1 Preliminaries

1.1 Printing in Arabic before 1700: the Western European Presses

As a commodity, paper reached Europe in the 12th century through the Arab merchants who traversed North Africa.[1] Like parchment, this early paper was very fragile, as it was made with plant-based resins that gave it little sturdiness. Over the following two centuries, manufacturing technologies and paper workshops appeared in Europe, where animal-based glues and more evolved tools were used in paper production. The gradual replacement of wool with flax brought greater strength to the final product and allowed paper to last longer. One of the centers of paper manufacture was Genoa, where many printing presses were then set up, owing to the availability of paper.

As a marking technique, stamping was developed quite early in human history. On the Mediterranean coasts, the process of applying engraved brass plates to tanned animal skins, to obtain ornamental motifs, was transferred to making covers for manuscript codices.[2] In the 14th century, Europe saw the coming of imprinted cloths from East Asia, made by pressing colored inks onto the textiles with wood or metal tools.[3] Towards the middle of the 14th century, Middle Eastern and subsequently European printing technology had reached the phase of xylographs or block prints: wooden plates engraved with sacred words, biblical scenes, images of saints, or brief moralizing texts, were inked, sometimes in color, and then pressed on to paper or pieces of cloth.[4] Block-prints are also preserved that comprise texts in Arabic script, not dated but, in some cases, datable approximately to the 11th or even the 10th century by archeological or radio-carbon

1 For the history of paper production and the import from the Far East (China) to Europe via Transoxiana and Baghdad, see Beatrice Gruendler, *The Rise of the Arabic Book*, Cambridge, MA and London, 2020, p. 103–104.

2 In ancient Egypt, the imprinting procedure generated the art of the tattoo, also using wooden matrices, some preserved to this day in museums around the world.

3 On the emerging knowledge of the 'typographic principle' in the West as early as the 13th century, because of the commercial connections between Eastern Asia and Europe, see Olivier Deloignon, "L'invention d'imprimer par poinçons et caractères", in Nathalie Coilly and Caroline Vrand (eds.), *Imprimer! L'Europe de Gutenberg, 1450–1520*, Paris, 2023, p. 23ff.

4 For a thorough study on this topic, see Sabine Mertens et al., *Blockbücher des Mittelalters: Bilderfolgen als Lektüre*, Mainz, 1991. See also the examples of pre-Gutenberg imprinted objects – coins, insignia, textiles, woodblocks, and copper plates – in Coilly and Vrand (eds.), *Imprimer! L'Europe de Gutenberg, 1450–1520*, p. 34–45.

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methods. They include amulets, charms, and brief prayers.[5] As late as the 18th century, hand-carved woodblocks were used for printing brief strings of script in the Ottoman world.[6] This process, first used in China was in some ways the ancestor of the art of printing. William M. Ivins notes that:

> This exact repetition of pictorial statements has had incalculable effects upon knowledge and thought, upon sciences and technology, of every kind. It is hardly too much to say that since the invention of writing there has been no more important invention than that of the exactly repeatable pictorial statement.[7]

Beginning in the 13th century, engravers and goldsmiths employed metal dies with a carved relief point, using various shapes. The earliest case of movable type printing is attested in Korea, where a Buddhist text was printed with movable cast-metal type in 1377. This is the *Jikji* (or *Jikji Simche Yojeol*), containing the essential teachings of Zen Buddhism, printed in two volumes at the Heungdeoksa Temple of Cheongju.[8]

This technique was first used in European printing in 1445–1455, in Mainz, by the goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg (assisted by Johann Fust). After printing a few brief texts,[9] Gutenberg developed the technology of movable type printing to

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5 See Richard W. Bulliet, "Medieval Arabic *ṬARSH*: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of Printing", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1987, 107, p. 418–438.

6 A German Antiquariat recently presented for sale a hand-carved Arabic-script wood-printing block, described in their online catalog as: "Woodblock in Ottoman Turkish for a Hebrew publication of the Song of Solomon, probably produced in the Ottoman regions of the Levant for a rural printing press. A rare survival of a printing tool, and an important witness to cross-cultural printing for minority audiences in the Ottoman world. Includes a print of the text reading *Safr Nishd al-Nishad li-Suleyman wa'ighal ba-l'Abraniyat Sir Hashirim*, printed on a piece of 18th-century paper pasted to a cutting from a Croatian printed book (*Pasha Duhovna*, on Spirituality and the Passover)", 165 x 105 mm.

7 William M. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953, p. 2–3.

8 The first volume is missing. Bibliothèque nationale de France holds the second volume, sized 24.5 x 17 cm, with 39 folios (Imprimé Coréen 109: *Päk un hoa sañ č'orok pulčo č'ikč'i simč'e yočōl*). In 2001, the *Jikji* was added to UNESCO's *Memory of the World Register*. In the online presentation of the *Silk Roads Programme* developed by UNESCO, the contribution of Eastern Asian early printing to the development of typographic technology in Europe is thus evoked: "There are some indications that the development of the printing press in Europe may have been influenced by various sporadic accounts of movable type technology carried back to the region by returning merchants and missionaries from China" (Did You Know? The Invention and Transfusion of Printing Technology in East Asia and its Implications for Knowledge Transfer | Silk Roads Programme [unesco.org]).

9 The first printed texts – a few letters of absolution, a papal bull directed against the Ottomans, the Muslim calendar, etc. – were requested by the Holy See with the intention of promoting the

produce his famous *Biblia latina*, an in-folio of 643 pages containing the text of the Vulgate, in two parts (bound in four volumes).[10]

At first, printers imitated in their work the appearance of the manuscript page to enable the acceptance of the new means of knowledge dissemination and obtain a larger readership, which meant securing more revenue from the sales.[11] The general purpose was to recover their investment in printing books, with a profit. Miniature painters, whose trade was originally disregarded by printers, were again sought after, as they were able to decorate the pages that came off the presses with initials and floral letters.[12]

Initially, Gutenberg's invention was met by the European churches with a certain mistrust and hostility. After some hesitation, printing was adopted in France, Italy, Spain, and eventually England, spreading rapidly after 1470. In Rome, the papal authorities accepted the new technology after two decades of consultations among the upper clergy.

In the era of incunabula, presses were also opened in Central and Southeastern Europe, mostly with tools brought from Italy. In Montenegro, at the Monastery of Cetinje, the first printing press of the Balkans was active in 1493–1496, while in Kraków the Catholic goldsmith Schweipolt Fiol printed in Slavonic beginning in 1491. For the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople (as for the one of Moscow, later),[13] printing decrees addressed to the clergy and faithful as flyers was soon

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policies of the Latin Church. The "earliest precisely datable piece of European printing that we know" is a 31-line Indulgence, "a vellum broadside of roughly 550 words or 3,500 pieces of type", printed in Gutenberg's press in Mainz on October 22, 1454, which ended up in Erfurt; cf. Paul Needham, "Copy-Specifics in the Printing Shop", in Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed (eds.), *Early Printed Books as Material Objects. Proceedings of the Conference Organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Munich, 19–21 August 2009*, Berlin and New York, 2010, p. 11.

10 For a description of the technology devised by Gutenberg and the various typographic items that he manufactured, see Yann Sordet, "Les laboratoires de l'innovation typographique", in Coilly and Vrand (eds.), *Imprimer! L'Europe de Gutenberg, 1450–1520*, p. 73ff.

11 Celeste Gianni and Michele Tagliabracci, "*Kitāb [Ṣ]alāt al-sawāʿī*: protagonisti, vicende ed ipotesi attorno al primo libro arabo stampato con caratteri mobile", *Culture del Testo e del Documento*, 13, 2012, 38, p. 152.

12 Camille Aboussouan, "*À Grenade et à Gênes, au XVI*e siècle, les premiers pas de l'imprimerie arabe", in Camille Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, Paris, 1982, p. 112.

13 The Archdeacon Paul of Aleppo witnessed this situation in 1657, while residing at the court of Moscow, as reported on f. 256r of his *Journal* preserved in MS Arabe 6016 at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. See p. 297, *Book XIV*, *Ch. VIII*, in F. C. Belfour, *The Travels of Macarius*, t. II, London, 1836.

considered more efficient than distributing manuscript version bearing the patriarchal seal.[14]

In Venice, several presses were active at the end of the 15th century, mostly printing in Latin and Greek type.[15] As for the 'exotic' alphabets, in 1511, the monk Hakob printed in the workshop of the Monastery of San Lazzaro degli Armeni[16] the first Armenian-type book, *The Holy Book of Friday* (*Anown grocʻs ē owrbatʻagirkʻ*). This is a collection of spiritual texts that includes passages from the Gospel, the *Life of Saint Hripʻsimē*, one of the first saints in the Armenian Church, a prayer against natural disasters, another for the health of suffering people, a treatise on snakes' bites, incantations, etc.[17] Hakob then printed, in 1512–1513, four other books: *Book of the Horoscope and Astronomy*, *Calendar for the Interpretation of Dreams*, a *Book of the Divine Liturgies*, and the *Book of Hymns*, a collection of religious poems. In the incunabula era, 139 books were also printed in Italy in Hebrew type from the 1470s on: Old Testament editions and comments, rabbinic literature, ritual texts, books on philosophy, medicine, mathematics, etc.

The delay in adopting printing was also explained by the efficiency and speed of production that the large centers of religious books copying had achieved. Triantaphyllos E. Sklavenitis notes that in the 15th century all the churches of Greece owned copies of the most needed liturgical texts, while in monasteries manuscripts more than a century old were still being used. They preserve valuable marginal notes that confirm the continuity of the scribal profession. The author also notes that a manuscript copy was easier to obtain:

14 Cf. Triantaphyllos E. Sclavenitis, "Méfiance vis-a-vis du livre imprimé et emploi parallèle du manuscrit", *Études balkaniques*, 21, 1985, 1, p. 128.

15 Geōrgios S. Ploumidēs, *To venetikon typografeion tou Dēmitriou kai tou Panou Theodosiou (1755–1824)*, Athens, 1969 (reprinted, Athens, 2019).

16 The press, whose (still undeciphered) Latin-type logo was 'D.I.Z.A.', was located on the island of San Lazzaro near Venice, inhabited since 1717 by the Mekhitarist Brethren, members of an independent Armenian monastic community which follows the order of the Eastern Catholic Church. The island was conceded to the order by the governors of Venice because there was a ban on such monastic orders residing inside the city canal network. The monk Mekhitar, founder of the order (also known as 'the Comforter', 1676–1749), fled the Ottomans, from Istanbul to Modone in the Peloponnesus and then to Venice, where the Armenian community had been flourishing since the 13th century. Incidentally, Modone is one of the cities cited as a possible source for Arabic type at the beginning of the 18th century, as I shall discuss later.

17 See Simonetta Pelusi (ed.), *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia. Testi sacri ebraici, cristiani, islamici dal Quattrocento al Settecento*, Padua, 2000, p. 146, n. 69; John A. Lane, *The Diaspora of Armenian Printing 1512-2012: Amsterdam and Yerevan*, Amsterdam, 2012, p. 22–27.

> Le livre manuscrit, qu' il fût ancien, usagé, qu'il fût nouvelle commande passée au copiste de l'époque, n'était pas moins cher que l'imprimé: on l'acquérait cependant sans qu'il fût besoin de fonctionnement de marché, suivant des modes absolument adaptés aux conditions de l'économie rurale et d'artisanat domestique et en aucune manière commerciale et monétaire.[18]

Moreover, during the first centuries of Ottoman rule, the ecclesiastical courts in the lands inhabited by Greeks based their rulings on manuscript copies of the *Legal Codices* (*Nomocanons*). Once the printed ones became available, it happened sometimes in territories under Venetian rule that the accused contested the validity of manuscript codices, claiming that only the printed ones could be invoked in an act of justice.[19]

In France, the Catholic clergy refused at first to acknowledge the benefits of the new technology of text reproduction, proclaiming that the mass distribution of the Bible would lead to it becoming a secular book. The copyists of religious texts, whose *raison d'être* as a craft and a trade was endangered, protested vehemently.[20] Despite all the dissatisfaction, King Louis XI (1461–1483) grasped the advantages of the printing press for disseminating written culture across his kingdom and decided to protect the German printer Johann Fust, who had taken over Gutenberg's workshop and transferred it to Paris in 1466.[21] Soon, the Church grew aware of the benefits of printing and became an active and generous supporter of the new craft: a great many presses were founded in Western Europe with the financial help of clerical authorities.[22]

In Europe, the spread of printing was directly connected to the economic situation in the various countries where it was first adopted. Seen as a means of pro-

18 Sclavenitis, "Méfiance vis-à-vis du livre imprimé et emploi parallèle du manuscrit", p. 118.

19 Ibid., p. 119, n. 6, citing Aristeides G. Dimopoulos, *He dikē diazygiou kata tēn vyzantinēn periodon*, Athens, 1964, p. 37 and *Annex*, p. 85–86.

20 On the criticism against printing expressed by French professional copyists and intellectuals, see Frédéric Barbier, "La Renaissance critique l'imprimerie", in Coilly and Vrand (eds.), *Imprimer! L'Europe de Gutenberg, 1450–1520*, p. 223–226.

21 Fust, who had worked at Mainz in Germany, created the first press mark in the world, which he applied, as a woodcut letter, in the Psalter that he printed together with Peter Schöffer in 1457, and again in the 1462 Bible. The mark was meant to obstruct the pirating of printed books and confirm the quality of the materials printed at the press of Fust & Schöffer. See Mayumi Ikeda, "The First Experiments in Book Decoration at the Fust-Schöffer Press", in Wagner and Reed (eds.), *Early Printed Books as Material Objects*, p. 39–49.

22 One of the earliest contributions on the beginnings of printing in France, still worth reading, is Auguste Bernard, *Notice historique sur l'imprimerie nationale*, Paris, 1848. Among his other works are: *De l'origine des débuts de l'imprimerie en Europe*, 2 vols., Paris, 1853, and *Histoire de l'Imprimerie Royale du Louvre*, Paris, 1867.

moting culture and civilization, it was also beneficial for merchants and bankers. Considered an essential element of modernity and progress towards a capitalist society, printing was rapidly adopted in Western and Central European countries, where social and political circumstances were quite different from those in the Ottoman-ruled East. One of the first printers to make a profit from his production was Josse Bade, who personally sold all his books after 1517, which allowed him to secure a printing privilege as soon as 1520.[23] His editorial program, almost entirely in Latin, included theological treatises, grammar books and dictionaries, as well as classical and humanist literature.

If the first typefaces created by Johannes Gutenberg and other German printers were mostly based on a semi-cursive Gothic script, the first non-Latin script used in printing was the Greek alphabet. In 1465, Peter Schöffer, one of Gutenberg's associates, created the first Greek type set. According to Victor Scholderer, the first attempt was "very crude, some of his letters conveying but a distant suggestion of their originals, and others being approximations made up of Roman sorts."[24]

Three decades later, the scholar and printer Aldo Manuzio (Aldus Pius Manutius, 1449–1515), founder of the Aldine press and a long tradition of Greek printing, cast Greek type of the utmost elegance and artistry.[25] His attempt in 1499 to insert Arabic type text when printing the book of Francesco Colonna *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (*The Dream of Polyphyly*) was not very successful. According to Geoffrey Roper, "when the same master-typographer came to print Arabic words, in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* of 1499, he did not, as we have seen, raise sights above crude and inaccurate woodcuts".[26]

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23 See Annie Parent-Charon, "La pratique des privilèges chez Josse Bade (1510–1535), in *Bibliologia 21, Printers and Readers in the Sixteenth Century*, Turnhout, 2005, especially p. 15–22.

24 Victor Scholderer, *Greek Printing Types 1465–1927*, London, 1927, p. 1, cited by Geoffrey Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", in Hanebutt-Benz, Glass and Roper (eds.), *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution*, p. 140–141.

25 On the Bible that he printed in Greek (The Old Testament and the Psalms), see the record in Pelusi (ed.), *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia*, p. 120, no. 20. On Greek printing in Venice, see Émile Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés en grec par des Grecs aux XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles*, t. I, Paris, 1885; Émile Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés en grec par des Grecs au dix-septième siècle*, t. I, Paris, 1894; Evry Layton, *The Sixteenth Century Greek Book. Printers and Publishers for the Greek World*, Venice, 1994; Marino Zorzi, "Il libro religioso nella storia della stampa veneziana", in Pelusi (ed.), *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia*, p. 17–28.

26 Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 141. See also Giorgio Vercellin, "Venezia e le origini della stampa in caratteri arabi", in Pelusi (ed.), *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia*, p. 54–57, and the description of this book on p. 164–165, no. 104.

The first illustrated incunabula were printed in Bamberg beginning in 1461, by Albrecht Pfister, who probably knew Gutenberg and his work. Pfister's illustrated Bibles initiated a tradition of the illustrated book in the Southern German provinces (Augsburg, Ulm, and Nüremberg in the first place).[27]

The great physician and philosopher Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) had the privilege of being the first Arab author whose books were printed in Western Europe, although not in Arabic. Book V of his most famous work, the *Canon of Medicine (alQanūn fī alṭibb)*, translated into Latin in the 12th century by Gerard of Cremona, was printed in Latin in Fano near Venice in 1473 (completed on September 12, according to the closing page).

The first page in Arabic type, an alphabet, was produced using a woodcut in 1486, when the Dominican monk Martin Roth printed in Mainz, on the press of Erhard Reuwich (ca. 1455 – ca. 1490), the memoirs of Bernard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam*, the first ever printed and illustrated travel journal.[28] Reuwich inserted in the book a table named *Sarraceni lingua et littera utuntur Arabica hic inferius subimpressa*, which presented the Arabic letters in their isolated form, their pronunciation in Latin script, and examples of their usage in a word.[29] However, this page was not printed with movable type.

In Spain, after the *Reconquista* of 1492, the humanist scholar Pedro de Alcalà of Granada received the order to print in Arabic the books that were required by Catholic missionaries sent to the new diocese of Andalusia to bring the king's subjects back to the Catholic Church after the long period of Muslim rule. In 1505, de Alcalà printed two Arabic-type books at Granada. They contained basic elements of Arabic, an Arabic-Spanish lexicon, Catholic prayers in Arabic, the service of the Mass, and instructions concerning confession, in Arabic and Spanish. In the foreword, the editor mentions that the Arabic language of the manual is the one spoken by the people, while in some places the Classical Arabic variant (the "high register") is also provided.

These first attempts at printing in Arabic set the pace for the production of Arabic books in the 16th–18th centuries. Remarking that "the great majority of the

27 Coilly and Vrand (eds.), *Imprimer! L'Europe de Gutenberg, 1450–1520*, p. 93–95.

28 The title, as given in the work itself, is *Travel and Pilgrimage beyond the Sea, to the Holy Sepulcher in the Holy City of Jerusalem*. A complete PDF version is freely downloadable here: https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbc0001.2016rosen0148/?st=gallery (a Library of Congress item). See also the copy in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York accessible here: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/338300.

29 See Vercellin, "Venezia e le origini della stampa in caratteri arabi", and the description of the book in Pelusi (ed.), *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia*, p. 168–169, no. 112; Gianni and Tagliabracci, "*Kitāb [Ṣ]alāt al-sawā'ī*, p. 132.

texts were intended for the use of Arab Christians, both Orthodox and Catholic", Geoffrey Roper divided the output of the European presses in this period into three main categories, thus:

> *Firstly*, doctrinal and evangelical works written and published to instruct local clergy and laymen and to influence them in favour of the "true" religion, whether that be Catholicism, Protestantism or Orthodoxy; *secondly*, the foundation texts of all branches of Christianity, that is the Bible, or parts thereof; and *thirdly*, books for them to use in the practice of their religion, primarily liturgical books for use in church worship. These last two categories were much the most important in the period under consideration – 16th to 18th centuries – because they were more widely seen and read.[30]

Several printing presses were active at the end of the 15th century on the Western coast of the Adriatic Sea, at Fano, Rimini, Ancona, etc. The Venetian family Grigorio de Forli, which in 1480 owned a workshop in Venice, was also present in Fano in the first decade of the following century. Beginning in 1484, printing was done in this city in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Italian. Of the Oriental scripts, Hebrew was the first to be addressed by printers: the first Hebrew books were printed in Rome ca. 1469–1473, followed by more Hebrew printing achieved in Spain and Portugal by printers of the Jewish communities there.[31]

Italy was the first country where printers, encouraged by the Roman Church, endeavored to solve the complex issues of creating a functional Arabic press. After the Fifth Lateran Council, convened by Pope Julius II in 1512, when one of the points discussed was the situation of the Eastern Churches, the idea arose to assist the efforts of the missionaries sent to the Eastern Mediterranean lands with books printed in Arabic for the Levantine Christians.

Thus, the first book printed with Arabic movable type was produced in Venice (mentioning 'Fano' as the press)[32] and completed on September 12, 1514:

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30 Roper, "Arabic biblical and liturgical texts printed in Europe in the 16th–18th centuries", in *Lucrările Simpozionului Internațional* Cartea. România. Europa*, ediția a II-a, 20–24 septembrie 2009*, Bucharest, 2010, p. 175.

31 See Coilly and Vrand (eds.), *Imprimer! L'Europe de Gutenberg, 1450–1520*, p. 88, where only Greek and Hebrew are discussed in the brief section on "Typographies non latines".

32 Vercellin convincingly argues that this book was not printed in Fano. See Vercellin, "Venezia e le origini della stampa in caratteri arabi", p. 54, and his description of the book in the same volume, on p. 165, no. 105. Commenting on the copy of this book at in the Thysiana library (Scaliger Institute) in Leiden, Arnoud Vrolijk (curator of Oriental Manuscripts and Rare Books with the Leiden University Library) states that "it is quite likely that the book was actually printed in Venice itself and that the name of Fano, a town within the jurisdiction of the pope, was chosen to avoid problems with the Venetian authorities"; see A. Vrolijk, "The Oldest Printed

Kitāb ṣalāt al-sawāʿī, a Book of the Hours, or Horologion, indisputably the most necessary book for church services.[33] Thirteen copies of this book are known to survive in collections around the world.[34] This is a small-size volume of 120 pp., with text in black and red ink, 5 x 11 cm, 12 lines per page, and vowels inserted to help with reading. The text of the first run was entirely printed in Arabic. Three years later, a front page with the title *Diurnale Graecorum Arabum* was added to the remaining printed blocks of paper, as well as a Latin foreword containing a dedication from the printer to Pope Leo X. This version included the indication 'Venice 1517'.[35] At the end of the book, in the shape of a colophon on the back of the last page, a phrase states: "If anyone finds a mistake, let him make it right, and God will forgive his sins by the intercession of our Lord [Jesus Christ], Amen." The design of the book is "generally regarded as clumsy and ill-balanced."[36] The Arabic types, in various sizes, are uneven and unstylish, and the diacritics are often placed in the wrong position.[37] The presence of three forms of type in the volume raises the question: were there steel punches made for three sets of types, or just for one, while the two other type sets were made with woodcut text matrices? Also named 'block printing', this process of placing woodcut characters or word pieces in the composing stick was a forerunner of mobile Arabic-type printing used between 1486 and 1505 in the production of several books.[38] Beginning with the title page, all sections start with the Christian *basmala*: "In the name of

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Book in Arabic: the 1514 Melkite Horologion in the Scaliger Collection", *Omslag. Bulletin van de Universiteitsbibliothek Leiden en het Scaliger Institut*, 3, 2009, p. 4.

33 Giovanni Galbiati, "La prima stampa in arabo", in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, t. 6, Vatican City, 1946, p. 409–413; Miroslav Krek, "The Enigma of the First Arabic Book Printed from Movable Type", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 38, 1979, 3, p. 203–212. See Nasrallah, *L'imprimerie au Liban*, p. XV, for more classical sources on this book. For the most detailed exploration of this book, see Gianni and Tagliabracci, "*Kitāb [Ṣ]alāt al-sawāʿī*", p. 131–185. A facsimile edition is under way in Lebanon, supported by the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchate and prefaced by Fr Charbel Nassif.

34 Gianni and Tagliabracci have located thirteen copies of this book and two other that they declared untraceable. See ibid., p. 133, n. 9. Fr Charbel Nassif has located eighteen.

35 Gianni and Tagliabracci, "*Kitāb [Ṣ]alāt al-sawāʿī*", p. 139–141.

36 Vrolijk, "The Oldest Printed Book in Arabic: the 1514 Melkite Horologion in the Scaliger Collection", p. 4.

37 Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 131; Gianni and Tagliabracci, "*Kitāb [Ṣ]alāt al-sawāʿī*", p. 154.

