One of the more mystifying aspects of the grammars of ancient and Oriental languages produced in the West during the Renaissance is how students were expected to proceed. They were obviously intended to memorise the tables and there seems to have been an assumption that to advance any further the help of a teacher was essential. But what about the chrestomathies, the texts frequently added to the grammars as linguistic exercises? In his study of early Greek grammars Paul Botley wrote that ‘the language was approached through Greek texts that the pupils already knew by heart in their Latin translations: the Greek Scriptures and the liturgy.’ In the case of Arabic a similar approach seems to have been adopted, particularly in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The Lord’s Prayer remained a favourite text, together with Arabic versions of the Psalms. Thanks to the manuscripts which Guillaume Postel had pawned with the Elector Palatine in Heidelberg, the German authors of early Arabic grammars who frequented the Palatine library – Jacob Christmann, Ruthger Spey and Peter Kirsten – could use the Arabic versions of the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles. Otherwise knowledge of Arabic literature was highly limited, and the most obvious text to choose, the one regarded as the perfect expression of the Arabic language, was the Qur’an.

Postel, who compiled the first proper grammar of classical Arabic to appear in the West, set a precedent. His *Grammatica arabica*, published in about 1539, gave as reading material, in Arabic and Latin, the Lord’s Prayer and the

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* In writing this article I depended heavily on the help and advice of Jan Loop at the Warburg Institute, Arnoud Vrolijk at Leiden University Library, and Alasdair Watson at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.


3 C. Fr de Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, Halle, 1811, pp. 18–19, no. 38.
fātiḥa, the first sura of the Qur’an. To the fātiḥa he added his own translation⁴ which is striking for the rendering of the Arabic iyyāku, often rendered as ‘thee alone’, as ‘o vos omnes’, ‘oh ye all’, and ṣirāṭ, ‘path’, as ‘punctum’, ‘point’. Although these translations gave rise to a prolonged debate among scholars and cast doubt on Postel’s competence as an Arabist,⁵ his version was added by Theodor Bibliander to the medieval Latin translation of Robert of Ketton⁶ and another

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⁵ The debate can be said to have started in the eighteenth century with the publication of Jacob Christof Wilhem Hoste’s Dissertatio inauguralis de prima Alcorani sura, Altdorf 1743, in which a detailed comparison was made between all the translations of the fātiḥa to date. It was revived in the early twentieth century when E. Nestle, ‘Geschichtliches zur ersten Sure’, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 60, 1906, p. 246, pointed to Postel’s mistranslations and wondered to what they were due. This drew a sharp reply by A. Fischer, ‘Miszellen’, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 60, 1906, pp. 245–54, esp. pp. 249–50, who said that they were simply due to Postel’s limited knowledge of Arabic which had already been observed by Scaliger. Three years later the debate was resumed by C.F. Seybold, ‘Kleine Mitteilungen’, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 63, 1909, pp. 625–6, who suggested that punctum was a misprint of pontem and that Postel was referring to the bridge to hell stretching from the Temple of the Mount to the Garden of Olives over the valley of Jehosophat, over which all souls will have to pass on their way to the Last Judgement. J. Fück, ‘Die Arabischen Studien in Europa vom 12. Bis in den Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in Beiträge zur Arabistik, Semitistik und Islamwissenschaft, eds R. Hartmann and H. Scheel, Leipzig, 1944, pp. 85–253, esp. p. 125, agreed with Fischer that Postel’s translation ‘zeigt, daß die arabischen Kenntnisse Postels einer soliden Grundlage entbehrten.’ In his De orbis terrae concordia libri quatuor, Basel, 1544, pp. 157–8, Postel repeats the translation punctum and translates ayāk as heus or ‘hail’, while in his De la République des Turcs, Poitiers, 1560, pp. 50–51, he translates ayāk as ‘O bons humains’ and al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm as ‘le point ou certitude’. More recently, however, Postel has been reassessed as an Arabist by H. Bobzin, Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa, Beirut, 1995, pp. 447–75. Bobzin argues (p. 451) that some Muslim interpreters explain al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaṣqīm as referring to the Qur’an. ‘Von hier aus wird auch Postels Textaussage verständlich: durch die Gleichsetzung von وَرَأَى مِن مَّرْضٍ مَّسْتَمَ وَأَوَّلَا ‘Weg’ auf den einen ‘Punkt’ des Korans reduziert.’

