

Simon Mills

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge's Arabic Bibles

King George I of Great Britain was no more versed in Arabic than he was in the native tongue of the kingdom he inherited in 1714.¹ Nonetheless, when, in 1724, he was presented with manuscripts of the Arabic Psalter and New Testament, he at least appeared to be “very well pleased with the sight of them”.² Indeed, the king was sufficiently impressed that he agreed to confer a royal bounty of five hundred pounds through his minister, Sir Robert Walpole, on the men behind this presentation to aid them in their pious endeavors.³ The men in question were the members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). A London-based association of predominantly lay Anglicans, the SPCK had been founded at the end of the 17th century as a reforming society concerned with the promotion of charity schools and the printing and distribution of religious literature. It became involved in missions overseas in the 1710s, through its support for the Danish–Halle mission to Tranquebar in India.⁴ In the early 1720s, the Society embarked on a project for printing Arabic books for the use of Christians in the Ottoman Levant. The fruits of

1 For a recent assessment of the king's ignorance of English, see T. Blanning, *George I: The Lucky King*, London, 2019, p. 26.

2 Cambridge University Library (CUL), Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) MS A32/1, “Extracts of the Minutes relating to the Arabick Impressions, 1722–1730”, p. 15.

3 CUL, SPCK MS C14/1, November 1, 1726.

4 For the early history of the SPCK, see W. O. B. Allen, E. McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698–1898*, London, 1898, p. 13–25; W. K. L. Clarke, *A History of the S.P.C.K.*, London, 1959, p. 1–18; E. Duffy, “The Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge and Europe: The Background to the Founding of the Christentumsgesellschaft”, *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, 7, 1981, p. 28–42; C. Rose, “The Origins and Ideals of the SPCK, 1699–1716”, in J. Walsh, C. Haydon, S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England, c. 1689–c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 172–190; D. L. Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, Göttingen, 1993; A. F. Walls, “The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Missionary Movement in Britain”, in A. Gross, Y. V. Kumaradoss, H. Liebau (eds.), *Halle and the Beginning of Protestant Christianity in India. Vol. 1: The Danish-Halle and the English-Halle Mission*, Halle an der Saale, 2006, p. 107–128; B. S. Sirota,

My thanks to Ioana Feodorov and Feras Krimsti for their efforts in organizing the conference “*Spread the Word*. Books printed for the Arab Christians in the 18th century” at the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha in June 2023. I am very grateful to the Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford, where a Visiting Fellowship for Michaelmas Term 2023 made the task of finishing the chapter not only easier, but also infinitely more enjoyable.

its labors included an Arabic Psalter, the *Kitāb Zabūr Dā'ūd*, published in London in 1725, and an Arabic New Testament, *al-'Ahd al-Jadīd li-Rabbīnā Yasū' al-Masīh*, which appeared two years later, in 1727.⁵

Most library catalogs attribute both works to the editorship of Sulaymān ibn Ya'qūb al-Shāmī al-Šāliḥānī. Sulaymān (or Solomon) Negri (bap. 1665, d. 1727) was a Melkite Christian from Damascus, Syria. His career as a teacher and a translator in Europe is fairly well known.⁶ He was, indeed, involved in the preparation of the SPCK's Bibles. However, the attribution to him alone glosses over a deeper and more complex history of the books' production. Behind this early episode in Christian Arabic printing lay a century of connections between England and Ottoman Aleppo, connections forged by overseas trade and by the early global adventures of

The Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680–1730, New Haven, 2014, esp. p. 110–148.

5 *Kitāb Zabūr Dā'ūd al-malik wa-l-nabī: wa-aydan maḍmūnātu-hā ma'a al-shahādāt al-mutaqābila min al-'Ahd al-'atīq wa-l-Jadīd thumma waṣāyā Allāh al-'ashar kamā fi al-iṣḥāḥ al-'ishrīn min sifr al-khurūj wa-l-ṣalāt al-rabbāniya kamā fi al-iṣḥāḥ al-sādis li-l-qiddīs Mattā*, [London], 1725; *al-'Ahd al-Jadīd li-Rabbīnā Yasū' al-Masīh: wa-aydan waṣāyā Allāh al-'ashar kamā fi al-iṣḥāḥ al-'ishrīn min sifr al-khurūj*, [London], 1727. On the books, see C. F. von Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, Halle an der Saale, 1811, p. 376–379; *GCAL* I, p. 118, 140–141; G. Roper, “Arabic Printing and Publishing in England before 1820”, *BRISMES Bulletin*, 12, 1985, 1, p. 21. For the history of the Bibles' production, see G. Roper, “The Export of Arabic Books from Europe to the Middle East in the 18th Century”, in *BRISMES, British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, Proceedings of the 1989 International Conference on Europe and the Middle East Held at the University of Durham, 9–12 July 1989*, Oxford, 1989, p. 226–233, esp. p. 228–232; G. Roper, “England and the Printing of Texts for 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*, vol. 1, Bucharest, 2011, p. 430–443, esp. p. 437–438; Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England*, p. 154–165; S. Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, c. 1600–1760*, Oxford, 2020, p. 224–248.

6 On Negri, see D. Weston, “Negri, Solomon (bap. 1665, d. 1727)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed. (henceforth, ODNB), 2013; J.-P. A. Ghobrial, “The Life and Hard Times of Solomon Negri: An Arabic Teacher in Early Modern Europe”, in J. Loop, A. Hamilton, C. Burnett (eds.), *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden, 2017, p. 310–331; P. Manstetten, “Solomon Negri: The Self-Fashioning of an Arab Christian in Early Modern Europe”, in C. Zwierlein (ed.), *The Power of the Dispersed: Early Modern Global Travelers beyond Integration*, Leiden, 2021, p. 240–282; F. Lucchetta, “Un progetto per una scuola di lingue orientali a Venezia nel Settecento”, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, 1, 1983, p. 1–28; C. Boehner, “Abenteuer Islam. Zur Wahrnehmung fremder Religion im Hallenser Pietismus des 18. Jahrhunderts”, Habilitation thesis, University of Munich, 1996, p. 19, 66–71, 78–82, 102; S. Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 224–235, as well as Negri's autobiography, *Memoria Negriana hoc est Salomonis Negri Damasceni vita olim ab ipsomet conscripta*, ed. G. A. Freylinghausen, Halle an der Saale, 1764, p. 1–6 (first published in J. H. Callenberg, *Spicilegium instituti Muhammedici monumentis subserviens*, Halle an der Saale, 1743, p. 3–9).

the Church of England. The story of the SPCK's Arabic Bibles is also bound up with a prior history of Arabic printing in the Ottoman Empire, specifically the work of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch Athanasios III Dabbās (1647–1724). The project brought together Negri and Dabbās, as well as other Eastern Christians in London and Aleppo; scholars, clerics, and lay Orientalists in England; and a little-known Levant merchant.

1 A Proposal for an Arabic Bible

The idea of printing an Arabic Bible originated in the spring of 1720. At the SPCK's meeting on March 24, the German chaplain at St James's Palace, Anton Wilhelm Böhme (1673–1722), presented the Society with a letter from Solomon Negri.⁷ Negri had arrived in England some time in 1717.⁸ His letter recommended a proposal for a New Testament in Arabic, as a charity for those Eastern Christians deprived of the Scriptures for want of the printing press. Receptive to the scheme, the Society solicited the opinions of the English clergy and of men with some experience of the East as to the feasibility and desirability of the undertaking.

Negri's proposal, published the following year with a series of testimonials intended to encourage patrons for the project, was the most detailed and the best-informed justification.⁹ He began with a (rather polemical) survey of the then-extant printed Arabic New Testaments. None of these was satisfactory, on account of the books' cost, scarcity, or linguistic deficiency. He then set out a three-fold plan, which in its outlines mapped out the course of action that the SPCK would eventually follow. First, Negri directed the SPCK's efforts towards the Melkites – the Greek Orthodox Church – who were “superior in number” to the other denominations of Eastern Christians. Secondly, he recommended that the Bibles be sent to Aleppo in Syria, where the English consul and, even more so, the Anglican chaplain could oversee the task of distribution. Finally, Negri advised that the Society work with the hierarchies of the Eastern Christian churches. The respective patriarchs and

⁷ CUL, SPCK MS A1/9, “Minute Book Volume 9, 1719–1721”, p. 92.

⁸ Negri first appears in the SPCK's records in January 1720, when he was granted five shillings from the charitable fund collected at the Society's anniversary meeting (CUL, SPCK MS A1/9, p. 77).

⁹ *An Extract of Several Letters relating to the Great Charity and Usefulness of Printing the New Testament and Psalter in the Arabick Language; for the Benefit of the Poor Christians in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, and other Eastern Countries: with a Proposal for Executing so Good an Undertaking*, London, 1721, p. 3–9; S. Negri [to H. Newman], [1720], CUL, SPCK MS D1/N/13 (another copy at CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 1–6).

senior clergy of the churches in Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt would be best placed to disperse the Bibles most effectively.