38 Ibid., p. 129–131. For its illustrations, see Marie-Geneviève Guesdon and Annie Vernay-Nouri (eds.), *L'Art du livre arabe. Du manuscrit au livre d'artiste*, Paris, 2001, cat. no. 124, p. 164; Hanebutt-Benz, Glass and Roper (eds.), *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution*, p. 480–481 and illustration, cat. no. *66.

God the Living, the Eternal".[39] When reprinted, it was indicated that the book was meant to be sold to the Arab Christians of the Levant.

This book was not commissioned by Pope Leo X:[40] it had been prepared before his election to the Pontifical See. Mentioned at the end of the book, the printer was Gregorio de' Gregorii (1450? – post 1529), offspring of an ancient Venetian family. He asks forgiveness for the mistakes that might have crept into the book unintentionally. De' Gregorii also worked in Venice, in the family printing press, and manufactured his own steel punches and woodcuts. The reason he preferred to print this Horologion in Fano, when he had his own printing workshop in Venice, remains unknown.

Recent research has been dedicated to answering a few unanswered questions.[41] Still, the typographer who manufactured the Arabic type for this book remains unknown. It is not clear why this particular text was chosen for printing, as it was useful especially to Byzantine-rite Christians. One explanation pointed to the pressure of the Greek colonies on the Western coast of the Adriatic Sea, established there after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, which were trying to preserve the age-old ties between the Greek Orthodox Churches of the East after Islam had settled in the former capital of the Byzantine Empire.[42] Ever since the movable-type technology was invented, Greek books were printed in Venice, and later this production spread to many European cities: Paris, Vienna,[43] Leipzig, Trieste, Moscow, Istanbul, Corfu, etc. Quite often, Greek books were of a commercial nature and their authors were dissatisfied, protesting against the lacunae, mistakes, and even deletion of sections of their works simply for

39 The Christian Arabic *basmala* is the abbreviated version of an expression placed at the beginning of a text where God's name is invoked. This expression, with numerous variants, was in use from the 8th century by Arabic-speaking Christian authors living in a Muslim milieu to assert their attachment to the One and Only God, at a time when Muslim theologians accused the Christians of polytheism for worshiping the Holy Trinity. See details in Stéphane Robin (Albo Cicade), "La 'Basmala' coranique comme formule chrétienne: un usage méconnu", 2015, accessible online at https://www.academia.edu.

40 Born Giovanni de Medici, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Leo X was elected pope in March 1513.

41 Especially Gianni and Tagliabracci in their essay "*Kitāb [Ṣ]alāt al-sawā'ī*: protagonisti, vicende ed ipotesi attorno al primo libro arabo stampato con caratteri mobile".

42 Josée Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident (XVI^e^, XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles)*, Paris, 1984, p. 20.

43 For books printed in Vienna in Oriental languages and type (Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Turkish), see Geoffrey Roper, "The Habsburg Empire and printing in languages of the Ottoman Empire, 16th–19th Centuries", in *Actes du Symposium International* Le Livre. La Roumanie. L'Europe, *4^e^ edition, 20 – 23 Septembre 2011*, t. III, Bucharest, 2012, p. 330–345.

economic or marketing reasons.[44] The fact that Arabic printing for the Eastern Christians was not available as early as it was for the Greeks was tied to the absence, in Central and Western Europe, of Arabic-speaking communities capable of covering the costs for the opening of an Arabic-language press.[45]

Another query of the book historians involves the fate of the printing tools and typographic material used there. No one knows what happened to the metal punches, the type, and the woodcut boards, since no other book was printed in Arabic in Fano. Having become a rare item, this book was described by Christian F. von Schnurrer in his catalogue,[46] a source for many subsequent historians who repeated his opinions.[47]

The second book printed with movable Arabic types was a polyglot Psalter produced in 1516 in Genoa at the press of Pietro Paolo Porro, where an Arabic version was included for the first time: *Psalterium, Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum & Chaldaeum* […] / *Mazāmīr ʿIbrānī Yūnānī ʿArabī wa-Qaṣdānī*. Described by Josée Balagna as "ecumenical",[48] this Psalter was the only polyglot edition printed in Italy during the 16th century. Psalms are printed in Syriac, Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew, with translations and comments in Latin. Four different alphabets were used. The Arabic text is presented on 246 pp. in two columns, 41 lines each, decorated with floral initials. The Arabic characters show an influence of the *maġribī* script, perhaps because Genoa had strong commercial relations with North Africa. However, the book is of a low quality both in printing technique and in the language of the text. The type that was used for this book never resurfaced. The printer, the Dominican monk Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1536), asserts in his memoirs that he printed the Psalms in 2,000 copies on regular paper and 50 copies on vellum (as gifts for Christian and Muslim princes), but only a quarter of them sold, which dashed his dream of continuing with printing a polyglot Bible.

44 See Sclavenitis, "Méfiance vis-à-vis du livre imprimé et emploi parallèle du manuscrit", p. 69, referring to Pachomios Roussanos, Kaisários Dapontes, Athanasios of Paros (Athanasios Parios), etc.

45 Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans*, p. 485.

46 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, Halle, 1811, p. 231–234. Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer (1742–1822), a theologian, philologist, and Oriental-books bibliographer, was chancellor of the University of Tübingen.

47 Charon, *Histoire des Patriarcats Melkites (Alexandrie, Antioche, Jérusalem) depuis le schisme monophysite du sixième siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, t. III. *Les Institutions. Liturgie, hiérarchie, statistique, organisation, listes épiscopales*, Rome and Paris, fasc. I-II, 1909–1911, p. 103; Graf, *GCAL* I, p. 636; Philip Hitti, "The First Book Printed in Arabic", *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 4, 1942, 1, p. 5–9.

48 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 23.

Giustiniani dedicated the Psalter to Pope Leo X, who had recently appointed him to the see of Nebbio.

In 1524, Giovanni Antonio Tagliente (ca. 1465 – ca. 1528) printed in Venice an Arabic alphabet in his work *Lo presente libro insegna la vera arte de lo excellente scrivere de diverse varie sorti di litere*... Another master engraver interested in the Arabic type in the early days was Geoffroy Tory (ca. 1480–1533), printer of the King of France François I. In his book *Le Champ fleury ou l'Art et science de la vraie proportion des lettres attiques ou antiques dites romaines, selon le corps et le visage humain*, printed in 1529, he included a table named *Lettres Persiennes, Arabiques, Aphricaines, Turques, & Tartariennes*, where an alphabet of the Arabic language is given in a somewhat inelegant type.[49]

The first academic book that included Arabic text is Robert Wakefield's *Oratio de laudibus & utilitate trium linguarum Arabicae Chaldaicae & Hebraicae*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde (d. 1535) in London in 1527 or 1528 (though the title page indicates 1524). The Arabic characters, printed with woodblocks, have a rudimentary appearance.[50]

The first Arabic Qur'ān was printed in Venice, in the workshop of the brothers Paganino and Alessandro Paganini, between August 9, 1537, and August 9, 1538 (464 pp.). Preparation for its printing required a whole year.[51]

Other Arabic-text books could not benefit from adequate printing implements due to the absence of skilled engravers. Thus, in 1538, Guillaume Postel's *Arabic Grammar* was printed in Paris: *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum introductio* [...]. Born in 1510, Postel became an erudite, an expert in Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic, professor at the Royal College of Paris, a traveler in the East, and a major figure of Arabic culture and Oriental mysticism.[52] As no craftsman capable of cutting punches for Arabic type was found,

49 Geoffroy Tory, *Champfleury*, *Livre III*, Paris, 1526–1529, f. XXVIb. See the splendidly illustrated catalogue of the latest exhibition of this great printer's works at Musée National de la Renaissance, Paris, April 6 – July 4, 2011: *Geoffroy Tory, imprimeur de François I^er^, graphiste avant la lettre*. The earliest book dedicated to Tory remains a most useful resource: Auguste Bernard, *Geofroy Tory, peintre et graveur, premier imprimeur royal, réformateur de l'orthographe et de la typographie sous François I^er^*, Paris, 1857.

50 Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 133.

51 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 367. This book was discussed at length in Angela Nuovo, "A Lost Arabic Koran Rediscovered", *The Library*, Sixth Series, 1990, 12, p. 273–292, and id., "La scoperta del Corano arabo, ventisei anni dopo: un riesame", *Nuovi Annali della Scuola Speciale per Archivisti e Bibliotecari*, 2013, 27, p. 9–22. See also Vercellin, "Venezia e le origini della stampa in caratteri arabi"p. 28–33, and its description in Pelusi (ed.), *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia*, p. 162, no. 100.

52 He is also known for a version of the New Testament in Syriac that he worked on in 1537–1550.

the Arabic text included in the volume as *Alphabetum arabicum vel punicum* was printed with woodcuts ('block printing'), with modest aesthetic outcomes.[53] For the *Grammatica arabica*, the Arabic language treatise that Postel published in Paris in 1539–1543, he succeeded in securing from unknown sources (perhaps from Constantinople, where he had traveled) an Arabic type font that looked quite rudimentary and was never used again.[54]

After 1550, Christophe Plantin established a flourishing printing press in Antwerp, where he was supported by the church and the monarch. He completed a Polyglot Bible in 1658[55] and became most famous for combining, for the first time, typography and engraving in producing illustrated scientific, especially botanical, works. In 1583, he moved to Leiden, where the University had become a Protestant center of learning under the patronage of William of Orange. His contribution to the expansion and evolution of printing in the Netherlands was decisive. Soon, a type-founding industry developed there, capable of producing a great variety of types.[56]

In German lands, in the second half of the 16th century, two brief texts were printed in Arabic using the woodblock technique: an Arabic alphabet in 1582, in Neustadt, and the Arabic translation of Saint Paul's *Epistle to the Galatians* in 1583, in Heidelberg. The translator, Ruthger Spey, deploring the ignorance of the Muslims of Asia and Africa who had no access to Christ's teachings, wished to print for them a Protestant version of the New Testament.[57]

He later contributed to the printing of the first Syriac Gospel edited by the Syriac Orthodox priest Moses of Mardin. See Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 24–27; J. F. Coakley, "Printing in Syriac, 1539–1985", in Hanebutt-Benz, Glass and Roper (eds.), *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution*, especially p. 96; R. J. Wilkinson, *Orientalism, Aramaic and Kabbalah in the Catholic Reformation. The First Printing of the Syriac New Testament*, Leiden, 2007.

53 See the description of this book in *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa a Venezia*, p. 168, no. 111.

54 For the cosmopolitan environment in which Postel worked in Paris, see Elizabeth Armstrong, "Paris Printers in the Sixteenth Century: An International Society?", in Christian Coppens (ed.), *Bibliologia 21. Printers and Readers in the Sixteenth Century, including the proceedings from the colloquium organized by the Centre for European Culture, 9 June 2000*, Brussels and Turnhout, 2005, p. 3–13.

55 Printed in 1568–1573 in eight volumes, the 'Plantin Polyglot' was also known as the 'Antwerp Polyglot', the *Biblia Regia*, or 'the King's Bible', in reference to King Phillip II of Spain, for whom it was produced as proof of Christoper Plantin's Catholic convictions. Thirteen printing presses were required for this work to be completed.

56 See Innis, *Empire and Communications*, p. 170.

57 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 32; Roper, "Arabic biblical and liturgical texts printed in Europe", p. 175–176.

In the same period, a renewed interest in printing liturgical books for the Arabic-speaking Christians was visible in Rome, but only *Catholic* texts intended for the faithful of churches that followed the Latin rite.[58] If in Central and Eastern Europe the Counter-Reformation was flourishing especially in the Polish lands, in the Middle East this battle was waged in particular in the present-day territories of Lebanon and Syria.[59]

In the press of the Roman College of the Jesuit Order, *Tipografia del Collegio Romano dei Gesuiti*, opened in 1556, a book was published in 1566 under the supervision of Pope Pius IV and Fr Giovani Bruno, a small Arabic catechism, with Arabic types, comprising 33 pp.: *Fidei orthodoxae brevis et explicata confessio / Iʿtiqād al-ʾamāna al-urṯūḏūksiyya* [...].[60] The title is significant for the attitude towards the order of the Eastern Churches that were not united with Rome: *Confession of the Orthodox Faith Decreed by the Church of Rome, Inventory and Rejection of the Errors of the Oriental Churches, the Way to Attain Communion with the Catholic Truth, and Submission to Pontifical Rome*.[61] The catechism had been translated into Arabic, at the request of Pope Pius IV, by the Jesuit monk Giambattista Eliano, an erudite scholar of Oriental studies who was born in Egypt of Jewish parents. In addition to Egyptian Arabic, he also mastered the art of printing, which he had learned in Germany, at Isny.[62] Eliano procured the necessary Arabic type of a simple, but elegant line, nicer than any other used before. After two editions of the Arabic catechism, the type was also used for two other books, at a time when no other European press possessed such printing implements. The third edition was printed in Rome by master Francesco Zannetti and it included illustrations. The last edition, printed between 1570 and 1578, with used Arabic type, is preserved in a few copies.

At the Jesuits' printing press there was also printed before 1583 an anonymous work containing an anti-Muslim polemic text, the first of its kind, composed in the style of a spiritual dialogue (*muṣāḥaba rūḥaniyya*) between two Muslim scholars upon their return from a pilgrimage to Mecca. The pamphlet-like

58 The reasons and means used in printing Arabic books for the Catholics of the Middle East and those who inclined towards the Union with Rome are detailed in the correspondence published by Sami Kuri, S. J., in *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 1–455 (Section Two).

59 Gérald Duverdier, "Défense de l'orthodoxie et lutte d'influences", in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 265. See also Cirillo Korolevskij, "L'Uniatisme. Définition. Causes. Effets. Étendue. Dangers. Remèdes", *Irénikon – Collection*, 1927, 5–6, p. 129–190.

60 Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 134.

61 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 236–237; Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 119.

62 See Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 44–46, for Eliano's activity in Lebanon, and his biography on p. 458.

tone and absence of correct information on Islam suggest a Western author with little knowledge of Islamic theology and the controversies between Christian and Muslim theologians. This work enjoyed vivid attention from Western scholars: it was translated into English and published by William Bedwell in 1616 and then reedited by Gilbert Gaulmin during the reign of Louis XIV, supplemented with many Latin and Arabic notes, including excerpts from the Qur'ān.[63]

Ever since he occupied the Holy See in 1572, Pope Gregory XIII tried to open a press that would print in Oriental type – Arabic, Armenian, Syriac –, as well as in Cyrillic.[64] He was supported in his intentions by several great literati and clergymen: Ferdinand de Medici, Leonardo Abel, cardinal Giulio Antonio, cardinal Santoro,[65] and the Jesuit monk Giambattista Eliano. The Vatican wished firstly to secure Syriac type to print the books required for the missionary activity in the territories of present-day Lebanon.

In 1578, Robert Granjon (1513? – 1590) arrived in Rome.[66] He had worked in several cities where he became famous: Lyon, Antwerp, Frankfurt, and Paris.[67] He had contributed to the printing of Christophe Plantin's Polyglot Bible in Antwerp by cutting the Syriac type. Later, he would make possible the activity of the *Stamperia Medicea Orientale* (ca. 1590–1614). Here is how Vervliet describes his artistic talent:

> If, in the history of roman typographic characters, Garamont's represent the sober, static, immutable beauty of the Renaissance, Granjon's for their part display the exuberance, ostentation, magnificent assurance and technical perfection of the Baroque. [...] Granjon's virtuosity revitalized gothic characters, left moribund since the beginning of the sixteenth century by the italianizing wave which swept Europe. [...]. Finally, as a cutter of exotic types, he not only made possible the *Polyglot* of Platin (1568–1572) and the *Stamperia Medicea orientale* (ca. 1590–1614). If one surveys the typography of the sixteenth century, these two

63 See one of the rare comments on this little-known printed book in Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 31–32.

64 Hendrik D. L. Vervliet, *Cyrilllic & Oriental Typography in Rome at the End of the Sixteenth Century: An Inquiry into the Later Work of Robert Granjon (1578–90)*, Berkeley, 1981, preface and ill. 24.

65 Ibid., p. 17.

66 For his biography, see ibid., p. 5–11.

67 See "Granjon, Robert", in Jean-Dominique Mellot, Élisabeth Queval, Nathalie Aguirre et al., *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires (vers 1470 – vers 1830)*, Paris, 2019, p. 670–671.

exploits constitute, along with the *Thesaurus linguæ latinæ* of Robert Estienne (1531),[68] the highest expression of European humanistic erudition.[69]

Hired by the Pope to manufacture Syriac and Arabic type, Granjon worked in Rome in 1578–1590, producing five sets of Arabic type of various sizes, perfectly readable and elegant, the main ones being *Arabica Grande* and *Arabica Piccolina*.[70] Granjon's first Arabic type dates to 1580 and the intention for creating it was, presumably, to replace that of the Jesuits.[71] These sets of type became famous and precious, under the name of 'Granjon', so much so that Pope Gregory XIII ordered that they, and the cut punches that were used in manufacturing them, never leave Rome.[72] Cardinal Bandini named Granjon *il migliore intagliatore che fosse mai stato*, "the best engraver that ever lived".[73] With the *Garshuni* (*karšūnī*)[74] types that Granjon manufactured, the first Syriac book was printed in Rome under the supervision of Domenico Basa: a catechism, probably dating to the end of May 1580.[75] The same year, the Catholic *Confession of the Faith* composed by Giambattista Eliano, already printed in Arabic and Latin in 1566, was published with the same Granjon type. Leaving for his mission to the lands of Lebanon in 1578 together with Toma Raggio[76] and Mario Amato,[77] Fr Eliano brought with

68 Robert Estienne directed a famous press in Paris, where he printed in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French from 1528 to 1560. In 1528, he produced the first Latin Bible in France that secured a privilege. See Max Engammare, "Robert Estienne et sa première Bible latine de 1528. Du privilège et des index de l'éditeur", in Edith Karagiannis-Mazeaud (ed.), *Bibliologia 44. Strasbourg, ville de l'imprimerie. L'édition* princeps *aux XVe et XVie siècles (textes et images)*, Turnhout, 2017, p. 141–159.

69 Vervliet, *Cyrilllic & Oriental Typography in Rome*, p. 1–2.

70 Ibid., p. 23–31.

71 Ibid., p. 29.

72 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 34.

73 Ibid., p. 37–38.

74 About this type of script, see Joseph Moukarzel, "Le garshuni. Remarques sur son histoire et son évolution", in Johannes Den Heijer, Andrea Schmidt and Tamara Pataridze (eds.), *Scripts Beyond Borders. A Survey of Allographic Traditions in the Euro-Mediterranean World*, Leuven, 2014, p. 107–137.

75 Vervliet, *Cyrilllic & Oriental Typography in Rome*, p. 1–2, 17ff.; Moukarzel, "Le garshuni. Remarques sur son histoire et son évolution", p. 131–132. The series of books printed in *Garshuni* type continued with the Gregorian Calendar of 1583 and a book of Maronite prayers in 1584. The first liturgical text in Syriac, the service for the dead according to the Maronite rite, was printed there in 1585. For the first books printed in *Garshuni* type, see Joseph Moukarzel, "Maronite Garshuni Texts: On Their Evolution, Characteristics, and Function", *Hugoye*, 17, 2014, 2, p. 237–262.

76 For his biography, see Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 463–464.

77 This was the first Jesuit delegation fifty-five years after Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder and first Superior General of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit Order), made his pilgrimage to

him, as a gift for the local upper clergy, this catechism in, most probably, two type versions – *Garshuni* and Arabic. He presented to the participants to the 1580 Maronite Synod of Qannūbīn, in Lebanon, the version printed in *Garshuni*.[78]

In 1585, the first Arabic secular text was printed: a *Cosmography* edited by Robert Granjon and Domenico Basa, *Kitāb al-bustān fī ʿağā'ib al-'arḍ wa-l-buldān* (*Book of the Garden of Wonders of the World and Countries*) by Salāmīš ibn al-Kunduġdī al-Ṣāliḥ (early 16th century). The book was revised by Gimbattista Raimondi.[79] After disseminating Christians texts, the printers evidently wished to print a text from a secular Muslim source.[80] The book was meant to be sold in the Middle East, which would have hopefully turned the Italian presses into a profitable venture.

The types that Granjon had created were used on a large scale in the second greatest Arabic printing press, Typographia Medicea Linguarum Externarum or Stamperia Medicea Orientale, founded in 1584, with the Pope's encouragement, by Cardinal Ferdinand de Medici, future Duke of Tuscany. The first book to be printed there was, naturally, the Gospel. Under the supervision of Giambattista Raimondi, the Typographia Medicea was the first press that systematically produced many books with Arabic type, on various topics, with the aim of selling them across the Ottoman Empire.

The Medici press printed the New Testament in Arabic in 1,500 copies, with an Arabic and Latin title.[81] The print date is confusing: 1590 on the first page, 1591 on the last one. A second edition was made in 1595. In the meantime, a bilingual version of the Gospel was printed in 1591 in 3,500 copies, with the Latin translation placed under the lines of Arabic text. Edited by Raimondi, these volumes were printed with the *Arabica Grande* type created by Robert Granjon. They include 149 splendid engravings printed from woodcuts by Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630), many copied from Albrecht Dürer's works.[82] Josée Balagna expressed her opinion that these books did not sell well, as she discovered copies

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Jerusalem. He asserted that Christian monks had a duty to reside in the Holy Land and serve the Church there. See Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 61.

78 Vervliet, *Cyrilllic & Oriental Typography in Rome*, p. 17; Joseph Moukarzel, "Le Psautier syriaque-garchouni édité à Qozhaya en 1610. Enjeux historiques et présentation du livre", *MUSJ*, 2010–2011, 63, p. 516.

79 This is a truly rare book: Balagna notes that she only knew of three copies, in Venice, Florence, and Oxford; cf. Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 35.

80 Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 135, 138.

81 Roper, "Arabic biblical and liturgical texts printed in Europe", p. 176.

82 See Richard S. Field, *Antonio Tempesta's Blocks and Woodcuts for the Medicean 1591 Arabic Gospels*, Paris and Chicago: Les Enluminures, 2011.

where the forewords had been composed much later (1619, 1774) and inserted at the beginning of volumes placed on the market again, in an attempt to get rid of the stocks.[83] As for the circulation span of this book, Jules Leroy found that a richly illuminated Gospel dated to the period of the Gondar rule over Ethiopia replicated "step by step" (*cette illustration suit pas à pas*) the engravings of the 1591 Gospel printed at the Medici press.[84] The illustrated Gospel preserved on an island on Lake Tana holds more than 50 illustrations that depict Jesus Christ's entire life among humankind. The way the Medici Gospel reached Ethiopia remains unknown. According to Leroy, the Ethiopian artist followed the model of the illustration in the Gospel of Rome, but reinterpreted it in his own style, according to local artistic tastes. "Five or six copies" of the Ethiopian illustrated Gospel were known to exist when Leroy wrote about it.

Several scientific books were then printed in Arabic type at the Medici press, which were exported to the East. First, in 1592, two grammars of the Arabic language, a handbook of syntax, and a map collection, a planisphere, *Roger's Book* (*Kitāb Rūğārī*), composed by Roger II, the Norman king of Sicily, and enriched with geographical stories composed by the famous traveler ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Idrīsī. Second, in 1593, Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* (*Kitāb al-qānūn fī al-ṭibb*), in three volumes and 1,700 copies. Then, in 1594, Euclid's manual *The Elements of Geometry* (*Elementorum geometricorum libri tredecim*), translated from Greek into Arabic in Bagdad in the middle of the 13th century by the Persian mathematician and astrologer Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, was printed in 3,000 copies.[85] All these books were revised and edited by Yaʿqūb bin Hilāl, or Jacob Luna (b. 1568), one of the early graduates from the Maronite College in Rome, who worked in the Medici printing press starting 1589.[86]

To secure the good prospects of their business, the Medici press published in 1594 the decree issued by Sultan Murad III (1574–1595) to grant the Italian merchants Antonio and Orazio Bandini the right to import into the Ottoman Empire books printed in 'Arabic, Persian, and Turkish type'.[87] The text was printed in the Turkish language, in "Turkish" script (i.e., Arabic), and was placed

83 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 36.

84 Jules Leroy, *L'Éthiopie. Archéologie et culture*, Paris, 1973, p. 241.

85 See the description of these books in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 246ff., and Sara Fani and Margherita Farina (eds.), *Le vie delle lettere: la Tipografia Medicea tra Roma e l'Oriente*, Florence, 2012, passim.

86 Pr. Pierre Raphael, *Le Rôle du Collège Maronite Romain dans l'Orientalisme aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, Beirut, 1950; Nasser Gemayel, "Les imprimeries libanaises de Rome", in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 191–192.

