Teaching and Learning Arabic in Early Modern Rome: Shaping a Missionary Language*

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The teaching of Arabic in Rome was primarily guided by Catholic missionary activity. The rise of the study of the languages, and especially eastern languages, was promoted by the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, a pontifical congregation founded in 1622 in order to coordinate missionary activities under the direction of the Pope. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Roman officials attributed a special importance to the mission of the Middle East. After the abandonment of major crusading projects the belief developed that the conversion of Muslims would be possible by pursuing a policy of cultural influence. Above all, it was hoped that the return of the 'schismatic' or 'heretical' Eastern Christian Churches into the Catholic fold would be quick and easy.¹ This optimism with regard to missionary activities in the Levant, which faded in the second half of the seventeenth century and even more during the century that followed, led in Rome to the encouragement of institutions preparing members of the religious orders for the mission in these lands.

Ever since its foundation, the *Propaganda* had been deeply committed to the study of languages on the part of the missionaries, for whom it was vital to be prepared to disseminate the principles of the Catholic faith in the tongues of the intended recipient populations. The *Propaganda* explicitly recovered

* I would like to thank Professor Alastair Hamilton (The Warburg Institute, London) and Jan Loop (University of Kent, Canterbury) for their invaluable suggestions and comments both on content and style.

1 On the Roman politics in the Near-East, see B. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique*, Rome, 1994; A. Girard, 'Entre croisade et politique culturelle au Levant: Rome et l'union des chrétiens syriens (première moitié du XVII^e siècle)', in *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna*, ed. M.A. Visceglia, Rome, 2013, pp. 419–37. For an introduction to the history of learning Arabic, see J. Fück, *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1955; A. Hamilton, 'Arabic Studies in Europe', in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, ed. K. Versteegh, Leiden, 2006, vol. 1, p. 166–172; B. Heyberger, 'L'Orient et l'islam dans l'érudition européenne du XVII^e siècle', in *Connaître l'Orient en Europe au XVII^e siècle*, ed. A. Girard, special issue of *XVII^e siècle*, 268, 2015, pp. 495–508 (499–502).

the tradition of the medieval missionary methodology propounded by Ramon Llull and the decrees of the Council of Vienne from the fourteenth century on.² The developments in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Rome provide unique insight into the relationship between mission and language. This essay will explore the political promotion of the teaching of Arabic in the pontifical capital and examine its consequences.³

Thanks to the quality of the Roman bureaucracy in the post-Tridentine era, the archives of the Congregation are extremely rich and especially where the Arabic language schools are concerned, provide material for a detailed study of the early modern period. In the last fifteen years Roman intellectual life in the post-Tridentine era has received new attention from historians, also thanks to a novel interest in the links between missions and the circulation of knowledge. Giovanni Pizzorusso in particular has focussed his research on Oriental studies and on the intellectual environment around the Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide*,⁴ a milieu qualified as 'a scholarly complex with a universal vocation' by Antonella Romano.⁵

- 2 J. Richard, 'L'enseignement des langues orientales en Occident au Moyen Âge', *Revue d'études islamiques*, 44, 1976, pp. 150–64; Cl. Kappeler, 'Les voyageurs et les langues orientales: interprètes, traducteurs et connaisseurs', in *Routes d'Asie. Marchands et voyageurs xv^e–xviii^e siècle*, eds M. Debout, D. Eeckhaute-Bardery, and V. Fourniau, Istanbul and Paris, 1988, pp. 25–35.
- 3 In recent years the historical study of linguistics has concerned itself increasingly with missionary linguistics, thanks especially to the Oslo Project on Missionary Linguistics and the International Conferences on Missionary Linguistics, organized and published since 2003. On the agenda of this research, see O. Zwartjes, 'The Historiography of Missionary Linguistics. Present state and further research opportunities', *Historiographia Linguistica*, 39, 2012, pp. 185–242.
- 4 G. Pizzorusso, 'Tra cultura e missione: la Congregazione "de Propaganda Fide" e le scuole di lingua araba tra xvii e xviii secolo', in *Rome et la science moderne entre Renaissance et Lumières*, ed. A. Romano, Rome, 2008, pp. 121–52; id., 'La preparazione linguistica e controversistica dei missionari per l'Oriente islamico: scuole, testi, insegnanti a Roma e in Italia', in *L'Islam visto da Occidente. Cultura e religione del Seicento europeo di fronte all'Islam*, eds B. Heyberger et al., Milan, 2009, pp. 253–88; id., 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste autour de la congrégation de Propaganda Fide au temps d'Abraham Ecchellensis', in *Orientalisme, science et controverse: Abraham Ecchellensis (1605–1664)*, ed. B. Heyberger, Turnhout, 2010, pp. 59–80.
- 5 A. Romano, 'Rome, un chantier pour les savoirs de la catholicité post-tridentine', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 55.2, 2008, pp. 101–19 (108). She also writes: 'Ici [in Rome] la trilogie accumulation-formation-diffusion dit le caractère organique du projet intellectuel, dessiné en fonction des nouvelles aspirations et des nouveaux besoins de l'État pontifical, rarement reproduit avec une même systématité dans la ville'.

Roma Arabica in the Early Seventeenth Century

The first major figure in the dawn of seventeenth-century Roman Oriental studies was Giovanni Battista Raimondi (ca. 1536–1614), a mathematician and linguist who had directed the *Typographia Medicea*, funded by the Medici family, under the papacy of Gregory XIII. Raimondi had planned to produce a Polyglot Bible and published works in Arabic. He had also collected Oriental manuscripts and exhibited a humanist interest in the texts. On the one hand Raimondi marked the beginning of the humanist Orientalist tradition in Italy, but he also revolutionized this approach by combining it with missionary objectives. Resurrecting the medieval tradition of the Council of Vienne of 1311, Pope Paul V vigorously supported the cultivation of Oriental languages in 1610, making their study mandatory in all regular religious orders. Under the influence of Raimondi, the *Caracciolini* were particularly active in the teaching of Oriental languages, and founded a college in Rome for instruction in Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac and Persian. Meanwhile, at the University of *La Sapienza*, Eastern Christians such as Marco Dobelio and Vittorio Scialac began to teach Arabic in 1605. There was also an Arabic teacher at the *Collegio Romano*, an alumnus of the Maronite College founded in 1584, which had hitherto been the most important centre for Arabic studies in the city. This first generation of Roman Orientalists established a fundamental link between linguistic knowledge, theological controversy, and anti-Islamic controversy.⁶

The foundation of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* in 1622 by Gregory XV was a critical step that favoured the development of Oriental studies in the pontifical capital. At the same time it institutionalized and incorporated them into the activities of the curial bureaucracy (as well as in its missionary policy). Repeating the appeal of Paul V for the study of Oriental languages within the religious orders, the initiative succeeded in establishing schools. The *Propaganda* endeavoured to provide instruction in the most diverse languages, since, for the secretary of the organisation Francesco Ingoli, they constituted one of the main means of conversion. However, in a report dating from 1631,

6 R. Jones, 'The Medici oriental press (Rome 1584–1614) and the impact of its Arabic publications on northern Europe', in *The "Arabick" Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, eds G.A. Russell, Leiden et al., 1994, pp. 88–108; A.M. Piemontese, 'Leggere e scrivere "Orientalia" in Italia', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, ser. III, 23, 1993, pp. 427–53; M. Casari, 'Eleven Good Reasons for Learning Arabic in Late Renaissance Italy: a Memorial by Giovanni Battista Raimondi', in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Joseph Connors*, eds M. Israël and L.A. Waldman, Florence, 2010, vol. 2, pp. 545–57; S. Fani and M. Farina, eds, *Le vie delle lettere. La Tipografia Medicea tra Roma e l'Oriente*, Florence, 2012.

the secretary specified the special status of certain languages to meet the objectives of the Congregation. These were mostly Oriental: Hebrew, the language of the Scriptures; the literary and vulgar Greek of Orthodox Christianity; the languages spoken in the Levant, Arabic and Syriac, or the language of Illyria, where Slav Catholics had enjoyed the freedom to celebrate the mass in their old tongue ever since the Middle Ages;⁷ as well as Persian. Giovanni Battista Raimondi had already been interested in this language in the sixteenth century, and it had assumed some importance at the time of Paul V with the efforts of the papacy and various religious orders to dispatch missions to the Shah.⁸ In the definition of his language policy, Ingoli made a distinction between 'literary' languages, which were dead and linked to the tradition of the sacred texts, and 'living' languages, which were useful for missionary communication and especially for doctrinal controversy. Arabic fell into both categories at a time when there was already a great interest in Rome in Arabic versions of the Scriptures.