Other responses were encouraging. William Wake, archbishop of Canterbury, William Talbot, bishop of Salisbury, and Edward Chandler, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, all expressed their approval.¹⁰ Sir Robert Sutton, who for more than fifteen years had served as English ambassador in Constantinople, gave his opinion through his chaplain William Ayerst that the Bibles would do “a great deal of Good” in the East.¹¹ Archimandrite Gennadios, abbot of St Sabbas Monastery in Alexandria, who in 1720 was in London as chaplain to Peter the Great’s Russian subjects, confirmed that the work would be a “noble Benefaction” to all Christians living under Muslim rule.¹² The Society also received advice based on the first-hand experience of several men who had served as chaplains to the merchants of the Levant Company and the East India Company. Samuel Lisle (1683–1749), who had spent nearly a decade in Izmir (Smyrna) and Aleppo, assured the Society that all Ottoman subjects south of Mount Amanus, “of whatever Religion or Rite they are”, were Arabic-speakers. Most of the Greek clergy in Syria and Palestine were monolingual and read the Scriptures and the offices of the church in Arabic. Lisle estimated that there were 15,000 Greek Orthodox Christians in Aleppo.¹³ George Lewis (c. 1663–1729), chaplain at Fort St George, Madras, between 1692 and 1714, could add that the Christians of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra all spoke Arabic.¹⁴ One potential objection to the plan was the low level of literacy.¹⁵ To allay this concern, Henry Brydges (1674–1728), who had been in Aleppo, recalled that there were public schools at Aleppo, Antioch, Damascus, Tripoli, Sidon, Jerusalem, and all the surrounding villages, where children learned to read and write Arabic.¹⁶ Lisle confirmed from his own testimony that the Christian clergy taught children to read, and

¹⁰ W. Wake to H. Newman, April 19, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 7; W. Talbot to H. Newman, May 9, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 8; E. Chandler to H. Newman, May 9, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 9.

¹¹ W. Ayerst to J. Chamberlayne, April 27, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 8; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 9.

¹² Archim. Gennadios to A. W. Böhme, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 36–38; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 18.

¹³ S. Lisle to H. Newman, May 26, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 15, 18; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 12–13.

¹⁴ G. Lewis to H. Newman, July 18, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 15, 26; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 16. On Lewis, see C. Ansorge, “The Revd George Lewis: His Life and Collection”, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 32, 2020, 1, p. 143–156.

¹⁵ CUL, SPCK MS A1/9, p. 124.

¹⁶ H. Brydges to H. Newman, November 28, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 42; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 21.

that there were “vastly greater Numbers of Christians in the East” able to benefit from the Society’s printed Arabic Bibles.¹⁷

By October 1720, the scope of the project had expanded to include both the New Testament and an Arabic Psalter. The Society made enquiries at Oxford, Cambridge, and London, and in the Netherlands, about the availability of type for printing in Arabic. By 1722, it had settled on the London engraver William Caslon, who was commissioned to make a new font of Arabic type, modeled on the Medici Press’s 1593 edition of Avicenna’s works.¹⁸ This had used a smaller letter than both Thomas Erpenius’s 1616 New Testament – printed on his own press at Leiden – and the Arabic texts printed in the London Polyglot Bible (1657), the Society calculating that the initial expense of a new font would be offset by savings in the cost of paper and binding.

The SPCK also began to investigate manuscripts in British libraries that might be used in preparing the new editions. Oxford, in particular, was a treasury of Eastern Christian literature, thanks to several large collections that came into the Bodleian Library between the 1690s and the 1710s.¹⁹ The French émigré scholar Jean Gagnier (ca. 1670–1740) could report on a number of Arabic versions of the Psalms. Among the collection bequeathed by the archbishop of Armagh, Narcissus Marsh, was an Arabic Psalter with twenty *kathismata* (prayers recited after each of the twenty sections into which the Psalter was divided for liturgical use) and ten canticles.²⁰ A manuscript among those bought for the Bodleian from the scholar and collector Robert Huntington contained an Arabic translation of the Psalms made from the Greek, different from the texts in the Polyglot Bibles printed in Paris (1645) and London.²¹ Two further Huntington manuscripts contained the Psalms in

17 S. Lisle to H. Newman, November 29, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 43; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 23–24; CUL, SPCK MS A1/9, p. 127, 129.

18 J. Ball, *William Caslon 1693–1766: The Ancestry, Life and Connections of England’s Foremost Letter-Engraver and Type-Founder*, Kington, 1973, p. 322–333.

19 See C. Wakefield, “Arabic Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: The Seventeenth-Century Collections”, in G. A. Russell (ed.), *The ‘Arabick’ Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, Leiden, 1994, p. 128–146, esp. p. 134–138.

20 J. Gagnier to H. Newman, April 30, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 71. Gagnier was referring to Oxford, Bodleian Library (Oxf. Bodl.), MS Marsh 687, described at J. Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium, videlicet Hebraicorum, Chaldaicorum, Syriacorum, Aethiopicorum, Arabicorum, Persicorum, Turcicorum, Copticorumque catalogus... pars prima*, Oxford, 1787, “Codices Christiani”, no. 20. On Marsh’s collection, see C. Wakefield, “Archbishop Marsh’s Oriental Collections in the Bodleian Library”, in M. McCarthy, A. Simmons (eds.), *The Making of Marsh’s Library: Learning, Politics and Religion in Ireland, 1650–1750*, Dublin, 2004, p. 76–84.

21 J. Gagnier to H. Newman, April 30, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 71; Oxf. Bodl., MS Huntington 369, described at Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium... catalogus*,

Garshuni (Arabic written in Syriac letters), alongside the Syriac version.²² Gagnier also promised to search in Oxford for Arabic translations of the New Testament. The Cambridge Orientalist David Wilkins (1685–1745) was commissioned to search the catalog of British and Irish manuscripts drawn up at the end of the 17th century and to inform the Society of any copies of the Arabic Psalter or New Testament that it might consult.²³ He was able to supply the SPCK with a list of fifty manuscripts in London, Oxford, and Cambridge.²⁴

Other scholars consulted by the SPCK proposed a simpler course of action. Rather than basing the new editions on Eastern manuscripts, the best plan, thought Humphrey Prideaux (1648–1724), dean of Norwich and author of a popular work on Islam, was to reprint the version of the Arabic New Testament from the London Polyglot Bible.²⁵ Edmund Chishull (1671–1733), who had been a chaplain at Izmir, thought the same: the New Testament should “be done from the Version of the London Polyglott”.²⁶ Others, however, foresaw that a reprint of a Bible known to have been the work of Protestants was likely to encounter resistance, both from Eastern Christians, and from the many Roman Catholic missionaries active in the Ottoman Levant. A better solution was therefore to use an Arabic version that the Eastern Churches deemed authoritative. As Anton Wilhelm Böhme put it, printing “the most approv’d Copy” of the Arabic New Testament would be the surest way of countering “all manner of Exceptions” that might be raised against a Bible based on either the London Polyglot or Thomas Erpenius’s edition.²⁷ This is – to some extent – what the SPCK did. The manuscripts it ultimately used came not from Oxford but from the place to which Solomon Negri had first advised the Society to turn – the Ottoman emporium of Aleppo.

“Codices Christiani”, no. 18. On Huntington and his manuscripts, see Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 96–136.

²² Oxf. Bodl., MS Huntington 109, described at Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium... catalogus*, “Codices Syriaci”, no. 4; Oxf. Bodl., MS Huntington 250, described at Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium... catalogus*, “Codices Syriaci”, no. 5.

²³ CUL, SPCK MS A1/9, p. 182.

²⁴ CUL, SPCK MS A1/9, p. 186.

²⁵ H. Prideaux to W. Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, May 20, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 11; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 11.

²⁶ E. Chishull to H. Newman, 28 May 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 13. Chishull possibly changed his mind about this: in the printed extract from his letter, “the London Polyglott” is replaced with “the most approv’d Version” (*An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 15).

²⁷ A. W. Böhme to H. Newman, July 4, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 14.

2 Books and Manuscripts from Aleppo

Several of the scholars and clerics consulted by the SPCK had cited the absence of printing presses in the Ottoman Empire as a further reason necessitating the Society's charity. As Humphrey Prideaux put it: "there being no Printing in those Parts, all the Copies that they have there of the Bible are in Manuscript". Such manuscripts were expensive; given the heavy taxes borne by Christians living under Islamic rule, they could hardly afford to buy them. Christians were thus bereft of the Scriptures, save what they heard read publicly in their churches.²⁸ Others with first-hand experience of Syria knew that this was not, strictly speaking, true. Samuel Lisle had informed the SPCK that "the present Patriarch at Aleppo" had brought a printing press from Europe, installed it "in his own House", and had begun to print "Copies of their Liturgy". The expense of the undertaking, however, had soon put a stop to it. The press had "lain still for some years" and seemed unlikely ever "to be set on Work again".²⁹

In fact, the patriarch – Athanasios III Dabbās – had printed at Aleppo at least ten books between 1706 and 1711. The much-discussed question of the relationship between Athanasios's press – housed in Aleppo's metropolitan residence – and the presses of Wallachia, where the patriarch had collaborated on the printing of two books in the early years of the 18th century, has recently been the subject of reinvestigation.³⁰ The first fruits of Athanasios's work in Aleppo were an Arabic Psalter and an Arabic version of the Gospels (both in 1706). The former is generally held to be the first Arabic book produced in the Ottoman Empire.³¹ It is a corrected version of an Arabic translation from the Greek, revised in the 11th century by the Melkite theologian 'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl

²⁸ H. Prideaux to W. Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, May 20, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 11; *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 10; see also *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 4.

²⁹ *An Extract of Several Letters*, p. 14.

