Gospels (bilingual)  | 1039  | 3500
Gospels (Arabic)  | 566   | 1500
Avicenna         | 810   | 1750
Euclid           | 1967  | 3000
Idrisi           | 1129  | 1600
Arabic Grammars  | 280   | 1300 (of each)
Alphabeticon Arabicum | 0 | 1500
Apollonius of Perga (Latin)  | 427   |
Syrac Massal (1594) | 1     |

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

72 Bertolotti, passim, using a number of sources in the Vatican library.

73 ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Piltra 3, doc. 27:

‘Vì si vede, dove chiaramente risuole la liberalità et la magnificiencia della Casa di Medici più che nella introduttione della lingua et delli libri Greci in Italia, così come ho letto in molti libri hora stampati et in particolare in un littero di Jacomo Christman, stampato in Frankfurt, et in una introduzione della lingua Arabic, cioè in uno Alfabeto del Rafaæligio stampato in Anverza [sic], et in molti altri, dove non restano satti mai di lodare et magnificare questa impresa benedicendo l’autore principale, et ringratandolo delle cose fatte con sperare dell’altrne future...’

74 Schraurer 47.


76 ASF, Stamperia Orientale, Pilza, doc. 38:

‘Sommario del Negozio 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 Tusci, 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 Brèves 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 Qāmūs</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>
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</tbody>
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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.
By far the most important personal attribute to link virtually all great benefactors was their failure to produce a male heir. William Camden, Henry Danvers, Lord Danby, Thomas White, and William Laud never married, while Sir Thomas Bodley and Sir Henry Savile left no surviving male issue. No great psychological acumen is needed to realize that in their twilight years these men were opting for an alternative route to immortality; their fortune would be translated into an everlasting tribute to their memory at the university. Certainly, this general pattern was familiar, and had a long and glorious tradition during the Middle Ages. These great benefactors, however, introduced a novel and important variant; they made a conscious effort to employ their wealth not only for the purpose of carrying on the family name, but equally important, to implement some of their convictions concerning the advancement of learning.

Even projected endowments that failed to materialize bear evidence to the crucial correlation between the desire to encourage scholarship on the one hand, and the ability to dispose of one's wealth for this purpose, on the other. Not surprisingly, the major limitation, time and again, was family opposition. Sir Edwin Sandys, for example, stipulated in his will (1628) his explicit wish to establish a professorship of metaphysics at Oxford. Yet, not only did Sandys die heavily in debt, but he also left some offspring who preferred not to honor their father's wish—and part with £1,800. An even more spectacular case involved the enormous benefaction of Sir Thomas Gresham stipulated in his will of 1579 to establish a college in London. Gresham's second wife tried everything in her power—including an act of Parliament—to contest her husband's will and divert the money instead to her children from a previous marriage. Although her efforts failed, her persistence illustrates the extent to which family members were willing to go to reverse a benefaction. In this category can also be included the failed attempt of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, to establish a history professorship at Cambridge. His heir, Robert Greville, Second Lord Brooke, never went beyond expressing verbal sympathy for his cousin's wish to support such a professorship. Quite possibly, he exploited the furor created by the lectures of the first incumbent, Isaac D'Israeli, to wash his hands of the intended endowment.1

This strong correlation between lack of a male heir and a desire to leave a testament to one's name applies mainly to large benefactions. Many made more modest gifts to the universities, regardless of whether they left male offspring. Such gifts came in the form of occasional scholarships or fellowships; augmentation of fellows' salaries; or even provisions of small sums to allow existing college fellows to lecture on specific topics within their respective houses. But these gifts invariably fell far short of the funds necessary to achieve the goals of Savile and his counterparts, since the cost of endowing chairs was staggering. Both Savile and Camden left Oxford with lands valued at close to £8,000, while Thomas White and Sir William Sedley each provided close to £2,000 to establish their respective chairs. Such sums were mandatory since the annual salary designated for a Professor represented roughly 5% of the value of the land intended to support the chair. Moreover, since a major purpose of these endowments was to provide generous remuneration for the incumbents—never less than £100 per annum—it was clear that only a substantial benefaction could bear the expense.

An intriguing aspect of this 'collective act of benefaction' involves the close personal ties that existed between the various benefactors. Clearly, a shared experience translated into a shared example of philanthropy. At the very least these men were contemporaries and members, past or present, of the universities they supported. The ties, however, usually went deeper, and a significant number were close friends. Bodley, Savile, Camden, and White—all of whom were born between 1545-1551—studied together at Oxford during the first decade of Elizabeth’s reign and retained their close ties, to their university and to each other, throughout their lives.

