'The book of the enormous mysteries that James the Apostle saw on the Sacred Mountain for the great gathering, written at his order by Cecilio, his disciple': lead book number 22 in the Sacro Monte archive, Granada: Arabic text and English translation with notes

van Koningsveld, P.S.; Wiegers, G.A.

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Nuevas Aportaciones al Conocimiento y Estudio del Sacro Monte

IV Centenario Fundacional
(1610-2010)

María Julieta Vega García-Ferrer
María Luisa García Valverde
Antonio López Carmona (Coords.)

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"THE BOOK OF THE ENORMOUS MYSTERIES THAT JAMES THE APOSTLE SAW ON THE SACRED MOUNTAIN FOR THE GREAT GATHERING, WRITTEN AT HIS ORDER BY CECILIO, HIS DISCIPLE" - LEAD BOOK NUMBER 22 IN THE SACRO MONTE ARCHIVE, GRANADA

Arabic text and English translation with notes

by

Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld and Gerard Albert Wiegers

Arabic Text


1 Originally presented as a separate booklet, including 5 plates of the original Lead Book, to the Participants of the Fourth Centenary Of the Foundation of the Sacro Monte Abbey, Granada, 13-15 October 2010.
NUEVAS APORTACIONES AL CONOCIMIENTO Y ESTUDIO DEL SACRO MONTE - IV CENTENARIO FUNDACIONAL (1610-2010)

...
Translation

The Book of the Enormous Mysteries that James, the Apostle, saw on the Sacred Mountain for the Great Gathering, written at his order by Cecilio, his disciple.

James, the son of Samīkh al-Zabādī, the Apostle, said: When I had fulfilled the order of the Holy Virgin Mary to preach [the Gospel] and Ibn al-Mughīra, whom I have called “the Captain”, had converted in this Peninsula of Spain, I aimed at leaving it for Ramat al-Hamal. At that moment, however,

2 Arabic: Ya’qūb al-Hawārī.
3 Arabic: Sa’īs Al-Āya.
4 His conversion to Christianity at the hands of James the Apostle is mentioned at length in Lead Book number 20, the Kitāb Mahāsin Ya’qūb al-Hawārī wa-Ma‘ajfzihi. This is the name of a town which figures in various Lead Books, and also in the Parchment. Its literal meaning, when read as Ramat al-Hamal, would perhaps be: “Height of Neglect”. It refers to Jerusalem (and more particularly to the Temple Mount), as it is said by Mary in Lead Book 15 (“History of the Essence of the Gospel”) that she was ordered to remove the Essence of the Gospel “from Ramat al-Hamal where we [viz. the Twelve Apostles and she herself] are now”, in order for it to be preserved safely until the end of time. When Peter asked her: “Why was this city called Ramat al-Hamal?”, she answered him as follows: “Because God cast it into oblivion and neglect, together with its infidel inhabitants. He became angry with them, with their children and their great-grandchildren. No flag will be raised for them in this world or in the Hereafter. They are the objects of God’s wrath until the Day of Resurrection. They will remain forever in the Fire. Nothing will remain thereof at all, because of their big errors and their denial of Jesus the Spirit of God and his Glorious Gospel, as they are the most evil people of His creation”. It is also possible to follow Miguel de Luna’s decipherment of the enigmatic poetical commentary of the prophecy of St. John contained in the parchment, who read: “Rumat al-hantā”, which he translated as “Roma la despreciada” (see also the article by Van Koningsveld elsewhere in this book, Le Parchemin et les Livres de Plomb de Grenade). Early medieval accounts tell us that during the fifth through seventh centuries, the Christians turned their backs on the Temple Mount. Building everywhere else in the city, they used the Temple Mount as dumping grounds for garbage. Muslim literary evidence, moreover, claims that when Caliph Umar entered seventh-century Jerusalem, he crawled on hands and knees through manure and trash in order to ascend the spoiled Temple Mount. One late Muslim chronicle from 1351, the Muthfr al-Ghirām, recites Umar’s encounter with the future site of the Dome of the Rock: “Now at that time there was over the Rock in the Holy City a great dung heap which completely masked the prayer niche of David and which the Christians had put there in order to offend the Jews; and further, even the Christian women were wont to throw their menstrual cloths and clouts in the place so that there was a pile of them there.” For a survey of the history of the Temple Mount during the early medieval period, see F. E. Peters: The Holy of Holies. In: Jerusalem and Mecca: The Typology of the Holy City in the Near East. New York 1986, pp. 80–122. See also GUY LE STRANGE. Palestine under the Moslems. A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500, 1890 (reprinted in Beirut: 1965), p. 139. The translation from Muthfr al-Ghirām provided here is by F.E. Peters in Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of
it was revealed to me that I should return to the Sacred Mountain and stay there in order to observe Great Mysteries from God which I was ordered to write down for the end of time. Thus I returned and stayed there for three months turning repentantly to God.

When I was praying to God in the darkness of one night, a light sleep befell me, and Safa and Marwa appeared to me. And behold an angel of enormous power and majesty whom I saw radiating a fulgurous light approached me from the side of the Throne, saying: “Do not fear, James! Write down the things transmitted to you in this night on plates of lead, and preserve them in this Sacred Mountain together with the Essence of the Gospel and the Book, so that the servants of God may know the truth in the Great Gathering in which the Essence will be elucidated at the end of time”. I answered: “I listen and obey!”