³⁰ I. Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands (EAPE-1)*, Berlin–Boston, 2023, p. 162–186. See also I. Feodorov, "Beginnings of Arabic Printing in Ottoman Syria (1706–1711): The Romanians' Part in Athanasius Dabbās's Achievements", *ARAM*, 25, 2013, 1–2, 2013, p. 231–260. For earlier accounts, see *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 132–146; W. Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie: évolution de l'environnement culturel (1706–1787)*, Tunis, 1985, p. 132–153; H. Kilpatrick, "From Venice to Aleppo: Early Printing of Scripture in the Orthodox World", *Chronos*, 30, 2014, p. 33–61, esp. p. 46–48; C. A. Panchenko, *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans, 1516–1831*, trans. B. Pfeiffer Noble, S. Noble, Jordanville, NY, 2016, p. 244, 350–351, 486.

³¹ Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands*, p. 263–285. See also Gdoura, *Le début de l'imprimerie arabe*, p. 139, 133, 273.

al-Anṭākī.³² Lisle had known Athanasios personally, was familiar with his efforts to print Arabic books, and recommended the SPCK to seek his approval and patronage for its plans.³³ However, he also put the Society in touch with another Englishman in Syria, who was even better acquainted with the patriarch, and who would henceforth bind the Society's project to a prior history of Eastern Christian scholarship and printing.

Rowland Sherman (d. 1748) – the said Englishman – was a long-serving Aleppo “factor”. But he was also a man with an unusually wide range of cultural and scholarly interests.³⁴ Having traveled to Aleppo in 1688, he studied Arabic with the Maronite priest, teacher, and philosophical writer Buṭrus al-Tūlāwī (1657–1746).³⁵ He apparently knew Greek and Italian, and he also learned some Turkish.³⁶ By 1720, Sherman had attained an exceptional level of proficiency in the first of these languages. According to Lisle, he possessed “a perfect Knowledge of the Arabick Tongue”, which he spoke and wrote with “great Elegance and Purity”.³⁷ These philological skills, Sherman put to use in correcting the Arabic translations of the New Testament and the Psalms. He had also improved the Arabic versions of the homilies of Saint John Chrysostom, and had composed an “index” to the New Testament, with explanatory notes on Jewish rites and customs and on scriptural history and geography. These, and several other works, Sherman had undertaken in collaboration with Athanasios Dabbās, and with others of the learned clergy with whom he had become acquainted in Syria.

Over the course of several years during the early 1720s, Sherman sent from Aleppo a number of manuscripts and books produced at Athanasios Dabbās's press, subsequently used by the SPCK to prepare fair copies for its Arabic impressions. The Psalter was essentially a revision of the Arabic Psalms printed by Dabbās in 1706. The printed text had been corrected – either by Sherman, or by Athanasios

32 On Ibn al-Faḍl, see A. Treiger, “Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī”, in *CMR* 3, p. 89–113; A. M. Roberts, *Reason and Revelation in Byzantine Antioch: The Christian Translation Program of Abdallah ibn al-Faḍl*, Oakland, 2020.

33 S. Lisle to H. Newman, May 26, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 18.

34 Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, 238–247. On Sherman's musical interests and connections, see B. White, “‘Brothers of the String’: Henry Purcell and the Letter-Books of Rowland Sherman”, *Music & Letters*, 92, 2011, 4, p. 519–581, esp. p. 521–525.

35 R. Sherman to H. Newman, April 20, 1725, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 86; R. Sherman to H. Newman, April 29, 1725, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 87. On Buṭrus b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ishāq ibn Zaytūn al-Tūlāwī, see *GCAL* III, p. 394–400; N. Hage, “Boutros al-Tūlāwī et l'école maronite d'Alep à la fin du 17^e et au début du 18^e siècle”, *Parole de l'Orient*, 16, 1990–1991, 1, p. 271–277.

36 R. Sherman to P. Wheak, September 29, 1699, TNA, SP 110/21, f. 24v, quoted in White, “‘Brothers of the String’”, p. 547.

37 S. Lisle to H. Newman, May 26, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 16.

himself – by comparing it with the versions in the English Polyglot Bible.³⁸ To this, Sherman added the citations for scriptural quotations in the margin, following the in-4^o editions of the English Bible, and the 1607 Italian translation by the Calvinist theologian Giovanni Diodati (1576–1649). He also included a short foreword and the “argument” prefacing each Psalm, both translated into Arabic from Diodati’s Italian. The New Testament was based for the most part on the Arabic version in the English Polyglot. Dabbās had compared the Arabic against the Greek and corrected it where necessary, and a Maronite priest (possibly Buṭrus al-Tūlāwī) had done the same against the Vulgate. *Acts* and *1 Peter* had been newly translated by Athanasios Dabbās himself, and the same Maronite priest who had compared the Arabic and Latin versions prepared a new translation of *Revelation*. Sherman then compared the whole against the Polyglot version, correcting anything that savored of novelty. To the New Testament, Sherman had added his own marginal annotations, taken both from Eastern authors (John Chrysostom and the 13th-century Copt al-As‘ad ibn al-‘Assāl), and from Protestant commentators (among others, Hugo Grotius). He took care to ensure that these notes were “short and clear”, and that they added nothing to the plain sense of Scripture. They were justified, Sherman thought, by the need to counter Catholic claims that the Bible was beyond the capacities of lay readers.³⁹

Sherman’s account of these manuscripts in his letters to England tells a rather different story to the commonly accepted opinion on the background to the SPCK’s Bibles. It is certainly true that the Pietists in Halle were a “driving force” behind the SPCK’s work.⁴⁰ Böhme and Negri had Halle connections, and the Pietists had inspired the SPCK by the example of their mission to Tranquebar and by their support for a New Testament in modern Greek. However, Athanasios’s earlier efforts in Arabic publishing, and Sherman’s concern for the patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās and his Church, arguably had more direct influence over the course the SPCK’s venture would take. Moreover, there is no evidence – at least in Sherman’s letters – to support the claim that Solomon Negri had worked on the Psalter

³⁸ Sherman told Henry Newman that Athanasios Dabbās “revis’d his whole Edition by the Polyglott and corrected several places, which the first Editor had render’d not over accurately” (R. Sherman to H. Newman, December 29, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 78–81). In Lisle’s letter to Newman, however, he mentioned only Sherman’s editorial work (S. Lisle to H. Newman, May 26, 1720, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 16: “he has likewise employ’d the same diligence in revising the Book of Psalms, the Translation of which he has fully corrected”).

³⁹ R. Sherman to S. Lisle, February 24, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 64–65; R. Sherman to H. Newman, December 29, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 78–81.

⁴⁰ Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England*, p. 162.

under Athanasios's supervision before he arrived in Western Europe.⁴¹ Certainly, the manuscripts used by the SPCK were the product of a collaboration between Western and Eastern scholars in Syria: Rowland Sherman; Athanasios Dabbās; the Maronite priest who translated *Revelation* and compared the New Testament with the Vulgate (possibly Buṭrus al-Tūlāwī); and Paolo Abdelnour – a Syrian priest who had been in Rome and whom Sherman tasked with reading his Arabic notes on the New Testament.⁴² However, it seems unlikely that Solomon Negri had seen the manuscripts produced in Aleppo before they arrived in London. By then, he was part of the team of theologians and scholars with knowledge of Arabic that the SPCK had assembled to oversee the production of its printed editions. The group included Englishmen and another Christian from Syria, with whom Negri worked on the translations as they went to press – though not always entirely happily.

3 A Team of Correctors

Among the men drawn into the SPCK's work was the Church of England clergyman Arthur Bedford (bap. 1668, d. 1745).⁴³ Bedford was a keen defender of a 17th-century tradition of Oriental scholarship, in which Arabic was valued primarily for its use in elucidating biblical Hebrew – part of a broader defense of Trinitarian orthodoxy.⁴⁴ Bedford was recruited by the Society as a “supervisor” of the Arabic impressions, correcting the printed sheets as they came from the press. Also among the team was George Sale (d. 1736), better known as the English translator of the Qurʾān.⁴⁵ Sale's own motivations for learning Arabic remain somewhat mysterious.⁴⁶ A practicing solicitor, his scholarly interests were unusual for their time, insofar as he was neither a university graduate, nor in clerical orders, and had never – unlike

41 Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands*, p. 176.

42 R. Sherman to S. Lisle, February 24, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 64. Paolo Abdelnour was in Rome in 1707, where he was granted a request to the Propaganda Fide for several books – including an Arabic Bible, cf. Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide, Scritture riferite nei Congressi, Siri (Soriani) 1, 1631–1773, f. 405.

43 S. Mandelbrote, “Bedford, Arthur (bap. 1668, d. 1745)”, *ODNB*, online ed., 2009.

44 A. Bedford, *A Defence of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, from the Testimony of the Most Ancient Jews. In Eight Sermons, preached at the Lady Moyer's Lecture, in the Cathedral-Church of St. Paul, 1739, and 1740. And since greatly Enlarged, with Useful Notes and Appendixes*, London, 1741, p. 292–293.

45 A. Vrolijk, “Sale, George (b. in or after 1696?, d. 1736)”, *ODNB*, online ed., 2015; A. Bevilacqua, “The Qurʾan Translations of Marracci and Sale”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 76, 2013, 93–130.