In this context of shared friendship and shared aspirations Sir Henry Savile emerges as the initiator and role model for most subsequent benefactors. In 1619, the seventy-year old Warden of Merton College and Provost of Elton endowed two professorships (of astronomy and geometry) at Oxford, personally selecting the first two incumbents and setting down in minute detail statutes regulating the two chairs. The previous decade Savile had already played a major role in assisting Sir Thomas Bodley to establish the Bodleian Library, and quite possibly had even been instrumental in prompting Bodley to endow Oxford with a public library in the first place. In a similar manner, in 1618 Savile convinced Sir William Sedley to endow his professorship of natural philosophy at Oxford. In Sedley’s case this solicitation helps explain the seemingly ‘anomalous’ benefaction, since Sedley alone among the benefactors had a male heir. But even this exception seems less exceptional when it is realized that the son and heir, Sir John Sedley, was Savile’s son-in-law, and the chair was (one may surmise) the ‘price’ Sedley senior had to pay for the hand of Elizabeth Savile—Sir Henry’s only child.

The important and explicit example set by Savile most probably served as a pattern of benefaction for Savile’s two contemporaries at Oxford, William Camden and Thomas White. The successful foundation of the Savilian professorships in 1619 was clearly the model William Camden sought to emulate when, three years later, he contemplated establishing his history professorship. True, a letter from Savile to Camden shortly after the latter had intimated to Lord Paget his intention to endow the professorship at Oxford
suggests that Savile was not specifically consulted; but such an oversight on Camden's part does not negate the influence exerted by Savile's successful foundation upon his friend of fifty years standing. In a similar manner, the foundation of White's Professorship of Moral Philosophy in 1621 and of the Laudian Professorship of Arabic fifteen years later reveal a modeling after the Savilian chairs. Indeed, the existence of a 'Savilian pattern' was recognized and encouraged by contemporaries. Henry Briggs, for example, the first Savilian Professor of Geometry, busily circulated the Savilian statutes as part of his search for a benefactor who might be persuaded to follow Savile's footsteps and endow similar chairs in Briggs' own alma mater—Cambridge University.

Although these large benefactions to Oxford fit into an existing mode of philanthropy in that they promised an alternative route to immortality, they nonetheless assumed a unique shape. The medieval period, especially in England, provided little precedent for the spate of professorial endowments of scholarship. Far more common was the practice on the part of large benefactors to establish a college, which may or may not have designated the instruction of certain subjects by specific fellows. In fact, before the early seventeenth century, the only precedent for endowed professorships was Henry VIII's establishment of the five Regius professorships in 1540. What our benefactors did, then, was to copy the princely example of an endowed chair in order to place the traditional framework of university benefaction on a new footing; instead of establishing a new college, or contributing a substantial sum for the reconstruction of an existing house, they chose to support one discipline and one professor. Further to differentiate these new endowments from even these princely examples was that while the Regius professorships were intended to support almost exclusively the three professions of theology, medicine and law, the new chairs represented the first serious attempt in England to encourage 'secular' scholarship, which was not directed to the above three higher faculties. In this way the founders of these chairs sought to enlarge the pool of vocational learned disciplines. And it is here that the uniqueness of these benefactions lies. By supporting either disciplines not hitherto officially represented in the curriculum (such as history or Arabic), or disciplines hitherto considered mainly preparatory for the pursuit of the professions, these benefactors helped to create a new set of academic priorities. And even if these new foundations were not intended as an immediate challenge to the existing hierarchy of knowledge, by ensuring the future prosperity of these heretofore 'subservient' disciplines, they nonetheless initiated the long process that would lead to their emancipation. Such was the beginning of a clear and effective campaign to re-order the disciplines and elevate certain among them to a position of unprecedented dignity.

This long-term purpose was explicitly articulated by some of the benefactors. At the outset of the statutes he had formulated for his two chairs, for example, Sir Henry Savile stated that he had endowed the chairs having seen that Mathematical studies are uncultiwated by our countrymen, and being desirous of supplying a remedy in a quarter almost given up in despair, and to redeem so far as in [him] lies, almost from destruction, sciences of the noblest kind."

Some historians have interpreted this mission statement as an expression of strong criticism on Savile's part, and thus evidence of the absence of all mathematical instruction in English universities. Such an inference, however, is unjustified. More accurate would be to interpret it as an expression of Savile's awareness of the great advances that had taken place in mathematics during the previous century, and his subsequent realization that only a new structure would enable it to flourish. The existing disciplinary infrastructure, Savile seems to be making clear, was incapable of supporting and sustaining fields of study that either strove to be self-sufficient or were not directly or overwhelmingly relevant to the three professions.