The study and practice of Oriental languages took place in several cultural institutions. With the polyglot printing press founded in 1626, the *Propaganda* started printing books in the most diverse languages, including Arabic, in order to proselytise amongst Muslims and schismatic Christians. It stimulated the learning of languages and led to the presence of foreign scholars who collaborated in the preparation of editions as proof-readers or editors.⁹ The Vatican Library was also in perpetual need of specialists in Arabic to supervise the manuscript collections.¹⁰ Furthermore, in the bureaucratic activity of the

7 F. Ingoli, *Relazione delle quattro parti del mondo*, ed. F. Tosi, Rome, 1999, pp. 281–2.

8 A.M. Piemontese, 'La "Grammatica persiana" di G.B. Raimondi', *Rivista di Studi orientali*, 53, 1979, pp. 141–50; C. Windler, 'La curie romaine et la cour safavide au XVII^e siècle: projets missionnaires et diplomatie', in *Papato e politica internazionale*, ed. Visceglia, pp. 505–23.

9 Z.R. Andollu, 'La Sagrada Congregación frente al Islam: apostolado de la Prensa en lengua árabe', in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*, ed. J. Metzler, Rome, Fribourg and Vienna, 1971, vol. 1, 1, pp. 707–31; B. Heyberger, 'Livres et pratique de lecture chez les chrétiens (Syrie, Liban), XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles', in *Livres et lecture dans le monde ottoman*, ed. F. Hitzel, special issue of the *Livres et lectures dans le monde ottoman*, ed. F. Hitzel, special issue of the *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 87–88, 1999, pp. 209–23; G. Pizzorusso, 'I satelliti di Propaganda Fide: il Collegio Urbano e la Tipografia Poliglotta. Note di ricerca su due istituzioni culturali romane nel XVII secolo', *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome Italie et Méditerranée*, 116–2, 2004, pp. 471–98.

10 G. Levi della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana*, Vatican City, 1939; I. Fosi, 'Usare la Biblioteca: la Vaticana nella cultura europea', in C. Montuschi éd., *Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Vol. III, *La Vaticana nel Seicento (1590–1700): una Biblioteca di biblioteche*, Vatican City, 2014, pp. 761–98.

pontifical government, linguistic expertise was invaluable. The *periti linguarum orientalium*, experts in eastern languages, could make use of their linguistic competence at routine levels of bureaucracy, translating letters, identifying places, names etc. Their services were mainly requested by the Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide*,¹¹ but also by the Holy Office and the *Index*.

For Roman Orientalists one of the major challenges of the seventeenth century was the examination of the 'Lead Books of the Sacromonte of Granada' on behalf of the Holy Office. The Lead Books, a group of circular lead plates which appeared in the caves of the Sacromonte (near Granada) in 1595, bore texts in a pseudo-archaic form of Arabic which seemed to constitute a new Gospel that presented a vision of Christianity reconcilable with Islam. The aim of these Morisco forgeries was to establish a common historical origin for Spanish Christians and Arabs.¹² The transfer of the Books from Spain to Rome took place in 1645, after which six experts laboured for fifteen years on a transcription of the text for the legal proceedings which led to its anathematization.¹³ The team of experts included the Jesuits Athanasius Kircher and Giambattista Giattini, the Franciscans Bartolomeo da Pettorano and Antonio dall'Aquila, the Caracciolino Filippo Guadagnoli and the rising star of Roman Oriental studies, Ludovico Marracci (a member of the order of the Chierici regolari della Madre di Dio, established by St Giovanni Leonardi).¹⁴ As early as 1622 the Congregation of the *Propaganda* prepared the publication of a Bible in Arabic, a project that would only be concluded in 1671. The commission brought together Ecchellensis, Guadagnoli, Marracci, and also Athanasius Kircher,¹⁵ the Capuchin Brice de Rennes, as well as the Arabic translator of Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiastici*,¹⁶ the Dutch Carmelite Célestin de Sainte-

11 For examples of this work of translation in the congregation of *Propaganda*, see ACPF, SOCG, vol. 180 and 181.

12 M. García-Arenal and F. Rodríguez Mediano, *Un Oriente español. Los moriscos y el Sacromonte en tiempos de Contrarreforma*, Madrid, 2010.

13 ACDF, St. St., R6-a, R6-b, R6-c, R7-a, R7-b, R7-c, R7-d, R7-e, R7-f; BAV, Ott. Lat. 1112.

14 A. Bevilacqua, 'The Qur'an Translations of Marracci and Sale', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 76, 2013, pp. 93-130; G. Pizzorusso, 'Ludovico Marracci tra ambiente curiale e cultura orientalista a Roma nel XVII secolo', in *Il Corano e il pontefice. Ludovico Marracci fra cultura islamica e Curia papale*, ed. G. L. D'Errico, Rome, 2015, pp. 91-118.

15 D. Stolzenberg, *The Great Art of Knowing. The Baroque Encyclopedia of Athanasius Kircher*, Fiesole 2001; id., *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity*, Chicago 2013; P. Findlen, ed., *Athanasius Kircher. The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, New York and London, 2004.

16 A. Trentini, 'Baronio arabo: vicende e tematiche dell'*Annalium Ecclesiasticorum Arabica Epitome*', in *Baronio e le sue fonti (Atti del convegno internazionale di Studi Sora 10-13 ottobre 2007)*, ed. L. Gulia, Sora, 2009, pp. 719-42.

Ludwina (the brother of Jacobus Golius), the Franciscan Antonio dall'Aquila, the Jesuit Giambattista Giattini and the Maronite bishop of Damascus Sergio Risi.¹⁷ These great collective undertakings stimulated and affected the Roman Arabist milieu.¹⁸

Schools of Oriental Languages before the Propaganda

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, even before the creation of the *Propaganda*, Arabic was being taught and practised in Rome. At the Collegio Romano directed by the Jesuits, Pius IV entrusted with the teaching of Arabic Giovanni Battista Eliano (1530–1589), a Jewish convert who also taught Hebrew. He was initiated into Arabic in the Jewish community of Cairo where his father was a merchant. A cultured man of learning and a missionary, Eliano knew numerous languages and published several books: the first illustrated catechism written in Italian (*Doctrina christiana nella quale si contengono li principali misteri della nostra fede rappresentati con figure per istrutione de gl'idioti et di quelli che non sano legere...*, Rome, 1587), an Arabic translation of the profession of faith promulgated by Pius V for the Eastern Christians who claimed to be united with the Catholic Church (*I'tiqād al-amāna al-urtūduksiyya kanīsa rūmīya* [sic] – *Fidei orthoxae brevis et explicita confessio quam Sacrosanta Romana Ecclesia docet*, Rome, 1566), and an Arabic catechism, *al-Ta'lim al-masīhī* (Rome, 1580). Other works remained unpublished. For his first mission, Eliano was dispatched to the Coptic patriarch in Egypt to promote union with the Roman Catholic Church. In 1564 he was entrusted by Pius IV with the acquisition of Oriental types at the expense of the Vatican for the *Tipografia del Collegio Romano*, the Jesuit press in Rome (1556–1615). In 1578 he left Italy again for the first Jesuit mission to the Maronites of Mount Lebanon where he was able to collect manuscripts to be brought back to Rome. In 1580 he returned to the East to organize with the Maronite patriarch a synod in the monastery of Qannūbīn in an endeavour to impose Tridentine legislation and to increase Roman influence on Lebanese Christianity. In 1582, while in Aleppo, he was asked by the Roman authorities to go to Egypt, again to promote the union of the Coptic patriarchate with the Roman Church, although without

17 ACPF, Acta vols. 3, 4, 6, 8 and 37, SOCG vols. 180, 181, 293, 312 and 382, CP vols. 1 and 6, SC Stamperia vol. 1, Fondo di Vienna vol. 22. See also R. Vollandt, 'Che portono al ritorno qui una Bibbia Arabica integra: A History of the Biblia Sacra Arabica (1672-73)', in *Graeco-Latina et Orientalia. Studia in Honorem Angeli Urbani Heptagenarii*, eds J.P. Monferrer Sala and S.K. Samir, Beirut, 2013; id., *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch. A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources*, Leiden, 2015, pp. 129–132.