46 Bevilacqua, “The Qurʾan Translations of Marracci and Sale”, p. 101–102.

Sherman – spent any time in the Arabic-speaking world. Nonetheless, in 1726 he was brought on board as a corrector for the New Testament. Others were enlisted as additional proofreaders: among them, Jean Gagnier at Oxford and Leonard Chappelow (1683–1768) at Cambridge. The SPCK also sought the advice of senior clerics. It was guided by the archbishop of Canterbury, William Wake (1657–1737), for instance, in its eventual decision not to print the annotations to the New Testament supplied by Sherman.⁴⁷

Of the two Eastern Christian collaborators working in England, Solomon Negri was particularly well qualified for the work of preparing new editions. At the Pietist foundations in Halle, where Negri taught Arabic during 1701–1702, and again during 1715–1716, he had guided his students through the Arabic texts of the Scriptures – using both the London Polyglot Bible and the Pentateuch (1622) and New Testament (1616) published by Erpenius.⁴⁸ In Rome, in 1703, Negri transcribed an Arabic Psalter, which he found in the library of the Franciscan monastery at San Pietro in Montorio.⁴⁹ His copy, he sent to August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), the Pietist theologian and Negri's former employer in Halle, whom he also provided with a brief account of the manuscript and its author. The text was the Arabic version derived from the Septuagint, corrected by 'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī. The work was significant, Negri claimed, firstly, because it had not previously been printed, and, secondly, on account of the author's skill and immense knowledge of Greek and Arabic. The Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox Church favored Ibn al-Faḍl's translations, the style of which appealed alike to both learned and unlearned Christians.⁵⁰ In 1720, before the SPCK had recei-

47 "A Memorial to his Grace the Lord Bp of Canterbury about Printing the Annotations on the Arabic New Testament as Transmitted from Aleppo", December 23, 1725, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 18–19; H. Newman to R. Sherman, July 30, 1726, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 25.

48 A method for learning Arabic, set out in J. H. Michaelis, *Dissertatio philologica de historia linguae arabicae... praeside Ioanne Heinrico Michaelis... pro privilegiis & honoribus magistri philosophiae & artium rite impetrandis, eruditorum examini sistet Christianus Benedictus Michaelis*, Halle an der Saale, 1706, p. 35–37, provides an overview of the course of studies followed by Negri's students and recommends specifically the Arabic texts in the Polyglot Bibles, and the Pentateuch and New Testament edited by Erpenius.

49 S. Negri to A. H. Francke, March 10, 1703, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Nachlass Francke, 16,1/6: 2.

50 S. Negri to A. H. Francke, May 25, 1703, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Nachlass Francke, 16,1/6: 4: "Je remets aussi entre les mains de Monsieur Pommer un Psautier en feuilles, que j'ay coppié à Rome, qui est une piece fort considerable, d'autant qu'il n'a jamais été imprimé & à cause de l'habileté de l'auteur de la version elle est fait sur le Grec des septante; c'est comme cela qu'on les recite en Orient; Tous les livres d'Eglises qui se lisent parmi les Grecs Orientaux sont de la version de cet auteur; il avoit une prodigieuse connoissance de la langue Greque & de la langue Arabe il s'appelle Ebn El fadl; son stile est admiré de toutes les nations chretiennes d'orient, il étoit fort heureux

ved the copies of the Psalter from Aleppo, Negri transcribed another version of the Arabic Psalms from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library.⁵¹ For his services during the early years of the Society's work on the Arabic Bibles, Negri was paid a guinea a week.⁵² By January 1723, however, he had secured a position with the British government as the King's Interpreter for Oriental Languages. Thereafter, he was less active on behalf of the SPCK.⁵³

A greater share of the work on the Arabic Bibles fell to another Syrian Christian. Theocharis Dadichi (1693/4–1734) – as he styled himself in England – had also taught Arabic at Halle in 1717–1718.⁵⁴ In July 1723, Dadichi appeared before a meeting of the SPCK in London.⁵⁵ Over the course of the following two years, he prepared fair

en ses traductions & sçavoit trouver un stile à contenter egaleement les sçavans & les ignorans". The manuscript is now in Halle, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen, H Q 67. Negri was wrong in claiming that Ibn al-Faḍl's Arabic translation of the Psalms had never been published; scholarly consensus holds that the *Kitāb ṣalāt al-sawāʿī*, the first Arabic book printed using movable type (Fano, 1514), incorporated Ibn al-Faḍl's Psalm translations; see GCAL I, p. 636; M. Krek, "The Enigma of the First Arabic Book Printed from Movable Type", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 38, 1979, 3, p. 203–212, p. 206. Moreover, the Arabic Psalms printed in volume II of the Propaganda Fide's *Biblia sacra Arabica* (1671) were based on a Vatican manuscript (Vat. ar. 468) which contained Ibn al-Faḍl's version; see GCAL I, p. 117; A. Vaccari, S. J., "Una Bibbia araba per il primo Gesuita venuto al Libano", *MUSJ*, 10, 1925, 4, p. 91.

51 CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 2. Negri's transcription is now MS BL, Harley MS 5476. Negri was also sent to inspect the Arabic manuscripts in Sion College Library in London but was unable to find a Psalter; cf. CUL, SPCK MS A1/9, p. 175, 179, 182.

52 CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 2–3.

53 Negri was paid a further twenty guineas in October 1723 for supervising the production of the Arabic type; cf. CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 6 (also CUL, SPCK A1/10, p. 198). This appears to have been the last payment he received from the SPCK.

54 On Dadichi, see W. Suchier, *C. R. Dadichi oder wie sich deutsche Orientalisten von einem Schwindler dúpieren ließen. Ein Kapitel aus der deutschen Gelehrtenrepublik der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Halle an der Saale, 1919; C. F. Seybold, "Der gelehrte Syrer Carolus Dadichi († 1734 in London), Nachfolger Salomo Negri's († 1729)", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 64, 1910, 3, p. 591–601; W. Hage, "Carolus Dadichi in Marburg (1718): Bittgesuch eines rum-orthodoxen Studenten im Universitäts-Archiv", *Oriens Christianus*, 95, 2011, p. 16–31; D. A. Morozov, E. Gerasimova, "Каролус Рали Дадихи и 'Восточная библиотека' Ассемани: Восточный взгляд на популяризацию сирийской литературы в Европе", *Символ: Syriaca, Arabica, Iranica*, 61, 2012, p. 357–370; Boehinger, "Abenteuer Islam", p. 72–89; Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 233–235, 242; Mills, "Johann Heinrich Callenberg's Orient", in *The Power of the Dispersed*, p. 209–239, esp. p. 226–232; Mills, "Missionary Philologist: Johann Heinrich Callenberg between the Catholic and Protestant Orients", in M. Friedrich, H. Zaunstöck (eds.), *Jesuit and Pietist Missions in the Eighteenth Century: Cross-Confessional Perspectives*, Halle an der Saale, 2022, p. 105–130, esp. p. 120–123.

55 CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 5.

copies for the printer of the Psalms and the Arabic New Testament, negotiating a fee of six guineas for the former, and fifty guineas for the latter.⁵⁶ He was also paid by the SPCK to translate from Arabic into Latin Sherman's annotations and a treatise on Catholic teaching sent by Sherman from Aleppo, and to prepare Arabic versions of the Swiss pastor Jean-Frédéric Ostervald's *Abrégé de l'histoire sainte* and a catechism.⁵⁷ Dadichi served the Society, too, as a corrector.⁵⁸

These were men of strong opinions, and were all, in different ways, deeply invested in the SPCK's Arabic editions. It is thus hardly surprising that disagreements arose. One disputed question was that of whether to print the diacritical markings indicating short vowels and gemination (*tashkīl*, in Arabic). The Psalter was printed without any of these markings, following Erpenius's method in his *Pentateuch* and New Testament. Some of the Society's members, however, felt that it was proper to include them in the New Testament. Arthur Bedford argued that given the SPCK's aim of producing an Arabic Bible "plain and easy to the Vulgar", the markings ought to be printed in full. Moreover, the "best and finest" Qur'ānic manuscripts always reproduced the *tashkīl* fully and accurately; Christians would expose themselves to the charge of "negligence", were the SPCK's Bibles to appear without any diacritical markings.⁵⁹ Dadichi thought otherwise. The parallel with the Qur'ān was misguided. The practice of fully vocalizing the Qur'ānic text was linked to the Muslim custom or "religious obligation" of reciting, or rather of "singing" the Qur'ān. This, in turn, had arisen from the Qur'ān's essentially poetic nature. The Scriptures, conversely, consisted of plain and simple language, and ought to be read publicly in a corresponding manner. Nonetheless, Dadichi conceded that the less learned required some aid in reading and understanding. The best solution was therefore to include the *tashkīl* selectively, in instances where the markings would elucidate difficult words, or resolve potential ambiguities.⁶⁰ The SPCK took these differences of opinion seriously. Sherman in Aleppo was asked to give his views, and to seek those of his "learned neighbours".⁶¹ Buṭrus al-Tūlāwī set out an

56 For the Psalter: CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 6, 7, 9–10; for the New Testament: CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 12, 15 (also CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 14, 17, 19, 21, 22); Dadichi presented the Society with the final part of his copy of the New Testament on May 11, 1725; cf. CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 26.

57 CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 7, 30, 42. For the translation of Ostervald's *Abrégé* and the catechism, CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 70, 72; Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 242.