87 Vercellin, "Venezia e le origini della stampa in caratteri arabi", p. 20.

at the end of the Arabic edition of Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*, one of the most requested items on the Eastern book markets. European printers effectively considered this decree as an import license for books printed in Arabic type, the so-called *Orientalia*, in territories under Ottoman rule. Commerce in goods not approved by the Sublime Porte within the empire could prove dangerous for several reasons. According to Marie-Renée Morin, head of the Acquisitions Department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, who wrote the foreword to Josée Balagna's book,

> Du temps, de l'argent, mais aussi le goût du risque sont indispensables, tout du moins jusqu'au milieu du XVII[e] siècle. Nos savants affrontent, pour acquérir et répandre leurs connaissances, naufrages, prisons, voleurs de grands chemins, pirates, traîtres.[88]

After 1595, the Typographia Medicea was only active intermittently until 1614, when it closed down.[89] Although the Medicean printed books were not as successful as expected on the Middle Eastern markets,[90] they remained much-appreciated in the West, where they were sought after by collectors of rare books, even those not proficient in the Arabic language.[91]

The punches manufactured by Robert Granjon for the three sets of Arabic types are preserved since 1811 in the Types Department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. They include 283 metal punches for the *Arabe de petit Canon* set used in printing Euclid's work, 356 of the *Grand Arabe* type used for the Gospel, and 353 of the *Petit Arabe* type used in printing Avicenna's work.

Pope Gregory XIII founded three colleges in Rome: the first, for baptized Jews, in 1577, the second, for Greek studies, in 1582, and the third, for the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, by the Papal Bull *Humana sic ferunt* issued on July 5, 1584. The Maronite Church was the only Eastern Church to have maintained its attachment to the Holy See ever since their Patriarch Mūsā al-ʿAkkārī lead it, early in

88 Marie-Renée Morin, "Préface", in Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 9.

89 In the note on *Maṭbaʿa* in *EI-2*, the authors suggest that the bankruptcy of this press was due to a lack of marketing skills of the manager, Giambattista Raimondi. See also A. Tinto, *La Tipografia Medicea orientale*, Lucca, 1987, p. 121.

90 Titus Nemeth presented this failure as one of the reasons for a later adoption of printing in the Ottoman Empire: "[...] Ottoman authorities, as well as potential local entrepreneurs, would have seen the commercial failure of European Arabic typography, making it an improbable role model to follow. If its products had no market in the region, why would one adopt it?"; cf. Titus Nemeth, "Overlooked: The Role of Craft in the Adoption of Typography in the Muslim Middle East", in Scott Reese (ed.), *Manuscript and Print in the Islamic Tradition*, Berlin and Boston, 2022, p. 27.

91 On the various aspects of the 'profitability' of Arabic printed books in the West and the East, see Sabev, *Waiting for Müteferrika*, p. 38 and 72.

the 16th century.[92] A Maronite community of scholars soon congregated in Rome, large enough to secure the necessary assistance for the Pope's translation and printing projects.[93] These strong ties allowed the Latin Church to send missionaries to Mount Lebanon starting with the second half of the 16th century. Back in Rome, the Jesuit fathers Giambattista Eliano and Girolamo Dandini brought with them manuscripts of the Arabic Horologion, attempting to obtain a unified text that would have been printed and distributed to the Maronite churches of present-day Lebanon and Syria. They had collected from the Maronite monasteries old copies that they found flawed by mistakes and heresies as compared to the Latin canonical text, and especially the Vulgate.[94]

Having occupied the Pontifical throne in 1585, Pope Sixt V founded the Vatican press in 1587, aiming to pursue the missionary activities of his predecessor. Between 1592 and 1594, a Book of the Divine Liturgies was printed there, which resulted from the "revision" of several tens of Arabic manuscripts and one written in *Garshuni* script, all collected by Fr Girolamo Dandini from the Ottoman provinces. The Medici press was waiting to print this book after the revision was completed. Controversies erupted as to the conformity of the Arabic text with those adopted by the Roman Catholic Church. To print the book, the intervention of a protector of the Maronites, Cardinal Jacques Davy du Perron, was deemed necessary. He even wrote a preface in which he upheld the theological correctness of the text.

After the book was distributed in the East, Maronites expressed their discontent as to the interventions of the editors in Rome, after they noticed that the printed version often strayed from the manuscript copies that had been known and used in the Maronite Church for several centuries. Nevertheless, the book started to be used after many persuasive efforts by Girolamo Dandini, who

92 See Sam Kennerley, *Rome and the Maronites in the Renaissance and Reformation. The Formation of Religious Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, London and New York, 2022, especially p. 24–56.

93 On the colleges opened in Rome for Levantine students and their activities after graduating, see Gemayel, "Les imprimeries libanaises de Rome", p. 190–192; Bernard Heyberger, "East and West. A Connected History of Eastern Christianity", in Feodorov, Heyberger and Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, p. 10–15.

94 On Fr Eliano's attempts, in 1579–1582, to secure a unitary Arabic version of the Bible based on a revision according to the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts, but necessarily observing the Latin doctrine, so he could print it in the Propaganda Fide press of Rome, see Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 122–124. The manuscript of the best version that he had obtained in Lebanon, which still contained inconsistencies with the Vulgate, was presented to the Maronite College of Rome and is now in the collections of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

had been sent by the Holy See to the Middle East to follow in the footsteps of Giambattista Eliano.

After 1585, a Dutch printer of Leiden, Frans von Ravelingen (Franciscus Raphelengius the Elder, 1539–1597) entered the relay. He was an expert in Oriental studies who mastered Greek, Latin, Syriac, Hebrew, Aramaic, Persian, and Arabic. His first 'Oriental' work was a table of the Arabic alphabet printed in 1595, *Specimen characterum arabicorum*, accompanied by a sample of its usage in printing the Psalm of David dedicated to God's mercy: *Irḥam-nī yā Allāh ka-ʿaẓīm raḥmati-kā*... ("Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy...").[95] This was just a show of the sort of Arabic type that he would use in printing books at the University of Leiden. Founded in 1575, this establishment would be foremost in European printing between 1600 and 1625. The press where this alphabet was printed belonged to Christophe Plantin of Antwerp (1520–1589), who had brought it from Leiden in 1583. Raphelengius, who was Plantin's son-in-law and took over the press in 1585, was already cutting punches for Arabic type in 1591.[96]

As far as Arabic printing is concerned, the 17th century opened with a German master, Peter Kirsten, born in 1577 in Breslau, a Polish city since the 10th century (present-day Wroclaw), one of the Habsburg family's domains at the time. On October 6, 1608, Kirsten secured from the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II the privilege to print.[97] He thereupon printed the same year, and dedicated to the emperor, the first part of a *Grammatices arabicae* (*Liber I*) containing the orthography and prosody of Arabic, preceded by a brief description of this 'language of civilization'. The book ends in a sample of the Arabic type and an excerpt of the *Gospel according to John* in Latin and Arabic, a Psalm, and *al-Fātiḥa*, the first *ṣūra* of the Qur'ān. In 1609, Kirsten further improved his type and printed a *Schema characterum arabicorum* (*Table of Arabic Signs*) where, alongside the Arabic consonants, vowels, and additional orthographic signs, he placed stylized flowers and other ornamental elements copied from Arabic manuscripts. The punches were manufactured by Peter von Selow and Peter Kirsten, copying the model of Granjon. With the resulting type, considered at the time among the most elegant in Europe, Kirsten printed in 1609 the *Second Book of the Canon of Medicine* by Avicenna, with the Arabic text, a Latin translation, and comments, followed in 1610 by two other volumes of the *Arabic Grammar*. Persuaded that Arabic was

95 Psalm 51: 1.

96 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 43; Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 142ff.

97 On the system of privileges for printing in the early history of the press, see Elisabeth Armstrong, *Before Copyright. The French Book-Privilege System, 1498–1526*, Cambridge, 1990.

a sacred Semitic language capable of helping people grasp the harmony of creation, Kirsten printed in 1611 several books of the New Testament in Arabic and Latin, with comments.[98] The chancellor Axel Oxenstiern, counsellor to King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden, convinced him to move to Prussia. Kirsten later moved to the court of Queen Christina. Thus, his printing implements reached the collections of the Academy of Uppsala and were never used again. In Uppsala, another famous private press was founded later, in 1686, by Olof Rudbeck Sr., the rector of the university of this city. Known as the *Typographia Rudbeckiana*, it published scientific works that were well received in academic circles.[99]

In the meantime, a new master of Arabic printing was in the making: François Savary, Seigneur de Brèves, Marquis de Maulévrier, Baron de Semur et Artois, universally known as François Savary de Brèves.[100] He travelled to Istanbul for the first time in 1585 and, having found the city interesting, was appointed ambassador of France to the Sublime Porte in 1593. He remained there until 1605, promoting the policies of King Henri IV ("Le bon roi Henri"), who aimed to support the Christian communities of the Middle East without disturbing the political relations between France and the Ottoman court, especially as they were endangered by the refusal of the court of Spain to collaborate with the Muslims in any way. Due to the activity of his diplomatic envoys, Henry IV was able to obtain a renewal of the capitulations granted by Sultan Ahmed I (1603–1617), which was printed by de Brèves.[101]

After his mission in Istanbul was completed, de Brèves first travelled to Jerusalem, where he became acquainted with the local Christian communities, then to Alexandria and Memphis in Egypt, and further on to Tripoli in Libya and Algiers. His Levantine travels took him far and wide in the lands inhabited by Arabic-speaking Christians: wishing to see the world-famous cedar forests of Lebanon, he reached Qannūbīn, in the Holy Valley of Qādīšā,[102] where he made

98 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 52.

99 On the printers of Uppsala, see Deschamps, *Dictionnaire de géographie ancienne et moderne*, cols. 1286–1287.

100 See Alastair Hamilton, "François Savary de Brèves", in *CMR 9*, p. 415–422.

101 *Relations des voyages de Monsieur de Brèves, tant en Grèce, Terre-Saincte et Ægypte, qu'aux Royaumes de Tunis & Arger. Ensemble, un Traicté faict l'an 1604 entre le Roy Henry le Grand & l'Empereur des Turcs et Trois Discours dudit Sieur*, Paris, 1628. In an earlier speech before the French court, Savary de Brèves underlined the benefits of this treaty, which had generated an uproar: *Discours sur l'alliance qu'a le Roy, avec le Grand Seigneur, et de l'utilité qu'elle apporte à la Chrestienté*, Paris, [c. 1615]; for a slightly different version see MS Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertine, 1777; cf. Hamilton, "François Savary de Brèves", p. 422.

102 The Qādīšā, 'valley of holiness', or 'of the saints', is situated in Lebanon, in the district

the acquaintance of Maronite monks residing in monasteries and hermitages[103] and noted their attachment to the Latin Church.[104]

Back in Paris in 1607, he was sent to Rome after one year, as ambassador of the French court. De Brèves spent twenty-two years in the East and printing in Arabic was only one of the many skills that he mastered when back in Paris. While in Istanbul, he collected more than a hundred Oriental manuscripts, including a *Qāmūs*, an Arabic dictionary in two volumes. His connections there generated the story that he ordered local craftsmen to create Arabic type based on the Arabic script of Ottoman manuscripts.[105] The more credible theory is that de Brèves obtained them while ambassador of France in Rome, after 1607, an opinion held by Gérald Duverdier, a librarian at the Collège de France and expert in Oriental printing.[106]

The source of the Arabic type first used by de Brèves could also have something to do with a character who accompanied him to Rome in 1608, a Muslim man from Buda who is only known as Huseyn. This man spoke Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Latin, German, and Hungarian. In Paris, while working in de Brèves's press, he learned French, and in Rome he would very quickly become familiar with Italian, revealing a real talent for languages.

Undeniably, the press that came to be known as the Typographia Savariana of Rome was the dearest project of Savary de Brèves. Between 1608 and the end of 1614, while he resided in Rome, the Medici press prepared a Polyglot Bible in which an Arabic version was supposed to be included. In 1613, Étienne Paulin

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of Bšarre, also known as Ǧibbat Bšarrī or Bšarāy. It consists of two low plain areas where the monasteries of Qozhaya and Qannūbīn are located, along with other monastic dwellings. The Qādisā River springs at an altitude of 2,000 meters in the traditionally Christian region of the Cedars, in a location covered by snow all year round, and flows into the Mediterranean near the city of Tripoli.

103 Among these, the Cave of Saint Marina was so much venerated by the Maronite patriarchs, and their flock, that they decided to place the patriarchal necropolis there. See Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 57, and Guita G. Hourani, "The *Vita* of Saint Marina in the Maronite Tradition", in Sr. Clémence Hélou (ed.), *Sainte Marina, Moniale déguisée en habit de moine dans la tradition maronite*, Kaslik, 2013, p. 28–39.

104 Gérald Duverdier, "Du livre religieux à l'orientalisme. Ǧibrā'īl aṣ-Ṣaḥyūnī et François Savary de Brèves", in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 159.

105 This information came from Vitré, cf. Gérald Duverdier, "De la recherche à l'étude des manuscrits", in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 211 (cat. nr. 79). See also Kuneralp, "Les livres et l'imprimerie à Istanbul au XVIII[e] siècle", p. 2.

106 Duverdier, "Du livre religieux à l'orientalisme", p. 159–160; Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 144–145. See also Gérald Duverdier, "Savary de Brèves et İbrahim Müteferrika: deux drogmans culturels à l'origine de l'imprimerie turque", *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, 3, 1987, p. 322–359.

printed at the Typographia Savariana an Arabic catechism, a translation of *De Doctrina Christiana*, ordered by the Pope Paul V for the benefit of the Middle Eastern Christians. Two sets of type were used for this book, which had never been seen before. The author of the original Latin book, Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine (1542–1621), supported papal primacy and the legitimacy of the pope's authority over all Catholic kings. The Arabic translation was made by Victorius Scialac Accurensis (Šalaq al-ʿĀqūrī) and Gabriel Sionita (Ǧibrāʾīl al-Ṣaḥyūnī),[107] students of the Maronite College, who had come to Rome from Mount Lebanon. Printed in two versions, one in Arabic (with vowels) and Latin, the other only in Arabic (without vowels), the book was meant to assist the work of the Catholic missionaries in the Levant. A large part of the print run was sent to the French consul in Egypt, with whom de Brèves had held discussions while in Alexandria. The Vatican, therefore, intended to attract the Copts towards the Latin Church, not to preach to the Muslims.

Pope Paul V, who in 1610 had added the study of Arabic to the curriculum of the Pontifical College, requested the printing of an Arabic language manual. This was printed only in 1620, as *Institutiones linguae arabicae*, authored by Fr Francesco Martelotti, based on Qur'ānic excerpts and pre-Islamic poems, with carefully placed vowels.

Back in Paris in 1614, de Brèves had in mind to open a college for Oriental languages – Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Syriac – where he would also set up a press for these languages. This would be used for printing scientific books, handbooks, dictionaries, and secular literature. He brought to Paris both the Arabic printing tools and the Maronites with whom he had worked in Rome: Gabriel Sionita, Victor Scialac, and John Hesronita.[108] He was also accompanied to Paris by Huseyn of Buda, who was going to teach Turkish and Persian, and his master printer in Rome, Stefano Paolino. His hope, which he would abandon around 1620, was to print in Paris the Polyglot Bible that the Medici press was supposed to print in Rome. Clearly, that was a long-held dream of Western European Oriental scholars.

After Savary de Brèves left Rome, the Maronite College produced at their own press bilingual books from 1620 to 1625. Their books had a clear purpose – to be used by the students of the college in Rome, not to be sent to Lebanon.[109]

107 See Joseph Moukarzel, "Gabriel Sionita", in *CMR 9*, p. 722–742.

108 See Joseph Moukarzel, "John Hesronita", in *CMR 9*, p. 689–694.

109 Wahid Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie: Évolution de l'environnement culturel (1706–1787)*, Tunis, 1985, p. 45; Roper, "Arabic biblical and liturgical texts printed in Europe", p. 177.

In France, after Guillaume Postel's early start in the first half of the 16th century, Arabic typography resumed with the first book produced by Savary de Brèves, who founded an 'Oriental-languages press' (*Imprimerie des langues orientales*) at the Collège des Lombards.[110] He edited there in 1614, alongside his disciples, a Psalter destined both for Middle Eastern Christians and European Oriental scholars who wished to learn Arabic and study this version of the Psalms. The *imprimatur* issued for this book by Cardinal Bellarmine confirms that "dans cette version des Psaumes de la langue arabe traduits en latin il n'y a rien qui aille contre la vérité de notre Vulgate ou contre le texte hébreu ou grec".[111] In 1618, compelled to defend himself from the denigrations of his political enemies, de Brèves claimed in a discourse pronounced before King Louis XIII that he had brought from Jerusalem the manuscript of the Arabic Psalter, probably, to give it more authenticity and authority. Another version of this story says that the manuscript had been sent to Rome by the patriarch of the Maronite Church from the Monastery of the Our Lady in Qannūbīn, the residence and refuge of the Maronite patriarchs from 1445 to around 1820.[112]

De Brèves also printed one of the first texts in Turkish, in 1615: the treaty signed in 1604 by France and the Sublime Porte, in a bilingual edition, Turkish and French. Gabriel Sionita and John Hesronita then composed an Arabic handbook, *Grammatica arabica Maronitarum*, and printed the first volume in 1616 with three sizes of type, the smallest – cast in Paris. In 1625, the press in Rome also used Persian and Syriac type.

Undoubtedly, the early start of Arabic printing in France allowed typographers active there to become highly skilled by the end of the 18th century, when Napoleon Bonaparte arrived in Egypt accompanied by scholars and craftsmen of all sorts, including some capable of installing and operating the country's first

110 Established in 1348 in Rue des Carmes, this college was open at first to Italians seeking education in Paris. Meant for the deprived youth who wished to pursue an education abroad, it was called 'Maison des pauvres écoliers italiens de la bienheureuse Marie'. It hosted Italian students on a grant secured from several French and Italian benefactors.

111 Gérald Duverdier, "L'apport des Libanais à l'étude des langues arabe et syriaque en Europe", in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 200.

112 Maronite historians place the transfer of their Patriarchate to Qannūbīn in 1440, with the installation here of the residence of Patriarch Yūḥannā al-Ǧāǧī, who was elected in Mayfūq, the residence of the Patriarchate since 1404. In 1863, the Patriarchate moved to Bkerke. See Wissam Halawi and Élise Voguet, "La propriété foncière du monastère de Qannūbīn: un témoignage sur le paysage agraire du nord du Jabal Lubnān (fin XVIe–mi XVIe siècle)", in Mathilde Boudier, Audrey Caire, Eva Collet and Noëmie Lucas (eds.), *Autour de la Syrie médiévale. Études offertes à Anne-Marie Eddé*, Leuven and Paris, 2022, p. 137.

Arabic-type press.[113] In 1798, the first printing presses and fonts of Arabic type arrived in Alexandria, to be used until 1801.[114] The aim was to distribute widely proclamations and instructions to the Egyptian people, in the form of printed posters. The first such leaf that has survived is dated July 2, 1798. The same year, an alphabet book containing an inventory of typefaces was produced for the benefit of French people who wished to learn Arabic.[115]

Since the Royal College in Paris had two Chairs of Arabic (created in 1587 and 1600), Gabriel Sionita was hired as a professor of Arabic and Syriac in order to allow him to pursue his translation and editorial work for Arabic, Turkish, and Syriac texts. Very quickly, however, it became clear that the readership of Arabic texts published with a Latin translation was too limited to justify large print runs. In the best of cases, the academic public that acquired such books was interested in translations of Arabic texts.

At the same time, Thomas van Erpe, more widely known as Erpenius, an outstanding scholar, librarian of Henry IV, professor at the University of Leiden, and interpreter of Arabic for the government, was active in Arabic studies in the Netherlands. He was the author of the first Arabic grammar with a parallel Latin text, easy to use for Europeans. The first edition was produced in 1613 at the Plantin and Rapheleng press (130 pp.), while others followed, printed in various forms. Erpenius then published a collection of Arabic proverbs in 1614, with vowels carefully placed in the text. He installed a press at home and manufactured punches himself, making new sets of Arabic type. He used them to print in 1615 the *Fables of Luqmān* and other edifying stories, with Latin comments. The consonants he had newly created were lower in shape, they allowed for a better page-setting, and were supplemented with vowels in 1616.

From 1615 on, Erpenius translated and printed in Leiden, at his own press (Typographia Erpeniana Linguarum Orientalium), the *Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans* and the *Epistles to the Galatians*, in a small format, to facilitate their circulation in the East. After several sections of the Arabic and Latin New Testament, in 1616 he printed the whole New Testament: *al-ʿAhd al-Ǧadīd*

113 Geoffrey Roper, "Printed Matter in Egypt before the Būlāq Press", in Ahmed Mansour (ed.), *Memory of Printing and Publishing in the Middle East*, Alexandria, 2018, p. 10–11.

114 Gianni and Tagliabracci, "*Kitāb [Ṣ]alāt al-sawāʿī*, p. 131–132.

115 The role of the French intellectuals in printing in Egypt is revealed by the excellent guide addressed by Albert Geiss to the Oriental scholars, to help them prepare their manuscripts: *De l'établissement des manuscrits destinés à l'impression. Conseils pratiques*, Cairo, 1906. Geiss was appointed technical director of the printing press attached to the 'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire' in 1903. His guide (24 pp. and Annexes) is still useful today for printing in Oriental languages.

li-Rabbinā Yasūʿ al-Masīḥ: Novum D. N. Iesu Christi Testamentum Arabice. The same year, he printed the *Story of Joseph* excerpted from the Qur'ān (*Ṣūra XII*), the second ever printed passage of the Qur'ān (apart from the block-printed fragments printed in Egypt in the 10th or 11th centuries).[116] Then followed a second edition of the *Arabic Grammar*, with vowels, and a basic treatise of Arabic syntax composed in the 11th century by al-Ǧurǧānī, a grammarian of the School of Baṣra. While visiting Paris in 1619, Erpenius befriended Gabriel Sionita and John Hesronita, learning from them about the printing projects of the French orientalists.

In 1620, *Rudimenta linguae arabicae*, one of the most famous grammars of the Arabic language ever printed in Europe, came out of Erpenius's press. Two years later, Erpenius printed in Arabic the *Book of Exodus*, which he had transferred in Arabic script from a manuscript in the collections of the University of Leiden, composed in the Arabic language but written in Hebrew script.[117] Also in 1622, his books were presented as precious gifts to the king of Morocco by the Dutch diplomatic mission to Marrakesh. In 1624, aged 40, already famous and courted by several kings and princes, Erpenius sadly died, probably of the plague that was devastating Europe. The type he had manufactured reached the great press of Bonaventura and Abraham Elsevier in Leiden, where several books were published after 1629, written or edited by Jakob Golius (d. 1667). Among them was a beautiful and carefully composed Arabic-Latin dictionary of 2,925 pp., published in 1653.

After 1618, when the great French scholar and printer Savary de Brèves fell into disgrace with the royal court, the press closed and his Oriental type remained idle. In 1632, the press implements came into the possession of Antoine Vitré, the court printer (d. 1674),[118] who bought them from the heirs for the royal press by secret order of Cardinal Richelieu. The latter had decided to prevent the sale of de Brèves's printing tools to "foreign Huguenots", as on a first attempted sale, buyers from England and the Netherlands had shown their interest. Once in control of this typographic material, they would have spread Luther's and Calvin's ideas among the Arabic-speaking Christians, in nicely printed versions. Vitré's inventory after the acquisition indicated 1,606 cut punches, an impressive lot of printing items.[119]

116 Roper, "Arabic biblical and liturgical texts printed in Europe", p. 174.

117 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 61.

118 See "Vitré, Antoine", in Mellot et al., *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires*, p. 1469.

119 Savary de Brèves declared that their manufacture had cost him over 200 écus. See Duverdier, "Du livre religieux à l'orientalisme", p. 160.

Although it was a clever move on the part of Cardinal Richelieu, instead of producing a long series of high-quality Oriental books, the acquisition of de Brèves's printing tools caused a lot of trouble for Antoine Vitré. A year later, as he was still indebted to the printer's heirs, he wrote the following to King Louis XIII.