18 G. Pizzorusso, 'La preparazione linguistica e controversistica dei missionari per l'Oriente'.

any success.¹⁹ The Maronite Jesuit Peter Metoscita also taught Arabic at the *Collegio Romano* before being sent by Paul V to Baghdad and Chios. Confessor to the Maronite college since 1622, he published a manual of Arabic in the year of his death, 1624, the *Institutiones linguae arabicae ex diversis arabicis monumentis collectae*.²⁰ The library of the *Collegio Romano* kept Oriental printed books in addition to Arabic manuscripts.²¹ Students of the 'national' colleges in Rome attended courses there.²²

The *Collegio Romano* was not controlled by the *Propaganda fide*, any more than was the University of *La Sapienza*. Arabic courses were given at *La Sapienza* by Maronites such as Vittorio Scialac or Abraham Ecchellensis. The latter was employed in 1636 to teach Arabic and Syriac until he relinquished the chair and went to France in 1640. At the *Sapienza* Arabic was not only taught by foreigners, but also by Italians: Filippo Guadagnoli replaced Ecchellensis in 1640 and held the position until his death in 1656. He was replaced in his turn by Ludovico Marracci, who retained the post until the end of his long life in 1699.²³ Both Guadagnoli and Marracci were authors of works which were widely disseminated. Marracci, from Torcigliano near Camaiore in the Republic of Lucca, was the famous translator of the Qur'an and the author of refutations of Islam. Both men were living examples of the close relationship between language and controversy.

Guadagnoli was a member of the order of the *Chierici regolari minori* called *Caracciolini*, derived from the name of their founder, St. Francesco Caracciolo. In 1595 this little order, consisting mainly of theologians, founded a school in

- 19 J.C. Sola, 'El p. Juan Baptista Eliano. Un documento autobiográfico inédito', *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu*, 4, 1935, pp. 291–321 (Edition of Elia's autobiography, written in 1588 at the request of Claudio Acquaviva, Superior General of the Society of Jesus); A. Hamilton, *The Copts and the West 1439–1822: The European Discovery of the Egyptian Church*, Oxford 2006, pp. 59–71; A. Girard, 'Giovanni Battista Eliano', in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 7: *Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America (1500–1600)*, eds D. Thomas and J. Chesworth, Leiden, 2015, pp. 724–731.
- 20 G. Pizzorusso, 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', p. 67.
- 21 I. Guidi, 'Catalogo dei codici siriaci, arabi, turchi e persiani della Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele', in id., *Cataloghi dei codici orientali di alcune biblioteche d'Italia*, Florence, 1878, vol. 1, pp. 5–38; A. D'Ottone, *Catalogo dei manoscritti arabi della Biblioteca nazionale centrale Vittorio Emanuele II di Roma*, unpublished PhD diss., Università di Roma-La Sapienza, 2006. Most of these Arabic manuscripts come from the Roman College and the Professed House of the Jesuits.
- 22 P. Broggio, 'L'Urbs e il mondo. Note sulla presenza degli stranieri nel Collegio Romano e sugli orizzonti geografici della "formazione romana" tra XVI e XVII secolo', *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 56, 2002, pp. 81–120.
- 23 E. Conte, *I maestri della Sapienza di Roma dal 1514 al 1787: i rotuli e le altre fonti*, Rome, 1991, *passim*.

the church of Sant'Agnese in Piazza Navona for the study of the Scriptures in the original languages, first Hebrew and Greek, and later Arabic, Syriac and Persian. After a suspension of this activity due to the fear that the study of languages might distract its practitioners from devotion, the *studium* was transferred to the church of S. Lorenzo in Lucina. Alfonso Manco, general of the order, decided to organize a public 'festivity of languages' (*solemnitas linguarum*) on the day of the Pentecost, celebrating the miracle of understanding tongues for the promotion of the Christian faith. On this occasion, the *Caracciolini* students of the school (Italian and Spanish) pronounced sermons in the five languages (which were subsequently translated into Latin by their teacher), for an audience consisting of 22 cardinals and members of the Roman nobility. Even if the order did not have any mission outside Europe and did not recruit missionaries, its members nonetheless presented a missionary and universalist orientation in the context of the papacy of Paul v. The order formed linguists and controversialists, with three Arabists distinguishing themselves in spite of the limited material available. First, in the early seventeenth century, the mathematician Andrés de León, from Zamora, contributed to the preparation of a polyglot version of the Bible under the supervision of Cardinal Bellarmine. Francesco Martellotto, from Martinafranca (Apulia), taught Arabic in his community and wrote the *Institutiones linguae arabicae*, published in 1620 after his death (1617). Finally, Filippo Guadagnoli, from Magliano dei Marsi in Abruzzo, an expert consulted in connection with the Lead Books and many other cases by the Roman congregations, compiled an Arabic grammar, the *Breves Arabicae Linguae institutiones* (Rome, 1642), and a book of controversy against Islam first published in Arabic in 1637 by the *Propaganda Fide* press²⁴ with a new version in 1649.²⁵ After his death in 1656, the Oriental studies that had been so prevalent within the order of the *Caracciolini* came to an end.²⁶

24 F. Guadagnoli, *Pro christiana religione responsio ad objectiones Ahmed filii Zin Alabedin, Persae Asaphanensis*, Rome, 1637.

25 F. Guadagnoli, *Considerationes ad Mahomettanos cum responsione ad obiectiones Ahmed filii Zin Alabedin, Persae Asaphanensis*, Rome, 1649.

26 Z.R. Andollu, 'Un saggio bilingue, latino e arabo di controversia islamo-cristiana nella Roma del sec. xvii', *Euntes Docete*, 22, 1969, pp. 453–80; N. Malcolm, 'Comenius, the Conversion of the Turks, and the Muslim–Christian Debate on the Corruption of Scripture', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 87, 2007, pp. 477–508; G. Pizzorusso, 'Filippo Guadagnoli, i caracciolini e lo studio delle lingue orientali e della controversia con l'Islam a Roma nel xvii secolo', in *L'Ordine dei Chierici Regolari Minori (Caracciolini): religione e cultura in età postridentina* (Atti del Convegno, Chieti, 11–12 aprile 2008), eds I. Fosi and

The 'national' colleges, mainly founded before the creation of the *Propaganda*, were submitted to its jurisdiction from the start of its activity. In these colleges (English, Scottish, German, Greek, Maronite, Irish etc.), usually directed by the Jesuits, the students were trained to return to their country as missionaries. Even though the training was mostly in Latin, the students also used their mother tongue. Founded in 1584 by Pope Gregory XIII, the Maronite College was intended to welcome young Maronites, near-eastern Catholics from the patriarchate of Antioch whose mother tongue was Arabic. In this institution, the Maronite scholar Abraham Ecchellensis²⁷ was appointed in 1629–1630 as a teacher of Arabic and 'Chaldean' (Syriac) by the *Propaganda*, against the will of the general of the Jesuits, Muzio Vitelleschi, who claimed that Maronite students should only speak Latin and Italian, and who remained very doubtful about the teaching of Arabic. Vitelleschi may have wished to impose a strictly Roman formation on the missionary clergy since the Society of Jesus at the time was very suspicious about the formation of native clergy. By the end of the 1620s, the Roman authorities also had their doubts about the Maronite liturgical rite and hoped for a smooth transition to the Roman rite.²⁸ Only at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when new rules were established in the Maronite college, was the teaching of Arabic institutionalized so that the young Maronites would not forget their mother tongue during their stay in Italy and would be able to speak and preach in Arabic when they returned to their country.²⁹

G. Pizzorusso, special issue of *Studi medievali e moderni*, 14, fasc. 1, n. 27, 2010, pp. 245–78; A. Trentini, 'Guadagnoli controversista e islamologo. Un'analisi delle edizioni dell'*Apoloogia* (1631, 1637) e della *Confutatio* (1649)', in *L'Ordine dei Chierici Regolari Minori (Caracciolini)*, eds I. Fosi and G. Pizzorusso, pp. 297–314; A. Girard, 'Des manuels de langue entre mission et érudition orientaliste au XVII^e siècle: les grammaires de l'arabe des Caracciolini', in *L'Ordine dei Chierici Regolari Minori (Caracciolini)*, eds I. Fosi and G. Pizzorusso, pp. 279–96; D. Half, 'Hebrew Bible Quotations in Arabic Transcription in Safavid Iran of the 11th/17th Century: Sayyed Aḥmad 'Alavī's Persian Refutations of Christianity', *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 1, 2013, pp. 235–52 (Sayyed Aḥmad 'Alavī is "Alabedin", the author refuted by Guadagnoli).