⁶ Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitae, doctrina, ac ipse Alcoran …, ed. Th. Bibliander, Basel, 1543, p. 8: ‘Misericordio pioque Deo, universitatis creatori, iudicium cuius postrema dies expectat, voto supplici nos humiliemus, adorantes ipsum: suaeque manus sustegiam, semitaque donum et dogma, quos nos ad se benevolos, nequaquam hostes et erroneos adduxit, iugiter sentiamus.’
anonymous rendering probably of Mozarabic origin in the edition of the entire text of the Qur’an which appeared in Basel in 1543. Postel, like his successors in the early modern period, provided no more than a translation of the first sura in his grammar. He made no attempt to elucidate any linguistic problem or to explain to students how they should apply to it the knowledge they had acquired from the rest of his Grammatica arabica.

Other compilers of Arabic grammars and type specimens in the sixteenth century avoided the Qur’an as a linguistic exercise, preferring, as we saw, Biblical texts. Jacob Christmann, in his Alphabetum arabicum of 1582, chose the Lord’s Prayer and the Epistle to the Philippians; in the following year Ruthger Spey preceded his Compendium grammaticæ arabicae with the Epistle to the Galatians, and added the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer; Franciscus Raphelengius gave the text of Psalm 50 (51) in the type specimen he published in 1595; Bartholomeus Radtmann used Psalm 146 (147) in his Arabic grammar of 1590; and Giovanni Battista Raimondi has the texts of the Lord’s Prayer, the Hail Mary, Psalms 112 (113) and 116 (117) and John 1:1–9 in his Alphabetum arabicum of 1592. But this approach changed with the author of the best Arabic grammar of his day which was to remain unsurpassed until the nineteenth century – Thomas Erpenius in Leiden. It was not, however, in his Arabic grammar, the Grammatica arabica which first appeared in 1613, that he provided any chrestomathy, but in his edition of the twelfth sura, Yūsuf, the Historia Iosephi Patriarchae, published in 1617, one of the first products of the new ‘Oriental’ press he had just set up in Leiden with his own Arabic types. Printed together with his Alphabetum arabicum, it was indeed intended for students of Arabic who had used his grammar.

Erpenius had long been interested in the Qur’an. We can follow this concern in his correspondence with Isaac Casaubon. In 1610 he was still trying to procure a copy of the Arabic Qur’an and Casaubon generously decided to present him with one of his own. Casaubon also seems to have transmitted to

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9 Schnurrer, Bibliotheca Arabica, pp. 30–31, no. 52.

him the notes made by Adriaen Willemsz, the former student at Leiden who had joined him in Paris in 1602. These consisted of an index of suras and marginal notes giving variations with respect to another manuscript in the French royal library. Erpenius became aware too of the importance of the *tafsīr*, the Islamic commentaries, and seems to have discovered one at the library of the Sorbonne in 1611. His acquaintance with the Qur’an led him to dismiss out of hand Peter Kirsten, the Arabist and physician from Breslau. Kirsten had given his own translation of the *fātiḥa* in the type specimen he published in 1608, but Erpenius claimed that he had not so much as read the entire text. Despite his discovery in Paris, Erpenius’s subsequent search for *tafsīr* proved vain, and his death in 1624 put paid to further plans to edit parts of the Qur’an.

