At Rome between 1590 and 1595 seven Arabic texts were published by the Typographia Medicea under the direction of Giovan Battista Raimondi. Two of these were Christian Arabic texts issued in Arabic and bilingual Arabic-Latin editions; the other five were scientific Arabic texts written some centuries earlier by Muslim scholars and issued in single monolingual editions. They were, in order of publication:

1590/1: The Gospels in an unidentified Arabic version with the wood-cut illustrations of the life of Christ designed by the Florentine painter Antonio Tempesta in two different editions, the first in Arabic alone and the second with an interlinear Latin version made by a team of translators working for the press.

1592: Two thirteenth-century tracts on Arabic Grammar that were very well-known in the Ottoman and Arab worlds: Al-Kafiya by the Egyptian jurist and grammarian Ibn al-Hajib, and Al-Muqaddima al-ajjamiyya, so-called after its Moroccan author Ibn Ajjama, also known as al-Sanhaj, who, according to tradition, composed this quintessence of Arabic syntax at Mecca with his face turned towards the Kaaba.

1592: Nuzhat al-mushāq fi dhikr al-amār... ("The jaunt of a man who loves recollecting capital cities, regions, countries, islands, towns and distant lands") being the anonymous abridgment of al-Idrīsī’s descriptive geography, which he wrote in Sicily in the twelfth century for the Norman King Roger II.

1593: The great tenth/eleventh-century medical work from Iran, Ibn Sīnā’s Al-Qanān fi al-tibb, which had already become so well-known in the West as Avicenna’s Canon, together with his philosophical work Kitāb al-Najāt ("Book of Salvation [from Error]"), which is his own selection of extracts from his important compendium, Kitāb al-Shifā ("Book of Healing [of the Soul]").

1594: Euclid’s Elements in an Arabic recension attributed to the thirteenth-century astronomer and mathematician from Khorasan, Naṣr al-Dīn al-Tūsi, and illustrated by numerous fine wood-cut diagrams.
in substantial derivative studies). Efforts should have been concentrated on producing a comprehensive grammar book and a dictionary, not unvocalised editions of difficult technical texts. A further criticism levelled at the press was that these texts had been marred by an excess of printing or editorial errors.

Here are some of those scholars’ judgments. Inevitably they reveal quite as much about themselves as about the press in Rome.

In a book published at Frankfurt in 1590, the German scholar Jacob Christmann, who found it impossible to acquire Arabic type, responded with admiration and expectation to the achievement in Rome:

At Rome in 1589 [sic] Pope Sixtus V [sic] established an Arabic press from which the Avicenna, Euclid and Four Gospels were issued. These books have been printed with such beautiful type that the shape and joining of the Arabic letters offer a superb match to manuscripts. Once somebody has made a move in the direction of type which can accommodate the vowels and with which Arabic grammars and dictionaries can be published, there is no doubt that within a short space of time the whole of Europe will be adorned by the Arabic language.

At Leiden in 1595, the scholar-printer Franciscus Raphelengius praised the founders of the Medici Press for their investment in what he assumed was a commercial enterprise directed toward an eastern market (a subject to which we shall return), but lamented their neglect of European needs. The memory of his own difficulties is still fresh:

Many years ago when I embraced the study of this language I realised there was nothing to encourage readers in this and I lamented the lack of anyone able to promote the matter. There were a few who made some attempt and no doubt they would have made progress had they not been put off by the expense. At last, however, after many years of expectation, it occurred to some eminent men to establish a printing press at Rome replete with the most elegant type. From the subsequent publications it is quite obvious that they spared no expense to equip the press. While these efforts became more famous by the day, the hope was that they would produce something from the excellently appointed workshop that would answer the needs of students. Prestigious and highly influential printed works in Arabic were published with such elegance that I can confidently say that nothing could be added in the way of greater embellishment. Yet most people passionately complain that they do not slake the thirst of our still ignorant Europeans. It is possible to conclude that they had nothing else in mind other than to serve the Arabs, especially the Christian Arabs, with their efforts, and were induced by the hope of gaining maximum profit from the books they printed. And although their intention is highly praiseworthy it would have been much more acceptable if they had taken into account the value to our men too by publishing the beginner’s grammar and a lexicon that they promised from the start. It was for this reason that I was inspired to have some characters cut in imitation of theirs so that westerners would sometime enjoy the same benefit

As I saw the orientals had from the Italians.

Around 1604, in a dedicatory epistle to King James I (and again, two years later, in an epistle to his friend, Lancelot Andrews), William Bedwell, ‘the father of Arabic studies in England’, singled out his European predecessors and contemporaries for their praiseworthy efforts in this field, but complained that, despite this, little had been achieved.

...some have toiled a great deal in these studies but left little to posterity; others have published a certain amount, but clearly to no avail or of no advantage to others. Only those who were helped by the support of Cardinal de’ Medici have produced something praiseworthy and greater by far than every expectation: yet it was not intended by them for the general benefit of students but for themselves. Many have promised an Arabic dictionary, several have tried, everyone has awaited, but no one has achieved anything yet.

By this stage, Bedwell had indeed completed draft versions of an Arabic dictionary and even considered approaching the Medici Press, which he mistakenly thought was in Florence not Rome, to print it.