- 27 On Abraham Ecchellensis, see B. Heyberger, ed., *Orientalisme, science et controverse*.
- 28 A. Girard, '*Nihil esse innovandum?* Maintien des rites orientaux et négociation de l'Union des Églises orientales avec Rome (fin XVII^e – mi-XVIII^e s.)', in *Réduire le schisme? Ecclésiologies et politiques de l'Union entre Orient et Occident, XIII^e-XVIII^e siècles*, eds M.-H. Blanchet and F. Gabriel, Paris, 2013, pp. 337–52 (342–43).
- 29 B. Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient*, p. 412; G. Pizzorusso, 'La preparazione linguistica e controversistica dei missionari per l'Oriente islamico', pp. 264–5; A. Girard and G. Pizzorusso, 'The Maronite college in early modern Rome: Between the Ottoman

In 1627 the Pope founded the *Collegio Urbano* which would be attached to the *Propaganda* in 1641 – an international seminar for the training of missionary clergy located in the building of the Congregation, where young aspirants from various parts of the world lived and studied together, preparing to evangelize their compatriots. Here there were also courses in Arabic for students from the East. In both educational institutions the teachers were always Eastern Christians.³⁰

Schools Founded by Religious Orders after 1622

Among the eastern languages, the *Propaganda* focused particularly on Arabic in the early seventeenth century. The Congregation first aimed at stimulating the resources in the religious orders. It recalled the constitution *Apostolicae servitutis onere*, promulgated by Paul V in 1610 in order to encourage the regular orders to open language schools. On 6 June and 23 July 1622 the Congregation asked the superiors of the religious orders to establish schools and language courses in the convents of Rome and the provinces. According to the archives, the orders generally seem to have followed this request, possibly because the *Propaganda* threatened them with visits to check the implementation of the instructions. Some orders reacted quickly: the Theatines, for example, announced that they had organized the study of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic in their institutions in Italy, also recruiting teachers from outside the order. On the whole, however, these responses of the superiors were very bureaucratic and seem to have been intended merely to placate the Congregation. The archival evidence also highlights some resistance from the superiors, who were not enthusiastic about the plan and raised several practical problems. Twenty years later, when the Congregation recommended sending some of their members to the courses in Oriental languages at the *Sapienza*, this negative attitude was confirmed.³¹

Despite the reluctance of most of the religious orders to respond to the instructions of the *Propaganda*, schools of eastern languages for the mission-

Empire and the Republic of Letters', in *Collegial Communities in Exile*, eds L. Chambers and Th. O'Connor, Manchester, 2017 (forthcoming).

30 A. Girard, 'L'enseignement de l'arabe à Rome au XVIII^e siècle', in *Maghreb-Italie. Des passeurs médiévaux à l'orientalisme moderne*, ed. B. Grévin, Rome, 2010, pp. 209–34, (212–14, 219–20).

31 ACPF, CP vol. 1, *passim*; J. Metzler, 'Orientation, programme, premières décisions', in *Sacrae Congregationis*, ed. J. Metzler, vol. 1/1, pp. 146–96, (173–4); G. Pizzorusso, 'Tra cultura e missione', pp. 127–8.

aries, and in particular of Arabic, were established in Rome and elsewhere in Italy, and some of them had a long life. The Discalced Carmelites were very active in the study of eastern languages in the seventeenth century: in the Near East, they had convents on Mount Carmel, in Aleppo, in Tripoli and on Mount Lebanon. The expert consulted in connection with the Lead Books, the Dutch Carmelite Celestin de Sainte-Ludwina (1604–1676), taught for an extended period in Rome at the training-seminary for missionaries of San Paolo (founded in 1613), located in Santa Maria della Vittoria (Quirinale), and then in San Pancrazio. Converted from Protestantism, he was the brother of the famous Dutch Orientalist Jacobus Golius (his name before entering the Carmelite order was Peter Golius – Peter van Gool). He had translated the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis into Arabic, published by the polyglot press of the *Propaganda* in 1663, with the approval of the Maronite Abraham Ecchellensis. He taught at San Paolo from 1653 until 1669, before coming back to the Netherlands to try to convert his family with the approval of the *Propaganda*.³²

At San Paolo students were not only Italians, but also French, Dutch and German who normally stayed for three years. Lessons were organized in Arabic and in controversy, with two different lecturers. On several occasions in the seventeenth century, however, the Roman authorities considered transferring the college to Malta for linguistic reasons (the unsuccessful teaching of Arabic), but also because of the internal politics of the order. The island-outpost of Christendom near the Italian peninsula was a crossing point for missionaries on their way to the Middle East. Even if the quality of the Maltese Arabic was criticized as a corrupt form of Arabic, the island was considered a good place to learn the language. In 1626 a seminar was founded in Cospicua (Bormla) on the model of the *Collegio Romano*.³³

32 ACPF, SOCG vol. 376, fol. 129 and ACPF, SC Congressi Collegi Vari vol. 59 (S. Pancrazio), fols 198^r–199^v; S.K. Samir, *Le P. Célestin de Sainte-Ludwina, alias Peter van Gool (1604–1676), missionnaire carme et orientaliste. Etude historico-littéraire*, Beirut, 1985; A. Fortes, *Las misiones del Carmelo teresiano 1584–1799. Documentos del Archivo General de Roma*, Rome, 1997, pp. 34–8; G. Pizzorusso, 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', pp. 73–4; A. Girard, 'Une traduction arabe pour la Propagande (1663)', in *Un succès de librairie européen: l'Imitatio Christi 1470–1850*, eds M. Delaveau and Y. Sordet, Paris, 2012, pp. 150–52.

33 ACPF, Acta vol. 14 (1640–1641), fols 2^v–5^r; ACPF, SOCG vol. 364, fols 116^r–122^v; ACPF, SOCG vol. 364, fol. 343^r. and ACPF, SOCG vol. 376, fols 40^r–40^v; ACPF, SC Congressi Collegi Vari, vol. 59 (S. Pancrazio), fols 198^r–199^v; A. Cremona, 'L'antica fondazione della scuola di lingua araba in Malta', *Melita Historica. Journal of the Malta Historical Society*, 1, 1953, pp. 87–103, and 2, 1954, pp. 141–59; A. Brogini, *Malte, frontiere de chrétienté (1530–1670)*, Rome, 2006;

Ever since 1622 the Franciscan convent of San Pietro in Montorio in Rome had been the main centre of the teaching of Arabic under the supervision of the Congregation of the *Propaganda*. The promoter was Tommaso Obicini da Novara, a former missionary in the Holy Land and in Aleppo, and representative of Pope Paul v to the Chaldeans, who returned to Rome in 1621. Tommaso was also interested in Hebrew and Coptic, as well as in manuscripts and inscriptions in these languages. He published a *Grammatica arabica. Agrumia appellata. Cum versione latina ac dilucida expositione* in 1631, with the polyglot press of the *Propaganda Fide*, where he was also responsible for the setting and printing of Arabic. He travelled in Italy until his death in 1632, especially to Venice and to Milan, where Cardinal Federico Borromeo consulted him in connection with the study of Oriental languages at the Ambrosian library.³⁴

A total of twelve students could be accommodated by the College at any one time, but their number was often much smaller. When they entered the College, students were frequently already relatively old, aged between 25 and 35. Despite their short time at school, some of them made their careers not only as missionaries in Arab lands but also as Arabic scholars: the Franciscan friar Bartolomeo da Pettorano, came back to Rome after a missionary activity, and replaced Ecchellensis in the committee for the Arabic Bible. An expert consulted in connection with the Lead Books, he became a translator for the Holy Office as well as a teacher at *La Sapienza*. Teachers at San Pietro in Montorio such as Domenico Germano da Silesia and Antonio dall'Aquila were normally former missionaries who had withdrawn to Rome. Because of its responsibility for the custody of the Holy Land, the Franciscan order was obviously very

G. Pizzorusso, 'Tra cultura e missione', pp. 147–9; id., 'La preparazione linguistica e controversistica dei missionari per l'Oriente islamico', pp. 272–8; id., 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', pp. 73–4; A. Girard, 'L'enseignement de l'arabe à Rome au XVIII^e siècle', p. 217.