In the *Historia Iosephi* Erpenius added to the Arabic an interlinear word by word Latin translation. In the margin he gave a more fluent and readable Latin rendering intended to explain the obscurities entailed by a literal version. The bilingual text of the sura is then followed by Robert of Ketton’s Latin translation. By far the largest part of the book is devoted to notes which clarify the

grammatical forms. Erpenius ends the book with the fatīha. In addition to his own interlinear Latin translation16 he gives Robert of Ketton’s Latin version, then Postel’s, and finally one he describes as ‘closer’ to his own but which in fact is the Mozarabic version added by Bibliander. Here too he adds notes explaining both grammatical points, for example that magḥḍūb is the passive participle of ghadība,17 and the significance of the Arabic. The note to ‘creaturarum’, ālam, is of particular interest since it raises the question of a Muslim belief in a plurality of worlds suggested by the plural rabb al-ālamīn, sometimes translated as ‘lord of the worlds’. Erpenius points out that it does not refer to worlds in the plural but to the creatures of which the world consists.18

Erpenius opens his explanatory notes with a brief essay on the Qur’an and the terms used – qur’ān itself, sūra, āya. The choice of sura 12 was a sensible one. It contains remarkably few obscurities. If we look at Ludovico Marracci’s later translation and explanatory notes (to which we shall return) we see that his quotations from the tafsīr of al-Bayḍāwī, al-Zamakhshari and al-Jalālain do not illustrate arcane linguistic points but simply expand the more or less obvious meaning of the passage in question. Erpenius limits himself almost entirely to pointing out grammatical constructions. These range from the simple indication of a broken plural, as in the case of aḥādīth, the plural of ḥadīth,19 or a comparative (akthar as the comparative of kathīr),20 to the indication of the form of the verb – the fourth form of falaḥa,21 for example, or the tenth form of ‘āṣama22 – to more complex constructions. He occasionally corrects the errors of his predecessors, noting that Postel was wrong in his translation of ḵyākā in the fatīha23 and that Franciscus Raphelengius, the compiler of the first Arabic-Latin dictionary to be published, mistakenly translated ʿir as ‘city’ rather than
as ‘company’ or ‘band’ (12:82). In fact subsequent translators of the Qur’an have translated it as ‘caravan’.

Even if Erpenius made no direct use of a *tafsir* he does at one point refer to an ‘ancient interpreter’ in connection with 12:32 when the women of Potiphar’s wife are so overcome by the beauty of Joseph that they cut themselves and bleed. This passage has been interpreted variously. According to one interpretation the bleeding was menstrual. This is what we find in Robert of Ketton. Erpenius dismissed it as totally erroneous. According to the eighteenth-century English translator of the Qur’an George Sale (who also criticizes Erpenius) it was a peculiarity of ‘the old Latin translators’ who had misunderstood the Arabic *akbarnahu*, usually rendered as ‘they exalted him’. Some *tafsir*, however, such as that of al-Ṭabarī, which Robert of Ketton may well have known, give an amivalent interpretation of the term.

Although the first edition of Erpenius’s *Grammatica arabica* had no chrestomathy, it did contain a brief passage from the Qur’an (44:51–5) as an example of Arabic script. In far later editions, the first of which appeared in 1636, long after Erpenius’s death, a chrestomathy was added consisting of the fables of Luqmān which Erpenius had already edited independently, and some Arabic ‘adages’. Each text was followed by explanatory notes elucidating the meaning and the grammar. In 1620, on the other hand, Erpenius published a revised version of his grammar, the *Rudimenta Linguae Arabicae*, to which he added, as a