The French ambassador to Istanbul, François Savary de Brèves, who founded his own printing press at Rome in the last years of the Medici Press, represented an unwelcome challenge to their monopoly. In his criticism of their edition and translation of the Gospels displays the same candelor he employed in dealing with other rivals. According to him, that edition was ‘so badly [printed], so far from the sense of the Arabic that to tell you the truth everything they have done is wrong’.

Nor was the great Dutch Arabist, Thomas Erpenius, averse to criticising his competitors for the sake of his own advancement. The reputations of Peter Kirsten, the Avicennist at Breslau, and Jan Theunisz, the liquor-selling Arabist who spent a probationary year teaching Arabic at Leiden, have both suffered as a result of Erpenius’ competitive spirit. But in his judgement of the Medicean Ajurrānīyyus, he reveals his own exacting standards as a grammarian rather than any personal animosity:

This little book was published one day at Rome at the Medici Press with very elegant-lettering but quite incorrectly with omissions here and there not so much of [individual] words but of whole sentences.

Elegant, faulty, and insensitive to European needs—these same verdicts can as easily be arrived at today. Connoisseurs of fine typography will agree to marvel at the typographical elegance of the books; and when they hear that the greatest type-cutter of the time, Robert Granjon of Lyon, worked for the press in the final years of his life, their pleasure is explained. By the late sixteenth century when type cutting skills had already been developing for a century and a half, fine Arabic typography could spring in a mature form from the
European printing tradition as a whole. As the Medicean Arabic books demonstrate—and as indeed does the recently rediscovered Venetian Qur'an printed by Paganino and Alessandro Paganini in c.1538—provided a craftsman of sufficient skill was found and funded, the technical difficulties of printing a cursive script could be overcome in a way that was convincing to Europeans at least. For Jacob Christmann and most other Arabists of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the problem of printing Arabic was not so much technical as economic. Fine Arabic printing required substantial patronage. So when Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, the future Grand Duke of Tuscany, invested in Granjon’s skills, the result was so impressive that it set a standard for Arabic printing which was followed not only by Raphelengius and Erpenius but by many other printers in the West for centuries to come.

As for the charge of inaccuracy, readers of Arabic can easily confirm that there are misprints in these editions. But whether these errors are as widespread or serious as Savary de Brèves claimed cannot be determined until the editions and their manuscript exemplars are examined in detail. To date only the slightest of the books, the Ayurrāmiyya has undergone such an examination. The more substantial texts await close inspection.

Leaving aside the typographic aspects of the press, which have received close analysis elsewhere, and the editorial, which have not, the third charge of insensitivity to European needs deserves special attention in the context of this collection of essays. It is easy to concur with the contemporary view of the Medicean publications as indulgent and disappointingly unsuitable for European requirements. If, as Raphelengius assumed, the press had more exotic markets in mind—and we shall be returning to the intentions of the press in the second part of this essay—then we should ignore the criticisms of its choice of publications and concentrations on the actual use to which they were put in Europe. For whatever the priorities of the press may have been and whether or not the books were intended or suitable for inexperienced students of Arabic, there is no doubt that they provided an important stimulus to the revival of interest in Arabic sources that took place around 1600 when Arabic texts, both manuscript and printed, were hard to obtain.

Hand-written annotations in extant copies of the Medicean Arabic books, now in European libraries, show how carefully they were read by their owners. In Leiden, for instance, there are those that belonged to Joseph Scaliger, in Amsterdam there were Matthew Slade’s, in Groningen Jacob Christmann’s, in Paris Etienne Hubert’s, in Hamburg Peter Kirsten’s, in Vienna Sebastian Tengnagel’s, and in London Isaac Casaubon’s.

In the absence of any sustained Arabic lexicographical and grammatical traditions in Europe, learning to read and understand these Arabic books was not an easy task. Nonetheless, with some determination and ingenuity they could be used, in the first instance, to improve the scholar’s knowledge of Arabic. Obviously, the bilingual editions of the Gospels and Eliano’s Confession of Faith provided an immediate source of Christian Arabic vocabulary in the same way that the Arabic text in Agostino Guistintiani’s polyglot Psalter, published at Genoa in 1516, had done earlier in the century for Nicolas Cloenardus and Wolfgang Musculus. As for the monolingual Arabic texts, two of the five texts, the Canon and the Elements, had for long been available in the West in themedieval Latin versions by Gerard of Crmona and Aedelard of Bath. Both texts, as revised by Andrea Alpago and Campanus respectively, then became widely available in printed editions. The Elements was also available in Greek editions. It was possible, therefore, to gain a knowledge of the Arabic texts by reading them in conjunction with the Latin (or Greek) versions; and in the case of the Canon at least, there is evidence that this kind of comparison was made. Even the editors of the Arabic text of the Canon compared it with one of the printed Latin editions. Joseph Scaliger annotated his copy of the Medicean Canon with reference to Gerard’s Latin version, as did Etienne Hubert. A copy of the Latin version printed at Venice in 1564 and now in the British Library was annotated in Arabic through reference to the Medicean text. Not that this circular method of comparing newly acquired texts with old translations could provide the return ad fontes and new interpretations that many Renaissance Arabists desired. But in the absence of Arabic—or Turkish—speaking informants able to interpret the works of the great Muslim lexicographers, the Medicean publications used in conjunction with existing Latin translations offered a rich supply of vocabulary, both religious and scientific. William Bedwell compiled parts of his Dictionary in this way; his first specimen of 1598, though relying chiefly on Guistintiani’s Psalter, also contains material from the Medicean Gospels; and his second of 1599 contains material from the Euclid. He did not make use of the abridged version of Idrisi’s Nuzhat al-mushāq at this stage and in any case no European version yet existed. By 1606, however, he had acquired a copy and his knowledge of Arabic had advanced sufficiently for him to draw up a glossary which he completed the following year. Valentin Schindler may have used the Medicean publications for some of the Arabic vocabulary in his Lexicon Pentagloton, which first appeared in 1611 and represents the first printed polyglot dictionary of oriental languages to include Arabic, and Franciscus Raphelengius certainly made use of the Gospels, grammars, Geography and Canon (though not the Euclid) in his Lexicon Arabicum published posthumously by his sons in 1613 as the first printed Arabic-Latin dictionary. Turning back to England in the mid-seventeenth century, though Edmund Castell was mainly indebted to Antonio Giggi’s Thesaurus Linguae
Arabicae (and thence to the new ground of the eastern lexicographers) for the Arabic element in his Lexicon Heptaglotton, the examples he gives from the Arabic Canon may also derive from the Medicean edition.