34 G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, Vatican City, 1951, vol. 4, pp. 174–6 (hereafter *GCAI*); A. van Lanschoot, *Un précurseur d'Athanase Kircher: Thomas Obicini et la "Scala" Vat. copte* 71, Leuven, 1948; Id., 'Lettre inédite de Thomas Obicini à Pietro Della Valle', *Rivista degli Studi orientali*, 28, 1953, pp. 119–29; R. Sbardella, 'Tommaso Obicini da Novara, O.F.M. e il cardinale Federico Borromeo', *Archivum franciscanum historicum*, 56, 1963, pp. 71–90; G.-C. Bottini, 'Tommaso Obicini (1585–1632) Custos of the Holy Land and Orientalist', in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, ed. A. O'Mahony, London, 1995, pp. 97–101; C. Balzaretto, 'Padre Tommaso Obicini: un mediatore nel vicino Oriente all'inizio del Seicento', *Novariensis*, 32, 2003, pp. 183–97.

sensitive to Arabic studies. The Franciscans had tried to spread their schools in Italy ever since the foundation of San Pietro.³⁵

With regard to the question of the schools' ideal location we can discern two opposing opinions. On the one hand, *Propaganda* officials were trying to develop linguistic studies in Rome. From their point of view, the local education of missionaries was more likely to guarantee their orthodoxy. They followed the same centralizing policy in the training of their native clergy in the papal capital, a place where students could 'imbibe the milk of the faith to transfuse it into the Infidels'.³⁶ On the other hand there were opinions that favoured the establishment of schools in the lands of the mission, as a response to the disappointing results of the Roman schools. In 1660, the Secretary of the Congregation of the *Propaganda* Alberizzi, less enthusiastic and more realistic than Ingoli, supported the plan to install the school in Arabic-speaking countries and not in Rome: 'As for the Arabic language, experience demonstrates that you learn more during fifteen days on the spot than in a year here, and the same thing applies to the controversies [...]'. Writing this report to the pope at the very beginning of his mandate in the hope of achieving a reform of the Congregation, Alberizzi explained that the members of the religious orders came to Rome with purposes other than the study of Arabic. Such criticisms reflected the doubts of the *Propaganda* and the missionary milieu about Orientalist studies in the middle of the seventeenth century. These doubts were fuelled by difficulties in translation projects (the Bible, liturgical books etc.) and new discoveries of eastern manuscripts, and by the disappointing results of the missions to eastern Christians and Muslims. Meanwhile, Filippo Guadagnoli had failed in his efforts to proselytise amongst the Muslims. Written in Arabic in the 1640s and published in 1649, his *Considerationes ad Mahommettanos cum responsione ad objectionem Ahmed filii Zin Alabedin* contained a chapter entitled 'The Qur'an does not contradict the Gospels' which provoked a furore and incurred a ban of publication by the Roman Inquisition. This condemnation was to weigh heavily on future editorial and polemical choices.³⁷

35 A. Kleinhans, *Historia Studii Linguae Arabicae et Collegii Missionum*, Florence 1930; G. Pizzorusso, 'Tra cultura e missione', pp. 136–42; id., 'La preparazione linguistica e controversistica dei missionari per l'Oriente islamico', pp. 268–72; Id., 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', pp. 69–73; A. Girard, 'Impossible independence or necessary dependency? Missionaries in the Near East, the "protection" of the Catholic States and the Roman arbitrator', in *Papacy, Religious Orders and International Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. M.C. Giannini, Rome, 2013, pp. 67–94.

36 ACPF, SOCG vol. 364, fol. 25^r.

37 ACPF, SOCG vol. 376, fol. 40^r; G. Pizzorusso, 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', pp. 74–5; id., 'Filippo Guadagnoli'; A. Trentini, 'Guadagnoli controversista e

Despite the problems about where the schools should be and the doubts about the success of the teaching, schools were retained in Rome and new schools were actually created: in the early eighteenth century, a chair of Arabic was founded at the Franciscan convent of San Bartolomeo all'Isola (on the Isola Tiberina) in Rome for the Friars Minor of the Observance. Generally, however, the teaching of Arabic was in decline: in most of the colleges less hours were devoted to it and sometimes it even disappeared. Under the Roman Republic, the *Propaganda* and its colleges were suppressed, and when the Roman authorities wondered about the necessity of reorganizing the teaching, a report written in 1828 referred to its uselessness and superficiality.³⁸

Language and Controversy: Entangled Teachings

The study of the languages encouraged by the *Propaganda* was inextricably linked to the missionary activity. This is why, following a tradition already established by the earlier missionary literature, the Congregation decided to combine the study of languages with the study of controversy, in other words of dialectical theology, by which missionaries would be able to convince the Muslim infidels and Eastern Christian heretics by refuting the principles of their religion or beliefs. Languages and controversies were two inseparable elements in the preparation of the missionary: Guadagnoli, owing to his career and his intellectual production, was a brilliant example of this double Orientalist activity in Rome. The training took place under the supervision of masters who ensured that the translation of concepts and principles was comprehensible to the recipients of the apostolate. The translation had to be correct and precise – an increasing source of anxiety for the Roman authorities, especially in the wake of the Chinese rites controversy. However, the aim was not to train and form theologians: it stressed, rather, the importance of maintaining controversy at a basic level. Indeed, the missionary, in his daily practice of preaching, should not oppose the learned heretic – it was prudent to avoid arguments with educated unbelievers – but especially ‘*objectionibus rudiorum et muliercularum*’ (‘the objections of the simple and little women’). The silence or embarrassment of a missionary when confronted with objections from simple people would have undermined the authority of the Church in the minds of both the heretics and the newly converted. It could also have

islamologo'; A. Girard, 'Des manuels de langue entre mission et érudition orientaliste'; A. Bevilacqua, 'The Qur'an Translations', p. 5–6.

38 ACPF, SC Collegi Vari vol. 55, San Bartolomeo all'Isola dal 1728 al 1845, fols 194^{r-v}; A. Girard, 'L'enseignement de l'arabe à Rome au XVIII^e siècle'.

prompted the charge of dispatching missionaries who were unprepared or even ignorant of fundamental theological principles.³⁹