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24 Ibid., sig. R3r.
25 Ibid., sig. P2r: ‘locus ita clarus et perspicuus, ut satise mirari veteris interpretis lapsum, qui haec vertit et menstruatae sunt, cujus quidem significationis nullum prorsus apparat vestigium.’
27 *The Koran, Commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed*, transl. G. Sale, London, 1734, p. 191: ‘The old Latin translators have strangely mistaken the sense of the original word *acbarnaho*, which they render *menstruatae sunt*; and then rebuke Mohammed for the indecency, crying out demurely in the margin, *O foedum et obscaenum prophetam!* Erpenius thinks that there is not the least trace of such a meaning in the word; but he is mistaken: for the verb *cabara* in the fourth conjugation, which is here used, has that import, tho’ the subjoining of the pronoun to it here (which possibly the Latin translators did not observe) absolutely overthrows that interpretation.’
linguistic exercise, sura 64 (al-Taghābun, ‘mutual disillusion’) in Arabic with an interlinear Latin translation. Sura 64 has the advantage of relative brevity – it is far shorter than the Sūrat Yūsuf – and presents few linguistic difficulties. Erpenius’s commentary, as in the case of the Sūrat Yūsuf, is entirely grammatical, but here he not only analyses every single word in the sura, but he also gives the precise reference (page and line) to that part of his grammar which deals with the construction in question.

While Erpenius’s grammar was widely regarded as unrivalled in Protestant Europe, the Catholics south of the Alps had started to produce grammars of their own. Although the great missionary organization in Rome, the Propaganda Fide, would only be truly established by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, the religious orders had long needed tools with which to instruct their missionaries in eastern languages. In the first half of the seventeenth century the most important of these were the work of Clerics Regular Minor, also known as the Caraccioli (or Adorno Fathers) – Francesco Martelotto and Filippo Guadagnoli. Martelotto’s Institutiones linguae arabicae, completed by Guadagnoli, was published posthumously in 1620, and in 1642 there appeared Guadagnoli’s Breves Arabicae linguae institutiones. This was one of the very first studies of the Arabic language to include a long section on prosody.

By the time he compiled his grammar Guadagnoli had acquired an immense reputation. Professor of Arabic and Syriac at the Collegio della Sapienza in Rome, he was an esteemed collaborator of the Propaganda Fide, and had for
years been working on the Arabic translation of the Bible which would finally appear in 1671. He was also appreciated as an anti-Islamic polemicist. His *Apologia pro christiana religione* was published by the Propaganda in 1631 and displayed a sound knowledge of the Qur’an, even if he was misguided by prejudice, ill-informed about Islam, and unreliable in his interpretations (but not in his translations) of the sacred text.36

While he drew for the vocabulary of Arabic poetry in his *Breves arabicae linguae institutiones* on the Arabic monolingual dictionary, the Qāmūs (which he borrowed from the Vatican library),37 Guadagnoli derived the rules of Arabic prosody from the thirteenth-century *Qaṣīda al-Khazrajīyya* and a poem by the Egyptian scholar al-Damāmī Badraddin (to whom he refers as Aladinus), who died in 1424.38 Guadagnoli also quoted a number of passages from the Qur’an, in Arabic and with a Latin translation, as examples. His first is 77:1–4 to illustrate a line of seven syllables, and then 53:1–6 to exemplify the so-called *carmen emissum* which is not limited to one particular metre but mingles lines of different syllables.39 A little further on he quotes 77:8–12 as an example of octosyllabic lines.40 There follow the quotations of 78:39–40 as an example of the first type of *carmen coniunctum*; of 76:17–18 to exemplify lines of ten and eleven syllables, the penultimate syllable of which is long; and of 78:1–4 to illustrate lines of seven and nine syllables.41 He also quotes 51:1–4 to illustrate repeated cadences and 55:1–6 as an example of quiescent consonants;42 74:1–7, and 52:1–6 for lines of three, four and five syllables;43 and the same verses in sura 55 again as examples of mixed syllables. Still further on he quotes

40 Ibid., p. 293: ‘Tertia species quae dicitur الحذف، constat secundum aliquos ex octo Syllabis, eiusque mensuram faciant.’
41 Ibid., p. 296.
42 Ibid., pp. 323–4.
43 Ibid., pp. 337–8
951–3 as an example of lines of seven and five syllables, and 78:40 to illustrate lines of seven and nine syllables.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 339–40.}