Concomitant with this campaign to encourage non-professional, secular scholarship was an attempt to impose new procedures that would safeguard this minor revolution. To this end our benefactors applied two novel concepts: first, they sought to elevate the social status and caliber of the incumbents of the chairs by instituting a most generous system of remuneration (which in many cases promised salaries higher than those enjoyed by the Regius professors); second, they made explicit stipulations prohibiting the professors from practicing any other profession while occupying the chair. In other words, our benefactors helped initiate the slow process of secularization and professionalization of the disciplines, a process which—for various reasons—would later suffer setbacks and only reach fruition during the nineteenth century.

From the outset remuneration was perceived as the crucial component in any major campaign to alter past perceptions and prejudices; only a secured position that promised both respect and a handsome stipend would attract the best candidates, ensure that the incumbents devoted their full time and energy to their duties, and encourage their best contribution to their respective areas of scholarship. The result of such an initiative would be to make the new professors at least 'equal' in terms of university standing to the old guard. Thus, our benefactors went out of their way to guarantee the most liberal terms of employment. In comparison to the annual salary of £40 stipulated for the Regius professors ever since 1540, the new professors received more than
twice that £100 p. a. for the White professor; £140 for the Camden professor of History; £160 for the Savilian professors; and, had Sir Francis Bacon's endowment for a professor of natural philosophy materialized, its incumbent would have drawn an annual salary of £200. Such a rationale of handsome wages was understood perfectly well by Archishop Laud, who not only intended to endow most liberally his professor of Arabic (on whom he managed to settle the minimum of £100 p. a. while awaiting his trial), but years before Laud had taken steps to augment the now meagre salaries of the Regius Professor of Hebrew by annexing to the chair a canonry of Christ Church. This thrust toward generous 'terms of employment' bore fruit and resulted—at least during the seventeenth century—in a highly qualified body of professors, the calibre of whom often exceeded that of the Regius professors. Content in their offices, they were not easily lured by either promise of honor or luxuries elsewhere.

But generous salaries guaranteed more than just quality and stability in the various chairs; they ensured the incumbents a position of respect both among colleagues at university and outsiders. Indeed, it is impossible to ignore the significance of the emergence of a certain 'professional' class of teachers at the universities precisely at the moment when college tutors were slowly engrossing all teaching duties. It is even possible to argue that at least as regards the seventeenth century, this development modified, maybe even halted, such a process, as many of the professors were talented, responsible, and certainly not absentees—men who felt sufficiently privileged and comfortable in their positions to carry out faithfully the wishes of the founders of their respective chairs.

As important as salaries and prestige were in attracting capable and responsible incumbents and in preventing split loyalties, they alone would have been insufficient to ensure the revolution initiated by our benefactors. In order for a discipline to come into its own, it was crucial that the cord that traditionally tied all scholarship to a higher purpose—and particularly to theology—be severed. And this brings us to the connection between scholarship and the church. For hundreds of years scholars had been rewarded by livings and dignities within the church hierarchy simply because few other forms of permanent remuneration existed. Problematic about such church positions, however, was the inevitable clash they involved between devotion to secular learning and devotion to one's 'higher calling'—to God and to one's flock. Most new endowments, therefore, made it explicit that only persons not holding other positions—and church livings especially—would be eligible for professorships. The most extreme formulation was made by Fulke Greville in his rules for the abortive professorship of history at Cambridge:

None shall be eligible that is in holy Orders. As well because this Realme affordeth manie preferments for divines, fewe or none for Professors of humane learning, the use and application whereof to the practice of life is the maine end, and scope of this foundation: and also because this Lecture must needs hinder a Divine from the studies and offices of his callinge, due to the church.

Greville went on to exclude those "that hath anie charge of wife or children, or anie office and employment necessarily distracting him from his studies." This strong statement should not be interpreted either as a Puritan challenge to the Church of England or, conversely, as a calculated ploy to exclude divines altogether. Rather it was a safeguard against any attempt to turn the chair into a sinecure. Greville, like Savile, had the same sound notion of ensuring the autonomy of the discipline he wished to promote as well as the freedom and dignity of his professor. That Greville excluded all people in holy orders from competing for the chair was, I believe, more a sign of his failure to think out the implications of his formulation. Significantly, other benefactors merely stipulated that no one holding another preferment could be appointed. For example, Savile allowed his professors to be elected out 'of any order or profession' forbidding them only 'to accept any ecclesiastical benefice after their admission, with cure or without cure ... or the headship of any college ... or any publice office in the University.'