> Monseigneur le cardinal duc de Richelieu, ayant été adverty que les poinçons et les matrices arabes, syriaques et persannes, que le feu sieur de Brèves, autrefois ambassadeur en Levant pour Vostre Majesté, avoit fait faire pour l'honneur de la France et advancement de la religion, avec les manuscrits qu'il avoit apportez, estoient prests d'estre enlevez par les huguenots estrangers qui s'en vouloient servir pour jetter en la langue de ces peuples des bibles et autres livres concernans la foy, et introduire par ce moyen en ce païs, aussi-tost que le christianisme, la religion de Calvin, que votre Majesté a extirpée en ses États avec tant de veilles et de soins, par les conseils du même seigneur cardinal, qui auroit commandé, de la part de V. M. audit Vitré, imprimeur à cause qu'il l'est de V. M. en ces langues, de s'en rendre adjudicataire en son nom.[120]

Relations between the Netherlands and the Ottoman Empire reached a new level of cooperation after commercial privileges were granted in 1612. In Istanbul, England and the Netherlands were the political and commercial rivals of France, who considered herself the protector of Middle Eastern Catholics.[121] Naturally, the works printed in the Netherlands by Protestant scholars and theologians reflected their vision, different from that of the Latin Church, which became increasingly worried about the spread of Protestant ideas in the East. Several books sent from the Netherlands to the capital of the Ottoman Empire and disseminated by the Patriarch Cyril Lukaris (1572–1638) in the Eastern Christian communities generated disquiet among the Catholic missionaries.[122]

Cyril Lukaris, who was Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 1620, after having been Greek Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria between 1601 and 1620, was known as an opponent of the Latin missions that were active both in

120 Antoine Vitré, *Histoire du procez qu'on renouvelle de temps en temps à Antoine Vitré*, Paris, 1656, p. 3, cited by Duverdier, "Défense de l'orthodoxie et lutte d'influences", p. 266. See Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 231–232, for details on Antoine Vitré's report, preserved in a 28-pages manuscript at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (with a second abridged version), and the lawsuits he was involved in as a consequence of the acquisition of printing tools and Oriental manuscripts for the Royal press.

121 See Alexander H. de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic. A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations, 1610–1630*, Leiden, 1978.

122 Lukaris received from the Dutch ambassador a large quantity of biblical texts printed by Erpenius and distributed them to the local clergy for free. See Roper, "Arabic biblical and liturgical texts printed in Europe", p. 178.

Egypt and in the Eastern European countries.[123] At the behest of the patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pigas,[124] Lukaris had travelled in 1596 to Poland to oppose the nion of Brest-Litovsk, where some of the Christians of the Cossack lands were persuaded to embrace the Latin creed.[125] He knew these lands well, as he had overseen for several years the colleges of the L'viv Brotherhood and that of Vilna (present-day Vilnius), while living in Catholic and Protestant environments. After his election as a patriarch of Constantinople, the Holy See became concerned with the undesired influence he might have had on some of the Eastern-rite churches in the Ottoman Empire. His intention to open a college[126] and a printing press and to disseminate books to the Orthodox clergy sounded disturbing to the Latin missionaries. The Catholic envoys who slandered him before the Ottoman officials based their case on Lukaris's long sojourns in Germany and other Central-European countries and the probability that he brought to Istanbul 'heretical ideas' that he wished to spread among the Christian communities of the Empire. As noted by Gérald Duverdier, in 1632, in Constantinople, Cyril Lukaris still occupied the patriarchal see. He would have received from the Netherlands books printed with the beautiful type of Savary de Brèves, had Cardinal Richelieu not intervened at the appropriate time.[127] Aware of the value of the printing implements and type, Antoine Vitré had wished to acquire them all. To convince Richelieu, he had made the point that Lukaris, who was "the fiercest enemy of the poor Catholics", had distributed in the Levant Calvinist books "that poisoned the spirit [of these Christians], especially as they were printed in a language familiar to them."[128]

Cyril Lukaris's attempt to set up a Greek press in Istanbul in 1627 would be met with suspicion and animosity. Bringing over from Western Europe typo-

123 On Cyril Lukaris's pastoral works, doctrinal options, and accusations against, during his term as Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, see Klaus-Peter Todt, "Kyrillos Lukaris", in Carmelo Giuseppe Conticello and Vassa Conticello (eds.), *La théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, II. *(XIII^{e}–XIX^{e} s.)*, Turnhout, 2002, p. 617–651; Viviana Nosilia and Marco Prandoni (eds.), *Trame controluce/Blacklighting Plots*: *Il patriarca* '*protestante*' *Cirillo Loukaris*/*The* '*Protestant*' *Patriarch Cyril Loukaris*, Florence, 2015; Ovidiu-Victor Olar, *La boutique de Théophile. Les relations du Patriarche de Constantinople Kyrillos Loukaris (1570–1638) avec la Réforme*, Paris, 2019.

124 Olar, *La boutique de Théophile*, p. 52–57.

125 Ibid., p. 57–63.

126 Bernard Heyberger remarks that Meletios Karma in Aleppo, Cyril Lukaris in Constantinople, and Petru Movilă in Kyiv were all planning in the same period to open colleges for language and theological studies. See Heyberger, "East and West. A Connected History of Eastern Christianity", p. 16–17.

127 Duverdier, "Défense de l'orthodoxie et lutte d'influences", p. 265–266.

128 Ibid., p. 267.

graphic tools and hiring a good printer did not amount to anything, as the enterprise faced a strong resistance from several entities. I shall return to this unsuccessful project later.

It is worth mentioning here the attempt of the Catholic missionaries active in the Ottoman capital to secure from the Sublime Porte a decisive action to close the Greek press that Dositheos II Notaras, the patriarch of Jerusalem (1641–1707), had opened in 1682 in Iași, the capital of Moldavia, due to the generosity and financial help of the prince Gheorghe Duca. If in Constantinople, where the Jesuit intrigues assisted by Western diplomatic envoys were more forceful and the Christians' situation was more constrained, it was possible for the press founded by the Patriarch Cyril Lukaris to be closed down, in Iași this was not possible. Therefore, Patriarch Dositheos was able to print at will, in 1682–1683, several books of anti-Catholic polemics in Greek.[129]

In Italy, the printing activity in support of the missionary efforts flourished again after the foundation of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide by Pope Urban VIII in 1622. In 1624, a college was founded by the new institution.[130] In 1627, as part of the great project of the Counter-Reformation, Pope Urban VIII founded a press of the Propaganda Fide that he endowed with typographic material for non-Latin languages, including Greek, Georgian, and Arabic types. One of the Arabic fonts, transferred from the Medicean press, was modified and supplemented, while others were newly cut and cast.[131] To be able to publish in several languages and alphabets, the press absorbed the expertise and printing installations and tools of smaller presses that were active at the time, such as those of Domenico Basa, Giambattista Raimondi, and Jacob Luna. After 1620, books were printed in Rome with type different from that used at the Medici and Savary de Brèves presses. The master engraver was, most of the time, Stefano Paolino.

In Rome, the project of an Arabic Bible was launched when the Propaganda Fide was founded in 1622. The project had been devised by Sarkīs al-Rizzī, the Maronite bishop of Damascus and vicar of the patriarch (1600–1638). He was the

129 Dumitru Stăniloae, *Viața și activitatea patriarhului Dosofteiu al Ierusalimului și legăturile lui cu Țările Românești. Teză de doctorat în Teologie*, Cernăuți, 1929, p. 22–27.

130 See Giovanni Pizzorusso, "Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste autour de la congrégation De Propaganda Fide au temps d'Abraham Ecchellensis", in Bernard Heyberger (ed.), *Orientalisme, science et controverse: Abraham Ecchellensis (1605–1664)*, Turnhout, 2010, p. 59–80.

131 Vercellin, "Venezia e le origini della stampa in caratteri arabi", p. 62, n. 24; Emanuela Conidi, *Arabic Types in Europe and the Middle East, 1514–1924: Challenges in the Adaptation of the Arabic Script from Written to Printed Form*, unpublished PhD thesis, online at 16021166_Conidi_redacted.pdf (reading.ac.uk), p. 429–437.

nephew of the Patriarch Mīhā'īl al-Rizzī (1567–1581), who had received with great honors at his residence the Jesuit monks Giambattista Eliano and Toma Raggio when they arrived on their first mission to Lebanon in 1578.[132] In spite of the close, longstanding relationship of the Maronites with the Latin Church, Eliano found dogmatic errors and even schismatic ideas in the liturgical texts that circulated in the churches of Lebanon. He believed that they were due to contamination from texts used by the faithful of other confessions.[133] Therefore, he decided to collect from the Maronite monasteries, during the first year of his mission, as many Arabic manuscripts as possible, with the declared intention of burning them.

As I mentioned before, when returning to Rome in 1579, Eliano brought with him a manuscript of an Arabic version of the Bible. In the Vatican, a council consisting of eleven cardinals and twenty-two scholars of Arabic and Latin convened to survey and select the Arabic texts brought from the East. The Council of Trento, completed in 1563, had decided that the only canonical text of the Bible, to which other translations were required to conform, was the Vulgate. Consequently, the text of the Arabic Bible that was finally printed in 1673 in four volumes was a translation of the Vulgate, a text established after a thorough revision and examination of its dogmatic accuracy from a Catholic perspective. The Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide wished for this version to be widely disseminated and for the old Arabic manuscripts to disappear, as they presented significant variances with the Vulgate. Thus, a closer connection to the Latin creed could be achieved, as well as greater uniformity of the liturgical rites of the Middle Eastern communities attached to the Roman Catholic Church.[134] For it was also decided at the Council of Trento that permanent ties were to be maintained with the Eastern Churches, to counter the increasingly active Protestant propaganda and compensate for the movement of certain Arabic-speaking communities towards anti-Catholic confessions.

Rome is also the place where the first book on logic in Arabic (and Latin) was printed, in 1625: *Introduction in the Science of Logic* by the Franciscan monk Tomaso Obicini. It contains comments on philosophical elements of the Islamic doctrine, focusing on the points in common with the Christian teachings.

132 Kuri, *Monumenta Proximi-Orientis*, p. 61, 71, ff.

133 Duverdier, "Défense de l'orthodoxie et lutte d'influences", p. 265.

134 On the clear definition of the "Eastern rites" under Pope Benedict XIV (1740–1758) and the definitive ban issued at that time for Catholics in the Levant to associate with "heretics" or "schismatics" (*communication in sacris*), see Heyberger, "East and West. A Connected History of Eastern Christianity", p. 9–10.

Towards 1625, the Arabic-printing technology was already an established business. New forms of type were not sought after anymore. Instead, punches were cut with clear and simple, easy-to-read forms, which less experienced engravers could later copy. In Rome, several presses were active for the benefit of the missionary activities in the Middle East, which belonged to the Vatican, the Apostolic Chamber, the Roman College of the Jesuit Order, the Maronite College, and the Medici family.

The competition between printers of the Propaganda Fide in Rome and the Protestant ones in the Netherlands, England, and Germany generated a continuous struggle to improve the quantity and quality of the Arabic printing done in Western presses.[135] In 1628, the secretary of the Propaganda Fide asked the French ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Philippe de Harlay, Count de Césy, to send him models of Arabic and Turkish calligraphy so that the Roman press of the Propaganda Fide would be able to produce beautiful books. Thus, in 1663, the workshop printed the *Alphabetum Arabicum*, a specimen of the Arabic type available with them.

In 1630–1660, Western printing in Arabic type was dominated by the Dutch, French, and Italian printers, with the most productive being the press of the Propaganda Fide in Rome.[136] Several works were printed at that time, which became classics: in language studies, Jean-Baptiste Duval, *The Latin-Arabic Dictionary*, Paris, 1632, and Dominicus Germanus, *Fabrica linguae arabicae cum interpretation Latina et italica*, Rome, 1639 (1,082 pp.); in theological studies, Cardinal Richelieu, *Kitāb al-taʿlīm al-masīḥī* (*Book of the Christian Teaching*), Paris, 1640 (415 pp.); in historical texts, Ibn Arabšah, *The Life of Timur-Lenk* edited by Jacob Golius, 1636. In 1632, in Milan, the *Thesaurus linguae arabicae* of Antonio Giggeo was printed in four volumes at the press of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, founded by Cardinal Borromeo in 1609. Important theological, grammatical, and literary works were reedited: *Doctrina christiana*, Paris, 1635, with a preface by Cardinal Richelieu; *Gramatica arabica* and the *Fables of Luqmān* edited by Erpenius were reprinted in 1636 at Leiden; Golius reprinted his Arabic grammar book in 1656, adding to it Qur'ānic *ṣūra*s, fables, poems by al-Ḥarīrī, etc. A polemic work in 1,165 pp. by Fr Filippo Guadalogni – a dialogue between a supporter of the Catholic doctrine and a Muslim, with a commentary by the author, who amplified the

135 Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 146–147.

136 Bernard Heyberger gives a table of the books in stock in 1660 in the Propaganda Fide press storage: they amounted at 12,586 books in Arabic and Syriac. See Heyberger, "Livres et pratique de la lecture chez les chrétiens", "Livres et pratique de la lecture chez les chrétiens (Syrie, Liban) XVII^{e}–XVIII^{e} siècles", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerrané*, 1999, 87–88, p. 211–212.

pro-Catholic statement – was printed in 1637 by the Propaganda Fide in Rome. In 1663, the Carmelite monk Celestin de Sancta Lidwina (1603/1604–1672)[137] published at the same press an Arabic translation from the original Latin of the famous work of Thomas à Kempis *Imitatio Christi* (562 pp.), which he had elaborated in 1638, while he was on a mission to Aleppo, according to his own statement in the Latin and Arabic printed forewords.[138] Alongside the Arabic Psalter, this book was to become the most frequently used teaching text in the Christian schools of the Middle East.[139]

While discussing Ibn al-Faḍl's Arabic versions of the book of Psalms, Alexandre Roberts notes:

> The Psalter was a fundamental text for Byzantine primary education. Just as early memorization of the Qur'ān was a standard marker of a Muslim boy's precocious talent (the historian al-Ṭabarī says that he managed the feat by age seven), getting the Psalter by heart was an early sign of a Christian child's brilliance. [...] The Psalter also played a public role in the Christian liturgy.[140]

Although commonly credited to ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl, this Arabic version resulted from a rather light revision of the original 8th–9th century Melkite Psalter. Alexander Roberts has recently commented on the Arabic translations of the Psalter from the earliest text known to us, shedding more light on Ibn al-Faḍl's contribution to the widespread of the Arabic text that circulated in manuscripts in Dabbās's time:

> Ibn al-Faḍl produced Arabic versions of the book of Psalms, most accompanied with extracts from patristic commentaries; [...] The Psalms had already been translated into Arabic long before Ibn al-Faḍl produced his Arabic version. The famous parchment fragment known as the Violet fragment, found in 1900 in a sealed storage space (the *qubbat al-khazna*) at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and probably dating, on paleographical grounds, to the late

137 Born Pieter van Gool, the brother of the great Oriental scholar Jakob Golius, he founded in 1643 the Order of the Carmelite monks in Lebanon, in the Qādīšā Valley, at the Monastery of Saint Elisius (Mār Elīšā).

138 The book was unanimously acclaimed by the scholars and the general public of the time. A second edition was printed in Rome in 1734, and other editions followed. See Graf, *GCAL* IV, p. 244, and Fr Samir Khalil Samir, S. J., "Le P. Célestin de Sainte Lydwina, alias Peter Van Gool (1604–1676)", *La Splendeur du Carmel*, 1995, 7, p. 1–84 (accessible at http://www.kobayat.org/data/mardoumit/history/fondateur_ocd_liban.htm).

139 Bernard Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du ProcheOrient au temps de la Réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVI^e^XVIII^e^ siècle)*, Rome, 1994, p. 559.

140 Alexandre M. Roberts, *Reason and Revelation in Byzantine Antioch. The Christian Translation Program of Abdallah ibn al-Fadl*, Oakland, CA, 2020, p. 37.

> ninth or early tenth century, preserves part of Psalm 77 (78) in Arabic translation written in Greek script. A number of ninth- and tenth-century Sinai manuscripts contain the same Arabic translation (in Arabic script). Ibn al-Faḍl's version is based on this earlier Arabic translation. He indicates his use of an earlier translation in his preface to the text, where he speaks of what "moved me to correct the Psalter…and extract its sense from Greek into Arabic". That is, he corrected an *Arabic* Psalter that was already available, revising it based on his reading of the Greek (Septuagint) Psalter.[141]

Jack Tannous has remarked that, as early as the 13th century, Bar Hebraeus, when indicating in his *Nomocanon* the subjects to be studied at school, began with the Psalter: "Rule: In the first place, let them read the Psalms of David, then the New Testament, then the Old Testament, the Doctors, then the Commentators".[142] According to Tannous,

> There is in fact evidence that an education in the Scriptures and the liturgy of the type Bar Hebraeus described formed the core of Miaphysite education as far back as at least the early sixth century. Such a pattern of education, however, was not unique to Myaphisites and seems to have persisted over a long period of time.[143]

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Book of Psalms was the book that Middle Eastern Christians read most often.[144] The Psalter was the book they used most often in teaching their children how to read.[145] In the first decades of the 17th century, supported by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, schools for the Arabic-speaking children opened in Aleppo, Damascus, and Mount Lebanon. Here, the teaching was based on handbooks and spiritual texts printed in Rome, which observed the Catholic teachings.[146] The Propaganda Fide sent considerable numbers of books to the Levant, and especially to Aleppo. In 1637, the Jesuits there received for distribution in Syria twenty volumes of Bellarmine's *Doctrina Christiana* and thirty-six tables of the Arabic alphabet, while the Carmelite monks were sent ten tables of the Arabic alphabet and eight of the Armenian

141 Roberts, *Reason and Revelation in Byzantine Antioch*, p. 36.

142 Jack Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East. Religion, Society, and Simple Believers*, Princeton and Oxford, 2018, p. 185.

143 Ibid. For other references to the Psalms being taught and their priority in the schools' curriculum, see ibid., p. 17 (n. 27), 20, 27 (n. 66), 185–187, 196, 232, 238 (n. 50), 239. I am grateful to Jack Tannous for his advice on this point.

144 For the 'power' that the Psalter was believed to hold in the times of Jacob of Edessa (d. 708), such as to be read for the purpose of preventing hail from falling on the farmlands, see Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East. Religion, Society, and Simple Believers*, p. 146–147.

145 Ḫalīl Ṣābāt, *Tārīḫ al-ṭibā'a fī al-Šarq al-'arabī*, Cairo, 1966, p. 104.

146 Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du ProcheOrient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 469–470.

one. Nevertheless, the demand for Psalters printed in Arabic and Syriac, a basic text in the education program and literacy testing, was greater than the Western presses could supply.

Secular texts were also printed in Rome for the Maronites in this period, such as the *Grammar of the Syriac language* by Ǧirǧīs Amīra, the reprint of which the patriarch of the Maronites Yūsuf Ḥalīb requested from Pope Innocent X in 1645.[147]

Unhappy with the monopoly of the Holy See on books printed for the Middle Eastern Christians, in 1631, Cardinal Richelieu founded in Paris a professional society of printers of religious books, the *Societas Typographica librorum officii ecclesiastici*, securing a royal privilege for it.[148] In exchange, he pledged to print all the books required by the Latin missions in the East: the Bible, liturgical books, the Catholic catechism, grammar books, dictionaries, etc. Since most of these books had commercial value and were sold on the book market, this step was beneficial for the merchants involved in book printing and distribution, who started making a nice profit, even if not for long (initially, thirty years, later reduced to ten).[149]

Around 1640, Abraham Ecchellensis (1605–1664), a Maronite close to the Druze emir Faḫreddīn of Mount Lebanon, was a student of the Maronite College in Rome.[150] He was the pope's interpreter, a lecturer in Arabic and Syriac at the University of Rome, a professor of theology and philosophy. Joseph Moukarzel describes Abraham Ecchellensis by citing Peter Rietbergen's description of him: "comme 'un médiateur entre les cultures méditerranéennes du dix-septième siècle', à savoir entre la chrétienté latine, les chrétiens orientaux et islam".[151]

Ecchellensis was called to Paris in 1641 by Cardinal Richelieu and the editor Michel le Jay, an attorney with the French Parliament, to resume the project of the

147 Nasrallah, *L'imprimerie au Liban*, p. 10.

148 See Mellot et al., *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires*, p. 1342.

149 Many other *Sociétés typographiques* (Printing Societies) were founded in France, Switzerland, and Belgium in the 17th–18th centuries (as elsewhere in Europe). For the French-language ones, see ibid., p. 1342–1345.

150 On the life and works of Abraham Ecchellensis, see Nasser Gemayel, *Les échanges culturels entre les maronites et l'Europe: du collège maronite de Rome (1584) au collège de ʿAyn-Warqa (1789)*, t. I, Beirut, 1984, especially p. 299–317, 386–400; Bernard Heyberger (ed.), *Orientalisme, science et controverse: Abraham Ecchellensis (1605–1664)*, Turnhout, 2010; Andrei Pippidi, "Chypre au XVIIe siècle, deux rapports inédits", *RESEE*, 41, 2003, 1–4, especially p. 212–214.

151 Joseph Moukarzel, "Les origines des maronites d'après Abraham Ecchellensis", in Heyberger (ed.), *Orientalisme, science et controverse: Abraham Ecchellensis (1605–1664)*, p. 151, citing Peter Rietbergen, "A Maronite Mediator between Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean Cultures: Ibrahim al Hakilani, or Abraham Ecchellense (1605–1664) between Christendom and Islam", *Lias*, 16, 1989, 1, p. 13.

Polyglot Bible. He revised the Arabic and Syriac texts translated during the days of Savary de Brèves and added new translations to them.[152] Next, he translated into Arabic several works of mathematics and Islamic philosophy.

In 1642, the first Arabic book was printed in England, accompanied by an annotated Latin translation: Saʿīd ibn al-Biṭrīq, *Patriarch Eutichios of Alexandria (933–939), Annals of the Church of Alexandria*. The Arabic type was acquired from the Netherlands. Born in 1584, Selden pursued his legal education in Oxford and joined the political elite at the courts of the Kings James I and Charles I, who punished him successively with prison terms for his opinions on religion and justice. The bilingual book that he edited was the fruit of the collaboration with the erudite oriental scholar Edward Pococke (d. 1691), a disciple of William Bedwell and a traveler in the East, where he also made the acquaintance of the Patriarch Cyril Lukaris.

Edward Pococke was one of the most active Oriental scholars in Europe in the second half of the 17th century. Born in Oxford in 1604, he became passionate about Oriental languages while he was a student. William Bedwell had establisehd the Arabic language course at the University of Oxford. Pococke followed him enthusiastically. Ordained as a priest in the Church of England in 1629, he resided in Aleppo for six years as treasurer of the English merchants' office in Syria. There he pursued his study of Oriental languages – Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic – and collected Arabic manuscripts that he sent to England. In 1637, he was in Constantinople, where he also acquired a large number of Oriental manuscripts. He then travelled to Paris, where he met Gabriel Sionita who was just preparing the Polyglot Bible. Back at the University of Oxford, where he would teach Hebrew and Arabic, in 1650 he edited a history of the Arabs composed by Bar Hebraeus (Abulfaragius), maphrian of the Syrian Orthodox Church in 1266–1286, giving it the title *Specimen Historiae Arabum*. The University of Oxford had bought in 1637 from Leiden Arabic type that were used for this book too. It was published by the master printer Henry Hall and reedited in 1658 with a Latin translation. The same year, Pococke published an Arabic translation of the *Treatise on the Truth of the Christian Faith* by Hugo Grotius (de Groot). This work was translated into several languages and became quite popular. The type looked more elegant, as it belonged to a newer font. Pococke also published in 1671, together with his elder son, the mystical work *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* (*The Alive, Son of The Awake*) by the Andalusian physician and philosopher Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1185). In his final years,

152 See Muriel Debié, "La grammaire syriaque d'Ecchellensis en contexte", in Heyberger (ed.), *Orientalisme, science et controverse: Abraham Ecchellensis (1605–1664)*, p. 99–117.

Pococke translated from Arabic and published an Anglican catechism (1671)[153] and Book of Common Prayer (1674), his last Arabic book.[154] These print-runs were distributed in the Levant.