58 CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 8, 19.

59 A. Bedford to R. Sherman, January 5, 1725, CUL, SPCK, MS D5/4, p. 7–11.

60 T. Dadichi to R. Sherman, January 12, 1725, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 12–13.

61 H. Newman to R. Sherman, December 23, 1724, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 5.

approach similar to Dadichi's.⁶² Guided by his advice, the Society added limited diacritical markings to the New Testament.

Aspects of the translation supplied by Sherman were also contentious. Opinions differed, for instance, on the question of how best to render proper names in Arabic. "Barnabas" was given in Sherman's manuscript as "Bārnābās" (بارناباس), a version closer to the Greek nominative form (Βαρνάβας), but different from the Arabic in Erpenius's New Testament and the Polyglot, where the name was spelled "Barnābā" (برنابا). Likewise, Sherman's rendition of "Andrew", "Andrīyās" (اندرياس), approximated the Greek (Ἀνδρέας), but differed from the version of the name found in Erpenius and the Polyglot, where the spelling was "Andrāwus" (اندر اوس). George Sale queried Sherman's renditions, prompting the latter to defend his decisions. "Exotick words, & especially Compounds", Sherman argued, were exempted from "the common Rules of the Arabick Language". Instead, "great care ought to be used to preserve the Etymology". The Jewish "sorcerer" and "false prophet" named at Acts 13:6 as "Barjesus" (Βαρϊσοῦς) appears in the Arabic text of the Polyglot as "Bār Yasū" (بار يسوع), which Sherman thought justified his spelling "Bārnābās".⁶³ More than three years after ceasing his more formal engagement with the SPCK, Solomon Negri was evidently still willing to serve as a corrector for the New Testament. However, he appears to have lost faith in the project after seeing what he clearly thought of as bad Arabic in the printed text based on Sherman's manuscript. The translator, he lamented, was a "mere scribler" ("il s'est barbouille"). His "too scrupulous care in following the Greek Text" had meant that, among other infelicities, he had "confounded the proper Names" by imitating the Greek case endings.⁶⁴

62 P. Oliva [B. al-Tūlāwī] to A. Bedford and T. Dadichi, April 22, 1725, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 88–89 (translation at p. 89–90).

63 R. Sherman to H. Newman, December 22, 1729, CUL, SPCK MS D5/3, p. 210–211. Although the comparison might account for why Sherman added the long vowel to the first part of the name ("Bār"), it does not quite work as an explanation of why he chose to follow the Greek nominative form in the second part ("nābās").

64 S. Negri to H. Newman, July 8, 1726, CUL MS D5/4, p. 97 ("Plus l'auteur a voulu paroître sçavant dans la langue Arabe & plus il s'est barbouille. Son soin trop scrupuleux de s'attacher au Texte Grec lui a fait changer les Nombres malgré l'exigence & la propriété de la Langue, et de renverser les noms Propres, qui ne sont plus entendues dans la terminaison Greque, comme Simon pour Somaan, Andreas pour Endrawous, & une infinité d'autres"). I have quoted the translation at CUL MS D5/4, p. 97–98 (French spelling cf. the quotation).

4 The Printed Books

Notwithstanding these disagreements, the SPCK succeeded at least in seeing through to publication the Psalter, the New Testament, and several shorter Arabic tracts. But what exactly did it print? The Psalter was prefaced by an introduction (*fātiḥat al-kitāb*) supplied by Athanasios Dabbās through Sherman from Aleppo (sig. a1r–v). This set out a brief history of the translation that sits rather oddly with the more detailed account found in Sherman's letters. It is conceded that there were some “imperfect expressions” that “needed correcting” (“*ibārāt mukhtalla wājibat al-iṣlāḥ*”) in the Psalter printed at Aleppo by Athanasios. The Arabic text was therefore collated against the Greek version (“*fa-qūbila ḥadith^{an} ‘alā al-nuskha al-yūnāniya*”), and “all accretions and omissions” (“*kull ziyāda wa-nuqṣān*”) in the Arabic translation remedied. This task is credited to “his [Athanasios's] student, the priest Solomon” (“*tilmīdh-hu al-qass Sulaymān*”), said to have “practiced the grammatical sciences and the subtleties of the Arabic language” (“*mārāsa al-‘ulūm al-naḥwīya wa-laṭā‘if al-lughā al-‘arabiya*”). This has generally been understood as a reference to Solomon Negri.⁶⁵ However, there is no other evidence that Negri was a pupil (or “disciple”, *tilmīdh*) of Athanasios, nor that he had been ordained. Given Sherman's account of the revision of the Psalter in his letter to Newman, it is just as likely that Athanasios was assisted in his work by a priest called “Solomon” in Syria (Negri had left his homeland and was in Paris by 1685, some twenty years before Dabbās's Psalter was printed in Aleppo).⁶⁶ If the reference is to Solomon Negri, then Athanasios could only have heard about his work on the Psalter in England at second hand, presumably through Sherman.⁶⁷

This introduction was followed by a “general summary of the Psalms” (*talkhīṣ ‘amm li-l-mazāmīr*) (sig. a2r–v). This is a translation of the introduction to the Psalms from Giovanni Diodati's *La Bibbia, cioè, i libri del Vecchio e del Nuovo Testamento* (1607).⁶⁸ The printed version omitted any reference to Diodati, in order to avoid

65 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 376; *GCAL* I, p. 118; *HMLÉM* IV.1, p. 146, 217; S. Di Pietrantonio, “Le *Kitāb fī ṣinā‘at al-faṣāḥa* du patriarche Athanase III Dabbās: Enjeux littéraires et linguistiques d'un texte de rhétorique gréco-arabe inédit”, in I. Feodorov, B. Heyberger, S. Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*, Leiden/Boston, 2021, p. 139; Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands*, p. 176.

66 Ghobrial, “The Life and Hard Times of Solomon Negri”, p. 317.

67 In the printed version, the introduction is undated; however, a manuscript copy that came to England through Sherman (CUL Add. MS 257) records that it was written in Aleppo in 1718. If the reference is to Negri, then he must have completed most of his work in revising the Psalter at least two years before the plan for an Arabic Bible came to the attention of the SPCK.

68 G. Diodati, *La Bibbia, cioè, i libri del Vecchio e del Nuovo Testamento*, [Geneva], 1607, p. 484.

explicitly linking the Arabic Psalter with Protestants.⁶⁹ A manuscript copy sent by Sherman from Aleppo, however, attributes the summary to “Yuḥannā ‘Aṭā’ Allāh” (the Arabicized version of the Italian name).⁷⁰ There follow 150 Psalms, each preceded by a short summary of the content (*maḍmūn*), also translated from Diodati’s Italian. The references to biblical citations are printed at the bottom of each page. The Society also produced copies without the summaries and references.⁷¹ The printed version thus omitted the ‘supernumerary’ Psalm, on David’s slaying of Goliath, found in the Septuagint and in most Eastern Christian Psalters. Instead, the volume concluded with the Ten Commandments from *Exodus* 20 (p. 227–229), to which are added *Deuteronomy* 4:2 and 12:32, *Matthew* 5:19 (p. 229), and the Lord’s prayer (p. 229–230).

The text of the Psalms is clearly a revision of Dabbās’s 1706 Psalter. The Arabic was brought into closer conformity with the Greek. In Psalm 1, for instance, the 1706 printed edition renders at verses 1 and 5 the Greek plural noun ἀσεβείς (“ungodly”) with “*al-kafara*” (“unbelievers”), whereas the same word at verses 4 and 6 is given as “*al-munāfiqūn*” (“hypocrites”). In the SPCK’s edition, ἀσεβείς is consistently translated “*al-munāfiqūn*”. There is also some evidence to support Sherman’s comment in his letter to Newman that Dabbās made use of the Polyglot Bible. At Psalm 150, verse 4 (“Praise him with timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments, the organ”, αἰνεῖτε αὐτὸν ἐν τυμπάνῳ καὶ χορῷ, αἰνεῖτε αὐτὸν ἐν χορδαῖς καὶ ὄργάνῳ), Dabbās’s 1706 edition renders the nouns *al-ṭabl* (“drum”), *al-duff* (“tambourines”), *al-awthār* (“strings”), and *ālat al-ṭarab* (“musical instrument”). The SPCK’s edition has *al-duff* (“tambourine”), *al-ṣanj* (“cymbal”), *al-awthār* (“strings”), and *al-urḡun* (“organ”), which matches the Arabic text in the Polyglot almost exactly.⁷²

The New Testament was adorned with a woodcut made from a design by George Sale.⁷³ It was prefaced by the Ten Commandments and the same texts from *Deuteronomy* and *Matthew* (p. 4–5), followed by a table of contents and a motto from 2 *Timothy* 3:16–17 (p. 6). There are no references to parallel texts, nor any of the marginal annotations, prefaces, or indices prepared by Sherman. The text is divided into chapters (*fuṣūl*) and verses following the Western Bibles, but also retains the divisions into pericopes (*iṣḥāḥ*) for reading in the Eastern churches.

69 SPCK MS A32/1, p. 18.

70 CUL, Add. MS 257.

71 H. Newman to R. Sherman, June 9, 1724, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 3. A copy of this version survives at Cambridge University Library (13.8.32). Some printed sheets containing the summaries but omitting the references survive at CUL, SPCK MS E9/3.