The simultaneous learning of languages and the rudiments of controversy had consequences for the didactic organization of the language teaching for missionaries. In order to learn and to teach Arabic, future missionaries used grammars and vocabularies, but also theological treatises or abstracts of refutations of other religions, written in the vernacular and prepared by reliable authors of the Church, mostly former missionaries or foreign scholars who were themselves teachers at universities or colleges. The Congregation suggested addressing doctrinal issues directly in the vernacular, even during the training of the missionaries which was performed in Italy before departure. In the *Antitheses fidei* (Rome, *Propaganda Fide*, 1638), Domenico Germano published the exercises of nine students (whose names are on the front-page) of the College of San Pietro in Montorio, which he directed and which were held before the 'visiting' cardinal of the College. Born in Schnurgast in Silesia in 1588, he became a Franciscan in 1624. He studied in Rome with the Arabist Tommaso Obicini da Novara and lived in Palestine for four or five years from 1630. In 1652, after other journeys to the Middle East, he became librarian of the Escorial where he performed a remarkable, but until recently unpublished, translation of the Qur'an. In his *Antitheses*, dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, written in Arabic and in Latin (as an aid to learning the language through controversy), the Franciscan attempted to refute four *difficultates contra religionem Christianam ex Alcorano desumptae*: 1. *de directione supernaturali* (p. 15); 2. *de actibus religionis, qui sunt oratio et devotio* (p. 19); 3. *de Creatione et Creatore et attributi eius essentialibus* (p. 25); 4. *de Deo Salvatore et eius attributis extrinsecis* (p. 35). This short book opens with the publication of a brief Arabic letter (also translated into Latin), (already lost and probably forged by the author), attributed to a Muslim writing to Rome (*ilā madīna rūmīyya*). The pseudo-author addresses Christians in order to reveal to them the testimonies of the Mosaic Law concerning the prophet Muḥammad (p. 2–5): for example, he uses the prophecy of Isaiah (21:7) to interpret the rider on the donkey and the rider on the camel as Jesus and Muḥammad. Then, in each *antithesis*, he

39 ACPF, CP vol. 1, fols 349^r–354^v. 'Rationes proponendae coram Sanctissimo et Sacra Congregatione de Propaganda Fide ob quas necessarium est legi controversias fidei in Urbe'; ACPF, Lettere vol. 2, fols 10^r, 15^r–^v; G. Pizzorusso, 'Tra cultura e missione', pp. 129–31; id., 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', pp. 65–6.

starts by quoting a verse from the Qur'an about Jesus or Christianity and a verse from the Bible, to create the contrast to be discussed.⁴⁰

As always, the ambitions of the Congregation for the study of controversy were scaled down: orders limited themselves to providing the basic controversial tools for their missionaries. In 1646, for example, the Franciscans of San Pietro in Montorio, the main *studium* of Arabic in Rome, said that a thorough knowledge of controversy was unnecessary for the missionaries in the Levant and preferred to confine themselves to a few disputes on general topics. In the same document, the Franciscan fathers also point out that the students were already too busy because of their Arabic courses. From their point of view, it would be sufficient for the Arabic teacher to introduce the subjects of controversy twice a week during the Arabic classes.⁴¹

Experience of Former Missionaries and Diglossic Language

Finally the Roman officials determined two different objectives which these colleges should achieve: to provide the missionary with a basic knowledge of Arabic, a language which would be properly learned afterwards, as a living language, mainly in the Levant or in Malta, and to prepare the missionary to read Islamic texts under the supervision of the Roman masters, and to refute them. There were therefore two levels in these studies: the language of theologians studied in Italy, and the language of communication learnt on the spot. There thus arose the problem of teaching the missionaries 'vernacular' Arabic, the language used in the countries they would visit, a language that would be very different from the literary Arabic of the Qur'an. As would happen in the nineteenth century with the creation of a chair for 'vernacular' Arabic,⁴² Eastern Christians were naturally invited to teach their native language, but it was not always a success. In 1722 four German priests who came to San Pietro in

40 D. Germano da Silesia, *Antitheses fidei ventilabuntur in Conventu S. Petri Montis Aurei Fratrum Minorum S.P. Francisci Reformat.*, Rome, 1638; A. Kleinhans, *Historia Studii Linguae Arabicae*, pp. 75–87; G. Graf, *GICAL*, vol. 4, pp. 176–8; Z.R. Andollu, 'La Sagrada Congregación frente al Islam', pp. 715–16, 721; F. Richard, 'Le franciscain Dominicus Germanus de Silésie, grammairien et auteur d'apologie en persan', *Islamochristiana*, 10, 1984, pp. 91–107; Germán de Silesia, *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis, Parte 1: La traducción Latina; introducción y edición crítica*, ed. A. García Masegosa, Madrid, 2009; G. Pizzorusso, 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', pp. 66–7, 71.

41 ACPF, CP vol. 5, fol. 376r; G. Pizzorusso, 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', p. 66.

42 A. Messaoudi, *Les arabisants et la France coloniale 1780–1930*, Lyon, 2015, pp. 55–91.

Montorio with a great missionary fervour, were sickened by the extent of their professors' ignorance and their heretical teaching. In a letter to the *Propaganda*, they denounced the lector of Arabic, who apparently did not know Latin and had not studied enough Arabic grammar to teach the language. In that year the lector was Antonio da Gerusalemme, possibly a Melkite from Palestine, who probably knew the local dialect, his mother tongue, but had no knowledge of the grammar of classical Arabic or how to teach it to European students. Defending himself in a letter to the Congregation, he explained that foreigners ought to teach their own language, particularly in the case of native Arabic speakers.⁴³

In the pontifical capital, professors and students could use Arabic textbooks published out of Rome, especially the grammar written by Thomas Erpenius first appeared in 1613 in Leiden unsurpassed until the nineteenth century. The book was even edited in Rome, by the *Collegio Urbano* of the congregation of the *Propaganda Fide* in 1829.⁴⁴ But Rome was probably the place in early modern Europe where most Arabic textbooks were published. Before the foundation of the *Propaganda*, there were editions and sometimes translations of early Arabic grammars. Inspired by Ingoli's policy, the polyglot press printed textbooks better suited to explain Arabic to prospective European missionaries according to the system of Latin grammars. There were also allusions to the grammar of Hebrew, considered to be the mother tongue, but far fewer than in textbooks written by Reformed authors.⁴⁵ Among these linguistic productions two former missionaries wrote textbooks of 'vernacular' Arabic: the Franciscan Domenico Germano published an introduction to the 'lingua volgare arabica'

43 ACPF, CP vol. 105, fols 141^r–151^v; A. Kleinhans, *Historia Studii Linguae Arabicae*, pp. 104–05; A. Girard, 'L'enseignement de l'arabe à Rome au XVIII^e siècle', esp. p. 216.

44 T. Erpenius, *Grammatica arabica*, Leiden, 1613. On this grammar see R. Jones, *Learning Arabic in Renaissance Europe (1505–1624)*, unpublished PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, 1988, pp. 187–212; A. Girard, 'Les manuels d'arabe en usage en France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime', in *Manuels d'arabe d'hier et d'aujourd'hui (France–Maghreb, XIX^e–XXI^e siècle)*, eds S. Larzul and A. Messaoudi, Paris, 2013, pp. 12–26, here pp. 16–19. On the Dutch context, see A. Hamilton, 'Arabic Studies in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *Philologia arabica (arabische studien en drukken in de Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw)*, Anvers, 1986, pp. 94–113; A. Vrolijk, 'The Prince of Arabists and his many errors: Thomas Erpenius's image of Joseph Scaliger and the edition of the Proverbia Arabica (1614)', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 73, 2010, pp. 297–325; A. Vrolijk and R. van Leeuwen, *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands. A Short History in Portraits, 1580–1950*, Leiden, 2014. On the use of this Erpenius's textbook in Rome, see ACPF, Miscellanea variae, vol. 14, fols 66^r–69^r.

