Piracy, war, and the acquisition of Arabic manuscripts in Renaissance Europe

by Robert Jones*

One of the ways in which Islamic Arabic manuscripts, particularly Qurans and prayerbooks, came into European hands during the sixteenth century was when they were taken as spoils of war and as pirates' booty. It is usual for devotional works to be carried into battle and on journeys by devout Muslims. So when European forces achieved success against Ottoman troops in the Mediterranean Sea or on the Hungarian plain, or when pirates attacked shipping off the north African coast, they often found such books among the possessions of prisoners and hostages, and on the bodies of the dead. It was even possible to stumble upon whole collections of Arabic manuscripts in the madrasahs and mosque libraries of any towns or citadels they captured. On one exceptional occasion, Spanish pirates boarded a boat and found the library of a Moroccan Sultan.

Violent events could of course lead to the destruction of books along with other property. But some Christian soldiers and sailors kept the Arabic books they found as trophies and as merchandise. As with other plundered goods, a trade developed in these handwritten Qurans and manuscripts; and some found their way into the collections of a few European scholars who were eager and able to read Arabic texts. Others were presented to distinguished patrons of Arabic studies. Today, a number of these Arabic manuscripts of Ottoman and Maghribi provenances, saved four or five centuries ago from the ravages of war and piracy, are still preserved in major European libraries.

Not that the sixteenth century was the first time Arabic books were acquired in this way by the west. Nor was it to be the last. The medieval transmission of knowledge from Arabic into Latin had followed closely in the wake of the Christian reconquest of Sicily and Spain. In particular, the capture of the city of Toledo in 1085 AD released an abundance of Arabic manuscripts and local Arabic-speakers for use by Christian scholars; and under the patronage of Archbishop Raimundo in the early twelfth century, scholars travelled there from all over Europe to collaborate with Arabic-speakers on the translation of texts that interested them¹. During the colonial period, the appropriation of oriental manuscripts, including Arabic texts, also contributed to the growth of European libraries and Orientalism. For example, the capture of Seringapatam in 1799 by British troops under Colonel Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, yielded spoil that was fantastic — even fictitious in the case of Wilkie Collins's moonstone. It also provided 2,000 volumes in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Hindi collected by Tipu Sultan. These manuscripts were then divided between British libraries at home and in India².

On the eve of the sixteenth century, however, the Catholic reconquest of Granada did not presage a revival of Arabic studies in Spain. Reports that Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros's policy of enforced conversion for the people of Granada was accompanied by the burning of thousands of Arabic manuscripts in the Plaza de Bibarrambla contrast vividly with the attitude towards Arabic learning four hundred years earlier after the reconquest of Toledo. Unlike Archbishop Raimundo of Toledo, the new Archbishop of Granada, Fernando de Talavera, did not preside over a group of translators recovering lost classical texts in Arabic versions. Instead, he commissioned his confessor, Pedro de Alcalá, to write a grammar and lexicon of Arabic. These works, written in collaboration with a local fāqih, and published at Granada in 1505, predate any other European attempt to provide Arabic language textbooks on a wide scale³. But, because they were intended to educate priests in the language of the Moriscos, they were written in Castilian and transliterated Andalusian Arabic. So while they enable the reader to preach in a dialect of Arabic, they offer very limited help to the student of Arabic texts in Arabic script.

Indeed, contrary to both contemporary and popular modern expectations, the very presence of the Morisco community in Spain and the repressive response of the Catholic authorities to that community meant that Spanish scholars and Spanish libraries did not play a significant role in the sixteenth-century revival of European Arabic studies⁴.

This astonishing revival took place in other parts of Europe that had never known sustained contact with Muslim culture. Renaissance Arabists — for so they may be termed — regarded themselves as continuing and refining the work of their predecessors; and in this respect, their endeavour represents a final reprise of the medieval period of translation. At the same time,
however, they emulated some of the aims and methods of the scholars and printers of Greek in the fifteenth century; and like Greek studies of the Renaissance, Arabic studies and Arabic printing flourished first in Italy before crossing the Alps to northern Europe.

By the early seventeenth century, centres of learning as far flung and as different in culture, outlook, and circumstances as Rome, Vienna and London, or Breslau, Heidelberg and Paris, could boast of scholars with a knowledge of Arabic and collections of Arabic manuscripts that were wholly unprecedented in those parts. Not that these scholars made anything like the contribution to the mainstream of European learning that can be claimed for the medieval translators of Arabic texts into Latin. But by making it possible for Europeans at home to tackle Arabic texts directly, Renaissance Arabists created a new discipline which totally changed the nature of European knowledge of Islam, the Arabs, their language, and their learning: and for many this change implies something much more immediate and important than the transmission of scientific or philosophical ideas in the Middle Ages. It heralds the birth of Orientalism.

The European discovery of Arabic learning during the Renaissance progressed in a competitive atmosphere through the sustained effort of a few isolated scholars, sometimes supported by influential patrons, and using, and occasionally pooling, minimal resources. These included, to some extent as we shall see, manuscripts acquired as booty. The famous medieval translators had not left their successors any substantial collections of Arabic manuscripts nor any of the means for learning Arabic; and as Thomas Erpenius, professor of Arabic at Leiden University, told a new generation of students in 1620, access to Arabic books, teachers, and language primers was a privilege that had only just been won.

In the early sixteenth century, a first generation of Orientalists with a special interest in Arabic — Agostino Giustiniani (1470-1536), Johann Albrecht von Widmanstetter (1506-1557), Cardinal Egidio of Viterbo and his Arabic-speaking assistant Leo Africanus (born c. 1490), Teseo Ambrogio (1469-1540), Nicolas Clenardus (c. 1493-1542), and especially Guillaume Postel (1510-1581) — developed areas of interest that were to dominate the attention of a second generation.

These later Arabists straddled the turn of the century during the forty year lifetime of Thomas Erpenius (1584-1624), when the quest for Arabic sources, Arabic speakers and scribes, and the attempt to compose a definitive Arabic grammar book and dictionary for European use, were pursued with particular intensity. In Paris there was the circle of Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), Etienne Hubert (c. 1568-1614) and other Arabist doctors of the French King, as well as François Savary de Bréves (1560-1628) with his Turkish and Maronite assistants. In London, there was the vicar of Tottenham, William Bedwell (1563-1632); in Vienna the librarian of the Imperial library, Sebastian Tengnagel (1573-1636) with his Turkish scribes; and in Heidelberg, Jacob Christmann (1554-1613). In Leiden, Christophe Plantin’s scholar-printer son-in-law, Franciscus Raphelengius (1539-1597) was working on Arabic as was the influential Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609). In Rome, Giovan Battista Raimondi (c. 1536-1614) supervised the publication of Arabic books for the Medici Oriental Press, which was founded in Erpenius’s birthyear by a future Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando de’ Medici; and in Breslau there was the Avicennist Peter Kirsten (1575-1640).

