communication of the sacrament."
[70] "Prophecy about the believers after their baptism and their sharing in the sacraments."
[71] "You place before me a table in the face of my enemies. You have anointed my head with oil, my cup overflowing [or 'intoxicating']."
[72] "You placed before my face a table,/ opposing my stubborn enemies// You anointed with precious oil my head,/ so my cup has become intoxicating to me."
[73] See Novikoff's discussion (29). Novikoff follows Glick's *Islamic and Christian Spain* here.

> Sic et dum illorum sacramenta inquirimus et filosoforum, immo filocomporum sectas scire non pro ipsorum convinciendos herrores, set pro elegantjam leporis et locutjonem luculenter dissertam neglectis sanctis lectjonibus congregamus, nicil aliut quam numerum nominis eius in cuuiculo nostro qvasi idola conlocamus.[74] (314)

Albarus does not oppose learning Arabic, if this learning is for "defeating their [i.e., the Muslims'] errors." What he opposes is assimilation, the desire to integrate into the dominant religious and social structures of Córdoba. What he fears is the next generation's detachment from the Latin writings of the Church Fathers ("volumina doctorum Latine conscripta") and love for Christian scripture (314). The immediately following lines of the *Indiculus* suggest this reading, since there Albarus describes in detail the conventions of Arabic verse (315). This reading is also consistent with what we know about Samson from the *Apologeticus*: he decried the loss of Latin learning while he was nonetheless more than proficient in Arabic. Ḥafṣ simply takes the next step: he translates the Christianity of Latin tradition into Arabic, and he cites Jerome as his model.

In a sense, Ḥafṣ takes a stronger cultural-religious position than his predecessors, because he makes a universalizing claim for a particularly Western form of Christianity. As *De doctrina Christiana* would have it, he claims Arabic for his tradition. By this time, the Greek, Syriac, and Coptic traditions were available in Arabic, and these traditions could boast of accomplished intellectuals. Works by authors such as Abū Qurrah (d. 820s) and ʿAmmar al-Baṣrī (d. ca. 830) were soon to exercise (or already had exercised) influence over Iberian Christians.[75] Were these intellectuals from the Eastern Mediterranean abandoning their religious traditions by adopting Arabic? Were they compromising in the face of Islam? Like Ḥafṣ, the first Christian-Arabic writers in the Eastern Mediterranean faced an eroding, dying church amidst acculturation and subsequent assimilation. We hear the echo of Albarus's lament in the *Indiculus* of Christians abandoning Latin for Arabic letters across the Mediterranean by a ninth-century Coptic theologian, cited by Aillet:

> Ils abandonneront la belle langage copte (*al lughat al-ḥasana al-qubṭiyya*) dans laquelle le Saint-Esprit s'est souvent exprimé par la bouche de nos pères spirituels (*abāʾinā al-rūḥāniyyīn*); ils apprendront à leurs enfants, dès leur jeunesse, à parler la langue des Bédouins arabes (*al-ʿarāb*) et ils s'en glorifieront.[76] (Aillet 2010, 136)

It would be too facile to suggest that the author (Samuel) or his disciples opposed learning Arabic, given that the text only survives in Arabic.[77] It seems, rather, that Samuel desires the preservation of Coptic alongside Arabic, a connection to the origin of his religious community. Albarus desired

[74] "And this when we scrutinize their sacraments and to know the schools of their philosophers, rather, charlatans, not in order to defeat their errors, but rather for the eloquence of charm and brilliantly expressed speech, we gather having abandoned the holy readings, we do nothing other than place the number of his name in our sanctuary as though idols. Who, I beg, is found today skilled among our lay faithful, who considers, intent on the holy scriptures, the volumes of any of the doctors composed in Latin?"

[75] Dominique Millet-Gérard suggested the connection between Eulogius and Albarus and theologians from the Eastern Mediterranean over three decades ago, see part three, "Origines de la pensée mozarabe." More recently, scholars including Aillet, Burman, González Muñoz, Monferrer Sala, Potthast, and Roisse have further explored these connections, primarily, though not exclusively, in Mozarabic works in Arabic.

[76] For the original Arabic and its French translation, see Samuel, "L'Apocalypse," ed. and trans. Ziadeh.

[77] It is generally assumed that this text was originally composed in Coptic (now lost), but its date of composition is widely debated. Aillet places the text in the ninth century, but Zaborowski argues that it may have been originally composed in Arabic as late as the thirteenth century (Aillet 2010, 136; Zaborowski).

the same, given his qualification regarding the purpose of Arabic learning and his knowledge of that language. What most worried these authors, whether writing in the language of their tradition or in Arabic, was the loss of Christian believers to Islam as well as the faithful's separation from their respective traditions. Like contemporaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Ḥafṣ responds to these concerns by adopting the *lingua franca* of his time and place. He makes his religious tradition more accessible, more beautiful through translation. His translation universalized his tradition.

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