Guadagnoli’s close acquaintance with the Qur’an points to the later translation of the entire text by his pupil and colleague Ludovico Marracci. Guadagnoli’s short translations, however, have certain independent features. On occasion he supplies alternative translations of certain words. For 77:8–9 he gives ‘quando stellae delebuntur, \textit{seu} obscuratbuntur. Et quando caelum scindetur, \textit{seu} aperietur’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 297.} Elsewhere what seems to be an attempt to translate into verse leads to slight mistranslations. 77:1 is usually taken to mean ‘emissary winds, one after the other’. Guadagnoli, on the other hand, gives ‘Per demissos crines, \textit{seu} Nuncios probos’ probably to rhyme with the following line ‘et procellosos ventos’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 292.}

Like most German Arabists Matthias Wasmuth, professor of Oriental languages and theology at Kiel, was primarily a Hebraist, but, a former student of Jacobus Golius, Erpenius’s successor at Leiden, he too published an Arabic grammar in Amsterdam in 1654.\footnote{Schnurrer, \textit{Bibliotheca Arabica}, p. 56, no. 80.} He ended it with the \textit{fātiḥa}, without any commentary, in Arabic with his own interlinear Latin translation followed by two of the Latin translations in Bibliander’s edition, the one by Robert of Ketton and the Mozarabic one.\footnote{M. Wasmuth, \textit{Grammatica arabica}, Amsterdam, 1654, p. 79. His translation runs: ‘In Nomine DEI miseratoris misericordis. Laus Deo domino creaturarum. Miseratori misericordi, regi diei judicii. Te colimus et te invocamus. Dirige nos in viam rectam, viam eorum qui gratiosus es erga eos, alienorum ab ira contra eos, et non errantium.’ He chose the translation ‘lord of the created’ rather than ‘lord of the worlds’. ‘Alienorum ab ira contra eos’ makes little sense.} Then, in 1656, thirty years after Erpenius’s death, Golius himself produced a new edition of Erpenius’s grammar, \textit{Arabicae linguae tyrocinium. Id est Thomae Erpenii grammatica arabica}, to which he appended a lengthy chrestomathy of his own.\footnote{Schnurrer, \textit{Bibliotheca Arabica}, pp. 56–7, no. 81. For details see Jan Loop’s article in this book.} In it Golius introduces Qur’anic texts with a brief essay on the history of the Qur’an, a definition of the terms (\textit{sūra}, \textit{āya}, etc), and speculations about the meanings of the mysterious letters at the beginning of so many of the suras. There follow sura 31, \textit{Luqmān}, and...
sura 61, *al-Ṣaff*, ‘the ranks’. The very last section of the chrestomathy is solely in Arabic and includes sura 32 of the Qur’an.

In contrast to Erpenius Golius had travelled and lived in the Arab world – first in Morocco and then in Syria – before settling in Leiden where he combined a professorship in mathematics with the professorship in Oriental languages. As a result of his travels he had managed to create a network of contacts who would supply him with Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts. He consequently had a large collection at his disposal, part of which was his private property and part of which went to the Leiden university library. These included a number of *tafsīr* which entailed an approach to the Qur’an very different from that of Erpenius. Quite apart from illustrating certain linguistic points, the *tafsīr* shed light on how the Qur’an was actually understood by Muslims.

Golius had at his disposal three of the main commentaries. He had bought al-Bayḍāwī’s *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta⁠ʾwīl*, dating from the thirteenth century, for the Leiden library. The others, the *Kashshāf* of the twelfth-century Persian Mutazilite al-Zamakhshari and the fifteenth-century *Tafsīr al-Jalālain*, were in his private collection. But he also owned a Persian commentary on the Qur’an by the sixteenth-century scholar from Khorasan Wā’īz Kāshiﬁ, which he exploited thoroughly in his treatment of suras 31 and 61. His procedure, however, was different in the two cases. In sura 31 he added to his Latin translation, in italics and in Latin, extracts from the Persian

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52 LUL, MS Or. 83, Or. 120.