To be more restrictive than this was hardly possible in the English context, owing to the peculiar collegiate system at Oxford and Cambridge and the stipulations issued by the founders of chairs. The statutes of all professorships stipulated a minimum age of twenty-five prior to election. By this age, most English scholars would have been expected to be well beyond their MA, most likely in possession of a college fellowship and—in accordance with the statutes of every college—pursuing theology. Indeed, all scholars were required either to take holy orders within a few years of graduating MA or to vacate their fellowships. Although exceptions existed, as some colleges provided for one or two 'secular' fellowships intended for those pursuing medicine or civil law, even in such cases there was an implicit assumption that eventually these fellows would either take orders or resign their fellowships.

Most important, in the highly charged religious atmosphere of the period, even an innocent wish to proceed with a 'secular' fellowship without taking orders could be easily interpreted as an indication of subversive religious beliefs, whether Catholicism or atheistic leanings. The tendency, therefore, was not to risk censure and instead take orders.

Yet, even after the new endowments, the number of chairs remained so
low—and the possibility of future openings so uncertain—that no individual could afford to wait for a vacancy. Even someone most eager for a professorship had to be certain of a living elsewhere. Hence, the numerous examples of serious scholars who took up holy orders and church livings only to resign them upon election to a professorship. Henry Gellibrand did so *en route* to becoming Gresham Professor of Astronomy, and John Wallis before his appointment as Savilian Professor of Geometry. For his part, Brian Twayne, expecting a quick reversion of the Camden Professorship of History, meanwhile resigned his church living. But while a living could be easily resigned, holy orders could not be reversed. It was this aspect of a scholar’s predicament that Greville perhaps failed to appreciate in his efforts to ‘professionalize’ history; he confused the desirable with the possible. Had his professorship continued to exist, its electors would have found it almost impossible to find those qualified candidates Greville wished to attract from among English scholars who were not also divines.

Earlier it was claimed that Sir Henry Savile was instrumental in prompting the wave of endowments that, in turn, generated a new type of incumbent—a well-qualified specialist who was secular in orientation. A careful reading of the Savilian statutes reveals that Sir Henry initiated further innovative features for his—and other—chairs. Perhaps most important, he left the content, form, and method of instruction largely to the discretion of the Professors. Anticipating that the new foundations would attract mature and well-qualified persons, Savile made a conscious effort not to restrict future incumbents, instead allowing them latitude in determining content and pace of instruction. Thus, although his statutes prescribed a few obvious authors as a point of departure for his Professors, they appealed to future incumbents to incorporate the works of contemporary and future authors whenever appropriate to the subject at hand. With similar latitude Greville would have allowed his reader to choose between secular and ecclesiastical history as well as on texts and methods of instruction. This relative freedom, though perhaps well motivated, nonetheless sometimes had adverse consequences. Since it was customary for statutes to contain some stipulations vis-à-vis the intended curriculum of the various disciplines, when no stipulations were set down (as was the case with White’s Chair of Moral Philosophy and Sedley’s Professorship of Natural Philosophy), the compilers of the new Laudian statutes simply resorted to the traditional, standby formulations, introducing to this end a cryptic reference about the need to follow Aristotle which—to us today—makes little sense in terms of what was actually taught. Hence, the anomalous situation whereby White’s ordinances for his lectureship contain no specification about the course of study, but the statutes stipulate that the reader

lecture on ‘the Ethics of Aristotle to the Nichomachus, The Politics and Economics, expounding the text, and tersely resolving the questions as they arise out of Aristotle’s text.’ And I shall return to this important point later.

Another innovative contribution introduced by Savile was his provision for an auxiliary apparatus facilitating both instruction and research. First and foremost was his erection of an adequate library for the use of both Professor and auditors. For the benefit of the Savilian Chairs of Astronomy and Geometry, Savile created a sub-library, within the Bodleian, which housed the scientific books and manuscripts he had bequeathed for the use—and under the supervision—of the occupants of his chairs. Given Savile’s emphasis on a library as part of the requisite teaching apparatus, it is not surprising that he sought to convince William Camden to endow the History Professorship with a similar resource:

One thing more I will be bold to persuade you, that to the use of your Readers you would bequeath your Books of that faculty. I for my part have cleared my study of all the Mathematical Books, which I had gathered in so many years and Countreys, Greek and Latin, printed and manuscript, even to the very raw Notes, that I have ever made in that argument. ... The Schools now are very large and fair, and place there may be conveniently found to set up a press with locks capable of them. Given Savile’s emphasis on a library as part of the requisite teaching apparatus, it is not surprising that he sought to convince William Camden to endow the History Professorship with a similar resource.