In addition to providing raw lexicographical material for pioneering Arabists at the turn of the century and beyond, the Medicean publications deserve recognition for a more profound textual contribution to the European revival of Arabic studies. New critical editions and translations of their Arabic texts by scholars throughout the seventeenth century were either based directly on them or stimulated by their example.

Given the lack of grammar books available to European students of Arabic, it is no surprise that the Medicean edition of the Ajurrāmiyya was of great interest to Arabists. Many attempts were made to redact or translate it and some of these were successfully published. Jacob Christmann owned interleaved copies of both the Ajurrāmiyya and the Kāfiyya, and some cross references he made to the longer work indicate his interest in extending his knowledge of the shorter work. Moreover, his vocalisation of the Ajurrāmiyya and his other annotations indicate that he made a rough comparison of the edition with a manuscript copy from the Maghrib. Copies of the Medicean grammar books were also acquired in 1602 by the English Brownist Matthew Slade, rector of the Latin school in Amsterdam and manager of the city library. A very few glosses as well as the inclusion of pagination and line numbers show how Slade’s copies were also consulted by Jan Theunisz. Isaac Casaubon made some notes in his copy of the Ajurrāmiyya. In October 1613, one of Frans Raphelengius’ two younger sons, Joost, made a copy of the Medicean edition of the Ajurrāmiyya apparently in order to republish it with a Latin version which his father had made years before. Copying the text took a couple of days on 9 and 10 October 1613; and although one or two obvious misprints were corrected, there is no evidence of a critical approach to the text, even though the vocalisation was to have been included. It was also intended that the Elder Raphelengius’ Latin version would be supplied interlinearly.

A French student of Arabic, Jean-Baptiste Duval, travelled to Rome in 1608 and then to Venice where he collaborated with a Syrian on a translation of the Medicean Ajurrāmiyya and Kāfiyya, first to Italian and thence to Latin. At Paris in 1612 Jacques-Auguste de Thou, having seen the Medicean Ajurrāmiyya, asked the Maronite scholars Gabriel Sionita and Victor Seialac to translate it for him. Savary de Brèves, his patron, wrote to de Thou on 25 June 1612 saying, with his usual candor, that he did not think this would help him to learn the language, ‘car à vous dire le vrai tout ce qui est fait à Rome n’est pas grande chose’. Nonetheless he was able to say that the Maronites were working on the translation and that he would have it printed. This they never achieved, though one man who got his translation of the Ajurrāmiyya into print with a revised edition of the text was Peter Kirsten. His three-part grammar of Arabic, published with his own type at Breslau in 1608 (Book 1) and 1610 (Books 2 and 3), is highly derivative of other European publications and of the Medicean publications in particular. In his first book on the alphabet Kirsten relied heavily on the Alphabetum Arabicum, and often quotes from it verbatim. The third book contains Kirsten’s rendition and translation of the Ajurrāmiyya. In his notes he shows precisely where he has added or substituted passages from his own manuscript copy of the text in order to improve upon the Medicean edition; but he admitted that the manuscript he was working from was a poor copy and hoped, therefore, that someone else with access to better copies might be able to improve upon his work. That man was Thomas Erpenius. At Paris in 1611, he compared the Medicean edition with a manuscript copy, which, like the one Christmann used, was of maghribi provenance; and in 1617, he published his own edition and translation of the Ajurrāmiyya on the basis of four manuscript copies. Then at Rome in 1631 another edition and translation of the Ajurrāmiyya was published by Tomaso Obiciini. Neither Erpenius nor Obiciini made use of the Edito Princeps for their renditions, though in the competitive atmosphere of Arabic studies in those days it should certainly be accorded the role of a catalyst.

Like the Ajurrāmiyya, the Medicean edition of the Nuzhat al-mushāṭaq was of great interest to European scholars, even though no mediaeval Latin version existed. The Italian polygraph Bernardino Baldi used that edition to make an Italian version in 1600, which was never published; and in 1606, as we have seen, William Bedwell gave careful consideration to the Arabic text. Erpenius too studied the Arabic edition and intended to publish a translation; but it was at Paris in 1619 that a Latin translation of the Nuzhat al-mushāṭaq was finally published. This had been prepared by the Maronite scholars Gabriel Sionita and Johannis Hesronita, once again on the basis of the Edito Princeps; and in its Latin guise Idrisi’s text—which, due to a copyist’s mistake or a misprint in the Arabic edition, the translators attributed to a Nubian author—provided the European public with a completely new source of information on the topography and toponomy of the Islamic World.