Al-Safa is the name of a mound at Mecca which now rises barely above the level of the ground and which, together with the slightly higher, similar eminence of Al-Marwa, plays an important role in the ceremonies of the Meccan Pilgrimage. See the article Al-Safâ in volume 8 of the second edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, by Braemer and Macdonald. Both places are also mentioned in Lead Book number 16 which contains the story of the ascension of the Holy Virgin Mary and her conversations with God: Kitâb Munâjât al-Sâliha Maryam al-'âdhrâ.

The Arabic original reads ra 'athu, which should probably be corrected into ra 'aytuhu (I saw him...).

- Occasionally, like in Lead Book 18, “Mawâhib thawâb Haqîqat al-Injîl”, a distinction is made between the “Haqîqat al-Injîl” on the one hand, and “the Book that is with it”, on the other hand. The latter is also referred to as “the solid, authentic Book with it” (in the same Lead Book 18). At other times, however, as is the case below in the present text, the Haqîqa itself is also referred to as a “book”, e.g. in the passage: “You should know that that temple is called the Temple of Mercy, and the book you saw in it is the Essence of the Gospel...”. The book “Haqîqat al-Injîl”, also called the “Libro Mudo”, is Lead Book no. 17, consisting of the six-pointed star of the “Seal of Solomon” provided with Arabic legends (in Arabic script), followed by a text in a script that has not yet been deciphered. The diagram of the star, together with its legends, was reproduced by Al-Hajârî in his autobiographic travelogue (see AL-HAJâRÎ, AHMAD IBN QâSIM (d. after 1640). Kitâb Nâsîr al-Dîn 'alâ 'l-qawm al-kâfirîn (The supporter of religion against the infidel). Historical study, critical edition and annotated translation by P.S. van Koningsveld, Q. Al-Samarrai and G.A. Wiegers. Madrid 1997, pp. 85-87.

- The Arabic text reads: sâmhan, instead of the correct sam 'an, one of the pseudo-archaic features of the spelling of these documents.
At that moment heaven opened and I saw in it a temple locked by three bolts of red gold. No one knows the value of that temple but God alone. And I saw Moses, God’s prophet, with the Tablets in his hand while complaining to God. And I saw in them ten places where a verse had been rejected. And behold! An angel of enormous power and majesty called from the side of the Throne, saying: “O, Moses, why are you grieving about the Tablets? God will certainly perfect His light, although the infidels may detest that.”

Then the gates of the temple were opened, and I saw in it a locked book with seven guilt tables, the value whereof was known to God alone. And from the temple there radiated a light which dazzled the sights. Moses entered it with the Tablets and then continued doing what he did before.

At that occasion I asked the angel about that station. He answered me: “You should know that that temple is called the Temple of Mercy, and the book you saw in it is the Essence of the Gospel. God did not allow any fool to read it so that its elucidation remains to be performed in the Great Gathering. Know [as well] that the Jews have blotted out ten verses from the Torah of Moses in which, in that very Torah, was mentioned the right of the Blessed One. It contained a complete story of his characteristics, without any enigmatic, symbolic or allegoric elements. God explained His religion to His creatures clearly and explicitly, but Satan instilled evil in them by blotting [those verses] out so that their kingdom and their religion would come to naught by his [Satan’s] being sent to the world. And because of that [evil] discourse, dissension and the splintering of arrogance entered their ranks as well as those of the non-Arab peoples.

10 Viz. in the Tablets.
11 The Arabic text reads here mahsūba, which can be understood in the sense we have translated it; it may also be a scribal error for mansūha (“blotted out”).
12 Compare Sura 9:32 of the Quran: “Wa-ya’ba Allāhu illā an yutimma nūrahū wa-law kariha al-kāfirīn”: “And God refuseth to do otherwise than perfect His light [by spreading His religion far and wide], although the infidels may detest [it]”.
13 The Arabic text has ‘adā which seems to be a scribal error for ‘iḍa.
14 “God’s religion” (dīn Allāh) is a characteristically Quranic expression referring to Islam.
The characteristic elements of those ten verses were put by God into the *Essence of the Gospel*, while He postponed its elucidation until the Great Gathering. [We are dealing here specifically] with the [textual] places that no one can deny, and the light whereof God will perfect, notwithstanding the aim to reject [them] of the infidels\(^15\).

Thereupon, the angels praised God for that [lofty] station with the sound of the thunder which was noticed wide and far.

I ordered to write it down like I was ordered myself [to do so]. God is to be thanked for everything!

The book was completed at the hands of Cecilio, the son of Al-Radî, the disciple of James the Apostle.

*Every [Sacred] Book is the Truth*\(^16\)

*Jesus is the Truth*\(^17\)

\(^{15}\) Compare the reference to the Quran in note 12.

\(^{16}\) Reading: "Kullu kitāb al-haqq".

\(^{17}\) Reading: "Yasū’ al-haqq"; in the Arabic of the Lead Books, the name of Yasū’ is written with an emphatical s (sād), which is, again, to be understood as one of the pseudo-archaic features of the specific orthography exclusively appropriate to these books.
Laminae Granatenses XIII/10 r

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Laminae Granatenses XIII/10 v

Laminae Granatenses XIII/11 r

Kitab al-Asrar al-Azifma, fol. 3 recto (Laminae Granatenses XIII/12 r). Original in the Sacro Monte Archive, Granada.