However, Camden failed to appreciate the importance of Savile’s suggestion—or perhaps he felt obliged to carry out his original intention to bequeath his library to Sir Robert Cotton—and thus the Camden Professor had to rely on his own, as well as the Bodleian’s, resources.

Nor did Savile stop with books. A talented mathematician and astronomer himself, Savile appreciated full well the changing nature of astronomy. Hence, he instructed his professors of astronomy to engage in actual observations of the heavenly bodies with proper instruments and presented to them his own collection of astronomical instruments, which would later be used and augmented by subsequent professors.

With lectures, a library, and instruments provided for, Savile’s final concern was with posterity, specifically the legacy of his professors. To this end he stipulated that the lectures delivered by his two professors, together with the observations made by the astronomy professor, be transferred into proper form and subsequently deposited in the Bodleian Library where they could be inspected and used by all interested in the subjects, and perhaps eventually published. Such a stipulation expressed in the form of ‘making the fruits of their studies public,’ certainly went a long way in initiating the concepts of ‘research’ and ‘publication’ as part of a professor’s duties beyond the traditional task of instruction. Savile, in other words, insisted on the dual
function of a 'modern' university: to instruct the young in both ancient and contemporary learning; and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. While perhaps not the first to envisage such goals, by virtue of his foundation Savile was the first to interject such convictions into the university statutes. Equally important, subsequent founders adopted such concepts and integrated them into the professorships they established. Sir Fulke Greville, for example, required that his reader 'shall yearly exhibit a copie of his whole yeares Readings ... to be layd upp, and kept in the University Library to be published, if they shall think them meet.' A similar demand was applied to the Lucasian professors after the Restoration.25

Even in terms of teaching duties, Savile placed his professorship on a new footing. He stipulated that his professors make themselves available to students outside lecture hours. Thus, the geometry reader was requested 'at his own times ... to teach and expound arithmetic of all kinds, both speculative and practical; land-surveying, or practical geometry; canonics or music, and mechanics.' The same professor was also requested to devote an additional hour each week for the instruction of all those interested

in practical logic or arithmetic of all kinds, which is best communicated without any formality, and in the vulgar tongue if he thinks fit. And also, that at convenient seasons, when it is agreeable to him, he shall show the practice of geometry to his auditors ... in the fields or spots adjacent to the University.

While this concern with instruction undoubtedly formalized past practices of Savile and his colleagues, by articulating it in the statutes he made what had previously been voluntary into a formal requirement. The proof of Savile's wisdom was the high level of instruction in the mathematical sciences at Oxford for the remainder of the seventeenth century.

To gauge the significance of these provisions in Savile's and the other new professorships, an appraisal of the larger framework of university teaching is required. In particular, the relevance of the official statutes to teaching practices must be addressed. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there existed the tendency to recycle prevailing ordinances concerning instruction whenever a new body of statutes was drawn up. Since the occasion for such codices was primarily religious and political, the matter of instruction was considered incidental and thus ancillary to the objective at hand. The Laudian statutes are no exception. When Archbishop Laud ordered a new body of statutes for Oxford in the early 1630s, the purpose of his reform was to ensure order and discipline, both civil and religious. For this reason, whenever the founders of chairs failed to specify the course of instruction they desired, the cryptic language of earlier promulgations was adopted. However, when a founder was careful to specify his wishes—as in the case of the detailed Savilian statutes—Laud was happy to incorporate such ordinances into the new statutes en bloc.

Nonetheless I would argue, even when old formulations were used, as in the case of the lectureships in moral and natural philosophy, the newly established notion of the professor as the ultimate arbiter of the course of study prevailed. In the absence of any guidelines from either Sedley or White, the Laudian statutes tersely charged the professors of moral and natural philosophy to expound on the relevant books of Aristotle. Yet, the assigning of the Stagirite at a period when no comprehensive alternative existed was only natural; a course of philosophical studies wholly outside the Aristotelian framework was unimaginable. Still, the spirit of the statutes ensured that, expressed language notwithstanding, it was the professors' duty to relate—and expand upon—more recent work.

With this evolutionary aspect of the statutes in mind, it becomes easier to make sense of the seeming disparity between what was assigned by the statutes and what was practiced by the professors. Regardless of discipline, from the second half of the sixteenth century lecturers took increasing liberty with the content of their lectures. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the way in which university teaching was conducted, in general professors synthesized both the introductory material necessary for beginners and the most recent contributions to their respective fields. In addition, they conveyed their own interests, enthusiasm and on-going research to their students, thus making the latter—at least in the scientific disciplines—junior partners in the process of collaborative research. Certainly, during the seventeenth century there were many talented professors—John Bainbridge, Henry Briggs, Seth Ward, John Wallis, Thomas Willis, Edward Pococke, Thomas Barlow and Henry Dodwell—who exposed students to new cosmologies, new subjects, and new trends in historical scholarship, thus contributing to the growing institutionalization of their respective disciplines. Moreover, by virtue of their maturity, competence, and lengthy occupation of their respective chairs, these professors were able to provide the stability and continuity so crucial for nurturing a succeeding generation. And, indeed, during the second half of the seventeenth century Oxford developed into one of the most stimulating scholarly communities in Europe, a community that helped prepare England for her crucial role in the intellectual and scientific revolutions of the age.