Both these generations of scholars were the pioneers who created the necessary conditions in which the great seventeenth-century collectors and bibliographers of Arabic manuscripts — Golius, Pococke, Warner, Hottinger, d’Herbelot and so on — could pursue their work.

Prior to the sixteenth century, European scholars and libraries made a few isolated acquisitions of Arabic manuscripts. We hear of Arabic manuscripts housed at Cluny and in the episcopal library at York during the Middle Ages; and in the second half of the fifteenth century two humanists owned a few Arabic manuscripts: Giorgio Valla had five; and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola had seven. Some fifty-seven Arabic manuscripts entered the Vatican library, probably from its inception in 1450 and perhaps brought to Italy as a gift by the legation of the Coptic Patriarch John XI to the Council of Florence in 1441.

In the formative period that concerns us in this article, during the sixteenth century and the lifetime of Thomas Erpenius, the influx of Arabic manuscripts into Europe increased fitfully due to a variety of circumstances. There were those among the Arabists who combined physical courage with their intellectual curiosity and undertook dangerous journeys to North Africa, the Ottoman World, Persia, and India with the express purpose of learning Arabic and other eastern languages and of recovering Arabic manuscripts.

Andrea Alpago (d. 1520) was exceptional among Renaissance Arabists in that he spent most of his life in Damascus, attached to the Venetian legation. He travelled widely in search of manuscripts in other parts of the Arab world but we do not know what became of his collection. Guillaume Postel, on the other hand, brought home an interesting collection of Arabic manuscripts after his diplomatic excursions to the east; and these manuscripts exercised a considerable influence over his Arabist successors. Nicolas Clenardus, disappointed by the moribund state of Arabic studies at Salamanca, travelled on to Fes in search of Arabic texts but was prevented from acquiring the manuscripts he wanted. A generation later, Etienne Hubert collected manuscripts during his visit to the Sultan in Fes, and these were appreciated by his contemporaries after his return to Paris. François
Savary de Brèves, whose twenty-two years in Istanbul rival Andrea Alpago’s thirty years in Damascus, brought a substantial collection of manuscripts home with him.13

Erpenius claimed that Giovan Battista Raimondi travelled abroad to pursue a knowledge of Arabic14; and the diary of a journey from Hormuz to Aleppo, written in his hand, may confirm this 15. Whether or not Raimondi acquired manuscripts in this way, at Rome he was well placed to be in close touch with diplomatic and missionary agents to the Near and Middle East, especially Giovan Battista Britti and Gerolamo and Gioambattista Vecchietti.16 From Vienna, Sebastian Tengnagel, who never left Europe, kept in touch with the Imperial dragomans at Istanbul: Johannes Paulus Albanus, in the second decade of the seventeenth century;17 and Michele d’Asquier in the mid 1620s. He also contacted the wandering Egyptian Copt, Yusuf ibn Abū Daqan (Joseph Barbatus), who was in Istanbul at the same time as d’Asquier.18

For others such as Erpenius or Jean-Baptiste Duval, Venice offered an excellent opportunity for learning some Arabic or Turkish of a rudimentary kind from merchants and dragomans, and for buying some manuscripts.19 Moreover, in spite of the personal and inter-denominational rivalries that have left us with such scurrilous accounts of certain scholars’ abilities as Arabists—Scaliger, Erpenius, and Savary de Brèves were particularly scathing about Christmann, Antonides and Kirsten, and Hubert respectively—the pioneers exchanged certain information. They told each other about the locations and contents of Arabic manuscripts in different European libraries at that time; and they used others collections. The Arabic manuscripts that Postel pawned to the Elector of Heidelberg, Otto Heinrich, in 1555 and that remained in the Palatine library until 1622 (when they were removed to the Vatican)20 were especially popular: Casaubon, Christmann, Kirsten, Tengnagel, and Erpenius all either consulted, borrowed, or copied them.

Not that the acquisition of manuscripts during this period, and the growth in knowledge of the texts they contained, progressed solely in an orchestrated way as the result of the deliberate choices made by European scholars. Before Golius acquired a copy of Ibn Khalliḳān’s biographical dictionary from Ahmad ibn Qāsim at Safi in 1624,21 very limited information on Arabic writers and their works was available to Europeans. As Erpenius told the listeners to his orations, and as we can see from his marginalia in some of the Arabic manuscripts he owned or consulted, he had gained a general impression of Arabic literature and learning from the numbers of authors cited in those manuscripts. But it was difficult to isolate any particular work or author on this basis.

European speculation about the recovery of certain lost Greek and Latin works in Arabic versions focused attention on the search for specific texts; as did the Arabists’ desire to improve upon the medieval Latin versions of Arabic works. The Arabic texts of Ibn Sinā and al-Rāzī, for example, frequently republished during the Renaissance in their earlier Latin guise, were much in demand in their original form among the Arabists.22 The one widely disseminated publication giving inside information on Arabic authors and their works during the second half of the sixteenth century, was the ‘Description of Africa’ by Leo Africanus. Granadan by birth, al-Hasan ibn Muḥammad al-Wazzān al-Zayyātī was educated at Fes where he was later employed by the Sultan on various diplomatic and commercial missions. On return from a visit to Egypt, however, he was captured at Djerba by Sicilian pirates, brought to Rome in 1518, and presented to Pope Leo X. After a year’s captivity, he was baptised with the Pope’s name, and proceeded to assist a number of scholars, including Cardinal Egidio, with their Arabic studies. His ‘Description’ was not published until 1550; but after that first Italian edition, it entered a number of other editions in a variety of European languages.

A century after Leo came to Rome, some of the most precise bibliographical information available to Erpenius in Leiden was that given by Leo in the ‘Description’; and Erpenius cited Leo more than once in his orations on Arabic. Moreover, it was works by authors referred to by Leo that Erpenius sought in North Africa with the help of his pupil, Jacob Golius, and their assistant from Fes, Ahmad ibn Qāsim24.

Although this type of directed search for particular texts could be successful, chance too played a part in bringing Arabic manuscripts to Europe. Late in 1577 or in early 1578, the arrival in Rome, in somewhat mysterious circumstances, of the refugee Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, Ignazio Na’mat Allāh (Nehemes), was an exceptional event which very fortunately contributed to the establishment of the Medici Oriental Press: the Patriarch brought not only a viva voce knowledge of Arabic and Syriac, but also his library of Syriac and Arabic manuscripts.