45 J. Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger. Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, 2013, pp. 64–5; A. Girard, 'Les manuels d'arabe en usage en France'.

in Italian,⁴⁶ while in 1649, another Franciscan, Antonio dall'Aquila, former custodian of the Franciscan convent in Aleppo, composed a short grammar for his students of San Pietro in Montorio. Antonio argued that his work, developed according to a new methodology, would offer an easy way to teach the 'vernacular' but also to provide 'the means to understand and explain any Arabic book'. The work of Antonio dall'Aquila was the first to present a truly diglossic vision of the forms of Arabic, one of which was called 'vulgaris', the other 'doctrinalis'. Like his predecessor Domenico Germano, he wanted to devise an easier method of learning the language. In the 'address to the reader', the Franciscan divided the students into four groups according to their need for one or other, or for both, sorts of Arabic. The 'vernacular Arabic' was considered by these authors as a spoken and written language. In order to explain the relationship between the two forms of Arabic to their students, they also referred to the parallel between Latin and Italian. This 'vernacular Arabic' seems to be a hybrid language, mixing up the characteristics of standard Arabic and specificities of the Near Eastern dialects: a form of the language known as 'middle Arabic', widely used in the Near East until the *Nahḍa* (Arabic awakening).⁴⁷

Before publication, the *Propaganda* submitted Antonio dall'Aquila's textbook to Brice de Rennes and Filippo Guadagnoli for doctrinal and linguistic approval. After its publication in 1651, the French Capuchin Brice de Rennes

46 D. Germano da Silesia, *Fabrica, overo Dittionario della lingua volgare arabica*, Rome, 1636 and 1639.

47 ACPF, SOCG vol. 182, fols 72^r–79^v; A. dall'Aquila, *Arabicae Linguae Novae et Methodicae Institutiones Non ad vulgaris dumtaxat Idiomatis; sed etiam ad grammaticae doctrinalis intelligentiam, per Annotationes in Capitum Appendicibus suffixas, accomodatae, Authore F. Anthonio ab Aquila Ord. Min. Sancti Francisci strict. Obser. Teologo, atque in Collegio Sancti Petri Montis Aurei à Sacra Congregatione de Propaganda Fide Arabicae linguae deputato Lectore Opus Tum omnibus Arabicae Linguae studiosis, tum potissimum Apostolicis Viris, per Asiam, & Africam Fidem propagaturis, utile & necessarium*, Rome, 1650; A. Kleinhans, *Historia Studii Linguae Arabicae*, pp. 92–5; G. Graf, *GCAL*, vol. 4, p. 179; J. Lentin, *Recherches sur l'histoire de la langue arabe au Proche-Orient à l'époque moderne*, Lille, 1997; id., 'Middle Arabic', in *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, Leiden, 2008, vol. 3, pp. 215–24; K. Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, Edinburgh, 2001 (1st edn, 1997), pp. 114–29; P. Larcher, 'Diglossie arabisante et fuṣḥā vs 'Ammiyya arabes. Essai d'histoire parallèle', in *History of Linguistics 1999. Selected papers from the Eighth International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences, 14–19 September 1999, Fontenay-St. Cloud*, ed. S. Auroux, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2003, pp. 47–61 (52–3); id., 'Al-luḡa al-fuṣḥā: archéologie d'un concept "idéolinguistique"', *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 124, 2008, pp. 263–78; B. Grévin, *Le parchemin des cieux: essai sur le Moyen Âge du langage*, Paris, 2012; A. Girard, 'Les manuels d'arabe en usage en France', pp. 23–5.

was outspoken in his criticisms, mercilessly denouncing grammatical mistakes and even mistakes in the transliteration of Arabic words, and asserting that the publication could put the Church in an embarrassing situation with regard to Protestants and Muslims. Guadagnoli said that he did not know vernacular Arabic and had to rely 'on those who are in the country or have visited it'. This daring approach did not meet with unanimous approval in the Roman Orientalist milieu. But Sansone Carnevale reported that, in his Congregation of apostolic missions in Naples, he had used this method and that the students were enthusiastic (which is not always a good sign).⁴⁸

Inventing a Christian Arabic?

The missionary orientation and the clear links with controversy had another consequence for Arabic in early modern Rome since the language was Christianized. The Arabic grammatical tradition had taken as its linguistic criterion the Qur'an and archaic poetry.⁴⁹ Some Roman Arabists knew early grammars and used classical examples such as '*ḍaraba Zaydun*'.⁵⁰ However, the authors of seventeenth-century textbooks of Arabic had a polemical attitude to the Qur'an⁵¹ and preferred to give examples of Christian origin. In his *Fabrica*, Domenico Germano introduced some quotations from the Qur'an without any translations, so that the student would be unable to understand the meaning of the verse, but, immediately following it, he gave a translated example from an Arabic version of the Bible.⁵² If Martellotto never quoted the sacred book, his audacious successor, Filippo Guadagnoli, used quotations from the

48 ACPF, SOCG vol. 182, fols. 2^r, 19^r–46^v, 152^r–153^v; G. Pizzorusso, 'Les écoles de langue arabe et le milieu orientaliste', pp. 76–7.

49 See the essays by Alastair Hamilton and Jan Loop in this collection.

50 F. Martellotto, *Institutiones linguae arabicae, tribus Libris distributae, in quibus uberrime quaecumque ad Litteras, Dictiones, et Orationem attinent, explicantur*, Rome, 1620, p. 97.

51 On the prohibitions of reading the Qur'an, see A. Hamilton, 'The Study of Islam in early modern Europe', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 3, 2001, pp. 169–82; id. *The Forbidden Fruit: the Koran in the Early Modern Europe*, London, 2008.

52 For example, see D. Germano, *Fabrica overo Dittionario*, pp. 92–3: 'E quelle dell'Alcorano, nel cap. Mensae medinae. جعل الله الكعبة البيت الحرام قياماً للناس و الشهر الحرام و الهدى والقلايد. بسورة المائدة مدينة. L'Autor delle regole dell'ortografia dice, che qui il nome sostantivo doppio l'altro per special privilegio piglia la natura d'adiettivo, parla della Mecha. E quella del Salmo V. Virum sanguinum et dolosum abominatur Dominus. السافك الدما والغاش يرذله. الرجل الرب. The quote from the Qur'an is the verse 98 from surat 5.

Qur'an, which were also translated. But the Caracciolino exemplifies most of the grammatical rules with typically Christian sentences.⁵³

This switch to Christian examples occurred in the 1620s and 1630s when, with Ingoli as its secretary, the Congregation *de Propaganda* insisted on the missionary orientation of Arabic teaching. In his *Institutiones*, Antonio dall'Aquila used the Christian names Buṭrus and Būlus (Peter and Paul) instead of traditional first names in Arabic grammars (Zayd and 'Amr). In Domenico Germano's *Fabrica*, the first reading exercises of Arabic were the sign of the cross, the Lord's Prayer and the *Ave Maria*, the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the *Salve Regina* and the *Confiteor*, entirely vocalized, with interlinear transliteration and Latin translation.⁵⁴ These exercises were very common in Roman manuals. In his courses for the Collegio romano the Maronite Jesuit Peter Metoscita employed a language imbued with Catholicism. He gave some examples to illustrate the presentation of proper names: مُوسَا Mūsā, *Moyses*, عيسَا 'Īsā, *Iosue*'. Regarding the way to form the masculine singular adjective from the substantive, he wrote: 'Ita ex يَسُوْعُ Iesu, fit يَسُوْعِي iesuion, Iesuita. Et ex الْمَسِيْحِ almasihhi, Christo fit الْمَسِيْحِي almasihhio Christianus, etc.'. He added quotations from the Gospel, and ended his textbook with Psalm 33 in Arabic, where he commented on every linguistic element to explain the form of the text.⁵⁵

Besides the textbooks, the archives give information about learning methods which were quite similar in the different colleges. The organization of teaching by Tommaso da Novara at the college of San Pietro in Montorio aimed not only at teaching Arabic to missionaries, but also at training teachers who could then be sent to other institutions. The lector began to teach the students to read unvocalised Arabic versions of the *Psalter* and Bellarmin's *Doctrine* (the first part of the first year). Ever since the Middle Ages, the Arabic Psalms were a common text used for the teaching and learning of the language. There were two Roman editions: the first was prepared by the Maronite scholars Vittorio Scialac and Gabriel Sionite, and the second, printed in 1744, was by a Copt converted to Catholicism, Raffaele Tuhi. The Bellarmin catechism was also translated by the same two Maronites and printed in 1613. For the second

53 F. Guadagnoli, *Breves arabicae linguae institutiones*, Rome, 1642; A. Girard, 'Des manuels de langue entre mission et érudition orientaliste', pp. 287–8. See also Alastair Hamilton's article in this collection.