Returning to the Medicean edition of the Canon, which as we have seen was read by several scholars in conjunction with Gerard of Cremona’s Latin version, four thirteenth-century Arabists should be singled out for their publication of recensions and new translations of parts of the Arabic Canon, and for their reliance on the Medicean edition in particular. Peter Kirsten, whose use of the Ajurrāmiyya and the Alphabetum Arabicum has already
been noted, also turned to the Medicean Arabic Canon for his own reedition of Book 2 on Simple Drugs, which he corrected with the help of some manuscript sources and to which he added his own new translation. Later in the century, in 1658, Vopiscus Fortunatus Plempl, professor of Medicine at Louvain, used the Medicean edition with some manuscripts in order to produce his own edition and translation of Books 1 and 2 and Book 4.1. That same year, Pierre Vattier, physician to the Duke of Orleans, produced a vernacular version from the Arabic of Ibn Sina’s *Najat* entitled *La Logique du Fils de Sina communément appelé Avicenne*. Although he does not state so himself, it is probable that Vattier made his translation on the basis of the Medicean edition. Such at any rate is the suggestion in the Royal Privilege that appears in the work which also refers to his Latin version of the Arabic Canon of which Book 3.1 appeared in the following year, 1659. And at Augsburg in 1674, Georg Welsch, a practicing physician, published his edition and translation of two chapters of Book 4.3, again on the basis of the *Editio Princeps*. In England, too, the Medicean publications and their derivative versions contributed towards the development of Arabic studies. As we have seen, William Bedwell was indebted to some of these Arabic editions as a primary source at the onset of the century; and later on there are references to those books in other works by English scholars. Even though they had recourse to a far greater range of Arabic sources than Bedwell had, Edward Pococke, John Greaves, Edmund Castell and Brian Walton all made some limited use of those famous editions from Rome; and it may be that further research into their unpublished writings will reveal a more profound interest in those books. One specific and important exploitation by an English scholar of a Medicean publication was when the Savilian Professor of Mathematics at Oxford, John Wallis, published a Latin version of the section on the fifth postulate from the Medicean Arabic edition of the *Elements*. The translation has been attributed to his colleague, the professor of oriental languages, Edward Pococke; and it was by this means that the Arabic *Elements* continued to exercise an influence on European mathematics throughout the eighteenth-century.

II

*Raphelengius* had assumed that the Arabic publications of the Medici Press must have been the product of a commercial enterprise directed exclusively towards the Arab World. If this was the case—and as we shall see Raphelengius’ claim was not unreasonable—we would have to conclude that the impact of those books on European scholarship and printing had been entirely fortuitous. But there is clear evidence to support the contrary notion that members of the press also sought to serve European academic ends. In unravelling the priorities of its staff and its founder, we are fortunate in having a wealth of material at our disposal, including official statements of purpose, the publications themselves, records relating to the distribution of those publications and to the changing fortunes of those involved, and the oriental manuscripts they collected and worked on.

In the context of late sixteenth-century Rome, it is not surprising that public statements aimed at gaining political or financial support for the press should imply a strong missionary bias. The legal document by which Cardinal Ferdinando de’ Medici founded the press on 6 March 1584 mentions his weighing of the pecuniary and scientific advantages of his investment, but stresses above all the universal benefit to Christendom it would bring. His subordination of academic interest to missionary goals was repeated on another occasion which was recorded by the director of the press, Giovan Battista Raimondi:

He ordered first the printing of the Holy Bible in Arabic in its entirety, or piecemeal at this early stage, and all Catholic books on Scripture that could be recovered in that language in order to serve the Arab Christians in the East and the Granadans in Spain. And he ordered the printing of all available Arabic books on permissible human sciences which had no religious content in order to introduce the art of printing to the Mahomedan community so that by the same means knowledge of the Mahomedans’ errors and of the truth of the Christian faith could gradually get through to them. Obviously it was expedient for Raimondi to repeat this kind of missionary ambition when seeking papal support for the project or hoping to attract customers for the books. In an attempt to effect the sale of thousands of copies of the Arabic Gospels to King Philip III of Spain, Raimondi recalled Pope Gregory XIII’s optimistic belief that the mere reading of the Gospels in Arabic would be sufficient to convert the infidels. As for the Arabic publications themselves, several features explain Raphelengius’ assumption that the press was intent on fostering an eastern market. First, none of the books contain the prefaces and introductions usually to be found in European books. Next, certain issues of the secular texts contain no indication of a western provenance whatsoever. Furthermore, the book design of eastern manuscript抄ists has been carefully imitated through rubricating titles or headings, placing the text within a rule, or ending with the inverted pyramid of the colophon. Additional proof for their eastern destination is offered in a page of Ottoman Turkish, appended to the Arabic text of the *Euclid*. It is a *firmān* issued by Sultan Murad III at Istanbul early in the month of *dhū` l-ḥijja* AH 996 (October/November AD...
1588), and orders Ottoman officials not to confiscate goods carried by European merchants as had happened to Beranton (Birinci) and Orazio Bandini who were carrying printed material in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. It is clearly stated that such ‘Frankish’ merchants must be allowed to trade, unmolested, in goods as well as in books.29

Other features suggest that the books were a hybrid product intended for consumption in the west as well as the east. Some of the secular texts make a gesture in the direction of a western readership through additional Latin title pages, or Latin titles and imprints overprinted on the Arabic title pages.30 The two Christian texts—the Gospels and the Confession of Faith—appeared in separate editions with Latin versions and could have served as didactic tools for incipient Arabicists, though the unvoiced Arabic would not lend itself ideally to this. Alternatively the bilingual edition of the Gospels could have been used for teaching the text of the Vulgate to Arabic speakers. An Arabic note appended by the censors to Ibn Sina's Kitāb al-Najāt is an important indication that a European—or at least a Christian—readership was expected.