The most random of all forms of manuscript acquisition, and one over which no bibliographical control could be exercised, was of course plunder. Books taken as spoils of war or booty are often bear inscriptions patriotically testifying to the circumstances in which they were acquired; and by collecting some of these inscriptions together and dovetailing them with events chronicled in the history books it is possible to build up a picture of this form of acquisition for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Here are some examples.

During the first Turkish siege of Vienna in 1529, one of the citizens, Johan Traberger, composed some doggerel in German and wrote it into a small Muslim prayerbook, glossed in Turkish, which he acquired. The six rhyming couplets explain how Traberger had bought the book from a mercenary who had picked it.
Plate 1. A c.17th-century copy of Baron Johannes Marquart’s German inscription on part of a Quran in a large maghribi hand describing how he took the original manuscript during the sack of Tunis on 21 July 1535.
up from an abandoned Turkish camp in a deserted, burnt-down house outside the city. (The other great siege of Vienna in 1683 also provided Europeans with Muslim prayerbooks).

In 1535, the siege and sack of Tunis by the Emperor Charles V included the looting of manuscripts, especially Qurans, from the mosques and libraries of the city. Apparently, one extract from a Quran copied in a large maghribi hand was taken from Tunis as a 'souvenir' by Baron Johannes Margart von Kungbeek on 21 July 1535. At any rate, a later European copy of the Arabic text and of the baron's unequivocal German inscription (see plate 1) was acquired by Groningen University Library in 1776.

On 26 July 1535, Bernardo Riparoli took the fourth volume of a Mamluk copy of Bukhari's famous collection of hadith, the Sahih, from the Mosque at Tunis. This manuscript then came into the Palatine library at Heidelberg; and along with the majority of the Arabic manuscripts pawned to the Elector by Postel, it later passed to the Vatican Library. A fragment of a letter received by Tengnagel in about 1624 describes the Arabic manuscripts in the library of Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, including a Quran plundered at Tunis. 'Alcoranus ex direptione Tunnetana' — the very words contained in an inscription on the first leaf of an Andalusian Quran, copied in Seville in 624 AH/1226 AD, and now kept in Munich. It had been passed on to the Arabist J.A. von Widmanstetter before entering the Duke's library. Three volumes of an eight volume maghribi Quran copied in the late fifteenth century now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, were taken from Tunis, apparently by the Emperor Charles V himself, and passed on to the Escorial Library, where Cardinal Granvelle acquired them for his own collection.

Furthermore, two manuscripts recorded in his inventory of Arabic manuscripts in the Vatican Library, have been identified by Giorgio Levi della Vida with two maghribi manuscripts that formerly belonged to the mosque in Tunis. It is likely that they too were taken away during the sack of 1535.

A number of other Qurans and devotional works in the Vatican Library, listed by Ranaldi and identified by Levi della Vida with manuscripts of eastern rather than maghribi provenance, were probably plundered by Christian pirates boarding Muslim boats or confiscated from Turkish prisoners-of-war. Two juridical texts among these manuscripts may have belonged to a travelling faqih.

On 7 October 1571, victory over the Ottoman fleet at that most celebrated of naval engagements, the battle of Lepanto, also brought Arabic manuscripts into European hands and eventually into the hands of scholars who could read them. Apparently some twenty Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts, including a so-called 'Corâne de Lepanto', were acquired by the Escorial Library as a result of the battle, though information on this is unclear. One precisely documented example of a manuscript won at Lepanto, however, is the copy of the popular abridgement of the Hidâya, the hanafite text by al-Marghînânî, composed by Mahmûd al-Mahbûbî and entitled Wiqâyat al-riwâyah fi masâ’il al-hidâyah. Now preserved in the university library at Leiden, and traditionally classified among the Scaliger legacy, a Spanish inscription by Don Bernardo de Josa clearly states that he was given this manuscript with ten other books at Rome by Don Guillem de Sanctelimente, who had acquired them among the spoils at Lepanto.

Away from the Mediterranean, in quite a different theatre of war, in the disputed borderlands of northwestern Hungary, a number of skirmishes in 1591 and 1592 led to outright war in 1593. The forces of Emperor Rudolph II of Austria engaged Ottoman troops under the command of the eighty-year-old Grand Vizier, Sinân Pasha; and the initial Habsburg successes brought more Ottoman Arabic and Turkish manuscripts into European hands.

Having taken up his winter quarters in Belgrade, Sinân Pasha was not in a position to help the Pasha of Ofen defend Stuhlweissenburg (Székesfehérvár), which the Imperial army attacked on 3 November 1593, leaving 6,000 Turkish troops dead and capturing 44 canons.

The Habsburg forces did not take full advantage of their victory and the lack of Turkish reinforcements; and instead of advancing on Gran (Strigoin, Esztergom), they spent the rest of November capturing lesser objectives with the help of Hungarian barons. Among the Turkish strongholds they successfully besieged was the Castle of Fülek, where once again a manuscript may have been acquired among the spoils.

On this occasion — or possibly two years before, according to another source — it was a Swabian dignitary, Vitus Marchtaler of Ulm, who took the manuscript, or rather scroll, which contains a set of genealogical tables in Turkish — the Subhat al-Akhbar by Yûsuf ibn 'Abd al-Latif, now located in the Herzog August Bibliothek at Wolfenbüttel.

Late in 1593, a Hungarian by the name of Matthaeus Uûfalvî (Ujfalvy) sent a manuscript copy of the Quran as a present to Jacob Christmann in Heidelberg. It may also have come from Fülek. According to the donor's inscription, eleven forts previously occupied by the Turks had been recovered at the end of that year; and this book was taken among the spoils. (See plate 3).
Plate 2. Don Bernardo de Josa's Spanish inscription on a copy of Muhammad al-Mahbub's popular Hanafite legal compendium, Wiqayat al-ríwayat fi mas'á'il al-hidayah, explaining that he was given the manuscript by Don Guillen de Sanctemillan who had taken it at the battle of Lepanto on 7 October 1571.