72 The Polyglot has *al-awthār*.

73 CUL, SPCK MS D1/S/64.

In general, the SPCK and its correctors were pleased with the work. However, the finished product was not entirely free from errors. One unlucky mishap led to the negative particle *lā* being omitted from *Galatians* 3:10, so that the text misquotes *Deuteronomy* 27:26: “Cursed is every one that continueth in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (*mal’ūn kull man yathbutu fī jamī’ al-farā’id al-maktūba fī muṣḥaf al-sharī’a li-ya’mala-hā*). This was considered by the SPCK to be “so material a fault” that the Bibles not dispatched to Aleppo were returned to the printer to be corrected.⁷⁴ The New Testaments already sent as presentation copies, however, retain the misprint.

Early readers of the SPCK’s New Testament recognized that the Arabic did not straightforwardly reproduce the text of the Polyglot Bible. Johann Jacob Reiske (1716–1774), like Negri, questioned the editor’s decision to place in parenthesis Arabic words with no direct equivalent in the Greek. Tellingly, given Sherman’s statement that Dabbās had translated *Acts* “anew”, Reiske took *Acts* 28 as a specimen to illustrate variations between the Polyglot translation and the SPCK’s New Testament. The latter was certainly closer to the Greek. Whereas the Polyglot rendered θήριον, the “venomous beast” seen hanging from Paul’s hand at *Acts* 28:4, with *al-aḡā* (“the viper”), the SPCK’s edition translated the word more accurately as *al-waḥsh* (“the wild beast”). Reiske was less certain that such changes were always improvements. The Polyglot’s rendition of “οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν φιλανθρωπίαν” (“no little kindness”) at *Acts* 28:2 with *ta’aṭṭuf^{an} kathīr^{an}* (“great kindness”) was less literal than the SPCK’s *ta’aṭṭuf^{an} laysa bi-l-yasīr* (“kindness not small”); the former, however, was better Arabic.⁷⁵ Those parts of the New Testament, too, which were derived from the Polyglot version, were also notably closer to the Greek text. Christian Benedict Michaelis (1680–1764) identified six places in *Matthew* 1 where the SPCK edition adhered more closely to the Greek than either the Polyglot or Erpenius’s New Testament.⁷⁶

* * *

Whatever the SPCK might have achieved in the history of Arabic publishing, its project was less effective as a Protestant mission to the Christian East. Two factors above all hindered its success. Firstly, the Society underestimated the strength of

⁷⁴ H. Newman to R. Sherman, September 29, 1729, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 47.

⁷⁵ Siegm. Jac. Baumgartens *Nachrichten von merkwürdigen Büchern*, 3, 1753, 16, p. 289–290.

⁷⁶ C. B. Michaelis, *Tractatio critica de variis lectionibus Novi Testamenti*, Halle an der Saale, 1749, p. 37.

opposition to its work on the part of Catholic missionaries. At least one former Aleppo chaplain, who had experienced at first hand the Catholic missions in Syria, had warned about the missionaries' inevitable resistance. The SPCK had taken steps to mitigate this. As well as avoiding any mention of Protestants in the prefatory materials, it had gone so far as omitting the place of publication from the Bibles' title pages. Nonetheless, the more numerous and better organized Catholic clerics in Syria and Palestine set themselves vociferously against the books' distribution, and it is likely that large numbers of them were destroyed. Secondly, through Rowland Sherman, the SPCK's Arabic Bibles became inextricably linked to the authority of Patriarch Athanasios III Dabbās within the Greek Orthodox Church. However, the Society's members in London were unaware of just how precarious Athanasios's standing was, as the Catholic movement within the Patriarchate of Antioch gained ground in the years leading up to the schism of 1724. Dabbās's successor, Sylvester of Antioch, fared even worse. Sylvester was barely able to establish himself in Aleppo, and Sherman's plans for a large-scale distribution of the SPCK's books ground to a halt.⁷⁷

In the end, it is not unlikely that the Psalter and the New Testament produced by the SPCK proved more effective as a resource for Western students of Arabic than as an aid to the spiritual renewal of the Eastern Churches. In other respects, too, the SPCK's Arabic Bibles were typical of the fruits of Arabic scholarship in the West between the late 16th and the late 18th centuries. They were the product of a history of textual transmission between Western Europe and the Arabic-speaking world, and they emerged from a confluence of Eastern and Western traditions of sacred philology and printing. The project drew in peripatetic scholars, whose careers carried them between Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

Nearly all previous accounts have overstated Solomon Negri's contribution. Negri set the project in motion, then oversaw the production of the new Arabic type. During the early stages of the SPCK's work, he transcribed and collated various manuscripts of the Psalter, but these were not, ultimately, the versions used for the printed Psalms. More central to the realization of the printed editions was his younger countryman, Theocharis Dadichi, and the English supervisors, George Sale and Arthur Bedford. Most of the editorial work, however, was carried out in Aleppo by Athanasios Dabbās, his Eastern collaborators, and Rowland Sherman. It was undoubtedly the last who did the most to bring together the Eastern and Western contributors to the project. Yet, Sherman's contribution has remained in the shadows, owing in large part to his own desire to preserve his anonymity.⁷⁸ It is

⁷⁷ Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 238–247.

⁷⁸ Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 247.

a curious twist to the tale that whereas Protestants in England and Germany knew almost nothing about Sherman, Roman Catholics were all too familiar with him. The reports filed back to Rome by missionaries in the field not infrequently invoked a troublesome English merchant, spreading the heresy of Protestantism among the Eastern Christians – even if only garbled versions of Sherman's name appeared in their letters.⁷⁹ When in the 1740s the Maronite cleric and librarian Stefano Evodio Assemani (1711–1782) cited the SPCK's New Testament in his entry for a manuscript of the Arabic Gospels in the Medici Palatine Library, he attributed the work not to Negri but to a certain “Mercator Anglicanus” called “Charmel”.⁸⁰ The name would have meant little to any of his readers. But “Charmel” was none other than Rowland Sherman – an Englishman with an unusually encompassing range of literary obsessions and religious sympathies.

Appendix

Books and Manuscripts in British Libraries connected to the SPCK's Arabic Bibles

1. Cambridge, University Library, 7828.c.5

The Arabic Psalter printed by Athanasios Dabbās at Aleppo in 1706 (Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands*, p. 263–265). This is quite possibly the same copy sent from Aleppo by Sherman, which was presented to the SPCK along with two manuscript Psalters by Samuel Lisle in July 1723 (CUL, SPCK MS A32/1, p. 4).

2. Cambridge, University Library, Add. MS 257

The 150 Psalms in Arabic and Greek. The manuscript contains the introduction in Arabic (*fātiḥat al-kitāb*) and the “general summary of the Psalms” (*talkhiṣ ‘āmm li-l-mazāmīr*), including the note about Diodati omitted from the printed version. It concludes with the Apostles' Creed (p. 222), the Nicene Creed (p. 222–224), and a version of the Athanasian Creed (p. 224–225), only the first of which has been translated into Arabic. This is almost certainly one of the manuscripts sent by Sherman from Aleppo. In February 1721, Sherman told Samuel Lisle: “With the Psalter which I send by the ships in the Arabick, I will also send you one which I caus'd at first

⁷⁹ Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge*, p. 244–245.

⁸⁰ S. E. Assemani, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum mss. orientalium catalogus*, Florence, 1742, p. 65.

to be wrote out in two columns Greek and Arabick, as I intended to send one to the Church of the Greeks here for their daily Use, but I desisted on the Patriarch Athanasios's telling me that so few of his own Clergy understood Greek, that it would be a needless Expence and of no use to them or any else of His People; So it can now only serve to shew how Carefull I was in what I undertook for the Good of others and Honour of our Nation and you may keep or present the Book to any one from your self as you please".⁸¹ In December the same year, Sherman wrote to Newman: "I caus'd a Copy to be drawn out with the Septuagint in one column, and his [Dabbās's] corrected Edition of the Arabick in the other, intending to have presented one so in Folio for the use of the Greek Church here, but the Patriarch diswading me from it, I intend to send you that which I have by me".⁸² The manuscript was given to the Cambridge University Library by Gilbert Bouchery, who had been domestic chaplain to Lisle. It is therefore likely that it had been sent by Sherman to Lisle.

See also E. G. Browne, *A Hand-List of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts... Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, Cambridge, 1900, p. 203–204; *GCAL* I, p. 118–119.

3. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. Or. 29

Theocharis Dadichi's copy of the Arabic Psalter. A note pasted at the end of the manuscript reads: "Mr. Dadichi's Transcript of the Arabic Psalter, from whence that of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was printed", and details various omissions in the manuscript. The manuscript includes the introduction by Dabbās (*fātiḥat al-kitāb*) and the "general summary of the Psalms" (*talkhiṣ 'āmm li-l-mazāmīr*), translated from Diodati. The text of the Psalms contains the parallel texts in the margin, page references to the manuscripts sent from Aleppo, and several notes to the printer. Following the Psalms is a Latin description by Dadichi of the manuscript New Testament sent by Sherman from Aleppo. In October 1723, Dadichi was tasked by the SPCK with preparing Latin translations of Sherman's Arabic annotations to the New Testament.⁸³ There follow Dadichi's translations of the notes from *Matthew* 1 up to *Matthew* 14; a separate insertion contains further translations of Sherman's notes, described as "Mr Dadichi's Translation of the Arabick annotations, on several controverted Texts of the New Testament and annotations sent from Aleppo". At the end of the manuscript there is a letter from

⁸¹ R. Sherman to S. Lisle, February 24, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 67.

⁸² R. Sherman to H. Newman, December 29, 1721, CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 79.

⁸³ SPCK MS A32/1, p. 7.