Although many issues have been raised in this treatise on metaphysics by Avicenna that are contrary to our Catholic faith and which in some cases even resemble it, nevertheless it does not impact in or present Christian teaching in the way our religion teaches it. We have therefore indicated some of them with this sign * in the margin and we have granted permission for it to be published in print on account of the other useful matters which it contains and in order that Inquisitors may be given the opportunity to learn the Arabic language as well.31

Clearly, the Alphabetum Arabicum is exceptional among the Medican publications in providing precisely for a European need. But since it only teaches the beginner how to read a vocalised text out loud, it does not contain sufficient information to enable him to read, let alone understand, the other unvoiced publications. Frustratingly for the isolated autodidact, this information is contained in the two elementary grammatical tracts on nabw (inflection and syntax); but without a teacher the key to the contents must remain locked within their unvoiced lines. In Rome, among the Neophytes and Maronites, there were teachers whose mother tongue was Arabic; and it may have been in their colleges that these grammatical tracts were employed. The records of the press reveal a deliberate attempt to distribute the publications in both East and West. Among Ferdinando’s orders, Raimondi recorded one which requested Florentine merchants to investigate the readiness of Muslims to receive printed books.32 And for over thirty years the market for printed books in the Islamic World was primed and investigated with proof sheets and presentation copies. In June 1587, the first two pages of Idris’ geography were sent to North Africa, Istanbul, and Cairo.33 In April 1595, a Maronite priest leaving for the Levant was given the Avicenna, Euclid

3. The firman Sultan Murad III issued at Istanbul in AH 996 (AD 1587), concerning European merchants and their carrying of printed matter in Arabic script through Ottoman territories. Published at Rome in 1594 by the Medici Oriental Press on the verso of the the final page of the Arabic edition of Euclid’s Elements.
and Idrisi, as well as a copy of the Gospels to give to his Patriarch.45 In July that same year eleven copies of the Gospels were bought for the Patriarch of Alexandria.46 In May 1596 a member of the Neophyte college who was leaving for Jerusalem was given a copy of the Gospel.46 In November 1598 sections of the Avicenna and of the Euclid and a complete copy of each of the other secular books were sent to Sicily en route for North Africa.46 And a decade later, in June 1610, a Carmelite friar was given a large consignment of books to take to Persia.46

There are also records of sales to local people in Rome. But in the autumn of 1594, agents of the press were sent to the Frankfurt Fair, which offered an established outlet for book sales in the North. There, two English merchants believing they could interest Levantine and North African merchants in London in the Medicean publications from Rome, exchanged maps and cloth for the full range of books.47 In June 1595, Paul Maupin, a craftsman who worked for the press, bought several of the books to take to France.48 And in March 1600, a priest who was leaving Rome for Spain was given three copies of the Gospels and the Alphabetum Arabicum to take with him.49

In spite of these efforts, the Medicean publications did not sell in anything like the numbers to justify the size of the print runs. They were even used as barter in payment of services rendered to the press. In 1619 and 1774 the Gospels were reissued with new title-pages,50 and records from the late seventeenth century show that a considerable proportion of all the books still remained unsold.51 How could the management of the press have misjudged the markets of their own day so extravagantly?

Their challenge to the Arabic manuscript copyster was clever and courageous. Other products of European technology such as paper and clocks and watches had been successfully exported to the Ottoman world and it seemed there would be a market for printed books too. But while, with Raphelengius, we may admire their audacity in speculating with an unknown eastern market, their assumption that somehow western needs could be provided for with the same product seems commercially reckless.

Giovanni Battista Raimondi (c.1536-1614), who directed both the editorial and practical aspects of the press, was a man of unusual abilities and sustained commitment, especially to the scholarly ideals of its foundation. For over thirty years until his death, he collected manuscripts and worked fervently to prepare texts—especially grammar books and dictionaries of oriental languages—for publication. The fact that his extremely ambitious publishing programme was only partially and seemingly carelessly put into effect was the result not of his own ineptitude, but rather of a series of misfortunes over which he had no control.

In April 1585, within little over a year of its foundation, the press had lost its most influential guardian, Pope Gregory XIII. Two years later in 1587 Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, whose initial investment appeared to have set the press on a firm basis, moved to Florence to succeed his brother Francesco as Grand Duke of Tuscany. That same year the death of Ignazio Na'anamatalah (also known as Nehemes), the refugee Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, was a major blow to the publishing team. It was under the Patriarch's chairmanship that a committee was to have produced not only the edition but also a new translation of Ibn Sinâ's medical Canon. Some recompense for his loss was in his manuscript collection which passed into the possession of the press. But then in 1589 Robert Granjon, the outstanding French type cutter, died. All this before a single book had been issued!