(Leiden University Library, Cod.Or. 222, fol. 1r).
Plate 3. The presentation inscription in Latin to Jacob Christmann by Matthaeus Uyfalvi on a complete copy of the Quran explaining that the manuscript had been taken from an Ottoman fort in Hungary late in 1593. (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Laud Or.246 fol.1r). This page also contains a note by Samson Johnson, stating that he acquired the manuscript in 1635.
Subsequently, more than twenty years after Christmann's death, this manuscript was acquired in 1635 by Samson Johnson, chaplain to the British envoy to Germany, who passed it on that same year to William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, Chancellor of the Oxford University, and the foremost patron of Arabic studies in England. It is now preserved in the Bodleian Library. The manuscript, which is in an undistinguished naskh hand dated 971 AH/1569 AD, contains annotations by Christmann as well as two leaves of text lost from the original copy and supplied by Christmann in his own Arabic hand.

During the campaigning season of 1594, Ottoman forces regained the initiative and their strategic advantage was secured by the fall of Raab (Javerin, Yāniq). On 3 March, however, success over the Turks at Neugrät left an Arabic prayerbook to a Habsburg soldier. Like a number of other manuscripts that were won in the following year, it is now kept in the National Library at Vienna. In the summer of 1595, Habsburg forces attacked the fortress town of Gran, eventually forcing its capitulation in August and taking full possession at the beginning of September. According to a French pamphlet celebrating the victory of 4 August, the booty consisted of 3,200 camels, 4,000 horses, 37 pieces of artillery, 27 ensigns, 'avecq force bagage et butin de toute sorte'—including, as we learn from the inscriptions they contain, several manuscripts now in Vienna.

Two officers fighting at Gran each presented a Quran to Job Hartmann Baron Enenkelius: one is from Wolfaucius Baron of Althann, the other from Bernard Leonis Gallus. A soldier also sold him a section of the Quran (the nineteenth juz') to Hartmann von Enenkel of Albrechtsberg and Hohenegg (1576-1627) was an Austrian Baron whose passion for genealogy and books drove him to create a library unparalleled by those of his peers, and which, by 1624, contained some 8,000 volumes. Hartmann had studied at Jena from 1592 to 1594; and from 1596 to 1600 he was to undertake an Italian tour, visiting the universities of Padua, Bologna, and Siena. But his whereabouts in the years 1594 to 1596, between these periods of study, were not altogether clear. From the inscriptions to be found in some other Arabic manuscripts acquired at Gran, it now appears that the nineteen-year-old bibliophile baron had also taken arms against the Turks, as his father had done before him. If not in the thick of the battle, he was close enough behind the leading troops at Gran to 'rescue', as he put it, some other books from destruction. He therefore acquired another section of the Quran (the sixteenth juz') and five Arabic prayer-books, and a lexicon containing some 700 difficult Arabic and Persian epistolary terms, glossed in Turkish— the kitāb-i Mushkilat-i Inshā' by an anonymous author.

Doubtless the single most dramatic episode in this story of the European appropriation of Arabic manuscripts was when Spanish pirates closed on a boat off the west coast of Morocco. According to Spanish sources, this took place in about 1611. When they boarded the boat, the pirates found it was carrying an exceptionally valuable cargo in the shape of Sultan Mawlāy Zaydān's household effects. This included his entire library of some three or four thousand Arabic manuscripts. Back in Spanish waters, the cargo was unloaded and the library presented to King Philip III who deposited it in the library of the royal monastery of San Lorenzo at the Escorial. A source used by Lévi Provençal claimed that a French captain was commissioned to convey the library and other effects from Safi to Agadir, but that when the agreed fee was not forthcoming, he headed for Marsella and had then been captured off Sale by three Spanish galleons.

For the Moroccan side of the story, we have a brief passage in Erpenius's second oration on the value of Arabic according to the 'Ambassador of the King of Morocco'—by whom Erpenius may have meant his assistant, Ahmad ibn Qāsim—the library, consisting of seven thousand eight hundred books, had been 'treacherously abstracted' by a Numidian called Nearcha. Could it be that the Spanish pirates were acting on inside information and that their interception of the boat was calculated? If so, this act of piracy would represent the only occasion, in the period that concerns us, on which the acquisition of Arabic manuscripts was the objective rather than the fortuitous outcome of European aggression.

The period closes with another documented act of piracy which brought several Arabic and Turkish manuscripts into Europe. This time, the books, now in the Vatican library, were seized off Malta in 1620 and handed on by the Inquisitor of Malta, Leonetto della Corbora, to Pope Paul V in Rome. Apart from some Turkish manuscripts sections of the Quran, the booty comprised a collection of prayers with the celebrated poem on the prophet, al-Busūrī's Burda; another collection of prayers; a copy of a well-known manual on logic, al-Kātībī's Shamsiyya with a commentary by Qutb al-Dīn al-Tahtānī; and a collection of religious and magical writings with another copy of the Burda, and an account of a vision of the prophets and of the first two orthodox Caliphs that occurred to the Algerian 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Makhlūf al-Tha'ālibī.

These examples we have cited of Arabic manuscripts that were acquired as booty and spoils during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries provide a catalogue of conflicts, both major and minor, between Christian and Muslim forces during this period. But what importance can be attached to these manuscripts for Renaissance Arabic studies?

Interest in accommodating the Arabic manuscript collection of Mawlāy Zaydān must to some extent have been stimulated by the memory of Benito Arias...
Montano (d. 1598). As librarian of the Escorial library he had called for the study of Arabic68; and at the end of his life he had marvelled at the typographical quality of some proof pages from the Medicean Arabic publications from Rome, scarcely believing they had been printed from movable type69. But since his death, and before the disastrous fire of 1671 when over half the Arabic manuscripts in the library were lost, no notable Spanish scholars emerge who would have been capable of exploiting such sources. The relative immaturity of Arabic studies in Spain at this time is well illustrated by the story of the lead books of Granada and the search for competent interpreters of their Arabic texts.

It was in the spring and summer of 1595 that eighteen books made out of lead plates, inscribed on both sides in an archaic-looking Arabic script (known as the characters of Solomon) were dug up by a team of excavators working under the supervision of the Archbishop of Granada, Don Pedro de Castro70. These extraordinary lead books were purported to contain writings by two brothers, the Arabs St Tesifon and St Cecilio, who had known Christ and the Virgin and were disciples of St James. They were enthusiastically accepted by the Archbishop and people of Granada as the genuine accounts of two martyrs from the Jacobite mission to Spain. Benito Arias Montano, however, was among those who doubted the authenticity of these lead books (as was Rome), and he pleaded ill-health to avoid involvement in the debate.