Within the general context of endowments at Oxford in the early seventeenth-century, the foundation of the Laudian Professorship of Arabic suggests both a close emulation of the previously discussed Savillian model as well as certain deviations. Like all other founders (save for Sedley) Laud had
no male issue. Yet, with the exception of Thomas White, Laud was the only cleric among the benefactors and, as such, cohered more to the medieval paradigm of the unmarried churchman who always contributed munificently to the English universities than to the Savilian model of 'lay' founders of the seventeenth-century. Another distinction was a function of the discipline Laud chose to endow. While all other new professorship institutionalized advanced teaching of already existing disciplines, the Arabic professorship represented a discipline hitherto absent from the university curriculum. Further to distinguish the Laudian professorship, it was geared (at least in principle) toward the study of theology. Such an orientation notwithstanding, Laud envisaged the lectureship within a broader humanistic framework, conceiving of the study of theology based firmly upon philology, in the manner advocated by Erasmus, Scaliger and Selden. Hence his stipulation that all bachelors of arts, medical students included, attend the lectures.

Of Laud's motives in endowing the professorship, little is known. Certainly, the remarkable awakening of interest in the study of Arabic during the two decades prior to the foundation of the chair could not have but attracted the attention of the future Archbishop. In fact, the inauguration of Laud's presidency of St John's College in 1611 coincided with the arrival at Oxford of Yusuf Abi Daqhan, or Josephus Abudacenus (Barbatus) as he was commonly known, a few months earlier. Having taught in Paris for some years—where Thomas Erpenius was among his students—Abudacenus came to Oxford armed with a letter of recommendation from Richard Bancrof, Archbishop of Canterbury, 'to the end [that] he might reade the Arabian tongue.' Sir Thomas Bodley added his own commendation of the Egyptian-born scholar entreatyng Thomas James, the first Bodleian librarian, to help install Abudacenus at Oxford not only for the advantage of local scholars, but 'lest Cambridge should endeavour, as I make account they would, to draw him unto them.' Abudacenus remained at Oxford until 1613, teaching Arabic and other Oriental languages, and studying in the Bodleian Library where he composed his Historia Jacobitarum, published by Thomas Marshall in 1675. 

Even more consequential for the future of Arabic studies was the sojourn of Matthias Pasor at Oxford in the following decade. Fleeting from the Thirty Years War, the German scholar arrived to England in late spring 1624, having spent the previous year at Leiden, where he perfected his knowledge of Arabic by conferring with Thomas Erpenius. Shortly thereafter he left for Paris where he further improved his knowledge of the Arabic by studying under the Maronite Gabriel Sionitis. He then returned to Oxford where he became, in the words of Henry Briggs, 'a very painfull and diligent reader for Arabicke and Chaldee,' providing instruction both through public lectures and private tutorials. In 1627 Pasor published the inaugural lecture he had delivered the previous year, in which he made a passionate plea for the endowment of a lectureship for the Oriental tongues at Oxford. Consciously perhaps, the lecture emulated, both in its structure and content, the oration delivered by Erpenius at Leiden 'On the value of the Arabic language.' Like Erpenius, but with less fervor, Pasor denoted the positive contribution of Islam to learning—not to mention the preservation of a large corpus of Greek writings in Arabic—in such subjects as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, history and poetry. Fully aware of the English predilection for theology, however, Pasor labored more than his mentor on the utility of Arabic for the study of scripture and more particularly, for the exegesis of Catholicism. He argued explicitly that both the Greek and the Hebrew tongues had been bountifully provided for in recognition of their indispensable contribution to the 'true' elucidation of the Old and New Testaments. Likewise, maintained Pasor, the Oriental languages needed endowment; the study of Arabic and Syriac would not only help illuminate the Hebrew text, but would also enable the proper study of various Oriental texts of scripture—in a manner reminiscent of the important Latin translation of the Old Testament by Emanuelle Tremelius and Franciscus Junius. Such a concentrated application to the Arabic, concluded Pasor, would bring about the purging of the 'Aegean stables of the superstition of the papacy and cleanse the filth of scholastic sophistry.' Whether Pasor's eloquence or instruction actually affected the foundation of the Laudian Professorship a few years later is not clear. Evident, however, is the warm reception Pasor received at Oxford, and such a response prompted various scholars into action. Towards the end of 1627, Henry Briggs wrote to the Cambridge friend, Samuel Ward, Master of Sidney Sussex College, that Pasor's lectures 'findeth diverse constante hearers' at Oxford, expressing the hope that the Chancellor of the sister university 'will set forwarde the like lecture withe you, and not permit Erpenius his bokes to be spoiled for lacke of use.' 