In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that Raimondi had little opportunity to pursue a publishing programme that would make sense to a European readership. The best he could hope for was that the West would in some way be served by books designed for the East. As we have seen, this was the case though there could never be great demand for such inaccessibly texts. Nor were the chances of the press's commercial success in the West improved when the unscrupulous foreman of the press, Matteo Nerone, took advantage of his position to pirate extra copies of the books. He sold these and others which he stole in 1593 at reduced prices and, as a result, Raimondi's agents in Frankfurt a year later found it impossible to sell for retail prices.52

At this stage it might have been possible to make commercial sense of the books through further investment in complementary translations and didactic tools of the sort expected by Christmann and Raphelengius. In an attempt to elicit such support, Raimondi referred to the praises and expectations of both northerners:

The generosity and magnificence of the House of Medici is to be seen shining more clearly [in the Avicenna and the Euclid] than in the introduction of the Greek language and books into Italy. This is what I have read in many contemporary publications including in particular a book by Jacob Christmann published at Frankfurt and in an introduction to the Arabic language—i.e. the Alphabet by Raphelengius published at Antwerp [sic]—and many others. They cannot praise and extol the venture enough, blessing the original author and thanking him for what has been done and hoping for more in the future.53

But Ferdinando had decided to cut his losses; and in 1596 a contract was drawn up selling the press to Raimondi. For a further fourteen years the terms of the sale made it possible for Raimondi to publish; only in 1610, thanks to Ferdinando's successor at Florence, Cosimo III, was the burden lifted and Raimondi published his edition with his two Latin translations of 'Izz al-Din
al-Zanjâni’s Kitâb al-Tâsrif. In northern Europe rumours of the impending publication of an Arabic grammar at Rome had startled Thomas Erpenius, who was hoping to conquer the continent with his own grammar book. And although it was the Dutchman’s work that was to stand the test of time, Raimondi’s Liber Tâsrifâ was a beautifully researched and produced book which demonstrates how even in the last years of his life, proper patronage enabled him to serve the European Republic of Letters with a suitable publication.

NOTES
1 Source material for the history of the Medici Oriental Press is now mainly located in three libraries in Florence: the Biblioteca Nazionale, the Archivio di Stato, and the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana.
2 Secondary studies on the press may be found in a variety of journals and monographs, as follows:
Jenisch, Bernhard Freiherr von. De Fatis Linguarum Orientalium Arabicae antiquae Persicae et Tauricae commentario (Vienna, 1780).

THE MEDICI ORIENTAL PRESS AND THE IMPACT OF ARABIC...
Proposition, sed principum et privatum. Dictionarium Arabicum multi promoverunt, plures tentarunt, omnes expectabant, sed adhuc evocari nemo.

Bedell’s almost literal repetition of this passage in his Epistle to Lancelot Andrews, c. 1606, (British Library, London, M.S.5196, fol. 21r-v), is also edited by Hamilton, op. cit., p. 117.

de Brêve’s correspondence quoted by Gérard Duverdier in Le Livre et le Liban, p. 239: ‘... mais encore si mal [imprimé] et si fâché du sens de l’arabeque, qu’à vous dire le vrai tout ce qu’ils ont fait est faux.’

For Erpenius on Jos Theuniss, see Isaac Casaubon, Epistolas, (Rotterdam, 1709), p. 666; the text of this letter to Casaubon is repeated in Schurrer, p. 355.

Thomas Erpenius, Grammatica Arabica dicta Gaiurnia...Leiden 1617, sig A2: ‘Excusus aliquando hic libellus Romae fuit in Typographia Medicus elegantissimo charactere, set admodum mendosum omisit passim et corruptus non vocibus tantum sed et integris veraminis...’

See the articles by Vervliet and Tiitto, and also Tiitto’s monograph (1987).


For editions of the Canon, see Nancy Siraiti, Avicenna in Italy (Princeton 1987), and Rafaela González Cassirro, Ruhez y Avicena en la Biblioteca de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad Complutense. Descripción de su obra medica impresos y comentariorios (Madrid 1984).

For editions of the Elements, see: Max Steck, Bibliographia Esculapiana (Hildesheim,1981), (Arbor Scientiarum, Beiträge zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Reihe C. Bibliographien, Band 1).

BNF, II, III, 15. For further information, see Jones, Dissertation (1981), appendix VI.

Leiden University Library, 8784 A.4: Scaliger’s copy of the Medicus Arabicus Canon.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. T29.5: Etienne Hubert’s copy of the Medicus Arabicus Canon.


Hamilton, op. cit., p. 12.

Ibid., p. 26, 87.

Valentin Schindler, Lexicon Pentaglotton (Frankfurt, 1611). Issued a second time that same year at Hams. Second edition Frankfurt, 1653.


Groningen, University Library Library, alpha, fol. 17.

Groningen, University Library, M.S. 461. Copy dated AH 918 (AD 1512/3).

Amsterdam University Library, 301.D.23.


Leiden, University Library, Cod. Or. 3041 (Ar.2401).

Le Livre et le Liban, p. 204, entry for exhibit 75: Deval’s manuscript copy of his Arabic lexicon, of which the preface is discussed here by Gérard Duverdier.

Ibid., p. 202, entry for exhibit 71: the Medicus Arabicus, discussed by Gérard Duverdier with reference to the translation by the Maronites.