More such books were discovered during the following ten years; and what emerges, and what proved so difficult for the Granadans to accept, was that these had been very cleverly fabricated by two beleaguered Moriscos, Miguel de Luna and Alonso del Castillo. Both men shared the necessary skills to produce relics that they believed might attract a more tolerant attitude towards their community. De Luna was the author of a sympathetic account of the Muslim conquest of Spain, which he claimed to have translated from an eighth-century source in the Escorial71; Castillo72 had made a list of inscriptions in the Alhambra Palace at Granada and a catalogue of Arabic manuscripts in the Escorial. Moreover, as the official Arabic interpreters of Granada, they were well placed to carry through their plans.

But Philip III commissioned a committee to advise him on how the question of the lead books should be handled; and in 1609 it recommended a search abroad for competent translators. A serious effort was made to find them, and at least two Arabists had been induced to visit Granada, one of whom, from the Vatican, was promptly dismissed when he was heard to say he was wasting his time on forgeries73. Two of the most distinguished Arabists of the age, Giovan Battista Raimondi in Rome74 and Thomas Erpenius in Leiden75, received samples of the text from Spain, in 1609 and 1619 respectively. Indeed, Erpenius was invited to Granada by Archbishop Castro to carry out a study of the lead books. But there is no evidence to show that he took up the invitation. Later, in 1627, Sebastian Tengnagel in Vienna received a copy of some of the text made by the Jesuit orientalist, Pierre Lanssel (1579-1632), who spent some time as professor of Hebrew in Madrid, on the invitation of Philip IV76.

In the Escorial, the library of Mawlây Zaydân was a prize that few could enjoy for its contents, especially since the final expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain on the edict of Philip III in 1609. As with the interpretation of the lead books, the necessary expertise came from abroad. A Scottish Arabist, David Coville, worked on the collection from 1617 for a decade, taught Arabic, and may have produced a catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts, now lost77; and on the orders of Philip IV, the Franciscan Arabist Dominicus Ger- manus of Silesia (d. 1670) spent the last eighteen years of his life there, teaching Arabic, working on a translation of the Quran into Latin, and researching other projects relating to Arabic and Islam78.

In Rome the manuscripts acquired from Malta in 1620 could be of little consequence for the development of Arabic studies. With the establishment of the Propaganda Fide society, and the removal of the Medicean oriental manuscripts to Florence, Arabic printing in Rome became restricted to Christian Arabic texts and language primers; and any interest in Muslim devotional texts, such as those from Malta, would have been negligible.

In northern Europe, on the other hand, a text such as the commentary on the Hidâya acquired at Lepanto stimulated interest on the part of Erpenius in the comparative study of eastern and western law; and this manuscript could have been one of those he referred to when he told students of the many legalists he had seen cited in one or two books79. Moreover, although the volume of Bukhârî’s Sahîh from Tunis was not among the manuscripts Erpenius borrowed from Heidelberg in 1612, it was during his meetings and discussions with Ahmad ibn Qâsim a year earlier that Erpenius realised the importance of being conversant with a wide range of Islamic theological literature, including Quranic commentaries and the Sunna80. Tengnagel considered it worthwhile to borrow a volume of the Sahîh from Munich and to have it copied by one of his Turkish prisoner-scribes81.

One plundered book that was put to scholarly use in print was the set of Turkish genealogical tables taken from Fülek by Vitus Marchtaler in 1593. Over thirty years later, Wilhelm Schickard, the astronomer and orientalist at Tübingen, incorporated the first six dynasties (of the seventeen it traces) into his historical publication, the Tarîkh, issued at Tübingen in 1628. Ultimately, however, the scholarly value of such a mythical text for a historical work is negligible; and it cannot be claimed that Schickard advanced European knowledge of eastern history by using this source82. As it happens, the single most likely book to be found among manuscripts acquired in combat, the
Quran, was greatly coveted by pioneering Arabists. Not only did they look forward to producing translations and commentaries of the Quran that would be better informed and more accurate than the refutations and derivative versions of those who knew no Arabic. They also venerated its fully vocalised text as an invaluable language primer.

The medieval Latin version commissioned at Toledo by Peter the Venerable of Cluny in 1143 and published by Theodor Bibliander at Basel exactly four hundred years later in 1543 provided the source for a number of published versions in vernacular European languages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These were challenged by a few editions and translations by Arabists of short sūras and, in the mid-seventeenth century, by a French version of the entire text by the French ambassador to Alexandria, André du Ryer. But real progress in understanding the meaning of the Quran and creating an effective refutation could only be made on the basis of the entire Arabic text.

Rumours that an Arabic Quran was printed at Venice early in the sixteenth century have just been substantiated by the sensational discovery of one extant copy. But this edition must have had a very restricted European circulation and may only have been used, among the orientalists, by Teseo Ambrogio and Guillaume Postel. Until the editions of Hinckelmann and of Marracci at the very end of the seventeenth century, most Arabists wishing to read the Quran in Arabic had the difficult task of finding handwritten copies.

Complete manuscript Qurans were rare. From Breslau in January 1608, Peter Kirsten told Tengnagel of the manuscript copies of the Quran that were known to him—a very elegant one belonging to Scaliger; the precious one in Tengnagel’s library, which he wanted to borrow; and four examples in Breslau (two of his own, one in a public library, and one belonging to a friend).

An undated manuscript Quran, now preserved, like Christmann’s Quran, in the Bodleian Library, contains an unequivocal ownership inscription by Thomas Erpenius, stating that he had been given the manuscript by Isaac Casaubon in 1610. That was the year Erpenius spent ostensibly studying theology under Du Plessis Mornay at the Huguenot college in Saumur, but in reality devoting his time to learning Arabic, writing the first draft of his famous grammar book, and reading the Quran—this Quran, which was at first lent to him by Casaubon and then given to him in early August 1610. In April, Erpenius had written to Casaubon saying that he had not yet set about a serious reading of the Quran, but that he was dipping into it and recording paradigms with page and line references, rather than by chapter and by verse, because the length of some sūras and the uncertain system of āyāt (red dots in this copy) did not make for easy retrieval of words. Keeping information in this way meant that it was essential for him to acquire his own copy, even to make his own copy despite the shortage of time. But by the beginning of July, Erpenius had not had time to copy out the Quran; and because he had no copy of his own, he was only recording words with reference to the sūra numbers. He asked Casaubon again to buy him a Quran, and this time even suggested he sell him this copy. Thus, when Casaubon yielded to Erpenius’s entreaties and, what is more, simply gave him the Quran, he could not have been more pleased.