A Polyglot Bible was finally published in Paris in 1645, in ten volumes that contain the Holy Scriptures in seven languages, including Arabic. The Arabic text is present in volume VII, published in 1642. The type used by the printer Antoine Vitré – consonants and vowels – are those of Savary de Brèves. They were supplemented, at the expense of le Jay, with Arabic type, a Syriac alphabet, and a Chaldean one, manufactured under the supervision of Gabriel Sionita. The general appearance is beautiful: the Polyglot Bible remains in the history of the book as a masterpiece of Oriental printing in Western Europe. Although criticized by contemporary theologians for certain features of the different versions, it was considered a highly valuable work in terms of the mastery of printing that it displayed. To help the readers of the Polyglot Bible, Vitré produced in 1636 tables of all the type-sets he had in his press – Arabic, Syriac, Greek, Hebrew, Armenian, and Persian.[155]

After the printing of the Polyglot Bible subjected the editors, Vitré and le Jay, to debts, suspicions, libels, and lawsuits, no other books with Arabic text were printed in Paris until 1679, when the last work was printed with the type of Savary de Brèves, at the press of Pierre le Petit: *The Book of the Psalms of Repentance and Praise to the Holy Virgin*. Then, the famous type of de Brèves was "put away for safe-keeping": the punches in the Accounts Chamber, where Garamond's Greek type had also been preserved since the times of King François I,[156] while the matrices were placed in the Royal Library, from where they were taken temporarily,

153 *Šarḥ qawāʿid dīn al-Masīḥ* (*Explanation of the Foundations of the Christian Faith*), Oxford, 1671.
154 Book of the Divine Liturgies, Church of England rite: *Liturgiae Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ / Al-ṣalawāt li-kull yawm ʿalā ʿādat Bīʿat al-Inkilīz*, Oxford, 1674. See Geoffrey Roper, "England and the Printing of Texts for the Orthodox Christians in Greek and Arabic, 17th–19th centuries", in *Travaux du Symposium international* Le Livre. La Roumanie. L'Europe, *Troisième édition – 20 à 24 Septembre 2010*, Bucharest, 2011, p. 437.
155 Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 228–229.
156 Born in Paris towards the end of the 15th century (d. 1561), Claude Garamond (or Garamont) was trained by Antoine Augereau, a skilled engraver of Paris who learned how to manufacture punches and became a printer and librarian. Garamond lived in Paris, where, around 1530, he had already created typefaces in three sizes for the printer Claude Chevallon. Towards 1540, he was famous all across Europe for his Roman type. Garamond was the first typographer who sold the types, matrices, and punches that he manufactured, succeeding in supporting his printing shop with the income. After he died, most of this material was acquired by the printing presses of Christophe Plantin, in Antwerp, and Jacques Sabon in Frankfurt, while the rest ended up at the French Royal press. See Mellot et al., *Répertoire d'imprimeurs/libraires*, p. 612.

against a receipt slip, when needed by printers who had the task of producing Arabic-type works.[157] In 1692, the typographic materials were placed in the Royal Press that was to become the National Printing Press of France. Josée Balagna explains the lack of interest in printing in Arabic in the second half of the 17th century by the fact that "le déroulement des études ne conduit personne à ce degré de tâche ardue qu'est l'édition scientifique."[158]

Another Polyglot Bible in six volumes, with versions in Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Ethiopic, Latin, Syriac, Greek, and Aramaic, was published by Brian Walton in 1657 in London, at the press of Thomas Roycroft. In the Appendix, maps of the Holy Land and Jerusalem, along with a sketch of the Temple, were provided. Protestants and Anglicans always showed a deep interest in a good knowledge of the languages used in writing the earliest versions of the Bible. Therefore, for this edition, the assistance of the language scholar Edmond Castell (b. 1606) was requested. In 1669, he composed a *Lexicon heptaglotton, hebraicum, chaldaicum, samaritanum, aethiopicum, arabicum conjuctim et persicum separatim…*, meant to help the readers of the Polyglot Bible.

The type created by Erpenius was used in 1654 in the Netherlands to print a collection of *Epistolae catholicae* consisting of the epistles of the Saints James (32 pp.), John (40 pp.), and Jude (24 pp.) in Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic text with vowels. These were the work of two new editors who published at the Elsevier press of the Leiden Academy: Theodor Petreus and Johann Georg Nisselius.

Towards the end of the 17th century, Franciscan monks also opened a press in Rome, with type manufactured at the Saint Francis Seminary. The Franciscans often dedicated themselves to the teaching of Oriental languages required by people entering the service of European embassies or consulates in the Middle East, as well as the missionary work that was specific to their order.

Padua was also one of the Italian cities where Arabic type was used before 1700. In 1688, the press of the Theological Seminary (*Stamperia del Seminario*) published in Latin and Arabic type *Proverbi utili e virtuosi in lingua araba, persiana e turca* / *Kitāb 'amṯāl muḫtaṣira* […] *bi-l-lisān al-ʿarabī wa-l-fārisī wa-l-turkī*, the work of Humaili ibn Daʿfi Karnuk, a Jacobite Christian of Diyarbakır who had migrated to Italy, where he took the name of Timoteo Agnellini. In 1709, an Arabic Psalter was printed at the seminary for the Arabic-speaking Christians of the Levant.[159]

157 Duverdier, "Défense de l'orthodoxie et lutte d'influences", p. 267.
158 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 88.
159 Roper, "Arabic biblical and liturgical texts printed in Europe", p. 179.

Of the more isolated initiatives during this period, it is worth mentioning several that were due to Northern European scholars. Johann Fabricius, a disciple of Jacob Golius, opened a press in Rostock and printed in 1638, with type cast in Copenhagen, an Arabic grammar enriched with poems by al-Ḥarīrī, Abu l'Ala al-Ma'arri and Ibn al-Fārid. At the University of Altdorf, Theodor Hackspan printed an Arabic handbook in 1646, with locally manufactured type of a different shape than those commonly known. From the collaboration between the theologians Wilhelm Schickard (1592–1635) and Johann Ernst Gerhard the Elder (1621–1668), a rapid learning manual of Arabic was produced in Jena in 1647, comprising declension tables, based on the model of a Hebrew manual that the former had previously prepared. In 1650, Gerhard published in Wittenberg a grammar of Arabic composed in Latin, containing Arabic texts. In the German lands, each printer created his own Arabic type, which gave the landscape of Arabic printing in Northern Europe a more complex appearance than that in the Southern countries.[160]

In Germany, an Arabic Qur'ān was published in 1694 with complete vowels. It was edited by Abraham Hinckelmann (1652–1695), a Protestant theologian and scholar, and a collector of Oriental manuscripts interested in the mystical schools that were much popular at the time.[161] It is not clear who were the readers that Hinckelmann addressed: few people in Europe were able to read the Qur'ān in Arabic, and the book was not distributed in the East. In the preface to this volume, supported by numerous citations from the works of Virgil, Baronius, Gregory of Tours, Abū al-Farrāğ, al-Zamaḫšarī, and others, the editor makes the case for the value of knowledge of the Arabic language and the Islamic culture. The study of the holy books of the Muslims allowed, he claimed, a better understanding of the holy scriptures of the Christians.[162]

Another German, Johann David Schieferdecker (b. 1672), a passionate Oriental scholar, composed and published in 1695 in Leipzig a grammar of the Arabic language accompanied, in the same volume, by one of Turkish. For some time, the Turks had been threatening the frontiers of Central Europe, and the approach of this threat had aroused the interest of the European political and intellectual circles towards the Ottoman Muslim fighters.

160 Balagna, *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, p. 76–77.

161 Alexander George Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Printed Books in the British Museum*, London, t. I, 1894, col. 869; Victor Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes publiés dans l'Europe Chrétienne de 1810 à 1885*, Liège and Leipzig, t. X, 1907, p. 123; Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 376.

162 See also the remarks of Jean Aucagne, S. J., "La préface d'Abraham Hinckelmann, ou la naissance d'un nouveau monde", in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 138–141.

Close to the end of the century, in 1698, an Arabic Qur'ān was beautifully printed, with a Latin translation and anti-Islamic comments dedicated to each *ṣūrā*. The author was Ludovico Marracci, the confessor of Pope Innocent XI, a professor of Arabic at the Seminary of Padua, where the type was procured for his Qur'ān. Although very critical towards the Muslim creed, Marracci asserted that Protestantism and Islam fostered common beliefs.

Naturally, texts written in languages other than Arabic were printed with Arabic type in Western Europe before 1700. It needs to be mentioned here that the Arabic alphabet was (and still is) used for a considerable number of languages that belong to various language families: besides Arabic and Ottoman Turkish (written in Latin alphabet since 1929), today Persian, Tajik, Urdu, Afghan (Pashto), and other languages use the Arabic script. Among the first printed books to use Arabic type for several languages was the work of Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, *Thesaurus linguarum orientalium Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae* (Vienna, 1680–1687, 4 vols.),[163] published close to the time of the second siege of Vienna (1683).[164]

The Arabic-books production of the 18th century in Western and Central Europe, contemporary with the one discussed in this book, has been presented in numerous contributions to the history of printing in Arabic. In this rapid overview of the chief moments of Arabic printing in these parts of Europe I only have the intention to demonstrate that by the time Arabic books started to be printed in Eastern Europe, Constantinople, and the Levant, Western typographers had already acquired great skill and experience and their productions had travelled east, without fulfilling the needs of the Arabic-speaking Christians for whom many of these books were produced. The most relevant example for the evolution of Arabic printing in Western Europe is, most likely, the lavish edition of the Arabic Psalter commissioned in 1792 in Vienna by Anthimos, the Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem, who added to the text his own commentary and, as a frontispiece, a splendidly engraved portrait of himself, seated in majesty on the patriarchal throne.[165]

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163 Reedited in 1780 and 2000, and still cited today. See Roper, "The Habsburg Empire and printing in languages of the Ottoman Empire", p. 335.

164 Other early European books with Turkish texts printed in Arabic type were Hyeronimus Megiser (1554–1619), *Institutionum linguae Turcicae*, Leipzig, 1612, and André du Ryer, *Rudimenta grammatices linguae Turcicae*, Paris, 1630. The first book printed entirely in Turkish with Arabic type was a translation of the New Testament by William Seaman, financed by the Bible Society, for missionary purposes (Oxford, 1666).

165 *Kitāb al-Zabūr al-Šarīf*, Vienna, at the press of Joseph Kurzböck, 1792. See Roper, "The Vienna Arabic Psalter of 1792 and the role of typography in European-Arab relations in the 18th century and

This cursory survey of the activities of scholars and typographers who printed in Arabic before the opening of Arabic presses in Greater Syria cannot be complete without a reminder of the works of Dimitrie Cantemir, the prince of Moldavia (March–April 1693, then 1710–1711), and prince of the Russian Tsardom from 1711, a member of the Russian Senate from 1721, and councilor of the Tsar Peter I. During the Russian campaign in the Caucasus and at the gates of the Persian Empire (1722–1723, in Dagestan, Derbend, Astrakhan, Bolgar, and Baku), he painstakingly procured Arabic type to produce manifestos in Persian, Arabic, and Tatar. Composed by himself, endorsed and signed by the tsar, these leaflets were meant to be distributed to the populations that the Russian army was going to attack.[166] Cantemir's intention was to convince these people to submit peacefully and thus to avoid all bloodshed. As a humanist thinker, the prince thought that printing would do less harm than swords. Unfortunately, the outcomes of his audacious project were insignificant.

As for the Arabic printing tools and type, the situation was different from country to country. In Italy, beautiful types were manufactured in the Typographia Medicea, which were used both for liturgical books and for secular texts. Then, the Propaganda Fide created their own type and used it for books distributed to the Middle Eastern churches committed to the Latin creed and the Italian missionaries sent there. Other Arabic type was created by the Franciscan Order and the Padua seminary. Dutch printers became famous for their Arabic books and succeeded in selling to English printers the Arabic implements that were used in printing them. Following the Dutch models, new type sets were manufactured in England and used for educational texts (handbooks and dictionaries) and missionary works, mostly Anglican. In France, Savary de Brèves published Catholic books, but his type had a more complicated fate. In Germany, many small presses manufactured their own Arabic type that they used, most times, for a single book.[167]

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earlier", in Johannes Frimmel and Michael Wögerbauer (eds.), *Kommunikation und Information im 18. Jahrhundert: das Beispiel der Habsburgermonarchie*, Wiesbaden, 2009, p. 77–89; Roper, "The Habsburg Empire and printing in languages of the Ottoman Empire", p. 335–336; Vera Tchentsova, "La naissance du portrait dans l'espace orthodoxe: représenter l'auteur dans les livres grecs du début du XVIII^{e} siècle", in Radu Dipratu and Samuel Noble (eds.), *Arabic-Type Books Printed in Wallachia, Istanbul, and Beyond*, Berlin, 2023 (forthcoming).

166 Eugen Lozovan, "D. Cantemir et l'expansion russe au Caucase (1722–1724)", *Revue des études roumaines*, 1974, 13–14, p. 91–102; Andrei Eșanu (coord. ed.), *Neamul Cantemireștilor. Bibliografie*, Chișinău, 2010, p. 122–123; Serge A. Frantsouzoff, "Le Manifeste de Pierre le Grand du 15/26 juillet 1722 rédigé et imprimé par Dimitrie Cantemir. Une mise au point", *RESEE*, 52, 2014, p. 261–274.

167 As for other continents, it is worth recalling that in the United States of America the first work

By the time the first Arabic books were produced in Eastern Europe, in Snagov and Bucharest, Western and Central Europe had produced a multitude of Arabic books, both religious and secular. In spite of the difficulties of manufacturing Arabic type, opening an Arabic language press had become an easy task for the experienced European printers. Undoubtedly, the Middle Eastern, predominantly Maronite, monks and scholars significantly contributed to this achievement by settling – temporarily or definitively – in Leiden, Rome, Paris, and London. Books printed there had two specific destinations: on the one hand, the Catholic or Protestant missions active in the East – and then, the expenses for printing were covered by the institutions that launched the order, such as the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide or the Society of Printers created in Paris by Cardinal Richelieu; on the other hand, the book markets of the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Europe, where editors and printers hoped against hope that their fortune would be made, but to little avail.

1.2 Existing Sources: An Assortment of Motley Information

Compared to the attention given in historical studies of the printed book to Western presses where Arabic books were produced in the 16th–18th centuries, the earliest Arabic presses of the East – Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire – were most often neglected. The 19th century was – and still is – considered the time when the Arabic press was established in the Middle East, primarily by Western European Catholic and Protestant actors.[168] The most popular Arabic translation of the Bible is considered the Van Dyck version printed in Beirut (New Testament, 1860, and Old Testament, 1865), sponsored by the Syrian Mission and the American Bible Society, evidently more widely distributed in the Levant than any previous versions.[169] To counter this Protestant Bible, the Jesuits prepared

to contain Arabic printed text was published in 1821. See Miroslav Krek, "Some Observations on Printing Arabic in America and by Americans Abroad", *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, 1994, 6 (1992), p. 75.

168 According to Ami Ayalon: "As the eighteenth century turned into the nineteenth, the Ottoman and Arab benign disregard for printing began to crack and give way to a different attitude. The new century would witness a gradual and eventually extensive Arab adoption of printing, the birth of a publishing industry, and the emergence of massive reading in Arab societies, changes that would further accelerate in the following century"; cf. Ami Ayalon, *The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership*, Cambridge, 2016, p. 18.

169 The Van Dyck Bible of Beirut presented the Arabic text in such a way that all the old versions specific to each Church of the Arabic-speaking Christianity were lost. Jean Hani described the

another Arabic version, in the Catholic spirit, and entrusted Ibrāhīm al-Yāziğī to revise it. According to Basile Aggoula, "elle n'a été d'aucune utilité pour les masses populaires et est demeurée le privilège d'une élite composée du clergé et des lettrés catholiques".[170]

Eastern European Arabic printed books and Middle Eastern presses of the 18th century such as Aleppo or Ḫinšāra were rarely present in the great records, bibliographies, and studies of Oriental printed books that became, and still are, important sources for research in this field. With the exception of Istanbul, where a press was set up in 1727 by Ibrahim Müteferrika for Turkish in Arabic type, the Eastern presses that printed in Arabic before 1800 were almost unknown until the mid-20th century.

Put together, the original contributions of historians who surveyed the Arabic books printed in Wallachia, Moldavia, and Ottoman Syria by Athanasios Dabbās and Sylvester of Antioch before the year 2000 do not exceed a hundred pages.[171] Most of these sources repeat information published earlier, some of it inaccurate, but adopted as common knowledge after the first publication. A lot of the information given in encyclopedias is imprecise, if not plain wrong. Just a few examples will suffice to prove my point.

David H. Partington, in an otherwise quite informative entry on 'Arabic Printing' in the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (1978),[172] reports on how the first books in Greek and Arabic were printed in Wallachia, and then glides into unchartered territory:

> There does not appear to be sufficient evidence to support the claim that Athanasius [Dabbās – *my note*] published an Arabic Bible in 1700. The press at Snagovo was neglected after the death of Anthime; so the new patriarch, Sylvester, caused a press to be set up first

liturgical rites of the Eastern Churches thus: "À l'intelligence du symbolisme des rites de la messe une aide considérable est apportée par les liturgies des églises orientales, liturgies beaucoup plus stables que celles de l'Occident et riches d'une poésie foisonnante", cf. Hani, *La Divine Liturgie*, p. 14.

170 Basile Aggoula, "Le livre libanais de 1585 à 1900", in Camille Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, Paris, 1982, p. 310–311.

171 Arabic-type books could evidently not be addressed in the three and a half lines devoted to printing in the Romanian Principalities in the otherwise exceptional work *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du livre* edited in three volumes by Pascal Fouché, Daniel Péchoin and Philippe Schuwer for Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie, Paris, 2002–2013.

172 David H. Partington, "Arabic Printing", in Allen Kent, Harold Lancour and Jay E. Daily (exec. eds.), *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, Volume 24. *Printers and Printing to Public Policy, Copyright*, New York and Basel, 1978, p. 54–75.

> in the Monastery of Saint Sābā (Sabbas) in Bucharest and then in Yassy. This press issued Melkite liturgical works, such as the *Liturgikon* in 1745 and the Book of Psalms in 1747.[173]

Here, a combination of inaccurate and vague information is given. Whose claim was it that Athanasios Dabbās published "an Arabic Bible in 1700," and where? We are left in the dark here. Patriarch Sylvester first printed in Iași, at the Monastery of Saint Sava (Sabbas), and never in Bucharest, as I shall explain later. The Book of Psalms printed, according to Partington, either in Bucharest or in Iași, in 1747, was, most probably, published in Beirut in 1752.

In the entry on "Book and Book-making" of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol. 1 (1998), the beginnings of Arabic printing in the Middle East and its first century and a half are described in a disappointingly brief (and somewhat erroneous) passage:

> In the Arabic-speaking world, printing was first introduced through the Church, the first printing press being established at the monastery of Quzahīya [*sic*], south of Tripoli, around 1009/1600. In Aleppo in 1118/1706 Arabic type was introduced into Syria for printing the Gospels, the Psalms and other religious books. Later a press was established in the Greek Orthodox monastery of St George in Beirut. Printing became a thriving business in 1834 when American protestant missionaries moved a press from Malta to Beirut [...].[174]

In his contribution to the volume *The Ottoman City between East and West. Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, co-authored in 1999 with Edhem Eldem and Daniel Goffman, Bruce Masters declares:

> Following in this opening to the West [i.e., the foundation by European missionaries of schools in Aleppo], Athanasius Dabbas, a pro-Catholic metropolitan who had studied printing in Rumania, established the first Arabic printing press within the Ottoman Empire in Aleppo by 1706. It remained in operation for about a decade before opposition from the orthodox faction led to its transfer to Mount Lebanon in 1720.

In making these statements, Masters cites a single source: "Muhammad Raghib al-Tabbakh, *Aʿlam al-nubala bi-taʾrikh Halab al-shaba* [*sic*], reprinted edition (Aleppo, 1977), vol. III, pp. 247–48". Unfortunately, his source had it all wrong, as the situation was contrary to what he claimed: towards 1711, Athanasios Dabbās was deemed too Orthodox-inclined by his disciple and apprentice at the Aleppo press ʿAbdallāh Zāḫir, who decided to part ways with the metropolitan of Aleppo

173 Ibid., p. 57.

174 J. L. Sharpe, "Books and Book-making", in Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, vol. 1, t. 1, London and New York, 1998, p. 159.

and establish a new press in Ḫinšāra, on Mount Lebanon, at the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist (attached to the Melkite Greek Catholic Church after 1724).

Brill's *Encyclopedia of Islam* provides incorrect information in the entry dedicated to *Maṭbaʿa*, where we find the statement, based on Joseph Nasrallah's *L'imprimerie au Liban* (1948), that in "Sinagovo"[175] the prince of Wallachia "Constantin Bassaraba Brancoveanul" installed "an Arabic press which edited numerous liturgical books in Arabic" and "seems to have ceased production in 1704" – all information to be corrected, as I shall explain below.[176]

While ground-breaking in terms of the research of the features of Arabic types and their evolution, Emanuela Conidi's latest contribution to the field, published in a book edited by Titus Nemeth in 2023 (to which I shall return),[177] still gives an imprecise idea about "the Arabic types used in two liturgical publications produced by Dabbās in the monastery of Snagov, near Bucharest, before moving to Syria."[178] In reality, the two books were produced in two different printing presses of Wallachia, one in the Monastery of Snagov (the Book of the Divine Liturgies, 1701), the other in Bucharest (the Horologion, 1702). The information that Antim the Iberian had "no knowledge of Arabic"[179] is only partially correct: he learned the Arabic alphabet when living in Jerusalem in his youth, as I shall explain later.

Recently, Western historians of Arabic book printing have started to doubt the reliability of the information circulated by the old sources – some dating from the first decades of the 19th century – and have asserted that more research is necessary, based on documents and the direct survey of the printed books, to clarify the contribution of typographers in the Romanian Principalities to the transfer of the printing technology and expertise to the Arabic-speaking communities of the Ottoman Empire.

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175 The spelling of the Romanian placename 'Snagov' has put to the test more than one historian of book-printing: For example, "Snagof ou Synaguphu" in Deschamps, *Dictionnaire de géographie ancienne et moderne*, col. 1182. In the current catalogue of the Vatican Apostolic Library, the entry on the 1701 Greek and Arabic Book of the Divine Liturgies indicates that it was printed at "Synagobon".

176 G. W. Shaw, "Maṭbaʿa", in P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, vol. 6, 2012, p. 794–807 (on printing "In the Arab World", p. 794–799). Moreover, calling Athanasios Dabbās, on p. 796, "the Melkite patriarch of Aleppo" is inaccurate: Dabbās was, at the time he printed books, metropolitan of the Church of Antioch for the eparchy of Aleppo.

177 Emanuela Conidi, "An Approach to the Study of Arabic Foundry Type", in Titus Nemeth (ed.), *Arabic Typography. History and Practice*, Salenstein, 2023, p. 11–55.

178 Ibid., p. 43.

179 Ibid., n. 68.

The studies conducted by Romanian specialists of book history were previously hampered by the lack of knowledge of Arabic, which prevented a thorough survey of the texts contained in these books. The study of early printing needs to focus on two different features of the book, seen as a cultural item produced by human hands: the aspect of content – *what* was printed – and that of form – *how* it was printed. For an accurate description of the book, both aspects require a *de visu* survey of a copy from each print run. If specific details of the physical characteristics of the book can be recorded and described without necessarily addressing the content of the book, in comments devoted to the text, researchers cannot do without a good knowledge of the language (or languages) used in composing the book and, often, of other languages that allow them access to studies published about it.

On the other hand, Arabic books printed in the 18th century were not studied thoroughly – as contents, form, type, editors, printers, presses, dating – neither in the West nor in the East, not only because of language issues but also due to a lack of direct access to copies of the books printed in Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, most of them missing even from the largest of European and Middle Eastern public libraries. Historians who devoted their attention to these books could often consult only one or two of them. The well-known French scholar and bibliophile Baron Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) examined the Book of the Divine Liturgies of 1701 (Snagov) and the Horologion of 1702 (Bucharest) in the Royal Library of Paris. He then received from the French consul in Syria two of the books printed in Aleppo: The Gospel (1706) and the Book of Prophecies (1708).[180] Wahid Gdoura (Ar. Qaddūra), who chose the beginnings of Arabic printing in Istanbul and Syria as the topic of his PhD thesis,[181] discretely confesses in a footnote of the resulting book that he had only seen two of the titles printed in Aleppo: "Cette étude sera limitée, car je n'ai pu consulter de ces livres, à cause de leur rareté, que l'Évangile de 1706 et les Homélies de 1711."[182] We can

180 As discussed in Silvestre de Sacy, *Magasin encyclopédique*, t. I, Paris, 1814, p. 201, and Émile Picot, "Notice biographique et bibliographique sur l'imprimeur Anthime d'Ivir, Métropolitain de Valachie", *Nouveaux Mélanges Orientaux*, Paris, 1886, p. 515–560.

181 Doctoral thesis defended at Université Sorbonne – Paris IV on January 15, 1983. The jury comprised Dominique Sourdel, president, and Dominique Chevallier and Nikita Eliseef, members.