Schurrer 45.

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS.Ar.4127.

Schurrer 53.
avribbo ne propugnare la verità con quel modo che la nostra fede delle quale alcune n'hanvano notate nell'immagine del libro con questo signo* per l'altr'e cosi utile che vi soas et per dar commodita ad studiosi delle lingue d'imparo ancora questa lingua Arabica, havemo permesso che si publichi nelle stampe.

"ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 3, doc. 20: 'Breve ragguaglio...'

"Ha mandato per tutte le parti di Mahmuttanni dove pratica et ha commerto la natione ferent et ad esplorare la volontà di detti Mahumuttanni intorno al recevere detti libri stampati..."


'19 di Giugno del primo foglio et del secondo dati al signor Cipriano per mandare in Africa et in Constantinopoli...no 1 di ciascuno...A 26 di Giugno 87 del primo et secondo foglio dati al signor Cipriano per mandare in Cairo...no 1....'

"ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 2, doc.XXV, fol.6v: 'A 4 d'Aprile 1595 matseit partirono di Roma per Levante il Padre Moise et suo compagno Joseph, Marronitti, al quale Padre Moise fu dato un'Avicenna Arabico, un Euclide Arabico scolito et un libro di Geografa ligato con fituccio di seta per mostra con una istruzione di quello che haveva da fare per la smistazione di detti libri [et] tutto questo con saputa del illustissimo signor [illegible] et ancora un libro dell' Evangeli per portarlo in dono al loro Patriarcha.'

"ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 1, doc.26: a copy by G.B. Raimondi of a document written by Giovan Battista Bandini on 3 July 1595 stating that he had paid Raimondi 53/2 Scudi for 11 copies of the bilingual Geografia that were to be given to the Patriarch of Alexandria.

"ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 2, XXV, fol.9r: 'A 29 di Maggio 1596 donai un volto di dell' Evangeli Arabi Latini a Ms Giorgio del Collegio di Neofiti qual volesa partire per Jerusalem.'

"Ibid., fol.13r: 'A 21 di Novembre 1596 sabbati si mandorono le mostre dell' libri Arabi in Sicilia, per Africa. Cioe molti quinterni del 30 libro dell' Canoni di Medicina d' Avicenna. Alcuni quinterni del primo libro di Euclide. Una geografia intera, una Grammatica Carta, et una Grammatica Giarrimia.'

"Ibid., fol.32v: 'A 8 di Giugno 1610 ho donato al P. fra Vincenzo dascalci per portar in Persia de libri Arabi—un Avicenna; 4 Evangelii Arabi; 2 Evangelii Arabi Latini; 4 Geografie; 6 Grammatiche Giarrimier; 20 professioni della fede.'

"Biagiarelli, (1979), p.130.

"ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 2, XXV fol.7r: 'A primo di Giugno 1595 parti di Roma Ms Paolo Maupina per Francia et hebbe 4 giorni primi 10 Evangelii Arabi Latini, un corpo d' Avicenna, due volume d' Euclide, una Geografia, et 20 Alfabetti Arabi Latini da pagarsi al prezzo ordinar.'

"Ibid., fol.176: 'A 28 di Maszo 1600 parti di Roma il P. fra Thomaos de Marchis per Spagna, et porto 3 Evangelii Arabi Latini sciolti, una Grammatica Calvicia Latina sciolt, un' Alphabetic Arabico sciolti, et li porto per mostra.'

"Recalled as Rome in 1619 by Jo. Antonius Rodolus, with a dedication to Cardinal Madutetus; and again at Florence in 1774, by Caesar Malanimus, historian of the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana.

"Bandini, p. 33, repeated by Saltini (1860), p. 293, note 2:

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45 Ibid., 63.
46 El articolo (see note 6 above).
47 British Library, London, MS Burney 364, fol.27r, an unpublished letter from Thomas Erpenius to Isaac Casaubon dated Leiden, 28 May 1614, containing the following:
'Studia mea quod aggregas, multa in manus habeo, sed praeteream ad editionem parvo verbo veram duplicis Geographiae Arabicae, Abulfedae [i.e. Abu'l-Fida's Topqim al-baladiq insanum, et illus Nubeniens [i.e. Idrisi]].'
49 Schurrer 394.
50 On these editions of Avicenna, see Siraisi, op.cit., pp. 127-128, 153-156.
51 See Cassinet, op.cit.
52 I am grateful to Raymond Mercier for keeping me informed of his research on Wallis. See his chapter in this volume.
53 See above, note 17.
54 ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 3, doc.1: 'Instrumento di fondazione della Congregazione per la Stamperia Orientale' [i.e. i.e. March 1584.
55 Essendo stato proposto da m. Giovambattista Raimondi una impresa di stampa in lingua Arabica et Caldaica trattata da esso con Mons. et Patriarcha d'Antiochia, recercando favore et commodita di poter mettere in Atto, et havendo considerato non tanto l' util peculiar che se ne potesse conseguire et la facilita che si accresce alla notitia delle scientie, quanto al poter con tale occasione aprire la strada all'avvenuto della fede.'


The date of this inaugural document is a little difficult to read; and though 1 March is a possible reading (and has been given in the index to the file), both Saltini (1860), p. 261, and Tinto (1987), p. 6, refer to date the inauguration of the press to 6 March 1582.