Two indices written by Erpenius into the manuscript give page references for sūra headings and page and line references for the mystic letters which he sought to interpret on several occasions. His precise linguistic interest in the Quran is displayed in this copy by his marginal notes, which refer to variants in a copy then kept in the King’s library in Paris. Moreover, an incipient interest in the chronology of the revelation of the sūras is to be seen in the margin to Sūra 96, where Erpenius quotes a certain Abū Ja’far (possibly al-Ṭabarî) and the claim that this was the first (revealed) sūra. He also copied out the Arabic imprecation which he had seen in gold lettering and gold roundels at the beginning of Scaliger’s copy—possibly the same elegant Quran referred to by Kirsten. Furthermore, Erpenius’s right to his Quran is confirmed in another note written by Etienne Hubert, whose own maghribī copy is now in Gdańsk. Finally, we should mention a manuscript Quran written in a European hand, now in Marburg, which was copied as an exercise in writing Arabic by a pupil of Golius, Jacob Vogeley, using Erpenius’s Quran and one other as the basis.

It is likely that several of the Qurans just mentioned were bought by scholars after they had been plundered. Of the documented examples of plundered Qurans cited above, we know that Johann Albrecht von Widmanstetter could have employed his copy from Tunis (with other copies he owned) for the Latin translation which he prepared; and it is evident that Jacob Christmann carefully read the copy he acquired from Hungary, annotating it in a way which reveals a primarily theological rather than linguistic interest in the text. Like Erpenius, he too included an index to the sūras, adding the observation that there were 114 chapters in the Arabic text as opposed to 124 in the Latin version (the Bibliander edition).

The Qurans and sections acquired by Job Hartmann, on the other hand, were probably not put to scholarly use. Although he was acquainted with Sebastian Tengnagel and with Hieronymus Megiser, who published the first substantial European grammar of Turkish in 1612, Hartmann does not appear to have known any Arabic or Turkish; and these books could have represented little more than hard won curiosities in a bibliophile’s library.
NOTES

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ASF Archivio di Stato, Florence.
- BLO Bodleian Library, Oxford.
- BNF Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence.
- BSH Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.
- BV Biblioteca Vaticana.
- ÖNB Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.
- UBL Universiteitsbibliothek, Leiden.

NOTES


4 An example of the contemporary expectations that Spain could provide Arabic texts may be found at ASF, *Stamperia Orientale*, Filza 5, fols. 158, 169, 202, 208, 214-215: the letters from Fabritio Caputi in Madrid to G.B. Raimondi in Rome, dated January to April 1592. In these letters, Caputi reported that he had been offered a published grammar and wordlist of Arabic (i.e. Alcalá’s), that he hoped to acquire a grammar and dictionary written by Nicolas Clenardus, and that Arabic manuscripts should be available in Cordoba.


9 Ibid., p. 101.


12 Bataillon, op. cit., passim.


14 Erpenius, op. cit., p. 74; Jones, op. cit., p. 22.


18 ÖNB, Cod. 8997, fols. 52v-53r: Tengnagel’s lists of Arabic and Turkish books he required Albanus to find in Istanbul in 1613 and 1617.

I am grateful to Dr. M.E.H.N. Mout for drawing my attention to the Tengnagel correspondence in Vienna.

19 Letters from d’Asquier to Tengnagel now in ÖNB, Cod. 9737s, fol. 313, dated Ofen 26 September 1624; Cod. 9737t, fol. 22, dated Komorn 4 April 1625; fols. 167-168: [Istanbul, 1627]; fols. 169-170, dated Prague 9 February 1628. Letters from Joseph Barbatus in Istanbul to Teng-
nagel in ÒnB, Cod. 9737s, fols. 1-2, dated 3 January 1625, fol. 152, dated 29 July 1627.

19 ÒnB, MS Arabe 4338 (Duval’s manuscript Arabic-Latin dictionary compiled at Venice in 1610). See the preface, dated Paris 1613, p. 1001: ‘Et licet ilia in civitate Neptunia [Venice] multi istius linguæ [Arabic] periti passim reperiuntur, pauci tamen illam legere, aut ad normam congrui usus dictiones suas revocare, legitima observatione dignoscunt.’ This manuscript entered in Le livre et le Liban, p. 204, no. 75, with a note by Gérard Duverdier.


22 For a selection of Renaissance editions of Rhazes and Avicenna in Latin, see: Rafaela Gonzalez Castrillo, Alcoran in Latin: see: Rafaela Gonzalez Castrillo, Rha:ealman Arab, AFG 438., 1-39..1:10 (i.e. rols. 1,2. and 6).


24 Erpenius, op. cit., pp. 52, 59, 60; Jones, op. cit., pp. 18-19.


25 On the search for manuscript copies of works by Ibn Khaldun, Mas’ûdî, Ibn al-Raqîq, and Harîrî (all of whom are mentioned by Leo Africanus), see the letters of Ahmad ibn Qâsim to Golius in Houtsma, op. cit., letters V-VI, pp. 24-33.

26 Daniel von Nessel, Catalogus sive Recensio Specialis omnium Codicum Manuscriptorum Graecorum, nec non Linguarum Orientalium, Augustissimae Bibliothecae Caesareae Vindobonensis ... Vienna and Nürnberg, 1690, Pars VII, no. 273, records the following inscription:

‘Als man zahlt 1529, Jahr
Diß Buechlin erobert war
Zu Wien vor der grossen Statt
Als der Tuerck die belegert hatt
In deß Tuerken Veldlaeger daß [sic]
In einem oeden verprenten Hauß
Darin Tuerken gelegen sind
Nach dem sie wieder abzogen sind
Durch ein Landsknecht zart
Mir Johan Traberger verkauft wart
Als ich in der Statt Wienn gelegen
Und sah daz undern hab helfen waveren.’

27 ÒnB, A.F. 527, an Arabic prayer book. Gustav Flügel, Die Arabischen, Persischen, und Türkischen Handschriften zu Wien, III, Vienna, 1867, p. 156, no. 1719, records the following inscription from fol. 1’:

‘Disses Bichel ist in der Belagerung Wienn von P. Willibalt von Steyr bekummen worden Anno 1683 in den Monat September.’

28 ÒnB, Mxt. 205, an Arabic prayer book. Flügel, III, p. 153, no. 1714, records the following inscription from inside the top cover:

‘Bettbuechlein So im Monat Septemb. A’ 1683 bey der den 12 dito beschehn entsetzung der Statt Wienn, in dem verlassnen Türkischen Lager ist gefunden worden.’


30 Groningen University Library, MS 468, fols. 1-53, a European copy of an extract from a Quran in a large maghribî hand. H. Brugmans, Catalogus Codicum Manu Scriptorum Universitatis Groninganae Bibliothecae, Groningen, 1898, p. 252. The inscription on the verso of the endpaper opposite fol. 1 reads:


32 ÒnB, Cod. 9737s, fol. 323.