53 *Catalogus… librorum m.ss.quos… Jacobus Golius… collegit*, Leiden 1696, p. 13.

54 Bodl. Oxf., MS Marsh 429.

55 In fact he owned two, one by Wā’īz Kāshifī and the other by al-Isfarāʾīnī, both of which are now in the Bodl. Oxf., MS Marsh 210 and MS Marsh 168–9. Cf. *Catalogus*, p. 8.

56 *Grammatica Arabicae linguæ tyrocinium. Id est Thomae Erpenii grammatica Arabica*, Leiden, 1656, p. 183: ‘Praefatione hac defunctus (venia digresso detur) nunc eiusdem Corani promissum exhibeo, cum uberiore explicatione: quam fere κατἁ πὸδα reddere visum fuit ex Persica paraphrasi, ad nos delata ex Mogolorum regno. Hanc quippe omnium, quas vidisse mihi contigit, maxime perspicuam judico, et praecipuorum interpretum medullam.’
commentary. This was a novel technique. Johannes Zechendorff, headmaster of the Latin school in Zwickau, had already published the entire tafsīr of al-Bayḍāwī to sura 61 in about 1647, but it was presented as a tafsīr rather than as the Qur’anic text with quotations inserted from another source. Golius’s Latin translation of Luqmān is printed opposite the Arabic, and the translation is framed by notes which contain references to al-Bayḍāwī and al-Zamakhshari. Sura 61, on the other hand, has, opposite the Arabic, a Latin translation which does not contain insertions and which is framed by notes referring to al-Jalālain (and to neither al-Bayḍāwī nor al-Zamakhshari). It is followed by a Latin translation of the entire text of Kashīfī’s commentary. The notes to sura 31 are both grammatical and elucidatory. In some cases Golius provides an equivalent in Hebrew or Aramaic. His references to the tafsīr are often the same as those of Marracci – in connection with the person of Luqmān (v.11), for example, where Marracci gives the full text of al-Zamakhshari.

Not only was Golius innovative in his manner of inserting quotations from tafsīr in the text of his translation, a procedure that would be adopted by Marracci. He was also one of the first western scholars to make use of Persian material. Franciscus Raphelengius had encountered the Judaeo-Persian translation of the Pentateuch by Joseph ben Joseph Tavus when he was working on the Antwerp polyglot Bible in 1584. He subsequently drew up a Persian-Latin lexicon based on it. It was completed by Joseph Justus Scaliger in Leiden, where Raphelengius had been appointed professor of Hebrew. With the Persian transliterated in Hebrew characters, it remained in manuscript. Also in Leiden, Louis de Dieu published the first Persian grammar in 1639. For his own Arabic dictionary, which appeared in 1653 and which, like Erpenius’s grammar, remained unsurpassed until the nineteenth century, Golius used not only the main monolingual Arabic dictionaries but also Arabic-Turkish and Arabic-
Persian lexicons. Golius himself prepared the first serviceable Persian-Latin dictionary. It was published posthumously in London by Edmund Castell in 1669, as an appendix to Castell’s own Lexicon heptaglotton. By using Persian material in his work on the Qur’an Golius also prepared the way for a plan cherished in the first years of the eighteenth century of producing a polyglot edition of the Qur’an in Arabic, Turkish and Persian. Proposed by Andreas Acoluthus in Breslau, Georg Jacob Kehr in Leipzig, and Antoine Galland in Paris, it was never fulfilled.