182 Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie*, p. 146, n. 104. His knowledge of the history of the Church of Antioch seems to have needed some more research as well: on p. 149, he states that "it is only around 1720 that the ex-patriarch [Athanasios Dabbās] reconverted to Orthodoxy and declared war on Zakhir and the Catholic party". However, there is solid proof that Dabbās was attached to the Orthodox spirit from a much earlier date.

also conclude from Joseph Nasrallah's comments that he only surveyed a few of the books printed by Athanasios Dabbās in Wallachia and Aleppo.

A recent testimony to this situation is presented in the article "Aleppo: The first ground for Arab-European cultural encounters in the early modern period" by Otared Haidar, who found that in histories of the book, the subject of the beginnings of Arabic printing in the East remained a marginal one.[183] While historical data concerning the first books printed in the Ottoman lands has lately captured the attention of Arab academic circles, the Romanian side of the story has not been properly investigated up to now. This assertion made by Haidar is conclusive: "The history of Arab print culture that preceded the establishment of Arab press and journalism is completely absent from most of the major resources of modern Arabic literature and culture and is discussed briefly and hurriedly in the rest."[184]

Since the beginning of the 19th century, the two Greek and Arabic books printed by Athanasios III Dabbās together with the Wallachian printer Antim the Iberian and the twelve titles (in eleven volumes) printed by him alone in Aleppo after 1705 have been the focus of several brief notes written by historians of printing preoccupied with the onset of modernity and the relations between the Arabic-speaking Christians and Orthodox Christians of Eastern Europe. The first records concerning these books were given in old catalogues and works of famous bibliographers. Among the first was Christian Friedrich von Schnurrer[185] (1742–1822), a theologian, Oriental scholar, and historian of early printing, chancellor of the University of Tübingen, whose annotated catalogue *Bibliotheca Arabica* (Halle, 1811) became an inescapable resource for the field, despite its shortcomings and lacunae. Another such bibliographer was Alexander George Ellis (1858–1942), a curator in the Department of Oriental Books and Manuscripts of the British Museum (before the transfer of the book collections to the British Library), who composed, together with Alexander S. Fulton and others, the *Catalogue of Arabic Printed Books in the British Museum*. A third was Émile Picot, a French scholar and bibliophile (1844–1918)[186] who provided in his essay "Notice

183 In *Journal of Semitic Studies*, *Supplement* 28, 2012, p. 127–138. This is a special issue published by the Oxford University Press: *From Ancient Arabia to Modern Cairo: Papers from the BRISMES Annual Conference 2009, The University of Manchester*.

184 Otared Haidar, "Aleppo: The First Ground for Arab-European Cultural Encounters", in *From Ancient Arabia to Modern Cairo: Papers from the BRISMES Annual Conference 2009, The University of Manchester*, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Supplement 28, 2012, p. 129.

185 Quite often, he was mistakenly named in subsequent sources "Schnürrer", including by Joseph Nasrallah.

186 Picot worked as a secretary for Charles I, the King of Romania, in 1866-1867, then a vice-consul

biographique et bibliographique sur l'imprimeur Anthime d'Ivir, Métropolitain de Valachie" a thorough presentation of Antim the Iberian's printed works, including the two Greek and Arabic books printed in Snagov and Bucharest.

A few of the books printed in Arabic with help from the Romanian Principalities were recorded in the monumental *Bibliografia românească veche* (*BRV*, the descriptive catalogue of the *Early Romanian Printed Books*), observing the rigorous scientific methodology developed for this work of utmost importance for the history of the Romanians' written culture. The descriptions included in *BRV* I relied on the Greek version of the bilingual Book of the Divine Liturgies of 1701 (Snagov) and the Horologion of 1702 (Bucharest). Here, excerpts of the Greek texts were transcribed, followed by the translation done by Constantin Erbiceanu, an erudite Romanian scholar of Greek language and literature.[187]

Some of these books were also surveyed by Fr Cyrille Charon (Kiril Korolevskij), a Greek Catholic monk born in France, professor at the 'Saint John Chrysostom' Patriarchal College in Beirut.[188] He wrote theological comments and bibliographical descriptions of the Arabic books printed by Antim the Iberian with Athanasios Dabbās in his works *Le rite byzantin dans les Patriarcats melkites, Alexandrie – Antioche – Jérusalem*[189] and the *Histoire des Patriarcats Melkites (Alexandrie, Antioche, Jérusalem) depuis le schisme monophysite du sixième siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, t. III. *Les Institutions. Liturgie, hiérarchie, statistique, organisation, listes épiscopales*.

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of France in Timișoara (South-Western Romania). An expert in Latin and Romanian studies, he was a professor at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) in Paris between 1875 and 1909. See Cécile Folschweiller (ed.), *Émile Picot, secrétaire du prince de Roumanie. Correspondance de Bucarest, 1866–1867*, Paris, 2020.

187 Excerpts from the first Greek version published by Constantin Erbiceanu in *BOR*, 13, 1889–1890, p. 531–539, were reproduced by Alexandru Papadopol-Calimach in his report "Un episod din istoria tipografiei în România", *AARMSI*, S. II, t. 18, 1895–1896, p. 141–144.

188 Born on December 16, 1878, in Caen, France (d. April 19, 1959, in Rome), Jean François Joseph Charon adopted the name 'Cyril' in Beirut in 1902, when he was ordained to the priesthood by Cyril VIII, the Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. In 1908, while residing in Rome, he applied to join the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church headed by the Metropolitan Andrei Szepticky, receiving the approval in October 1909. Having settled in Rome, he worked at the Vatican Library and was a consultant of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide. Under the names 'Cyrille Charon' and 'Kiril Korolevskij'/'Karalevsky', he published several works that soon became fundamental sources for the history of the Eastern Churches and Christian Arabic culture. He opposed the Latinization and total subordination of the Eastern Catholic churches united with Rome, as revealed by his essay "L'Uniatisme. Définition. Causes. Effets. Étendue. Dangers. Remèdes", published in *Irénikon – Collection*, 1927, 5–6, p. 129–190.

189 Pr. Cyrille Charon, *Le Rite byzantin dans les Patriarcats melkites, Alexandrie – Antioche – Jérusalem*, Rome, 1908.

It is worth mentioning here the exceptional role that this erudite historian of the Eastern Churches played in the distribution of knowledge of the Arabic books printed with help from the Romanian Principalities. In 1923–1924, Charon sojourned in Bucharest, where he was in contact with Nicolae Iorga and other prominent Romanian historians. His friendship with Ioan Bianu, the director of the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, allowed them to pursue a substantial research work on the books printed in Romanian lands.

Ioan Bianu was the organizer and director of the Library of the Romanian Academy between 1879 and 1935, and a great specialist in early printing in the Romanian lands. Until 1928, he taught the history of Romanian literature at the University of Bucharest. He devised a vast program of recording and describing the books printed within the borders of the Romanian Principalities and launched a multi-volumes series of books that contain the richest scientific bibliography of Romanian printing, intended as a "national bibliography of Romania". Published in five volumes in 1903–1944, this monumental work that received the title *Bibliografia românească veche* (commonly known as *BRV*) provides a complete, systematic, and illustrated catalogue of the books printed in the Romanian territories since the very beginning of printing, in 1508, until modern times (1830). Since the publication of this series, the books printed in present-day Romania between 1508 and 1830 are called 'CRV', *carte românească veche*, i.e., 'Romanian early printed books' (labelled as such in Romanian catalogues and bibliographies). Bianu's academic cooperation with Cyrille Charon on the latter's journeys to Romania is evoked in the outstanding autobiography of Charon published in 2006 by Mons. Giuseppe M. Croce.[190]

As reflected in the latest descriptive record of books printed in the Romanian Principalities that are now in the Vatican Library (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; below, 'BAV'), recently published by the Romanian historians of printing Anca Tatay and Bogdan Andriescu,[191] Charon's contribution to the development of the BAV collections is marked on fifty-eight Cyrillic-type books and four Greek-type books in the Romanian corpus, by means of a round stamp where his name is abbreviated 'K'.[192] Charon brought to Bucharest not only accurate information

190 Giuseppe M. Croce, *Cyrille Korolevskij, Kniga bytija moego (Le livre de ma vie). Mémoires autobiographiques*, edition and notes, t. I–V, Vatican City, 2006. For Charon's connections with Bianu (and Hodoș), see t. III, p. 506, n. 1028, 537, n. 1096, 591, n. 1221, 592, 596, 599, 805, n. 1662.
191 Anca Tatay and Bogdan Andriescu, *Carte românească veche și modernă la Roma, în Biblioteca Apostolică Vaticană (sec. XVII–XIX). Catalog / Libri romeni antichi e moderni a Roma, nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (sec. XVII–XIX). Catalogo* (*Studi e testi*, t. 546), Vatican City, 2021.
192 Alongside a 'T' for Cardinal Eugène Tisserant (1884–1972), librarian and head of the BAV Archives. See Tatay and Andriescu, *Carte românească veche și modernă la Roma*, p. 27

concerning the first Arabic books printed in Ottoman Syria but also rare books that enriched the collections of B.A.R. Bucharest.[193] On May 3, 1913, while presenting to his colleagues of the Romanian Academy one of the books printed by the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch in Iași (in 1746), recently donated to the Library by Fr Cyril Charon, Ioan Bianu, the director of the B.A.R., declared that "on the existence of an Arabic press in Iași we had no knowledge until now."[194] Charon's confidence in the bibliographical work carried out in Romania is also worth noting. He used the descriptions of the *BRV* for the books that he had no access to: for example, that of the Greek and Arabic Horologion printed in 1702 at Bucharest.[195] Charon was the first theologian with an expert knowledge of the history of the Eastern Churches – and the Greek and Arabic liturgical literature composed in them – who carefully studied the books printed in Wallachia and Moldavia for the Arabic-speaking Christians in the 18th century. His research was cited by most of the subsequent historians of Arabic printing.

Marcu Beza (1882–1949) was a Romanian diplomat who traveled far and wide in the Middle East and collected information and items connected to the traces of Romanian culture preserved in those parts of the world.[196] He mentioned the Arabic books printed in the Romanian Principalities in his works "Biblioteci

("Introductory Study" by Anca Tatay) and the relevant entries on these books.

193 He received in exchange at least one book from the collections of the Library of the Romanian Academy, now in the collections of the Vatican Library: a copy of the *Tomos Charas* printed at Râmnic in 1705, at the press of Antim the Iberian. See ibid., p. 16, 30, and 357–359 (description of the catalogue item).

194 Ioan Bianu, note in *AARPAD*, S. II, t. 35, 1912–1913, p. 114.

195 Charon, *Histoire des Patriarcats Melkites*, p. 103, n. 2.

196 Of Macedonian origin, Marcu Beza graduated from the University of Bucharest in 1908, and pursued his studies in London and Oxford (from 1909 to 1914). Born in a wealthy family, he traveled on his own expense in the Balkan countries, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Mount Athos, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Mount Sinai. He continually sought traces of the Romanians' presence and contribution to the cultures of the Eastern peoples and Christian communities. He pursued an outstanding diplomatic career: he was consul general of Romania to Great Britain in 1920–1933, cultural counselor of the Romanian Legation in London in 1920–1932, and, from 1933, consul general of Romania in Jerusalem. He taught Romanian language and literature at King's College, London, in 1920–1932. He published several books in Romanian and even more in English: *Papers on the Rumanian People and Literature*, London, 1920; *Paganism in Roumanian Folklore*, London and Toronto, 1928; *Shakespeare in Roumania*, London, 1931; *Lands of Many Religions: Palestine, Syria, Cyprus and Mount Sinai*, London, [1934]; *Byzantine Art in Roumania*, New York and London, 1940; *Bessarabia and Transylvania, an Explanation. With Five Maps*, [London], [1940]; *Frontiers of Rumania. With two maps*, London, 1941; *Achievements of the Small Nations*, [London], 1943; *The Rumanian Church*, London, 1943; *Heritage of Byzantium*, [London], 1947.

mănăstireşti în Siria, Atena şi insula Hios" ("Monastic Libraries of Syria, Athens, and the Island of Chios") and *Urme româneşti în Răsăritul ortodox* (*Romanian Traces in the Orthodox East*).[197]

In Bucharest, Constantin I. Karadja (d. 1947), a passionate bibliophile and researcher of the early printed books, published in 1940 the coat of arms of the Brâncoveanu family printed in the Aleppo Psalter of 1706, from the copy of the B.A.R. Bucharest, in the chapter devoted to *Die alte rumänische Buchdruckerkunst* in *Geschichte der Buchdruckerkunst*.[198]

On the basis of information collected from the works of Cyril Charon, Christian Fr. von Schnurrer, Abel Couturier, and several catalogues of old Arabic books composed by Paul Sbath and Louis Cheikho, the German scholar of Oriental studies Georg Graf mentions some of the books printed in Arabic by Athanasios Dabbās in the first volume of his massive *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*,[199] while in volume III, when presenting Dabbās's activities as a patriarch of the Church of Antioch, he includes a brief passage on his printing works.[200]

Dan Simonescu (1902–1993), one of the major historians of early printing and written culture in Romania, studied the topic of Arabic printed books to which Antim the Iberian contributed, especially after 1930 when, following in the footsteps of his professor Ioan Bianu, he started surveying the documents and early Arabic books in the collections of the B.A.R. Bucharest.[201] To understand the Arabic texts included in these books, Dan Simonescu later addressed the Syrian priest Emil Murakade (Ar. Muraqqada), who had come to Bucharest from Damascus on a grant from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch to study theology at the University of Bucharest.[202] Residing in Romania for thirteen

197 Marcu Beza, "Biblioteci mănăstireşti în Siria, Atena şi insula Hios", *Academia Română. Memoriile Secțiunii Literare*, S. III, t. 8, 1936–1938, p. 11; Marcu Beza, *Urme româneşti în Răsăritul ortodox*, p. 163–165.

198 Constantin I. Karadja, "Die alte rumänische Buchdruckerkunst", in *Geschichte der Buchdruckerkunst*, Leipzig, 1940, unnumbered plate.

199 Graf, *GCAL* I, p. 633–638.

200 Graf, *GCAL* III, p. 128, with a reference to the first volume of this series.

201 See Virgil Cândea, "Contribuția Profesorului Dan Simonescu la istoriografia imprimeriei arabe", in *Centenar Dan Simonescu. Cartea și biblioteca. Contribuții la istoria culturii românești*, Bucharest, 2002, p. 182–184.

202 See Ioana Feodorov, "La Damasc, în căutarea unui prieten al României: Părintele Emil Murakade", *Tabor*, 2015, 5, p. 74–81. Recently, Răzvan Bucuroiu has started preparing, under my supervision, a PhD thesis devoted to Emil Murakade's life and works in Bucharest and Damascus, in order to shed light on the cultural outcomes of his Romanian sojourn.

years, Murakade came to master Romanian so well that he was able to translate literary and theological texts both from Romanian into Arabic and vice-versa.[203]

Simonescu and Murakade surveyed together the six Arabic books held at the B.A.R. Bucharest. Simonescu declared that in 1935, after Ioan Bianu died, he found 'in a safe in his office' Arabic sources and printed materials concerning the Arabic books printed in the Romanian Principalities, which he could only research after that date.[204] In 1939, the first fruit of the collaboration between Simonescu and Murakade appeared, with the publication of a jointly-authored essay in the academic series *Cercetări literare*: "Tipar românesc pentru arabi în secolul al XVIII-lea" ("Romanian Printing for the Arabs in the 18th Century").[205] The Appendix begins, on p. 15, with the following note by Dan Simonescu: "The following translations and abstracts are the work of my collaborator Mr. Emil Muracade of Damascus, sent by the Patriarchate of Antioch for higher education at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest". Simonescu placed in the Appendix the descriptions of four books in the B.A.R. Bucharest, which were composed by Murakade. These books had been 'placed in storage by I. Bianu" and then given to Simonescu by Gheorghe Țițeica, general secretary of the Romanian Academy, to be described and included in *BRV* IV. They were: the Gospel printed in Aleppo in 1706, first edition (p. 15–16), and the one bound two years later, in 1708, with the financial support of Hetman Ivan Mazepa (p. 17–18); the Oktoechos (Paraklitiki), Aleppo, 1711; Nektarios, the patriarch of Jerusalem, *The Rule of Justice and the Transmission of Truth*, and Eustratios Argentis, *Manual against the Roman Popes' Infallibility*, printed together in one volume in 1746, in Iași. The descriptions and translations made by Emil Murakade were included in *BRV* IV.[206] Beside citing the 1939 article in every note dedicated to an Arabic book, Dan Simonescu explicitly

203 In 1946, Emil Murakade returned to Syria, where he served as a priest at the Maryamiyya Cathedral of the Greek Orthodox in Damascus. In 1967, he was the general secretary of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Three pages written by him and signed in green ink, which are attached to the Aleppo Gospel of 1706 in the collections of the B.A.R., attest his good knowledge of the Romanian language. Virgil Cândea met Murakade in Damascus in 1967 and noted that he still spoke Romanian fluently (cf. V. Cândea, "Contribuția Profesorului Dan Simonescu la istoriografia imprimeriei arabe", p. 182–184).

204 Dan Simonescu, "Cărți arabe tipărite de români în secolul al XVIII-lea (1701–1747)", *BOR*, 82, 1964, 5–6, p. 540, n. 44.

205 Dan Simonescu and Emil Muracade, "Tipar românesc pentru arabi în secolul al XVIII-lea", in *Cercetări literare publicate de N. Cartojan*, Bucharest, t. III, 1939, p. 1–14, with an Appendix on pp. 15-26 and facsimiles on p. 29–32.

206 *BRV* IV, p. 32–34 (CRV 154A and 155A), p. 38–40 (CRV 161A), and p. 61–67 (CRV 250C and 250D).

mentioned Murakade's contribution at the end of the description dedicated to the book of Nektarios and Argentis (Iași, 1746).[207]

Emil Murakade's descriptions of the Arabic books printed in the 18th century held in Bucharest have remained the most accurate and detailed available in printed form. According to Dan Simonescu, his work together with Murakade lasted for only a brief time, 1938-1939. Murakade is most likely the one who in 1938 helped professor Simonescu get connected with the Syrian historian ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf, who sent him his important article "Maṭbaʿa rūmāniyya al-urṯūḏuksiyya al-ʿarabiyya al-anṭākiyyā" ("A Romanian Printing Press [for] the Antiochian Arab Orthodox"),[208] which he had published in Damascus.[209] Translated by Murakade into Romanian, this article provided professor Simonescu with rich information previously unknown in Romania, since al-Maʿlūf had surveyed the Arabic forewords of several books that were not held in Romanian collections. Murakade possibly helped the professor to obtain access to other Arabic resources, some containing illustrations, such as the photo of the Patriarch Sylvester's signature in Greek and Arabic published by Simonescu in "Impression de livres arabes et karamanlis en Valachie et en Moldavie au XVIIIe siècle".[210] Together, they supplemented and corrected the (approximate and scattered) information collected from the old sources, such as the above-mentioned works by Christian Fr. von Schnurrer, Alexander George Ellis, Émile Picot, and Cyrille Charon. Dan Simonescu revisited the topic of printing for the Arab Christians two decades later, rephrasing the information given to him by Murakade in a more elaborate and accurate version for his article "Impression de livres arabes et karamanlis".

For the young Syrian who arrived in Bucharest in his formative years, working alongside Dan Simonescu was a real training period. He had the chance to form a close relationship with the intellectual and ethical model that this exceptional scholar embodied, not only for him but for several generations of Romanian historians of printing and written culture.

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207 The article signed together with Murakade was later republished by Dan Simonescu as "Cărți arabe tipărite de români în secolul al XVIIIlea (1701–1747)" in *BOR*, 82, 1964, 5–6, p. 524–561.

208 This is one of the sources mentioned by Dan Simonescu in his article "Impression de livres arabes et karamanlis en Valachie et en Moldavie au XVIIIe siècle", *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, 1967, V–VI, p. 55, n. 21, and p. 61, n. 42, but his translation of its title, "La typographie arabe de la Roumanie orthodoxe à Antioche", is inaccurate.

209 In *Al-Niʿma* (journal of the Patriarchate of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch), 1911, 3, p. 44–56.

210 Simonescu, "Impression de livres arabes et karamanlis en Valachie et en Moldavie au XVIIIe siècle", p. 49–75. See also the notes in the study of Simonescu and Muracade "Tipar românesc pentru arabi în secolul al XVIII-lea", and the details in *BRV* IV.

The studies published by Dan Simonescu with Emil Murakade's help became a classical resource for the historians of Arabic printing, both in Romania and abroad. Simonescu is often cited in foreign publications whose authors addressed the transfer of the printing techniques to the Arab East, as I shall discuss below. In Romania, all the authors who devoted a few pages or lines to this topic cite Simonescu's works.[211]

Between 1982 and 1985, three works marked the advances in the knowledge of early printing in Arabic: the catalogue of the exhibition *Le Livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900* coordinated by Camille Aboussouan (Paris, 1982), Josée Balagna's book *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident (XVI^e^, XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles*) (Paris, 1984), and the published form of Wahid Gdoura's PhD thesis, *Le Début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie: Évolution de l'environnement culturel (1706–1787)* (Tunis, 1985).

Prepared in 1982 for the 'Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock' Art Museum in Beirut, the exhibition *Le Livre et le Liban* was relocated to Paris as a consequence of the insecure situation in Lebanon. Under the direction of Camille Aboussouan, the permanent delegate of Lebanon to UNESCO in Paris, the exhibition was opened in the presence of Jack Lang, the French Minister of Culture. The event presented to the French public the history of the written and printed culture of Lebanon and neighboring countries by means of an exceptional collection of exhibits: manuscripts, printed books, maps, letters, engravings, book illustrations. The items were created either in large centers of calligraphy of the Syriac and Arab scribes, or in Western European scriptoria and presses, and later in Lebanon, in either Muslim or Christian milieus. Considered a major cultural event in France, the exhibition lives on in the memory of both the French and the Lebanese audiences.[212] Its catalogue, a collection of studies dedicated to the manuscript works and printed books of the Eastern Mediterranean countries, became a much sought-after book because of the expert comments it contains, authored

211 For example: Diac. asist. Ioan Rămureanu, "Luptător pentru ortodoxie", *BOR*, 74, 1956, 8–9, especially p. 836–853; Pr. Ilie Gheorghiță, "Tipografia arabă din Mănăstirea Sfântul Sava și venirea lui Silvestru, patriarhul Antiohiei, la Iași", *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, 34, 1958, 5–6, p. 418–423; Florența Ivaniuc, "Tipar de carte bisericească pentru arabi în vremea domnului Constantin Brâncoveanu", *BOR*, 94, 1976, 7–8, p. 792–797.

212 For example, here is the first paragraph of the *Préface* contributed by Marie-Renée Morin to Josée Balagna's book *L'imprimerie arabe en Occident*, on p. 9: "En 1982, nous furent rappelés nos liens séculaires avec l'Orient méditerranéen. Deux grandes expositions: *Le Livre et le Liban* et *l'Orient des Provençaux* nous remirent en mémoire nos relations économiques et culturelles, relations dont les réussites, aléas et péripéties se retrouvent à travers la grande aventure de l'imprimerie en arabe tentée par des Occidentaux."

by Georges Skaff, Jean Salem, Jean Ferron, Henri Dalmais, Sobhi Mahmassani, Camille Aboussouan, Donatella Nebbiai, Jean Aucagne S. J., Gérald Duverdier, Nasser Gemayel, Paul Khalil Aouad, and others. The Romanian historian Virgil Cândea (d. 2007), one of the chief coordinators of the exhibition, contributed to the catalogue with a text that highlights the connections between the Romanians and the Arabic-speaking Christians: "Dès 1701: Dialogue roumanolibanais par le livre et l'imprimerie" (on p. 283–293).[213]

Possibly not entirely unrelated to this event in Paris, in 1984 Josée Balagna published in her book a record with commentaries of the Western books printed in Arabic type from 1514 to the end of the 18th century, which she studied at the National Library of France in Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France).[214] Presented as an appendix to her work, the list of books described by Balagna on p. 135–146 (mentioning the BnF shelfmark of each item) allows a comprehensive picture of the printing activities in Western Europe, including all the major presses in Rome, Leiden, Milan, Paris, London, Antwerp, etc.

Author of a PhD thesis devoted to the beginnings of printing in the East, Wahid Gdoura followed in the footsteps of Josée Balagna and studied the same collection of books held by the BnF in Paris. He added to his research, published in French, a great number of Arabic sources, mostly published in Middle Eastern journals. In 1985, Gdoura published a second version of his book in Arabic, with a few additions and improvements. He reorganized his conclusions, with supplementary details, in his work "Le Livre arabe imprimé en Europe: une étape importante dans les relations Orient-Occident (1514–1700)", a contribution to the volume of studies collected by him together with Angela Nuovo, Maurice Bormans, and Abdeljellil Temimi, *Études sur le dialogue interculturel euro-arabe: les premiers ouvrages publiés en arabe en Occident*, Zaghouan and Riyad, 1993, p. 7–33.