34 ÒnB, MS Arabe 438, 439, 440 (i.e. vols. 1, 2, and 6). François Déroche, ‘Les Manuscriptes du Coran du Maghreb à l’Insulindie’ in: Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes, Manuscripts Musulmans, I, 2, Paris 1985, pp. 37-38, records the following inscription from the beginning of vol. 2:

‘c’est l’alchoran que Charles le Quint, Empereur des Romains et Roy des Espagies, aporta de ses expéditions de Tunis et Alger et que le cardinal Granvelle avoit tiré de l’Escorial pour le mettre en sa bibliothèque.’


38 Braulio Justel Calabozo, La Real Biblioteca de el Escorial y su Manuscriptos Arabes, Madrid, 1978, pp. 138-139.


40 UBL, Cod. Or. 222. P. de Jong and M.J. de Goeje, Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academae Lugduno Batavae, IV, Leiden, 1866, p. 120.

I am grateful to Professor Alastair Hamilton for alerting me to his discovery that, contrary to the traditional view, this manuscript did not belong to Joseph Scaliger but to Franciscus Raphelengius. Alastair Hamilton identifies nine manuscripts that formerly belonged to Raphelengius, and are now preserved in Leiden University Library, in his forthcoming article: ‘Nam Tirones sumus — Franciscus Raphelengius’ Lexicon Arabico-Latinum (Leiden 1613)’, in a commemorative issue of De Gulden Passer, 1989, marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Christophe Plantin. I am also very grateful to Alastair Hamilton for supplying me with a transcript of the inscription on fol. 1’, which reads:

‘la ley [de la] o secta de Mahoma [crossed out] fue la felice y ha gloria de dios afortunada jornada dela
batalla navall cuando se venció la armada turchesca siendo dos cientos y treinta galeras y sexenta galeotas y la venció el s. don joan de austria hermano dell rey don phelipe nuestro señor siendo general de la armada christiana que eran dos cientos y ocho galeras seys galeasas y trenyta fragatas encontraron se las ditxas dos armadas delante del golfo de lepanto dia de sanct marcos martir y papa a los 7. de octubre 1571 años y siendo vencidos los turcos solo se salvaron 28 vexelles entre galeras y galeotas quedando las demas en poder de los christianos y se tomo este libro entre los ricos spolios que de dita victoria quedaron y me fue dado a mi don bernardo de josa 10 otros por don guillem de sanctelimente que en dita jornada se hallo y de alla lo traxo en roma y alli me lo dio

Ita est. Bernardo de josa.' (See plate 2).

Sanctelimente is not listed in A. Salimei, *GlI Italiani a Leganto*. Rome, 1931.


Nessel, *op. cit.*, no. 182, recording the following inscription:

‘In victoriosissimo illo, Devini numinis Clementia, Christianorum conflictu contra Turcas ad Albam Regalem die Novem. 1593 feliciter obtento, Steffanus Schupman Gotlandensis, occiso Turco, ex spolis hunc librum, sanguine conspersum, Hieronymo Beck à Leopoldstorf D.D.’


Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Ms Heine-mann 3899. The manuscript was taken from Fülke according to Manfred Ullmann in his ‘Arabisches, türkische und persische Studien’ in *Wilhelm Schickard 1592-1635. Astronom, Geograph, Orientalist, Erfinder der Rechenmaschine*, (ed. Friedrich Seck), Tübingen, 1978, p. 115, note 38. But according to Nessel, *op. cit.*, no. 158, it was taken from a plundered mosque two years before the capture of Fülke: ‘Volumen manuscriptum Genealogicum Ture-Arabicum ... quod bienno antequam famosissimum illud Ungaricae Castellum Villek expugnaretur, Dominus Vitus Marchtalerus...’

I am very grateful to Mr. Colin Wakefield of the Oriental Department of the Bodleian Library for informing me of his discovery of this manuscript and its former ownership by Christmann. The following transcription of the inscription on fol. 1' was made possible with the kind help of Mr. Wakefield, Professor Alastair Hamilton, and Professor H.J. de Jonge.

‘Clarissimo et doctissimo viro Domino Iacobo Christmanno / professori logices in inclyta Heidelbergensi / Academia dignissimo: Matthaeus Uylafelii / Ungarum memoriae et observantiae ergo mitte / bat. Anno 1593. Cuius finis fuit Un / garis optatissimum et felicissimus receptis trium septi / manarum spatio undecim arcius ante a turcis occupatis. Ex quarum spoliiis et hic liber.’ (See plate 3).

ÖNB, A.F. 501. Flügel, III, p. 158, no. 1723, records the following inscription inside the lower cover:

‘1594 Nichts ohn Vrsuch. Diess Piechhl hab Ich bekummen Als wir Neugrat haben eingenommen von Türgen, welches ist geschehn den 9 tag Marejg Im fünfzehnhundt Vnd in Vier und Neunzigen Jar. Gott geb wetter glückh und Heyl.’


ÖNB, A.F. 184. Flügel, III, p. 43, no. 1588, records the following inscription on fol. 286' :


On Wolf Dietrich Baron of Althann (1557-1620), Captain in Rudolph II’s army, see: Moriz Bermann, *Österreichisches biographisches Lexicon*, Vienna 1851-1852, p. 114. ÖNB, A.F. 424. Flügel, III, p. 44, no. 1592, records this inscription from fol. 3 :

‘Strigonio capto an. MDXCV. Hic liber Turcicus bibliothecae Enenkelianae ab Austriacae Militiae Summo praefecto D. Bernardo Leo Gallo donatus fuit.’

ÖNB, A.F. 245. Flügel, III, pp. 48-49, no. 1603, records the following inscription from fol. 20’ :

‘Capto a Christianis Strigionio an. MDXCV. Liber hic Turcicus inter praedam emtus a milite per Job. Hartman- num Baronem Enenkelium.’


Ibid., p. 261.

Ibid., p. 252.

ÖNB, A.F. 246: the 13th and 16th juz’s. Flügel, III, p. 48, no. 1602, records the following inscription at the beginning of juz 16:


ÖNB, A.F. 473. Flügel, III, pp. 164-165, no. 1730, records the following inscription from inside the front cover:


And ÖNB, A.F. 531. Flügel, III, p. 189, no. 1763, records this inscription from fol. 1’:

‘Strigonio recepito anno Dni MDXCV. Hic libellus turci- cus captius biblothecaeque dicatus a Jobo Hartmanno Enen- kelio Albrechtsbergio Libero Barone Hohennecko Austrio.’