Erpenius’s grammars went through countless editions for the rest of the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries, and these editions would include his chrestomathy. Occasionally, however, an editor might add something of his own. Leonard Chappelow, professor of Arabic at Cambridge, produced a new version of the Rudimenta in 1730. He included sura 64 together with Erpenius’s Latin translation and his notes, but he followed the Arabic text of the sura with a transliteration of his own indicating the pronunciation. Above the transliterated words he gave the number of the section of the grammar where that particular word or grammatical form was discussed.

In 1771 Erpenius’s Grammatica Arabica was reissued in a German translation, edited by Johann David Michaelis at the university of Göttingen, widely acclaimed as one of the greatest Orientalists in Germany. Michaelis added the chrestomathy which had been appended to the text by Albert Schultens, and this did not include the Qur’an. Nevertheless Michaelis expatiated on the Qur’an in his long preface, saying that he would always choose it as the best introduction to Arabic for beginners and, somewhat surprisingly, adding how...
easy it was and that it was no more necessary to read it with the help of a *tafsīr* than to explain the New Testament from the writings of the Church Fathers.  

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Although Erpenius’s grammars were unrivalled for so long, and although they were generally regarded as the standard texts for learning Arabic in Northern Europe, other Arabists continued to produce grammars, and these often included suras of the Qur’an in the chrestomathy. One example is the *Nucleus institutionum arabicarum enucleatus, variis linguae ornamentis atque praeceptis dialecti turcicae illustratus* published in Zeitz in 1695 and compiled by the twenty-three-year-old Johann David Schieferdecker.  

Schieferdecker, from Weissenfels, had studied in Leipzig and had then lectured there in Oriental languages until he was summoned to the town of his birth in 1698 to teach at the local gymnasium. His work was an Arabic grammar, to which was appended a Turkish one. The Arabic grammar ends with a chrestomathy consisting of the *fātiḥa* followed by ten Arabic adages. While the adages are simply given in Arabic and in Latin translation, the *fātiḥa* is printed first in Arabic, then comes a Latin translation, and finally we have a word by word grammatical analysis.  

Schieferdecker follows Erpenius’s *Rudimenta* in providing the page in the grammar in which the various forms that appear in the sura are treated. But, although he added his Turkish grammar to his Arabic one, he treats Arabic as a language to be studied in conjunction with Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac. He endeavours to give the Hebrew, Aramaic or Syriac equivalent of all the words in the *fātiḥa*, thereby exemplifying a tendency typical of Arabic teachers at German universities where pride of place was invariably given to Hebrew stud-

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69 Erpenii Arabische Grammatik, abgekürzt, vollständiger und leichter gemacht, von Johann David Michaelis nebst den Anfang einer Arabischen Chrestomathie, aus Schultens Anhang zur Erpenischen Grammatik, Göttingen, 1771, pp. x–xiv. For Michaelis’s attitude to the Qur’an and his contempt for *tafsīr* see Hamilton, “To rescue the honour of the Germans”, pp. 201–02.

70 Schnurrer, p. 60, no. 86.


72 Ibid., pp. 176–86.
ies. Arabic was treated as ancillary and its study suffered accordingly. But there is one exception to Schiefermaker’s painstaking and exclusively grammatical analysis: when he comes to the last two verses he recommends the French translation by André Du Ryer which had first appeared in 1647 and had been treated somewhat dismissively by scholars.

Anybody who introduced a sample translation of the Qur’an into a chrestomathy after 1698 had to reckon with a landmark in the history of Qur’an translations, for it was in that year that the Italian Arabist Ludovico Marracci at last published his bilingual (Latin and Arabic) edition of the whole of the Qur’an in Padua. A preliminary volume, the *Prodromus*, had already appeared, published in Rome by the Propaganda Fide, in 1691. There Marracci had displayed a wealth of sources with which no scholar in Northern Europe could possibly compete. Thanks largely to the missionaries and the Maronites, the various Roman libraries contained a variety of *tafsir* to be found nowhere north of the Alps. For Protestant scholars, particularly Lutherans who had developed a somewhat proprietary attitude to the translation of the Qur’an ever since Luther’s involvement in the publication of the Latin translation in Basel in 1543, Marracci’s version was regarded on the one hand as by far the most reliable to date and one to which scholars could help themselves, and on the other as a challenge, stimulating scholars to do better.