Dadichi in French, dated July 2, 1724, noting differences between the in-folio and the in-8° manuscripts of the Psalms sent from Aleppo.

See also A. Nicoll, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum orientalium Bibliothecae Bodleianae pars secunda Arabicos complectens. Confecit Alexander Nicoll... Editionem absolvit... E. B. Pusey*, Oxford, 1835, “Codices Christiani”, no. IX.

4. London, British Library (BL), Harley MS 5476

Solomon Negri's transcription of the Psalter. A note on the verso of the flyleaf reads:

Arabicus hic Codex continet CL. Psalmos Davidis & unum extra numerum, de caede Gigantis Goliath, & praeterea decem sacros canticos è diversis scripturae libris. Descriptus ab exemplari quodam quod ex Aegypto allatum erat, emendatus & commatibus distinctus juxta exemplar Graeco Complutense, deinde cum duobus Codicibus Bibliothecae Bodleianae Oxonii Laud 306.7.A & 776.9.D accurate fuit collatus. Manu Salomonis Negri Damasceni. an. 1720.

In April 1721, Negri informed the SPCK that he had obtained “a pretty correct Copy of the Psalms in Arabick as they are now used in the Greek churches and schools”. This was possibly the version he had transcribed in Rome in 1703. He recommended, however, “for the greater certainty of its being a good copy”, that the Society “procure a search to be made in the Bodleian library”.⁸⁴ Negri subsequently visited the Bodleian, where he transcribed the entire Psalter from a Bodleian manuscript; this he presented to the SPCK in November 1721.⁸⁵

The BL manuscript is therefore likely to be Negri's transcription of an (unidentified) Bodleian manuscript, probably Oxf. Bodl., MS Marsh 687. It might also, however, be a copy of Oxf. Bodl., MS Bodl. Or. 468, which certainly originated in Egypt. The two Laudian MSS against which Negri has collated this copy are now Oxf. Bodl., MS Laud Or. 22 (Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium... catalogus*, “Codices Christiani”, no. 17) and Oxf. Bodl., MS Laud Or. 197 (Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium... catalogus*, “Codices Christiani”, no. 15).

5. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Vet. Or. c. Arab. I [formerly MS Sale 81]

The Gospels in Arabic as printed by Athanasios Dabbās in Aleppo in 1706 (Feodorov, *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands*, p. 266–267). The copy is lacking a title page and preface. The printed text breaks off at *Matthew* 17 (the 74th pericope) and has been added by hand, resuming at *Matthew* 19 (the 84th pericope). The text is followed by a table indicating the pericopes to be read during the course of the liturgical year. This is possibly the copy which Sherman told Newman in December

⁸⁴ CUL, MS A1/9, p. 169.

⁸⁵ CUL, MS A1/9, p. 210.

1721 that he had, “ready to send”.⁸⁶ Given Sale’s involvement in the project, it is not inconceivable that an exemplar sent from Aleppo for the use of the SPCK later came into his personal collection.

6. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Sale 84

A manuscript containing the Arabic New Testament sent by Sherman from Aleppo. A note pasted to the inside cover reads:

Novum Testamentum, Arabicè, ad fidem Graeci Textûs recognitum, et cum antiquis optimæ notæ Versionibus collatum.

Cui præmittuntur contenta Librorum Veteris Testamenti, secundum ordinem Alphabeti Hebraici digesta: nec non Decalogus.

Post Novum Testamentum sequitur ordine Alphabetici, Index copiosissimus Nominum eorumque præsertim Propriorum, quæ in hoc ipso Testamento usurpantur unâ cum eorundem Expositione.

In margine totius codicis <an>notantur loca parallela.

Exaratus est hic Codex Halebi An. Dom. 1718.

The Arabic title page (f. 6) identifies the work as the New Testament, collated against the Greek version and the best copies in other languages. The manuscript was completed in Aleppo in 1718. At f. 6v, there is a table of contents and the motto from 2 *Timothy* 3:16–17. Folios 7r–19v contain a summary of the books of the Old Testament (*maḍmūnāt asfār al-ʿAhd al-ʿatiq*), identified as a translation from Giovanni Diodati’s 1607 Italian Bible. Folio 20r is a table of the 22 books of the Old Testament, corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, as given by Athanasios of Alexandria. To this is added the text of *Romans* 3:2. Folios 20v–21r contain the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20, identified as the text of the Arabic-Latin edition printed at Rome in 1671 by the Propaganda Fide. There follow the texts of *Deuteronomy* 4:2 and 12:32 and *Matthew* 5:19. Folios 21v–22r contain the introduction (*muqaddima*) to the Gospels, translated from Diodati. The *Four Gospels* (f. 22v–158r) include references to parallel texts, and extensive annotations in the margins. *Acts* (f. 159r–201v) is also prefaced by the introduction from Diodati (f. 158v–159r), as is each of the subsequent books (f. 202r–349r). A separate title page (f. 350r) precedes an index of names mentioned in the New Testament, with definitions taken from the best commentators and historians, also completed in Aleppo in 1718. There is a motto from *Galatians* 6:10. The index is ordered alphabetically, beginning at “Abaddon” (*Revelation* 9:11) (f. 350v), and ending with “Joel” (*Acts* 2:16) (f. 433v).

⁸⁶ CUL, SPCK MS D5/4, p. 80.

[Samuel Palmer], *The X. Commandments and XXIII. Psalm in Arabick... a Specimen of the New Cast Letter; to be us'd in the Printing of the Psalter and New Testament; design'd by the Society at London for Promoting Christian Knowledge to be distributed gratis among the Poor Christians in Arabia, Syria, Palestine, &c.* [London, 1721]

At least three copies of this single printed sheet survive: Cambridge, CUL, SPCK MS E9/11; London, British Library, C.123.ff.13; Oxford, Christ Church Library, Hyp D. 31 (9). In the early stages of the project, the SPCK planned to use Arabic type cast from the matrices used for the Polyglot Bible by the printer Samuel Palmer. Negri found fault with several of these, leading the Society to contract with the type founder Thomas James to make around thirty new matrices and punches (CUL, SPCK MS, A1/9, p. 184). By 1722, however, William Caslon had been commissioned to make a whole new set of smaller typefaces. This document is a specimen of the original larger type made from the Polyglot matrices. The SPCK eventually used Caslon's new smaller type for the text, and the type made from the Polyglot matrices for the headings.

Bibliography

Unpublished Sources

Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide, Scritture riferite nei Congressi, Siri (Soriani) 1, 1631–1773.

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Nachlass Francke, 16,1/6.

British Library, Harley MS 5476.

Cambridge University Library, Add. MS 257.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS A1/9.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS A1/10.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS A32/1.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS C14/1.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS D1/N/13.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS D1/S/64.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS D5/3.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS D5/4.

Cambridge University Library, SPCK MS E9/3.

Halle, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen, H Q 67.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. Or. 29.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Sale 84.

Published Sources

- Allen, William Osborne Bird, Edmund McClure. *Two Hundred Years: The History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1698–1898*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1898.
- Anson, Catherine. “The Revd George Lewis: His Life and Collection”. *Journal of the History of Collections*, 321, 2020, p. 143–156.
- Assemani, Stefano Evodio. *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum mss. orientalium catalogus*. Florence: Gaetano Albizzini, 1742.
- Ball, Johnson. *William Caslon 1693–1766: The Ancestry, Life and Connections of England’s Foremost Letter-Engraver and Type-Founder*. Kington: Roundwood Press, 1973.
- [Baumgarten, Siegmund Jacob (ed).]. *Siegm. Jac. Baumgartens Nachrichten von merkwürdigen Büchern*, 3, 1753, 16.
- Bedford, Arthur. *A Defence of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, from the Testimony of the Most Ancient Jews. In Eight Sermons, preached at the Lady Moyer’s Lecture, in the Cathedral-Church of St. Paul, 1739, and 1740. And since greatly enlarged, with Useful Notes and Appendixes*. London: C. Rivington and T. Longman, 1741.
- Bevilacqua, Alexander. “The Qur’an Translations of Marracci and Sale”. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 76, 2013, p. 93–130.
- Blanning, Tim. *George I: The Lucky King*. London: Penguin Books, 2019.
- Bochinger, Christoph. “Abenteuer Islam. Zur Wahrnehmung fremder Religion im Hallenser Pietismus des 18. Jahrhunderts”. Habilitation thesis, University of Munich, 1996.
- Browne, Edward G. *A Hand-List of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts... preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900.
- Brunner, Daniel L. *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1993.
- Callenberg, Johann Heinrich. *Spicilegium instituti Muhammedici monumentis subserviens*. Halle and der Salle: Institutum Iudaicum, 1743.
- Clarke, William Kemp Lowther. *A History of the S.P.C.K.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1959.
- Di Pietrantonio, Stefano. “Le *Kitāb fī šināʾat al-faṣāḥa* du patriarche Athanase III Dabbās: Enjeux littéraires et linguistiques d’un texte de rhétorique gréco-arabe inédit”. In Ioana Feodorov, Bernard Heyberger, Samuel Noble (eds.), *Arabic Christianity between the Ottoman Levant and Eastern Europe*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021, p. 132–192.
- Diodati, Giovanni. *La Bibbia, cioè, I libri del vecchio e del nuovo testamento*. [Geneva]: [Jean de Tournes], 1607.
- Duffy, Eamon. “The Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge and Europe: The Background to the Founding of the Christentumsgesellschaft”. *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, 7, 1981, p. 28–42.
- Feodorov, Ioana. *Arabic Printing for the Christians in Ottoman Lands. The East-European Connection*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2023.
- Feodorov, Ioana. “Beginnings of Arabic Printing in Ottoman Syria (1706–1711): The Romanians’ Part in Athanasius Dabbās’s Achievements”. *ARAM*, 25, 2013, 1–2, p. 231–260.
- Gdoura, Wahid. *Le début de l’imprimerie arabe à Istanbul et en Syrie: évolution de l’environnement culturel (1706–1787)*. Tunis: Université de Tunis, Institut supérieur de documentation, 1985.
- Ghobrial, John-Paul A. “The Life and Hard Times of Solomon Negri: An Arabic Teacher in Early Modern Europe”. In Jan Loop, Alastair Hamilton, Charles Burnett (eds.), *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 2017, p. 310–331.