ÖNB, A.F. 175. Flügel, I, p. 116, no. 108 (2), records
this inscription from fol. 41": "Per Dominum nostrum Rodolphum recepto Strigonio MDXCVI Jobus Hartmannus Enenkel Liber Baro hunc librum ab interitu vindicavit.

59 Ibid., p. 173.
60 Erpenius, op. cit., p. 65: ‘Quinque aut sex ayes sunt, quod Regis Marocanni Bibliotheca Arabica, a Nearcha quodam Massiliensi improbo in Hispanam ascepta, et in Regis Hispaniarum Bibliothecaem transleta fuit. Ea, referente ipsiusmet Regis Marocanni Legato, codicibus justis & distinctis constat septem mille et octingentis.’

62 bv. Turc. 4, 6, 26, 31, 352.
63 bv. Ar. 201, 204, 205, 224, 227.
64 bv. Ar. 237.
65 bv. Ar. 238.
66 bv. Ar. 302.
67 bv. Ar. 370.


71 Miguel de Luna, La verdadera historia del Rey Don Rodrigo, in la qual se trata de la causa principal de la perdida le España y la conquista que della hizo Miramamolin Almançor..., Granada, 1592 and 1600.
73 Kendrick, St James in Spain, pp. 108-109.
74 bNF, MS II, V, 157. (six different documents bound in together). The fifth document consists of 7 leaves containing Raimondi’s parsing of the passage of Arabic that had been sent to him from Spain; a letter in Spanish from Ello Hybar dated 24 January, 1609; a letter from the Cardinal of Granada.
75 Gerard Ioannis Vossius, Oratio in obitum clarissimi ac praestantissimi viri, Thomae Erpenii ..., Leiden, 1625, pp. 31-32, citing a letter to Erpenius from Archbishop Castro of Granada, dated 4 June, 1619.
76 ÖNB. MS 9737r, fol. 151r to Sebastian Tengnagel from Pierre Lasssel in Antwerp, dated 23 July 1627: ‘... in super habes aliquid lineas antiquo charactere Arabico quas ex prima lamina plumbea in montibus Granatenses ante aliquid annos reperta descripsit, lubenter tuum iudicium excipiam.’

The extract from the lead tablet is on fol. 150.
77 Justel Calabozo, op. cit., pp. 93, 224-226.
78 Ibid., pp. 93, 226-227.

80 Isaac Casaubon, Epistolae, Rotterdam, 1709, p. 661: a letter from Thomas Erpenius to Isaac Casaubon, dated Paris iv Kalends October 1611.
81 ÖNB, A.F. 31 is the copy that Tengnagel commissioned. See: Flügel, III, p. 84, no. 1647.
83 Ullmann, op. cit., pp. 115-120.
84 For the Cluniac Quran see: James Kritzeck, Peter the Venerable and Islam, Princeton, 1964.

87 Alcoran textus universus ex correctioribus Arabum exemplaribus summa fide arte pulcheremini characteribus descriptus, cademque fide: ac pari diligentia ex arabico idiomate in latinum translatus ... His omnium praemissus est Prodomus tumtv priorem tumvis implicat ... anclore Ludovico Marraccio ... Padua, 1698. Schnurrer, pp. 412-414, no. 377.
88 Justel Calabozo, op. cit., pp. 93, 226-262.

Possibly ÖNB, MS A.F. 6., a fine Sūlūs Quran copied c. 1555. It contains a later interlinear Turkish translation. Though the richly conceived illumination was not completed, Tengnagel referred to this Quran in 1625 as ‘rurus et pretiosus’. See the exhibition catalogue: Österreich und die Osmanen (Gemeinsame Ausstellung der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek und des österreichischen Staatsarchiv), ed. Rudolph Neck et al., Vienna 1983, p. 53, exhibit 78.
89 BLO, MS Marsh 358.

I am grateful to Mr Colin Wakefield for locating this manuscript for me. Erpenius’s ownership inscription is on the verso of the first blank leaf following the text and reads: ‘Sum Thomae Erpeni ex dono Clarissimi viri Isaaci Casauboni anno 1610.’

90 Casaubon, Epistolae, pp. 343-344: A letter from Thomas Erpenius to Isaac Casaubon in Paris, dated the Kalends of April 1610, and containing the following: ‘Alcorani seriam lectionem nondum sum aggressus, etiamsi eum aliquoties regularum indagandarum gratia percurrerint quod ante mihi sit descriptibus, quod omnia in eo observanda commode in Dictionarium meum referre possint, citatissima et lineis: nam azaararum citatio non potest mihi sufficere, cum quaedam nimirum prolixiae sint, et versuum, (quos /áyà/, id est signa, vocant) ratio ita incerta et varia, ut de ea ipsi /masín/ [i.e. /mu'allim/] nihil possint certi statuere, licet singulis azaariis eorum numeros superscribantur.’
Si fortassis Alcoranus aliquis Arabicus venalis in manus tuas incidat, velis eum pro me emere; modo tersus sit, et utcunque bene scriptus; de pretio nihil possum determinare, melius id me nosti. Valde optarem quam primum unum habere, antequam scedulas meas in Dictionarium reponendas dissecem, quo cuique vocie paginam et lineam Alcorani mei possim assignare. Hactenus nimium non nisi azaíás notavi. quia proprium Alcoranum non habui. Coeperam eum describere; sed labor et amissio temporis ab incepto me revocavit. Si auderem, rogarem te, ut illud exemplar, quod hic a te habeo, mihi venderis; si quidem alia exemplaria habeas, ita ut hoc sine incommodo magno carere queas."

Quod Alcoranum Arabicum quem postremis meis a te petiveram tam benevole ex voto meo mihi concedas, mirum in modum gaudeo, et gratias tibi ago quam possim maximas.'

Quod Alcoranum Arabicum quem postremis meis a te petiveram tam benevole ex voto meo mihi concedas, mirum in modum gaudeo, et gratias tibi ago quam possim maximas.'

On fol. 13' of his Quran, Erpenius refers to two Qurans belonging to the king — *codex maior regnus, minor reg.*

Not identifiable among the Quran sections classed among the Scaliger collection in Leiden University Library.

Hubert's note is on the *recto* of the last blank leaf preceding the text and reads:

'Je reconnaç ce livre pour celuy de Monsieur Erpenius. Hubert.' [With his initial, to be seen in several of his manuscripts in BNP].


ÖNB, MS 9737t, fols. 266-280: letters to Sebastian Tengnagel from Job Hartmann.