Laud could not have been oblivious to the wave of enthusiasm that swept Oxford. Fellows, heads of house and even young scholars gladly welcomed the opportunity to pursue the study of Arabic both for its contribution to the study of the Old and New Testaments—an over-riding motive behind much of English scholarship in the seventeenth-century—and for the light it shed on the languages, customs, and institutions of the ancient Near East. To a select few, however, the lectures provided a golden opportunity to gain insight into the scientific, medical and historical material available in Arabic manuscripts. Among these scientifically motivated students were Peter Turner,
John Greaves and John Banbridge, whose close relations to Laud as well as other influential promoters of the language (such as James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh and John Selden) no doubt proved instrumental in establishing an Arabic professorship at Oxford.

If Laud was only marginally interested in Arabic science, he was strongly predisposed toward the belief that Arabic and other oriental languages could be used for polemical purposes against Catholicism. For while he adhered to the 'divine and infallible revelation by which the originals of scripture were first written,' he did not allow such a conviction to preclude his endorsement of the recent fruits of higher criticism; in terms of biblical scholarship this was translated into an unwillingness to accept any manuscript as infallible. Only a close scrutiny and collation of sundry manuscripts, Laud concluded, could establish a 'true' text. Viewed in terms of such a conviction, Laud's patronage of both Oriental and Greek studies becomes understandable.¹⁵

Indeed, even before the foundation of the Arabic chair, Laud exhibited his concern for oriental studies by annexing in 1630 a prebend at Christ Church to the office of the Regius Professor of Hebrew, an act that, in retrospect, drew Anthony Wood to exclaim that it was during the tenure of the first benefiting incumbent, John Morris, that the

Hebrew and Chaldaic Tongues which few in Oxford understood some years before became to be so cheerfully studied that it received a wonderful proficiency, and that too in a shorter time than a man could easily imagine; so great a spur the hope of honour and preferment gives to Art and Languages.²⁴

Perhaps it is not amiss to append to our discussion yet another, more mundane and immediate, consideration that might have precipitated Laud into action. The general enthusiasm for things Arabic during the 1620s brought to bear considerable pressure from various quarters on influential courtiers and prelates to actively support the discipline. Laud's own former patron, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was persuaded in 1625 to purchase the manuscripts of Thomas Erpenius; the following year, upon his appointment as Chancellor of Cambridge University, he was induced to donate the collection to the University Library. At least some of the individuals who influenced Buckingham into action—prelates such as Lancelot Andrews, James Ussher and John Williams, and scholars such as Samuel Ward and John Selden—most certainly pressured Laud to act on behalf of Oxford. Be this as it may, in November 1630 Laud, then Bishop of London, drew a catalogue of 'Acts of Bounty' he projected to effect, and amongst these he resolved to 'Erect an Arabick Lecture in Oxford, at least for his Life-time, his Estate as he supposed not being able for more, that this may lead the way.'²⁷

Laud's exact design for a philology lecturership (subservient to theology) is set out in the statutes he drew up. The professor was required to lecture for one hour every Wednesday during vacation and Lent, and afterward make himself available for students between one and four in the afternoon. As for content, the lecturer was expected to explain 'the work of some approved and ancient author, in which the properties of the language and the elegance of expression are remarkable.' In the course of such exposition they would provide

a clear explanation of the words and grammatical meaning of the author, and point out all that has a reference to the grammar and peculiarities of the language; and shall also show, whenever occasion offers, the agreement of the Arabic language with the Hebrew and Syriac.²⁹

Unlike Camden, Laud shared Sir Henry Savile's conviction that a good library was essential for his professors; and to this end he bestowed some 600 Oriental manuscripts on the Bodleian Library in the 1630s, thus establishing Oxford as a major European center for the study of Oriental languages.²⁸