Joseph Nasrallah presented the Lebanese contribution to printing in Syriac and Arabic type in his book *L'imprimerie au Liban* (Beirut, 1948). Opened by a foreword by Charles Corm, the book was published under the aegis of the Lebanese UNESCO Commission. In it, Nasrallah discusses the activity of the Aleppo press, providing minimal information on the books printed there by Athanasios Dabbās,

213 On Virgil Cândea's research carried out in Lebanon and published works connected to the artistic and literary heritage of the Antiochian Christians, see Ioana Feodorov, "Through the Looking-Glass. Remembering the First Exhibition of Melkite Icons at the Sursock Museum in Beirut, May–June 1969", in Feodorov, Heyberger and Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, p. 339–358.

214 A similar endeavor, but much more limited in scope and richly illustrated, is that of Mariette Atallah in her essay "Early Arabic Printing in Europe" published in *MELA Notes*, 2018, 91, p. 43–67.

without any mention of the Arabic books printed in the Romanian Principalities. Later, based on Dan Simonescu's articles, Nasrallah included brief notes concerning the books printed in Snagov, Bucharest, and Iași in his work *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite du V^ème^ au XX^ème^ siècle*.[215]

Anṭuwān Qayṣar Dabbās (Antoine César Dabbās), a descendant of the Beirut branch of the Patriarch Athanasios III's family, published together with Naḫla Raššū a monograph devoted to the life and works of his illustrious relative, *Tārīḫ al-ṭibā'a al-'arabiyya fī al-Mašriq. Al-Baṭriyark Aṯanāsīyūs al-ṯāliṯ Dabbās, 1685–1724* (Beirut, 2008).[216] An attempt to record and describe the books printed at the Aleppo press is presented on p. 102–105, with some inaccuracies and lacunae, mostly resulting from the unawareness of the relevant Romanian sources. Otherwise, the book provides information from a direct source on the works written and printed by Athanasios Dabbās, the family archive and collection of manuscripts and printed books, including, at the end, an interesting genealogical tree.

An exceptional source of information for the topics that I am discussing in the present work are the catalogues of collections preserved in monasteries across Lebanon and Syria. One of them is the *Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts of the Ṣaydnāyā Monastery* (*Waṣf li-l-kutub wa-l-maḫṭūṭāt. Dayr Sayyida Ṣaydnāyā al-baṭriyarkī*), published in 1986 by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus. Eight copies of the first Arabic books printed for the Antiochian Christians with support from the Romanian Principalities are recorded in this catalogue.

The need to shed light on the first Christian Arabic books printed in Snagov, Bucharest, and Iași with Romanian printing tools preoccupied Virgil Cândea for many years. This preoccupation drove him on Lebanese and Syrian roads, looking for copies of these rare books in collections and monasteries of the Byzantine-rite churches. In several of his published works, he presented the conclusions of his research on early Arabic printing, underlining the essential role that printers in the Romanian Principalities, and first of all Antim the Iberian, played in the transfer of the printing expertise to the Christian East. His surveys of Middle Eastern archives, libraries, and collections allowed him to make significant discoveries in

215 Nasrallah, *L'imprimerie au Liban*, p. 14–15, 17–25; *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 144–146; *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 87–89. See also Joseph Nasrallah, "Les imprimeries melchites au XVIII^e^ siècle", *Proche-Orient Chrétien*, XXXVI, 1986, fasc. III–IV, p. 232–241.

216 See my review of this book in *RESEE*, 46, 2009, 1–4, p. 362–364 (accesible online at www.resee.ro).

connection with the relations between the Romanians and the Arabic-speaking Orthodox, which he commented in many of his published studies.[217]

I addition to these resources, a certain number of documents are held by the National Archives of Romania in Bucharest which help researchers to understand the background of the visits that the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch made in the Romanian Principalities, his connections with rulers and upper clergy in Iași and Bucharest, and especially the circumstances for his securing the Monastery of Saint Spyridon (the Ancient) as a metochion of the Church of Antioch from the prince of Wallachia Constantin Mavrocordat in 1746. As this metochion came together with income from the lands, orchards, and shops that belonged to the monastery, this event had significant consequences for the Antiochian Christians. It also helped the patriarch advance his printing project, since an important activity connected to the manufacture of Arabic type took place there. Fr Vasile Radu, a passionate researcher and translator of Christian Arabic texts, recorded the letters and documents preserved in Bucharest that reflect the results of Patriarch Sylvester's residence in Moldavia and Wallachia in the mid-18th century. In his article "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei,"[218] he defines the features of Patriarch Sylvester as an Orthodox scholar, presented his printing activities, cited the Arabic foreword of the books that he printed in Iași, and describes two items that remained in Bucharest after his travels: an Arabic and Greek inscription on the front wall of the Church of Saint Spyridon, recalling the circumstances of its consecration in 1747, and an icon of the patron saint of the church, presented by the Patriarch Sylvester to the parish on the same occasion.

As I mentioned above, a collection of Greek letters exchanged by the Patriarch Sylvester with Moldavian and Wallachian clerics, boyars and their wives was kept for a long time in the Library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus.[219] This manuscript, whose record in the library inventory

217 Virgil Cândea, "Une politique culturelle commune roumano-arabe dans la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle", *Bulletin de l'AIESEE*, 3, 1965, 1, p. 51–56; Virgil Cândea, "La culture roumaine et le Proche-Orient", in *IIIe Congrès International d'Études du Sud-Est Européen. Histoire, B 2. Relations culturelles du Sud-Est européen avec le monde méditerranéen et Pontique. Co-rapports*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 54–71; Virgil Cândea, "Beginning with 1701: The Romanian–Lebanese Dialogue through Books and Printing", *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, 1983, 11, p. 26–33, reedited (revised and improved) as "Dès 1701: Dialogue roumano-libanais par le livre et l'imprimerie", in Aboussouan (dir.), *Le livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900*, p. 283–293.

218 Pr. Vasile Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și Patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei", *Revista istorică română*, 1933, 3, p. 11–31.

219 In 1860, the archive of the Patriarchate of Antioch in Damascus suffered a severe fire. Some of the documents survived, including the manuscript discussed here.

is labelled 'Doc. Arabe nr. 71', was mentioned for the first time by Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, who cited a letter dated February 10, 1739, addressed by the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch to the *stolnic*[220] Roset of Wallachia.[221] Fr Vasile Radu mentions this collection in his above-mentioned article, where he expresses his opinion that "No. 71 in the collection of Arabic manuscripts at the Patriarchate of Antioch still needs to be surveyed."[222] His note relied on several articles consecrated to Patriarch Sylvester's biography by the Archimandrite Clement Karnapas, published in vols. I-II, 1905–1907, of *Nea Sion*, the journal of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.[223]

Marcu Beza saw the MS no. 71 while in Damascus around 1936, when the patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch kindly left at his disposal for a few days "two eighteenth-century Greek manuscripts: one by Athanasios Dabbas, *History of the Antiochian Patriarchs* – and the second containing the letters of the patriarch Sylvestrus".[224] Thus, he he had the privilege of seeing the manuscript codex that contained Greek letters exchanged by the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch and several princes and boyars of the Romanian Principalities before and after his travels to Iași and Bucharest (1735–1749).[225] In his book *Urme româneşti*

220 The *stolnic* (< Sl. *stolnik* < *stol*, 'table') was an officer of the court in the Romanian Principalities, a boyar in charge of the prince's table.

221 Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitikē Vivliothēkē ētoi Katalogos tōn en tais vivliothēkes tou Hagiōtatou Apostolikou te kai Katholikou Orthodoxou Patriarchikou Thronou tōn Hierosolymōn kai Pasēs Palaistinēs apokeimenōn hellēnikōn kōdikōn*, t. 4, Saint Petersburg, 1899, p. 203–218.

222 Radu mentions that there was also preserved a *Record of the Grants Collected during His Travel by Sylvester of Antioch* (*Catastihul ajutoarelor bănești strânse în călătoria lui Silvestru al Antiohiei*). See Radu, "Mănăstirea Sf. Spiridon și Patriarhul Silvestru al Antiohiei", p. 28, n. 5.

223 The secrets of the Damascus manuscripts collection were unveiled by the exceptional work of Ronney el Gemayel, Léna Dabaghy and Mona Dabaghy in "Les manuscrits du Patriarcat Grec-Orthodoxe de Damas dans l'Histoire de Joseph Nasrallah et Rachid Haddad. Index et concordance avec le catalogue d'Élias Gebara", in Željko Paša (ed.), *Between the Cross and the Crescent. Studies in Honor of Samir Khalil Samir, S. J., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, Rome, 2018, p. 223–276. Unfortunately, as the letters I am referring to were written in Greek and are probably recorded at the library as archival material, not manuscripts, they were not included in this survey.

224 Beza, *Heritage of Byzantium*, p. 72. In Beza, *Urme românești în Răsăritul ortodox*, on p. 164, a photo shows HH the Patriarch of Antioch Alexander III Ṭaḥḥān holding these two manuscripts in his left hand.

225 These letters were seen or mentioned by several scholars before him: Ghenadios M. Arabazoglu, *Fōetieios Vivliothīkī*, Constantinople, t. II, 1935, p. 168–169 (letter of October 1748); Marcu Beza, "Biblioteci mănăstireşti în Siria, Atena şi insula Hios", p. 7, 11–15; Beza, *Urme românești în Răsăritul ortodox*, p. 163–165 (including the reproduction of a letter); Virgil Cândea,

în Răsăritul ortodox (*Romanian Traces in the Orthodox East*) he mentions a letter sent by the prince Grigore Ghica to the Patriarch of Antioch Cyril V (reproduced in a photo),[226] and several correspondents of Patriarch Sylvester: Smaragda, the wife of the prince of Wallachia Matei Ghica; the prince Grigore II Ghica; Ștefan Racoviță, the prince of Moldavia; Ana, a boyar's wife, etc. The Romanian historian Teodor G. Bulat published a passage from a letter where mention is made that the *protosyncellos* Makarios, sent by Patriarch Sylvester from Damascus, arrived at the court of Mihai Racoviță, the prince of Moldavia, carrying a message dated June 10, 7260 (i.e., 1751 AD).[227] This manuscript is proof that after 1750 the Patriarch Sylvester continued to correspond with several princes, boyars, and bishops in the Romanian Principalities, aiming to keep an eye on their support – financial and diplomatic – for the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch.

Based on the minimal information he could find in the above-mentioned sources, Virgil Cândea searched for MS no. 71 in the library of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate in Damascus, when he traveled to Syria in 1969 and 1970. He learned that it was still kept in the library of the Patriarchate of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch but could not obtain a list of the letters it contained.

One of Karnapas's sources was an autograph codex of the Patriarch Sylvester, composed between 1724 and 1730, which was recorded under no. 124 in the library of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem (Patriarchal Collection).[228] In 1932, Nikolaos S. Phirippidēs published in *Ēpeirōtika Chronika* a Greek note handwritten by the Patriarch Sylvester in the opening of this manuscript (f. 19v): "Here is an account of our patriarchal term, our residence, and the lands of Rumelia and

"Sources roumaines et grecques dans les bibliothèques du Proche-Orient", *Bulletin de l'AIESEE*, 8, 1970, 1–2, p. 74 (reprinted in Virgil Cândea, *Histoire des idées en Europe du Sud-Est (XVII^e–XVIII^e siècle)*, Bucharest, 2018, p. 287–297); *HMLÉM* IV.2, p. 86.

226 Nicolae Iorga, *Textes post-byzantins*, II. *Lettres des Patriarches d'Antioche aux Princes Roumains du XVIII^e siècle*, Bucharest, 1939, p. 31–55 (Greek text), 57–82 (Romanian translation); Beza, "Biblioteci mănăstireşti în Siria, Atena şi insula Hios", p. 7, 11–15; Beza, *Urme româneşti în Răsăritul ortodox*, p. 163–165 (with photos of three letters written in Greek).

227 Teodor G. Bulat, "Din documentele Mănăstirei Văratec", *Arhivele Basarabiei*, 6, 1934, 1, p. 93–94. Constantin Bobulescu's conclusion, relying on this text, that Sylvester was in Iași in 1751 does not seem correct; see Constantin Bobulescu, "Iașii la 1402 în legătură cu aducerea moaștelor sfântului Ioan-cel-Nou de la Suceava", *Revista Societății Istorico-Arheologice Bisericești din Chișinău*, 24, 1934, p. 33–34, n. 3.

228 Papadoupolos-Kerameus, *Hierosolymitikē Vivliothēkē ētoi Katalogos*, vol. 1, p. 203–218, online at: https://www.google.be/books/edition/Hierosolymitik%C4%93_biblioth%C4%93k%C4%93/C4YqAAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0.

the East that we journeyed through and we celebrated the Holy Easter in".[229] In a letter contained in Codex no. 124, Patriarch Sylvester thanks Grigore Ghica, the prince of Wallachia, for having granted 500 piasters to the monastery of Kykkos on the island of Cyprus, the patriarch's birth place.

In terms of sources preserved in Levantine collections, one of the most useful for my research of Arabic early printing in the East was presented for the first time by Rachid Haddad in his text published in 2006 "La correspondance de Ṭrābulsī, secrétaire du patriarche d'Antioche Sylvestre de Chypre."[230] From the letters preserved in this manuscript, labelled as MS no. 9/22 in the catalogue of the library of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate in Homs (today located in Damascus),[231] Haddad excerpted some passages that he published in French translation and commented on from a historical point of view.[232] Fortunately, despite the terrible situation in Syria over the past decades, I succeeded in acquiring a scan of this manuscript and surveyed it for the research I am presenting in this book.[233] The essential information gleaned from the letters exchanged by the patriarch's secretaries and disciples is that at the Monastery of Saint Spyridon in Bucharest, Arabic type was manufactured in 1747–1748, while the Patriarch Sylvester resided there, and two years later their creator, and his creations, left for Syria and were used in a new press in Beirut. This precious source confirms the claims found in Romanian documents about the contribution of the printers of Wallachia and Moldavia to the transfer of printing technology and first tools for Arabic books to

229 Nikolaos S. Phirippidēs, "Episkepsis tōn Iōanninōn hypo tou patriarchou Antiocheias Silvestrou", *Ēpeirōtika Chronika*, 1932, 5, p. 117–118.

230 Rachid Haddad, "La correspondance de Ṭrābulsī, secrétaire du Patriarche d'Antioche Sylvestre de Chypre", in Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais (eds.), *Mémorial Monseigneur Joseph Nasrallah*, Damascus, 2006, p. 257–288.

231 Haddad states that the manuscript was held at the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus. Originally in Homs, it was transferred to Damascus, along with the Patriarchate's entire library, after he studied it in 1969. See Philexinos Yuhanon Dolabani, René Lavenant, Sebastian Brock, and Samir Khalil Samir, "Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Patriarcat Syrien Orthodoxe à Homs (auj. à Damas)", in *Parole de l'Orient*, 1994, 19, p. 597. I am grateful to Fr Ronney el Gemayel for this reference.

232 Mention should be made that Rachid Haddad also contributed with information collected from documents at the Antiochian Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus to the work that he prepared together with Joseph Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire de l'Église melkite*, vol. IV, t. 2, where Nasrallah had presented his research on documents in the Vatican Library and Lebanese collections. See Ioana Feodorov, review of *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église melchite du V^e^ au XIX^e^ siècle. Contribution à l'étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne, t. VI*, in *RESEE*, 60, 2022, 1–4, p. 357–360.

233 I am immensely grateful to Fr Meletios Shattahi, who helped me obtain this copy.

the Ottoman provinces of the East, and especially to Beirut – a totally novel field in Romanian historical research.[234]

Although the Arabic texts contained in Antim the Iberian's books were never studied with the same scientific tools as the other productions of his extensive typographic work, interest in the Greek-Arabic books he printed remains high among specialists of early printing in Romania. In his work *Bibliografia românească veche. Additamenta*, I. *1536–1830*, Dan Râpă-Buicliu added the information published by Dan Simonescu, Fr Ilie Gheorghiță, and Virgil Cândea long after the *BRV* was completed.[235] Information on the Greek-Arabic books of Antim the Iberian, relying on the above-mentioned sources, was also included in works published over the last couple of decades by Ana Andreescu, *Cartea românească în veacul al XVIIIlea*,[236] Daniela Luminița Lupu, *Tiparul și cartea în Țara Românească între 1716 și 1821*,[237] Anca Elisabeta Tatay and Cornel TataiBaltă, *Xilogravura din cartea românească veche tipărită la București (1582–1830)*,[238] etc.

In his books published over the last two decades, Doru Bădără includes important comments about the technical aspects of the cooperation between Antim the Iberian and Athanasios Dabbās in printing Christian Arabic texts. His works *Tiparul românesc la sfârşitul secolului al XVIIlea şi începutul secolului al XVIIIlea*[239] and *Antim Ivireanul și caracterele exotice în istoria tiparului românesc*[240] are crucial for the domain addressed in the present book.

A few Arabic historical works brought to the attention of Middle Eastern researchers the books printed in Aleppo at the press of Athanasios Dabbās in 1706–1711. While commenting on the social and cultural evolution of the Middle East in the final period of the Ottoman rule, great intellectuals of the Nahḍa

234 As the letters he exchanged in 1989 and 1991 with Virgil Cândea reveal, Rachid Haddad intended to present four letters from this collection at a conference that my father planned in Bucharest for the autumn of 1991, but which never took place. These letters are preserved in my family archive.

235 Dan Râpă-Buicliu, *Bibliografia românească veche. Additamenta*, I. *1536–1830*, with a foreword by Dan Simonescu (written in 1990), Galați, 2000.

236 Bucharest, 2004.

237 Iași, 2009.

238 Cluj-Napoca, 2015.

239 Doru Bădără, *Tiparul românesc la sfârşitul secolului al XVII-lea şi începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, Brăila, 1998.

240 Doru Bădără, "Antim Ivireanul și caracterele exotice în istoria tiparului românesc", in *Antimiana: antologie de studii, comunicări și articole*, Râmnicu-Vâlcea and Bacău, 2012, p. 280–294.

pointed to the adoption of printing as an element of progress.[241] This topic received more attention from the academia after 1900. The source cited most frequently is the article published in 1911 by ʿĪsā ʾIskandar al-Maʿlūf (1869–1956), "Maṭbaʿa rūmāniyya al-urṯūḏuksiyya al-ʿarabiyya al-anṭākiyyā" ("A Romanian Printing Press [for] the Antiochian Arab Orthodox"). Louis Cheikho published a series of articles in *al-Machriq*,[242] which were used by Nasrallah in his book *L'imprimerie au Liban* (1948) and other works. Al-Maʿlūf is the most cited Arab historian who wrote about printing in Syria and Lebanon. Although more than a century old, and practically unfinished (a promised second part was never published), this article of his became a reference for anyone wishing to discuss printing in Arabic for the Christians of the Middle East. ʿĪsā ʾIskandar al-Maʿlūf's library contained nearly 1,200 manuscripts and more than 20,000 books (*al-Ḫizāna al-Maʿlūfiyya*), and it welcomed the scholars who visited his home in Zahle, in the Beqāʿa Valley, as Samar Mikati Kaissi (Associate University Librarian for Archives & Special Collection, University Libraries, AUB) explained in a conference held at the AUB on December 1, 2022. It is most fortunate that al-Maʿlūf's archive and library were rescued and are in the process of inventorying and survey with the American University of Beirut, in a joint project with the British Library.[243]

In his book published in Cairo in 1966, *Tārīḫ al-ṭibāʿa fī al-Šarq al-ʿarabī* (2nd ed.), Ḫalīl Ṣābāt discusses the late adoption of printing in the Middle East, presenting several reasons that influenced Ottoman society to reject it for a long time. The Christians' efforts in printing books for their liturgical and spiritual necessities are marginally addressed. The chapter dedicated to the "Birth of Printing in Syria, 1706–1867 [*sic*]" covers a mere six pages, two and a half of them dedicated to the press of Athanasios Dabbās.[244] After the Aleppo press, the next moment recorded by Ṣābāt is 1841, when the Sardinian printer Belafonti moved to Syria and started printing by lithography, not with movable type. He only printed a few books, and among them, a Psalter.[245] This information is correct,

241 For example, Ǧirǧī Zeydān, *Tārīḫ ʾādāb al-luġat al-ʿarabiyya*, Cairo, t. IV, 1914, and Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *ʾUdabāʾ al-ʿArab fī al-Andalus wa-ʿaṣr al-Inbiʿāṯ*, Beirut, 1937.

242 Lūwīs Šayḫū, "Tārīḫ fann al-ṭibāʿa fī al-Mašriq", *Al-Machriq*, 1900–1906, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22.

243 This joint project, carried out at AUB by Samar Mikati, Elie Kahale and Basma Chebaneh, is described at: https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP1423. See also the current stage of the digitization in the Digital Collections of the AUB: https://libraries.aub.edu.lb/digital-collections/.

244 Ḫalīl Ṣābāt, "Našʾat al ṭibāʿa fī Sūriyā", in id., *Tārīḫ al-ṭibāʿa fī al-Šarq al-ʿarabī*, p. 101–107.

245 The first book printed by Belafonti was the *Dīwān* of Ibn al-Fāriḍ. See Šayḫū, "Tārīḫ fann al-ṭibāʿa fī al-Mašriq", *Al-Machriq*, 3, 1900, 2, p. 357; Ṣābāt, "Našʾat al ṭibāʿa fī Sūriyā", p. 104; Partington, "Arabic Printing", p. 68.

since after Aleppo there was no other printing venture in the Ottoman provinces of the Eastern Mediterranean lands before 1841 – whether with movable type or otherwise. The foundation of other presses, as mentioned by this author, are: Dūmānī's press, Damascus, 1855; the Maronites' press, Aleppo, 1857; the government's press, Damascus, 1864; the *Furāt* journal press, Aleppo, 1876. The author then moves to the period 1868–1918.

Oussama Anouti includes in his work *al-Ḥaraka al-'adabiyya fī balad al-Šām ḫilāla al-qarn al-ṯāmin 'ašar* (Beirut, 1971) a brief subsection dedicated to printing (*al-Ṭibāʿa*, on p. 45–47), extracting information from the works of Cheikho and Nasrallah.

Several articles published after 1990 by Arab historians about one or another aspect of the printing activities in Eastern Mediterranean lands after 1700 rearranged the previously published information, without adding any contribution to the field.[246] They repeat, in broad lines, information that was already known to the academic public, together with some of the errors that plague this research.[247] Although apparently these "recent articles on the topic use the archives of the eastern churches and European consulates in Aleppo to document in detail a journey taken in 1698 by Ithnasius (Ithnāsiyūs) Ibn al-Dabbās al-Ḥalabī, the head of the Eastern Church of Aleppo" (i.e., Athanasios III Dabbās, patriarch of the Church of Antioch, but not in that period – *my note*)," there is no historical evidence whatsoever for Suhayl al-Malāḏī's assertions that "the Wallachian prince Constantin Brâncoveanu helped Dabbās open a press in Bucharest" and it produced "a large number of religious books".[248]

In the past two decades, especially in European countries (other than Romania), a few books, articles, and exhibitions have put Arabic printing on the map of academic topics. Several well-known experts in the culture of Ara-

246 Suhayl al-Malāḏī, "'Āṣimat al-taqāfa al-'islāmiyya wa-'ūlā al-maṭābiʿ al-'arabiyya", *Al-tūrāt al-'arabiyy*, 26, 2006, 103, p. 103–108; Suhayl al-Malāḏī, *Al-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-ṣiḥāfa fī Ḥalab*, Damascus, 1996; Mahā Faraḥ Ḫūrī, "Ḥalab iḥtaḍanat 'awwal maṭbaʿa bi-l-'aḥruf al-'arabiyya fī-l-Mašriq", *Tišrīn*, November 11, 2006. They are all mentioned by Haidar, "Aleppo: The First Ground for Arab-European Cultural Encounters", p. 129, n. 3, 4, and 6.

247 For example, on printing in the Romanian Principalities, Mahā Faraḥ Ḫūrī's sources are the above-mentioned articles by 'Īsā 'Iskandar al-Maʿlūf (1911) and Louis Cheikho (with more erroneous information in her version of things, such as the fact that "*al-Aflāq* or *al-Aflāḫ* forms, together with *Al-Buġdān*, the present state of Romania" (ibid., p. 104, n. 4). There is no need to mention here that modern Romania was formed by the union of five historical provinces: Wallachia, Moldavia, Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transylvania, and the final act was the Great Union of December 1, 1918.