In a later document (Filza 3, doc.17), Raimondi actually refers to the inaugural document as being dated the sixth of March.

"ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 3, Doc. 20: 'Breve ragguaglio delle cose fatte dal dill. sig. cardinal de' Medici, intorno la protezione datali del Patriarca d'Antiochia, del Patriarca d'Alexandria, e del re d'Egitto, e da una descrizione della geografia d'Arabia.'

'Comando che in lingua Arabica si stampasse principalmente la Biblia Sacra intesi o vero in questi principi a parte a parte et tutti libri cattolici della scrittura che si potessero trovare in detta lingua et questo per servire de' cristiananti Arabi quali sono in oriente et Granadini in Spagna et che si stampassero tutti li libri che si potessero havere in lingua Arabica di scientie humane licite nelle quali non si trattasse niente di religione. Et questo per inducare la stampa fra Mahmuttanni accio con questo mezzo pia piano vi possi penetrare la notitia dell'errori di Mahumttanni et la verita della fede Christiana.'

"ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 3, doc. 30.

"Both the monolingual and bilingual editions of the Gospel the text begins on p.9 leaving room for 4 leaves of preface to be added at a later stage.

"This letter is illustrated in Le Livre et le Liban, p. 248.

"See especially the two grammatical tracts and the Geography, all published in 1592.

"For the original Italian version of the stricture printed in Arabic at the end of the Nanjat, see BNF, MS II.V. 157, fol. 19: 'Non ostante che in questo trattato de Metafisica d' Avicenna vi siano molte cose contraria alla nostra fede Cattolica et alcune che si bene par se aprossimo non dimeno non
ROBERT JONES

Gospels (bilingual) 1039
Gospels (Arabic) 566
Avicenna 810
Euclid 1567
Idrisi 129
Arabic Grammars 280
Alphabeticum Arabicum 0
Apollonius of Perga (Latin) 427
Syriac Missal (1594) 1

(Unsold)

Original Print Runs
3500
1500
1750
3000
1600
1300 (of each)
1500

(For the original print runs, see Bertolotti, p. 237.)

31 Bertolotti, passim, using a number of sources in the Vatican library.
32 ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza 3, doc. 27:
"Vi si vede, dove chiaramente risuona la liberalità et la magnificenza della Casa di Medici più che nella introduzione della lingua et della libri Greci in Italia, cosi come ho letto in molti libri hora stampati et in particolare in un libro di Jacomo Christman, stampato in Frankfurt, et in una introduzione della lingua Arabica, ciò in uno Alfabeto del Rafaelengo stampato in Aveversa [sic], et in molti altri, dove non restano satti mai di lodare et magnificare questa impreza benedicendo l’autore principale, et ringraziandolo delle cose fatte con sperare dell’altr'future..."

33 Schunner 47.
35 ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Filza, doc. 38:
"Summario del Nezogesio da proporsi al Serenissimo Gran Duca di Toscana", though not in Raimondi’s hand, may yet testify to a desire, towards the end of his life and following on the success of the Liber Taurispri, to serve a European readership alone. The document proposes the commercial basis for establishing a press producing books of Arabic interest for Europeans. Precise costs and forecasts of sales are given. The mention of Savary de Brêves and an Arabic font that was made for him would date this document after 1611 (cf. Le Livre et le Libra, p.160); and therefore this proposal would have been made to Ferdinando's successor, Cosimo III.

Three different Arabic fonts would be made at a cost of 1000 Scudi. The following books would then be published:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Return on 2000 Copies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin Arabic Grammar</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic/Latin Qur’an</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Bible in Latin</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Science in Latin</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin Qur’an</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MORDECHAI FEINGOLD

PATRONS AND PROFESSORS: THE ORIGINS AND MOTIVES FOR THE ENDOWMENT OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS—IN PARTICULAR THE LAUDIAN PROFESSORSHIP OF ARABIC

In the three decades before the English Civil War, the infrastructure at Oxford underwent profound changes. Endowed professorships increased from five to ten; three new lectureships were established; plans for two new colleges came to fruit; the Botanical Garden as well as the Bodleian Library were constructed; and a new set of university statutes were drawn up. To this list may be added plans for two additional chairs which, however, failed to materialize. This unprecedented augmentation of both teaching and research opportunities at Oxford was matched by an expanding matriculation, which would be surpassed only in the nineteenth century.

Although historians have noted this momentous period of university expansion, occasionally singling out for discussion one or another of the individual foundations, no attempt has been made to take an overview of what may be termed the ‘collective act of benefaction’ that so transformed Oxford. Nor has there been any sustained effort to explore either the motives that may have animated these benefactors or the impact of their philanthropy upon the university curriculum, the manner of instruction, and the research opportunities at Oxford. This ‘collective act of benefaction’ will be analyzed in this essay in order to demonstrate that it was part of a major bid to set the intellectual life of Oxford on a new footing during the first decades of the seventeenth century. The success of this effort is reflected in the reformulation of the nature and character of both undergraduate and graduate learning at Oxford that took place at this time.

The motives that prompted the largest benefactions may be divided roughly into two groupings: personal motives and scholarly motives. The former reflected the desire of donors to immortalize their names, while the latter was an expression of their concurrent genuine concern with promoting learning. And although scholarly motives certainly played an important role in determining the ultimate selection of the discipline to be promoted, the actual act of benefaction, that is, the event that set in motion the entire process, can invariably be found within the domain of the personal.