- Graf, Georg. *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols. Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–1953; repr. 1959–1960.
- Hage, Nabil. “Boutros al-Tūlāwī et l'école maronite d'Alep à la fin du 17^e et au début du 18^e siècle”. *Parole de l'Orient*, 16, 1990–1991, p. 271–277.
- Hage, Wolfgang. “Carolus Dadichi in Marburg (1718): Bittgesuch eines rum-orthodoxen Studenten im Universitäts-Archiv”. *Oriens Christianus*, 95, 2011, p. 16–31.
- Kilpatrick, Hilary. “From Venice to Aleppo: Early Printing of Scripture in the Orthodox World”. *Chronos*, 30, 2014, p. 33–61.
- Krek, Miroslav. “The Enigma of the First Arabic Book Printed from Movable Type”. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 38, 1979, 3, p. 203–212.
- Lucchetta, Francesca. “Un progetto per una scuola di lingue orientali a Venezia nel Settecento”. *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, 1, 1983, p. 1–28.
- Mandelbrote, Scott. “Bedford, Arthur (bap. 1668, d. 1745)”. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., 2009.
- Manstetten, Paula. “Solomon Negri: The Self-Fashioning of an Arab Christian in Early Modern Europe”. In Cornel Zwielerlein (ed.), *The Power of the Dispersed: Early Modern Global Travelers beyond Integration*. Leiden: Brill, 2021, p. 240–282.
- Michaelis, Christian Benedict. *Tractatio critica de variis lectionibus Novi Testamenti*. Halle an der Saale: Renger, 1749.
- Michaelis, Johann Heinrich. *Dissertatio philologica de historia linguae arabicae... praeside Ioanne Heinricho Michaelis... pro privilegiis & honoribus magistri philosophiae & artium rite impetrandis, eruditorum examini sistet Christianus Benedictus Michaelis*. Halle an der Saale: Christian Henckel, 1706.
- Mills, Simon. *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, c. 1600–1760*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Mills, Simon. “Johann Heinrich Callenberg's Orient”. In Cornel Zwielerlein (ed.), *The Power of the Dispersed: Early Modern Global Travelers beyond Integration*. Leiden: Brill, 2021, p. 209–239.
- Mills, Simon. “Missionary Philologist: Johann Heinrich Callenberg between the Catholic and Protestant Orients”. In Markus Friedrich, Holger Zaunstöck (eds.), *Jesuit and Pietist Missions in the Eighteenth Century: Cross-Confessional Perspectives*. Halle an der Saale: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2022, p. 105–130.
- Morozov, Dmitry, Ekaterina Gerasimova. “Каролус Рали Дадихи и ‘Восточная библиотека’ Ассемани: Восточный взгляд на популяризацию сирийской литературы в Европе”. *Символ: Syriaca, Arabica, Iranica*, 61, 2012, p. 357–370.
- Nasrallah, Joseph. *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église melchite du V^e au XX^e siècle*. Vol. IV. *Période ottomane, 1516–1900*, t. 1. 1516–1724. Louvain/Paris: Peeters/Chez l'auteur, 1979.
- Negri, Solomon. *Memoria Negriana hoc est Salomonis Negri Damasceni vita olim ab ipsomet conscripta*, ed. by Gottlieb Anastasius Freylinghausen. Halle an der Saale: Francke Foundations, 1764.
- Nicoll, Alexander, Edward Bouverie Pusey. *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum orientalium Bibliothecae Bodleianae pars secunda Arabicos complectens. Confecit Alexander Nicoll... Editionem absolvit... E. B. Pusey*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1835.
- [Palmer, Samuel]. *The X. Commandments and XXIII. Psalm in Arabick... a Specimen of the New Cast Letter, to be us'd in the Printing of the Psalter and New Testament; design'd by the Society at London for Promoting Christian Knowledge to be distributed gratis among the Poor Christians in Arabia, Syria, Palestine, &c.* [London]: [Samuel Palmer], [1721].
- Panchenko, Constantin A. *Arab Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans, 1516–1831*, trans. B. Pfeiffer Noble, S. Noble. Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Seminary Press, 2016.

- Roberts, Alexandre M. *Reason and Revelation in Byzantine Antioch: The Christian Translation Program of Abdallah ibn al-Fadl*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020.
- Roper, Geoffrey. "Arabic Printing and Publishing in England before 1820". *BRISMES Bulletin*, 12, 1985, 1, p. 12–32.
- Roper, Geoffrey. "The Export of Arabic Books from Europe to the Middle East in the 18th Century". In *BRISMES, British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, Proceedings of the 1989 International Conference on Europe and the Middle East held at the University of Durham, 9–12 July 1989*. Oxford: British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 1989, p. 226–233.
- Roper, Geoffrey. "England and the Printing of Texts for 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*, vol. 1. Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2011, p. 430–443.
- Rose, Craig. "The Origins and Ideals of the SPCK, 1699–1716". In John Walsh, Colin Haydon, Stephen Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England, c. 1689–c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 172–190.
- Schnurrer, Christian Friedrich von. *Bibliotheca Arabica*. Halle an der Saale: Johann Christian Hendell, 1811.
- Seybold, Carl Friedrich. "Der gelehrte Syrer Carolus Dadichi (†1734 in London), Nachfolger Salomo Negri's (†1729)". *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 64, 1910, 3, p. 591–601.
- Sirota, Brent S. *The Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680–1730*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
- [Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge]. *al-'Ahd al-jadīd li-Rabbinā Yasū' al-Masīh: wa-ayḍan waṣāyā Allāh al-'ashar kamā fī al-iṣḥāḥ al-'ishrīn min siḡr al-khurūj*. [London], 1727.
- [Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge]. *An Extract of Several Letters relating to the Great Charity and Usefulness of Printing the New Testament and Psalter in the Arabick Language; for the Benefit of the Poor Christians in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, and other Eastern Countries: with a Proposal for Executing so Good an Undertaking*. London: Joseph Downing, 1721.
- [Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge]. *Kitāb zabūr Dā'ūd al-malik wa al-nabī wa-ayḍan maḡmūnātu-hā ma'a al-shahādāt al-mutaqābila min al-'Ahd al-'atīq wa al-jadīd thumma waṣāyā Allāh al-'ashar kamā fī al-iṣḥāḥ al-'ishrīn min siḡr al-khurūj wa al-ṣalāt al-rabbāniya kamā fī al-iṣḥāḥ al-sādis li-l-qiddīs Mattā*. [London], 1725.
- Suchier, Wolfram. C. R. *Dadichi oder wie sich deutsche Orientalisten von einem Schwindler dūpieren ließen. Ein Kapitel aus der deutschen Gelehrtenrepublik der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Halle an der Saale: Ehrhardt Karras, 1919.
- Treiger, Alexander. "'Abdallāh ibn al-Faḡl al-Anṭāki.'" In David Thomas, Alexander Mallett et al. (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 3. Leiden: Brill, 2011, p. 89–113.
- Uri, Joannes. *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium, videlicet Hebraicorum, Chaldaicorum, Syriacorum, Æthiopicorum, Arabicorum, Persicorum, Turcicorum, Copticorumque catalogus... pars prima*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1787.
- Vaccari, Alberto, S. J. "Una Bibbia araba per il primo Gesuita venuto al Libano". *MUSJ*, 10, 1925, 4, p. 77–104.
- Vrolijk, Arnoud. "Sale, George (b. in or after 1696?, d. 1736)". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., 2015.
- Wakefield, Colin. "Arabic Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: The 17th-Century Collections". In G. A. Russell (ed.), *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in 17th-Century England*. Leiden: Brill, 1994, p. 128–146.

- Wakefield, Colin. "Archbishop Marsh's Oriental Collections in the Bodleian Library". In Muriel McCarthy, Ann Simmons (eds.), *The Making of Marsh's Library: Learning, Politics and Religion in Ireland, 1650–1750*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004, p. 76–84.
- Walls, Andrew F. "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Missionary Movement in Britain". In Andreas Gross, Y. Vincent Kumaradoss, Heike Liebau (eds.), *Halle and the Beginning of Protestant Christianity in India*. Volume 1: *The Danish-Halle and the English-Halle Mission*. Halle an der Saale: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2006, p. 107–128.
- Weston, David. "Negri, Solomon (bap. 1665, d. 1727)". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., 2013.
- White, Bryan. "'Brothers of the String': Henry Purcell and the Letter-Books of Rowland Sherman". *Music & Letters*, 92, 2011, 4, p. 519–581.