248 In "'Āṣimat al-taqāfa al-'islāmiyya wa-'ūlā al-maṭābiʿ al-'arabiyya", p. 103.

bic-speaking Christians have focused, in their published works, on historical or theological aspects of their printing activity – and its outcomes. Part of this research was done by consulting the few copies of Arabic books printed in the 18th century that survive in European libraries. All these contributions to the history of printing in Arabic for the Levantine Christians are important sources that I have considered in writing this book. A preliminary conclusion is, however, that historians of the Arabic printed book are generally interested in Middle Eastern presses and printed material produced in the 19th–20th centuries, for which local sources – and surviving copies of the books – are easier to find.[249]

Between October 2001 and January 2002, the Bibliothèque nationale de France presented to the Parisian public a splendid exhibition at its Richelieu site and published a richly illustrated catalogue where the history of writing, as preserved both in manuscripts and printed books, was surveyed from the earliest times until modern times. The evolution of writing, from the emergence of paper factories and scriptoria to that of the printing presses, was followed relying on exhibits from all epochs and locations. While the main focus was on the vast manuscript collections of the library, a section was dedicated to printed books, addressed in the catalogue – *Livres imprimés* – on p. 162–175. Here, the reader is informed that:

> Une imprimerie avait été créé en 1701 à Bucarest. [...] Elle avait été installée grâce à l'action du patriarche melkite d'Antioche, Aṭanāsiyūs Dabbās, lors de son séjour en Valachie et témoignait des bons rapports entre orthodoxes roumains et catholiques syriens.[250]

To be precise, the first Arabic book was printed in Snagov in 1701, the second in Bucharest in 1702. The workshop was not an 'Arabic press', but a Greek/Romanian/Slavonic press where Arabic type and other typographic implements were

249 When one searches the word 'printed' in the outstanding online resource *Biblia Arabica. The Bible in Arabic among Jews, Christians and Muslims. Bibliography of the Arabic Bible*, entries are generally connected to the modern Arabic presses of the Middle East and the books they printed, for example: Jean-Baptiste Belot, "Maṭbūʿāt šarqiyya" ("Eastern Printed Material"), *Al-Machriq*, 46, 1952, 4, p. 501–512 (Abstract: "A Survey of recent [*sic*] printed materials in the East, including the Bible of 1950 produced by the Catholic Press in Beirut"); Antoine ʿAwdū, "Al-Kitāb al-Muqaddas: Maṭbaʿat al-'ābā al-dūmīnīkān fī al-Mawṣil (1875–1878)", in *Tarǧamāt al-kitāb al-muqaddas fī al-šarq: buḥūṯ bībliyya muhdāt ilā Lūsiyān ʿAqqād/Bible Translations in the East: Biblical Researches Presented to Lucian Accad*, Beirut, 2006, p. 43–52 (Abstract: "Investigation of the history of the Arabic edition of the Bible printed by the Dominicans in Mossul [1875–1878] and its translation strategies").

250 Annie Vernay-Nouri, "Livres imprimés", in Guesdon and Vernay-Nouri (eds.), *L'Art du livre arabe. Du manuscript au livre d'artiste*, p. 167.

manufactured for these two books. Athanasios Dabbās did not help install any printing press in Wallachia; he was granted the approval and support for printing two books in local presses. As for the 'good relations between Romanian Orthodox and Syrian Catholics', the Church of Antioch was still one, as this all happened before 1724, the year of its division into the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch. Speaking of 'Catholic Syrians' is somewhat untimely for the early 18th century, and especially in connection with Athanasios Dabbās, an Antiochian metropolitan of Aleppo when visiting Wallachia, where he was seen by his hosts as firmly attached to Orthodoxy.

In 2002, on the occasion of an exceptional exhibition devoted to the *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution. A CrossCultural Encounter* organized at the Gutenberg Museum of Mainz (Germany), Eva Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass, and Geoffrey Roper (in collaboration with Theo Smets) composed a catalogue in German and English, the most diverse and richest illustrated record ever published about printing in Middle Eastern languages and types. Dagmar Glass and Geoffrey Roper dedicated a chapter to "The Printing of Arabic Books in the Arab World". Here, the activity of the Aleppo press is covered in a brief passage.[251] The authors cite Georg Graf's opinion that the Arabic type used by Athanasios Dabbās "originated in the printing press of the monastery of Snagov near Bucharest" during the rule of Constantin Brâncoveanu (but the printer who manufactured them, Antim the Iberian, is not mentioned). Other opinions regarding the source of Dabbās's type are also evoked, including their manufacture by 'Abdallāh Zāḫir. The authors cautiously conclude with regard to the source of the Arabic type of the Aleppo press that, "Until no new sources are found, or the respective printed editions are examined by typography experts familiar with Eastern languages, this will remain an open question." Then follows an overview of the printing activities in Ḫinšāra. For Beirut, the first press mentioned dates from 1834. No printing activity in Beirut in the 18th century is acknowledged.[252] As a matter of fact, owing primarily to the scarcity of extant copies, the books printed at the Beirut press of the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saint George have remained almost unknown until recent days.

In September 2017 – January 2018, the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA) in Paris hosted a great exhibition dedicated to *Chrétiens d'Orient. 2000 ans d'histoire*.[253] In

251 Dagmar Glass and Geoffrey Roper, "Arabic Book and Newspaper Printing in the Arab World. Part. I: The Printing of Arabic Books in the Arab World", in Hanebutt-Benz, Glass and Roper (eds.), *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution*, p. 177–226, here, at p. 178–179.

252 Glass and Roper, "Arabic Book and Newspaper Printing in the Arab World", p. 191.

253 Subsequently transferred to the MUba Eugène Leroy in Turcoing, in February – June 2018.

one of the halls there were several exhibits connected to Arabic printing, including the punches that Robert Granjon used for an Arabic Gospel book printed at the Medici Press in Rome (1580–1586). Bernard Heyberger included a paragraph concerning the Arabic books printed by Athanasios Dabbās in his contribution to the exhibition catalogue.[254]

Bernard Heyberger had already addressed the topic of printing in Arabic in several published works. In his well-known book *Les chrétiens du ProcheOrient au temps de la Réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle*), he mentions on p. 439–440, in Chapter 14, *Une réforme pour le clergé régulier*, subchapter *Des moines missionnaires*, three presses, including that of Athanasios Dabbās, with a brief presentation of its activity. Printing in Arabic is discussed in several other sections in connection with the books printed in Western Europe for the Latin missionaries and the Melkite Greek Catholic press of Ḫinšāra.[255] In a subsequent article that he devoted to this topic in 1999, "Livres et pratique de la lecture chez les chrétiens (Syrie, Liban) XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles",[256] he comments on the Arabic books printed in Western Europe that reached the Arabic-speaking Christians of the Levant and their influence on local spiritual life and theological thinking. Comments on the Levantine scholars' contribution to printing in Italy are also present in his essay "East and West. A Connected History of Eastern Christianity" (Leiden – Boston, 2021).[257]

Printing for the Arabic-speaking Christians has also been discussed by Carsten-Michael Walbiner in several articles over the last few decades. He discussed the Christians' role in introducing printing to the Ottoman Empire[258] and the Melkites' attitude towards printing in the 17th – early 18th centuries.[259] Walbiner

254 Bernard Heyberger, "Transformations religieuses et culturelles à l'époque Ottomane, XVI^e–XIX^e siècle", in Raphaëlle Ziadé (dir.), *Chrétiens d'Orient. 2000 ans d'histoire*, Catalogue d'exposition, Paris, 2017, p. 120.

255 Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du ProcheOrient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, p. 93, 141, 144, 149–150, 187, 189, 238, 250, 406, 407, 469, 470, 475.

256 Id., "Livres et pratique de la lecture chez les chrétiens", p. 211–212.

257 See also Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya, mystique et criminelle (1720-1798)*, Paris, 2001, p. 54–58, and "Réseaux de collaboration et enjeux de pouvoir autour de la production de livres imprimés en arabe chez les chrétiens (XVII^e – début XVIII^e siècle)", in Girard, Heyberger and Kontouma (eds.), *Livres et confessions chrétiennes orientales*, p. 381-412.

258 Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "The Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* (Syria): Pioneers of Book-Printing in the Arab World", in Klaus Kreiser (ed.), *The Beginning of Printing in the Near and Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims*, Wiesbaden, 2001, p. 11–12.

259 Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "Some Observations on the Perception and Understanding of Printing amongst the Arab Greek Orthodox (Melkites) in the Seventeenth Century", in Philip Sadgrove (ed.), *Printing and Publishing in the Middle East*, *Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement*,

also briefly describes and comments on a few of the books printed by Athanasios Dabbās in Aleppo and ʻAbdallāh Zāḫir in Ḫinšāra.[260]

Constantin A. Panchenko, in his book *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans 1516–1831* (translated from the original Russian by Brittany Pheiffer Noble and Samuel Noble),[261] mentions printing in Arabic a few times, in connection with the efforts of Athanasios Dabbās to print the essential liturgical books of the Antiochian Church, the anti-Orthodox polemical works later printed by ʿAbdallāh Zāḫir in Ḫinšāra, and the opening of an Orthodox press in Beirut around 1744 with support from the Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch.[262] The author dedicates a subchapter to "A Duel of Printing Presses", where he briefly describes the Arabic printing activities in Western Europe, then moving to Wallachia, with an imaginary portrait of the erudite scholar, preacher, and printer Antim the Iberian, later elected a metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia, whom he defines as "an extremely colorful personality."[263] Although part of the information on the Romanian side of the story and the Aleppo press is inaccurate and insufficiently supported by historical facts, this could be considered one of the first attempts to underline the role of printing in Arabic for the Antiochian Christians in Ottoman times.[264]

Information on Arabic printing in the 18th century did not get any clearer with time: Ahmed El Shamsy, in his recent book *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics. How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2020), makes the following assertions:

> When books in Arabic finally began to be printed in the eighteenth century [in the Middle East – *my note*], the technology was initially used either by non-Muslim communities (such as the Levantine Christians, whose presses were, however, financed by European donations, not indigenous demand), or for the printing of secular texts. Islamic literature continued to

2008, 24, p. 65–76; Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "Melkite (Greek Orthodox) Approaches to the Bible at the Time of the Community's Cultural Reawakening in the Early Modern Period (17th – early 18th Centuries)", in Sara Binay and Stefan Leder (eds.), *Translating the Bible into Arabic: Historical, Text-critical and Literary Aspects*, Beirut and Würzburg, 2012, p. 53–61.

260 Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "Die Protagonisten des frühen Buchdrucks in der arabischen Welt", in Ulrich Marzolph (ed.), *Das gedruckte Buch in Vorderen Orient*, Dortmund, 2002, p. 128–141, and "The Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* (Syria): Pioneers of Book-Printing in the Arab World", p. 20–21, 24–27 (brief description of early Arabic books printed in the Middle East).

261 Jordanville, 2016.

262 See p. 395, 457–458, 489.

263 On p. 485.

264 See my article dedicated to this book in *RESEE*, 57, 2019, 1–4, p. 333–349.

> be reproduced exclusively by hand. It was only in the nineteenth century – parallel to the rise of a new readership – that printing presses also began to produce Islamic literature.[265]

It is worth commenting on the author's assertion about the "indigenous demand" that did not "finance" the Levantine Christians' printing presses: first, there was considerable demand for liturgical and prayer books in all churches of the Ottoman Levant, and second, if 'demand' means here 'income from sales', we need to recall that books printed in the 18th century in the Romanian Principalities, Aleppo, and Beirut, were distributed for free and never sold.[266] Moreover, the Aleppo press did not function only with European donations, nor did the one in Beirut, where the printing workshop at the Monastery of Saint George, the first in the city, opened thanks to a local sponsor, as I explain below. After mentioning the "printing of secular texts", i.e., the books printed by Ibrahim Müteferrika (as the author indicates in note 9), El Shamsy apparently suggests that Islamic literature started being printed in the 19th century only because a new readership had emerged. In fact, not printing any Islamic texts was the condition on which Müteferrika was allowed to get his press going, and it was not the absence of a readership that prevented him from printing Islamic literature. Otherwise, his book is rich in interesting comments on and new interpretations of the Muslim readership and reception of Arabic printed literature after 1800.

Another recent contribution to the topic is based on a unique source published in 1908, from which inaccurate and vague information is extracted: "The Greek Catholic Community and its Collective Memories. Religious Orders, Monasteries and Confessional Dynamics in Lebanon", by Rodrigo Ayupe Bueno da Cruz (*Anthropology of the Middle East*, 17, 2022, 2, p. 30–47). While remarking that the printing press there "represents modernity and Arab nationalism in Lebanon", the author believes that "the Chouerite Order evokes a profane memory through its printing press" (p. 32). How "profane" a rich corpus of Christian Arabic liturgical and polemic books printed for the Melkite Greek Catholics of Mount Lebanon could have been seems unclear to me. On the same page, the false idea is repeated that "the first Arabic printing press in the Middle East" was "located in the central Chouerite convent". Later, the author sums up the inconsistent and unsubstantiated information that circulated over a century ago:

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265 Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics. How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition*, Princeton, NJ, 2020, p. 65.

266 The author cites, in support of his statement, Walbiner, "The Christians of *Bilād al-Shām* (Syria): Pioneers of Book-Printing", p. 11–12.

> The printing press in Arabic letters was built in Lebanon by Abdallah Zaher, a Greek Catholic priest from Aleppo. He created the press in conjunction with Father Fromage, a French priest. At the time, Zaher was the superior of the Jesuit mission in the Levant and raised funds for the press donations [*sic*] from Europe and French merchants residing in Lebanon. Initially, priests put the equipment imported from France in the Greek Catholic convent of Antoura, in Zouk Mikael. However, soon afterward, it was transferred to *dayr mar yūḥannā*, in Khenchara, to provide more extensive facilities for the operation of this Arab press (Bacel 1908: 281–287).[267]

For the overconfident assertion that the equipment of Dayr al-Muḫalliṣ was "imported from France" no proof is provided, except Bacel's statement.[268] I also believe it is inappropriate to place this outstanding achievement of ʿAbdallāh Zāḫir and his press on the same level of interest as the winery of the monastery, like this author apparently does:

> While the Salvatorian Order has concentrated its touristic activities on devotion to Abūnā Bshara, the Chouerite Order emphasizes its Printing Press Museum to visitors. Also, another profane attraction in *dayr mar yūḥannā* [*sic*] is the *Cave du Monastère Saint-Jean* winery, one of the most important wine producers in the country.[269]

Before 2000, historians of the Oriental printed book did not pay much attention to the aspect of the particularities of Arabic script, which were among the greatest difficulties that the first printers who manufactured Arabic type confronted, as recent research has started to reveal.[270] This situation did not only involve Arabic printing, but also the other languages that use Arabic script, such as Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Kurdish, Urdu, Malay, etc. With few exceptions, Arabic characters have four graphic forms depending on their position in a word. Even if some of the characters look similar in all four forms, for others, the graphic appearance

267 Ayupe Bueno da Cruz, "The Greek Catholic Community and its Collective Memories", *Anthropology of the Middle East*, 17, 2022, 2, p. 41.

268 Paul Bacel, "Abdallah Zakher et son imprimerie arabe", *Échos d'Orient*, 11, 1908, 72, p. 281–287.

269 Ayupe Bueno da Cruz, "The Greek Catholic Community and its Collective Memories", p. 41–42.

270 Huda S. Abifares, *Arabic Typography: A Comprehensive Sourcebook*, London, 2001; Thomas Milo, "Arabic Script and Typography: A Brief Historical Overview", in John D. Beery (ed.), *Language, Culture, Type: International Type Design in the Age of Unicode*, New York, 2002, p. 112–127; Thomas Milo, "Arabic Typography", in Lutz Edzard and Rudolf de Jong (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, Brill online, *s.v.*; Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", p. 140; Orlin Sabev, *Waiting for Müteferrika: Glimpses of Ottoman Print Culture*, Boston, 2018, p. 106–107.

is quite different. Moreover, Arabic script also developed additional signs for marking gemination (a double consonant), short vowels, and the indefinite character of nominal elements – the *tanwīn*. In handwriting, when copying a manuscript, there is no problem to observe the particularities of *scriptio plena*, i.e., to mark all the elements that make up an Arabic word: the consonantal root with its semantic content, and added vowels (*a*, *i*, or *u*, short or long) whose combination according to Classical Arabic schemes (*wazn*, pl. *'awzān*) leads to the creation of different meaningful units of language.[271] In printing, as a rule, only the consonants and long vowels are written, and short vowels quite seldomly, generally only in order to avoid ambiguity in Islamic texts (Qur'ān, Ḥadīṯ) or poetry. This is, for example, the case with the passive voice, where the vowel *u* placed after the first consonant indicates the correct verbal form. Auxiliary signs, such as the *šadda* (for gemination), *sukūn* (marking the absence of a vowel), etc., will only be marked in a very carefully prepared book, meant for a religious or administrative use. Most often, because of proofreading and technical difficulties, they are absent from the printed page. Proceeding from the dispute between the supporters of the traditional ways and those of reforming the Arabic press, the famous Oriental scholar Jean Sauvaget offered a summary of the difficulties of printing in Arabic in an essay, "Suggestions pour une réforme de la typogaphie arabe",[272] where he formulated practical solutions in a way that could lead to an agreement of the conflicting views.

The study of the Arabic cast type was the focus of the thesis submitted in 2017 by Emanuela Conidi for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication, University of Reading: *Arabic Types in Europe and the Middle East, 1514–1924: Challenges in the Adaptation of the Arabic Script from Written to Printed Form* (unpublished, 334 pp.). As I mentioned before, Conidi published a condensed version of her dissertation in the essay "An Approach to the Study of Arabic Foundry Type" published in 2023. Although the focus of this essay was not the corpus of books printed in the 18th century in the East, but rather more the production of Western European presses and that of the workshops of Istanbul (Müteferrika) and Beirut in the 19th century, this contribution to the history of Arabic type is an important source for the survey of books printed in Snagov, Bucharest, Aleppo, Ḫinšāra, and Beirut before the 1800s. The rigorous, state-of-the-art methodology that Conidi devised and applied to other types of printed materials than the Christian Arabic books produced in the East

271 See the explanation of the particular features of Arabic (and Hebrew) script in Suarez, Oxford, 2013, p. 13.

272 Published posthumously in *Revue des études islamiques*, 1949, 22, p. 127–133.

would bring great benefits to the research of this corpus. A careful and precise description of the type used in each of the TYPARABIC project corpus entries will surely yield important information on the renewal of the Arabic types and their transfer from one press to another.[273]

In recent years, Titus Nemeth has published several important works in connection with Arabic typography. He contributed to the above-mentioned collection of essays (that he also edited) a study dedicated to "The typography of the *Naḥdaḥ*" (p. 229–309), where he sheds light on the essential role of printing in the progress of the Levantine societies in the 19th century, while explaining the technicalities of Arabic letterforms and typeface based on a wide range of printed matter, mostly produced at the press of Müteferrika in Istanbul and the Būlāq press in Cairo.[274] In 2022, for the collection of essays edited by Scott Reese for De Gruyter, Titus Nemeth contributed a ground-breaking essay devoted to the typographic skills required of Arab typographers and the complex technicalities of printing with Arabic type: "Overlooked: The Role of Craft in the Adoption of Typography in the Muslim Middle East".[275] Moreover, note should be taken of his book *Arabic Type-Making in the Machine Age. The Influence of Technology on the Form of Arabic Type, 1908–1993* (Leiden, Brill, 2017) which, although dedicated to 20th century aspects of the Arabic typography, includes important sections for the research of Arabic type in general, such as, in Chapter 1, "Aspects of the Arabic Script" (p. 14–22) and "The Typographic Representation of the Arabic Script" (p. 22–26).

In broad lines, the focus of the present book – and the TYPARABIC project – is on printed books. However, surveying manuscripts also comes within our tasks, as they are witnesses of the successive versions of texts that came to be printed, they reveal the stages of the historical development of a Christian text, and they sometimes chronologically come *after* a book that was printed, as proof of the

273 A database containing the Arabic types used in samples of printed books from the Romanian Principalities, Aleppo, Ḫinšāra, and Beirut is under construction by several members of the TYPARABIC project team. Once the elements are scanned and placed in a comprehensive table, comparing their features will become easier.

274 The first Arabic press in Egypt, after the short-lived French one installed by Napoleon's administration at Alexandria (1798–1801), was active starting in 1822 in the Būlāq quarter of Cairo, on a piece of the Naval Artillery land overlooking the right shore of the Nile. See Khaled ʿAzab and Ahmed Mansour, *Bulaq Press*, Cairo, 2005; Ahmed Mansour, *The Arabic Printed Book: From Origins to Bulaq Press*, Cairo, 2008; Ahmed Mansour and Mohamed Hassan, "Digitizing Historical Arabic Typography: Bulaq Press Contributions", *Égypte/Monde arabe*, 2, 2020, 22, p. 32–39; El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*, especially p. 65–75.

275 In Reese (ed.), *Manuscript and Print in the Islamic Tradition*, p. 21–60.

need to augment the number of available copies that parish priests or the ordinary faithful required at a given moment. Therefore, the reader of this book will find references to Georg Graf's *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*[276] and several Arabic manuscripts catalogues published in Lebanon in recent years.

One of the most important developments in recent years is the emergence of an exceptional source for the research of manuscripts *and*, as it turns out, printed books: the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) and its Virtual Reading Room (vHMML). Here, several kinds of materials are of utmost interest for the researcher of early Arabic printing in the East: first, entire printed books, or book fragments, which ended up in manuscript codices, catalogued as such, sometimes preserving copies of lost books; second, 'binder's waste', i.e., printed sheets that remained behind at the press storeroom and were used by binders when making covers for other (content-unrelated) books[277] – again, a chance to recover lost printed books; third, manuscripts that are relevant to the production of printed materials, such as the texts used in preparing books (rarely preserved, in general), or polemical epistles written by opposing actors in the cultural life of the Eastern Churches.

This rapid overview of the researchers of early Arabic printing in the East reveals the scattered and insufficient amount of information on the Arabic books printed in the Romanian Principalities and later in Aleppo, Ḫinšāra, and Beirut that is available in catalogues, books, and articles published over the last two centuries. Although part of this information was accurately repeated from the first descriptions of books provided in 19th- century sources, the lack of access to copies of the printed books and to the languages required for this research – Arabic, Greek, Romanian – generated a mass of unverified data and imperfect conclusions. Until now, the focus has been on early printing in Arabic in Western Europe and the 19th-century Arabic presses established by various missionary movements in the Middle East after 1800. The Eastern European contribution to printing in Arabic for the Christians of the Church of Antioch has only been addressed by a few Romanian historians of early printing who did not master the Arabic language and only published in Romanian.

276 Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, Vatican City, I, 1944; II, 1947; III, 1949; IV, 1951; V, 1953. For non-German-speakers, an Italian translation of a section of Graf's work is now available: *Storia della letteratura araba christiana. Volume II, tomo 1: Gli scrittori melchiti, maroniti, nestoriani fino alla metà del XV secolo*, translated from German by Paola Pizzi, Bologna, 2018 (and *Volume II, tomo 2* under work).

277 See Eric Marshall White, "The Gutenberg Bibles that Survive as Binder's Waste", in Wagner and Reed (eds.), *Early Printed Books as Material Objects*, p. 21–35.

My purpose in writing this book is to explain the contribution of the Romanian Principalities to the initiation of printing in Arabic, with Arabic type, in the Middle East and to present a descriptive record of the books printed in the 18th century in Snagov, Bucharest, Iași, Aleppo, and Beirut, owing to a collaboration between salient figures of the Church of Antioch and several Wallachian and Moldavian princes and printers. The theological and art historical aspects fall to the responsibility of other members of the TYPARABIC project team. The Advanced Grant that I received from the European Research Council within the Horizon 2020 Program and which I am now directing has allowed me to survey sources and – most importantly – copies of the printed books that form the corpus of this project by visiting the collections that hold such rarities, east and west, and acquiring recently printed books and journals that are essential sources for the entire team's research.

Although the story of Arabic printing in Western Europe and the Istanbul presses has been presented in published books and articles, the contribution of the Wallachian and Moldavian printers, metropolitans, and princes to the Arabic-speaking Christians' efforts to master the art of printing has remained in the shadows. With up-to-date research tools and the benefit of an easier access to relevant information, I have embarked on the mission to present, for the first time, the adventure of Arabic type and printing expertise travelling from the Romanian Principalities to Aleppo, where Arabic book-printing only started to develop in the first decade of the 18th century, soon extending to Lebanon.