Laud was fortunate in his choice of the first incumbent, Edward Pococke. Having obtained his MA in 1626, the young linguist from Corpus Christi College proceeded during the next year or two to learn all that Pasor could teach him before applying himself to William Bedwell for further instruction. Bedwell was also the person to recommend Pococke to Archbishop Laud, who ultimately interceded on the young man's behalf and was responsible for his appointment as Chaplain to the Levant Company's merchants at Aleppo, a post Pococke took up in 1630. Pococke stayed in the East for six years, vastly expanding his knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew and purchasing numerous manuscripts both for Laud and for himself. By 1634 the Archbishop had appointed Pococke as his first lecturer in Arabic at Oxford, and in 1636 the young orientalist leisurely made his way back to England. At Oxford, Pococke busied himself with preparations for his inaugural oration, scheduled for August 1636, and with inspecting and arranging the manuscripts Laud had dispatched to the Bodleian Library. He delivered his oration on 10 August 1636, and immediately proceeded 'with a course of lectures upon the proverb ascribed to the Caliph 'Ali.' Despite his having just been appointed Professor, Pococke wished to return to the East, and within a year his Oxford friends Peter Turner and John Greaves were able to persuade Laud to consent. Pococke left England in the summer of 1637, returning only in 1641.²⁷

For the next fifty years, Pococke devoted himself to teaching, writing, and assisting the Oriental undertakings of all English Orientalists. The quality and profundity of his teaching can be gleaned both by his lecture notes and through a study of the extant library catalogues of some of his students. What emerges
owned the *Proverbia Ali*; Ravius' edition of a particular Surah of the *Qur’an*; Pococke's *Specimen*; and Epenius' *Historia Saracenica*.

Pococke was thus able to uphold both the letter and spirit of the vision that had animated Laud in endowing the Professorship of Arabic. While catering to the anticipated needs of the future theologian, the Laudian Professor was also able to offer a thoroughly 'secular' course for students who were interested more in philosophy, or for whom the study of Arabic was only an instrument for attaining the scientific knowledge hidden in the Arabic manuscripts that increasingly found their way to European libraries. Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine how many students took advantage of Pococke's teaching or to evaluate the depth of knowledge attained by students. All that may be ascertained is that a significant number of catalogues of Oxford scholars contain at least a couple of elementary books in Arabic, indicating the acquisition of at least the rudiments of the language.

Far more research is necessary in order to evaluate the exact modes of the teaching of Arabic at Oxford. At present it is only possible to suggest that the Laudian chair, together with the Savilian professorships, helped make Oxford one of the most important European centers for the study of Arabic and of the mathematical sciences. And as such, the chairs vindicated the wisdom and success of the men who sought to revolutionize the structure and content of English higher education by munificently endowing a series of professorships at Oxford in the early years of the seventeenth century.

**NOTES**


On the Continent, of course, there were earlier precedents for the foundation of professorships. Most relevant, perhaps, is the successful experiment carried out at Leiden to attract the most prominent scholars. But the English foundations were unique in the fact that all chairs were established by private individuals, with neither the university nor the monarch (or the state or the town) contributing anything toward the fulfillment of the project.


Ward, Oxford University statutes, I, p. 277, 281. White’s lecturer in moral philosophy was to be ‘unengaged in any ecclesiastical function or cure of soul elsewhere.’ Ibid., I, p. 285.

See, for example, his instructions to the Professor of Astronomy to expound on Ptolemy, Geber, Copernicus ‘and other modern writers.’ Ward, Oxford University Statutes, I, p. 273.

Ward, Oxford University Statutes, I, pp. 285-7, 20-1. The same occurred with the Sedilian Professorship. The founder did not provide even an ordinance, so the Laudian statutes stipulate that the lecturer expound on Aristotle’s Physics, or the books concerning the heavens and the world, or concerning meteoric bodies, or the small Natural Phenomena of the same author, or the books which treat of the soul, and also those on generation and corruption.’ Ibid., I, p. 22.

Ward, Oxford University Statutes, I, pp. 272-3. A generation later, when Sir Henry Lucas founded his Professorship of Mathematics at Cambridge, he, too, bequeathed his library to the university for the use of his professors.

Smith, V. C.I. Gaisenlin Camdens et illustrium virorum ad G. Camdenum epistolae, p. 315.

For a list of the instruments and books c. 1640, see Trinity College Dublin, MS 383 fols. 142-143v.


For a fuller discussion of the Laudian Chair and of Oriental studies at Oxford in the seventeenth century, see my ‘The Oxford Oriental School’ in Ibid.


Paus, Oratio pro Lingua Arabicae Professione (Oxford, 1627).

Bodl. Ms. Tanner 72 fol. 211. Briggs referred to the purchase of Epenius’ manuscript by the Duke of Buckingham, which was presented to Cambridge University Library by Buckingham’s widow following the Duke’s assassination.