54 D. Germano, *Fabrica overo Dittionario*, pp. 9–23.

55 P. Metoscita, *Institutiones linguae arabicae, ex diversis Arabum monumentis collectae et ad quam maximam fieri potuit brevitatem atque ordinem revocatae, quibus addita est exercitatio grammatica in Psalmum xxxiv*, Rome, 1624, pp. 40–41, 43, 229–30.

part of the year, the students had to learn to read the Gospel in Arabic⁵⁶ and the lector taught the grammatical rules. At the end of the first year an exam assessed the pronunciation and the general level, and decided whether the student could pursue his studies or whether he had to return to his province. In the second year, the students were required to talk to one another in Arabic and, by the end of it, were expected to hold public disputations. Tommaso da Novara had also prepared bilingual abstracts of the texts to be submitted to the students. It seems that they never studied the original texts, but rather adapted versions prepared by the teacher, nor did they read the Qur'an directly. The fathers wanted to filter or control access to the sources of the aspiring missionaries.⁵⁷

Lexicographical works too tried to distinguish a 'Christianized' Arabic language from a vocabulary which would sit hand in glove with Islam. For example, the Maronite scholar Abraham Ecchellensis, in his unpublished *Nomenclator arabico-latinus* (written between 1646 and 1651), wanted to safeguard the language and the culture of the Christian Arabs, describing the Arabic language without any reference to Islam. Islamic terminology was intentionally removed. Thus, under the root *qara'a*, the derivative *qur'an* was only presented as a synonym of *qirā'a*, with the Latin translation of *Lectio*, but without any reference to the Qur'an. For *rasūl* (*apostolus*), or *nabī* (*propheta*), no allusion to Islam was made. In contrast, the lector could find the Arabic words of Christian feasts, the sacraments and dogmas (Trinity, incarnation etc.).⁵⁸

It is also necessary to view these Orientalists in the context of Arabic studies in contemporary Rome. Some of them prepared an edition of the Arabic Bible. Marracci translated and refuted the Qur'an, and six experts worked on the Lead Books of the Sacromonte of Granada'. In these three areas the Orientalists were forced to reflect on the relationship between language and religion. For the Lead Books, the experts concluded that the documents contained many

56 Thanks to the Medicean typography, an Arabic version of the Gospel was printed in 1590 and in 1591 (with Latin translation). The whole Bible was also printed in Rome in 1671.

57 A. Kleinhans, *Historia Studii Linguae Arabicae*, p. 13; for the Carmelite seminar: ACPF, SOCG vol. 364, fols 3^v–4^r; Z.R. Andollu, 'La Sagrada Congregación frente al Islam', pp. 715–16. See also A. Girard, 'L'enseignement de l'arabe à Rome au XVIII^e siècle', pp. 224–33.

58 BnF, MS Arabe 4345: *Nomenclator arabico-latinus*; M. Moubarakah, 'Le "Nomenclator arabico-latinus" d'Abraham Ecchellensis (Ibrahim al-Haqilani) (BnF, MS Arabe 4345)', *Parole de l'Orient*, 22, 1997, pp. 419–39; A. Hamilton, 'Abraham Ecchellensis et son *Nomenclator arabico-latinus*', in *Orientalisme, sciences et controverse ...*, ed. B. Heyberger, pp. 89–98; B. Heyberger, 'L'Islam et les Arabes chez un érudit maronite au service de l'Église catholique (Abraham Ecchellensis)', *Al-Qantara*, 31.2, 2010, pp. 481–512, (500).

'Mahometan' terms, prompting Marracci's continued endeavours to separate a Christian Arabic from Islamic contamination:

The Koran and other books of the Mahometans use these words and others of the same kind; Arabic-speaking Christians never use them, or very rarely, and only for conversation and business dealings with Muslims: on the contrary, they avoid and curse them as profane and impious.⁵⁹

The same fear was expressed by Marracci while he was working on the Arabic Bible.⁶⁰

There were three reasons for this attempt to emphasise a 'Christianized' Arabic. First, Roman Orientalists underestimated the ancient and profound Arabization of the Middle Eastern Churches.⁶¹ They had no knowledge of Arabic Christian literature and did not recognize its significance for the Eastern Churches, while the Syriac legacy was better known. Secondly, ever since the revival of missionary activities in the East, doubts, fears, and criticisms were expressed about the *accomodamento* and the translation of Christian doctrine into local languages.⁶² Finally, for Roman Orientalists, Arabic had a controversial image: on the one hand, it was believed to be the language of an ancient and venerable version of the Bible, which was very interesting for philologists, but at the same time a battlefield of denominational conflicts. On the other hand it was the language of the Qur'an, the sacred book of the Muslims. However, the missionary concerns, of central importance in Rome, made the situation more complex: on the one hand the Arabic version of the Bible used by Eastern communities could be full of heresies, so a 'good' version had to be published in Rome, and on the other, the Qur'an, dangerous and forbidden, had to be known and refuted in order to convert Muslims.

59 ACDF, SO, St. St., R6-a, fol. 1127^r; M. García-Arenal, 'The Religious Identity of the Arabic Language and the Affair of the Lead Books of the Sacromonte of Granada', *Arabica*, 56, 2009, pp. 495–528; B. Heyberger, 'L'Islam et les Arabes', p. 501.

60 ACPF, SC Stamperia vol. 1, fol. 225^v.

61 S. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque. Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, Princeton, 2008; *The Orthodox Church in the Arab World, 700–1700, An Anthology of Sources*, eds S. Noble and A. Treiger, DeKalb, 2014.

62 G. Pizzorusso, 'I satelliti di Propaganda Fide', pp. 493–5; A. Girard, 'Entre croisade et politique culturelle au Levant', pp. 431–6.

Conclusion

The teaching of Arabic in Rome was shaped by the need to prepare missionaries to converse with Arabic-speaking Christians and Muslims in the Middle East. These language schools were situated in an Orientalist milieu: the presence of these institutions stimulated the production of books, including textbooks for the teaching of Arabic, which were printed by the polyglot press. Volumes of eastern manuscripts filled the specialized libraries of convents and colleges: missionaries contributed decisively to the collections of books and original manuscripts. Another characteristic of Roman intellectual life was the polycentrism of places of knowledge, and in our case, the multiplicity of schools. Each religious order – the Jesuits, but also reformed and conventual Franciscans and Carmelites – had its own language school, in addition to the academic chair at the *Sapienza*. This partial institutionalization of Arabic teaching contributed to the organization of the academic field of Orientalism as a discipline.⁶³ However, the difficulty in recruiting good teachers, the low level of pupils and the decline in the eighteenth century also shows its limitations.

The initial enthusiastic inspiration and the policy of Ingoli, secretary of the *Propaganda Fide*, contributed to the development of a network of schools and of a specifically Roman approach to the language, even if the teaching of Arabic was soon confronted with many problems. Students, teachers, and the Roman authorities wondered about the location of these schools: should they stay in Rome or should they be in Arabic-speaking countries? With regard to Arabic itself, the Roman Arabists, sometimes former missionaries, conceived a diglossic language ‘vernacular’ and ‘doctrinal’ and, with the support of Maronite scholars, an Arabic that was clearly distinguished from Islam. In the early seventeenth century this particular orientation of Arabic studies in the papal city contributed to making Rome the centre of an original production of printed textbooks which would be used and commented on in

63 D.R. Kelley, ‘Introduction’, in *History and Disciplines. The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. D.R. Kelley, Rochester, 1997, p. 1: ‘What may be regarded as marks of disciplinarity include a characteristic method, specialized terminology, a community of practitioners, a canon of authorities, an agenda of problems to be addressed, and perhaps more formal signs of a professional condition, such as journals, textbooks, courses of study, libraries, rituals, and social gatherings [...]’; D. Stolzenberg, ‘Les “langues orientales” et les racines de l’orientalisme académique: une enquête préliminaire’, in *Connaître l’Orient en Europe au XVII^e siècle*, ed. A. Girard, special issue of *XVII^e siècle*, 267, 2015, pp. 409–26.

Catholic Europe, especially Italy and France, until the end of the eighteenth century.⁶⁴

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- 64 For the French case, see: *Manuels d'arabe*, eds Larzul and Messaoudi; *Silvestre de Sacy: le projet européen d'une science orientaliste*, eds M. Espagne et al., Paris, 2014; P. Ageron and M. Jaouhari, 'Le programme pédagogique d'un arabisant du Collège royal, François Pétis de La Croix (1653–1713)', *Arabica*, 61, 2014, pp. 396–453; A. Messaoudi, *Les arabisants et la France coloniale*, pp. 23–54. See also: R. Jones, 'The Medici oriental press (Rome 1584–1614)'.