74 Ibid., p. 186. Du Ryer’s translation quoted by Schieferdecker runs: ‘Conduy nous au droit chemin; au chemin de ceux que tu as gratifié, contre lesquels tu n’as pas esté courroucé.’


An example of the first case is the twenty-three-year-old Johann Gottfried Lakemacher, professor of Oriental languages at Helmstedt, who, in 1718, issued his *Elementa linguae arabicae*, a brief and superficial work which could in no way hope to compete with Erpenius even if it was given to students of Arabic at Halle together with the grammar by Johann Christian Clodius. The chrestomathy at the end consists of the Arabic version of the first chapter of Genesis taken from the London Polyglot Bible and the second chapter of Matthew’s Gospel. In each case the Arabic has an interlinear Latin transliteration followed by a Latin translation. There then comes sura 15 of the Qur’an, *al-Hijr*, with an interlinear Latin translation (but no transliteration). The grammar ends with a short grammatical analysis of Genesis 1, but not of any other of the texts. Lakemacher’s translation of sura 15 is striking for the omission of the mysterious letters (aliph, lam, re) in the first verse. He jumps straight to the second and gives a translation which is almost identical to that of Marracci including Marracci’s insertions of the *tafsīr* of al-Jalālain in the Latin text.

If Lakemacher used Marracci’s version of the Qur’an as a convenient translation, Emo Lucius Vriemoet saw it as a challenge. Professor of Oriental languages at the university of Franeker, Vriemoet, from Emden, had been deeply influenced by Adriaen Reland and Frans Burman when he was studying at Utrecht, and he owed his reputation to his work on Jewish antiquity. Although the majority of his writings are in the field of Hebrew studies, in 1733 he produced his own Arabic grammar, *Arabismus; Exhibens Grammaticam Arabicam Novam, et Monumenta quaedam Arabica, cum notis miscellaneis et glossario arabico-latino. In usum studiosae iuventutis, omniumque qui vel proprio Marte in hisce studiis se exercere cupiunt.* The *monumenta* included a section from Pococke’s edition of Abū l-Faraj, a Muslim confession of faith, a polemical tract the manuscript of which was in the Utrecht library, parts of the Old and New Testaments, a *maqāma* of al-Ḥarīrī, various poems, and five suras from the Qur’an – 32, 67, 86, 75 and 90. Suras 86 and 90 are solely in Arabic, while the others have a Latin translation on the opposite page. The chrestomathy ends with a detailed commentary of all the suras (including 86 and 90), but not of any of the other material.

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78 *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 17, pp. 528–9.
79 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 61, no. 89.
In his notes Vriemoet exhibits a vast learning and a close acquaintance with rabbinic texts. All his quotations from the *tafsīr* of al-Jalālain are to be found in Marracci, and we can only conclude that he did not have a copy of the *tafsīr* of his own. He tries to argue with Marracci, but the only point on which he can be said to have won is the idea that the Muslims believed in a plurality of worlds. This, as we saw, had already been raised by Erpenius, who had pointed out that *al-ālamīn* referred to ‘creatures’ rather than to ‘worlds’. Marracci, on the other hand, together with a number of earlier interpreters, assumed that the reference was to more than one world. This was challenged at some length, but with no reference to Erpenius, by Reland in the second edition of his *De religione mohammedica*, which Vriemoet duly cited. Elsewhere, however, Vriemoet’s criticisms are less felicitous. By and large his translation is close to that of Marracci and, like the later eighteenth-century German translators of the entire Qur’an, David Friedrich Megerlin and Friedrich Eberhard Boysen, when he deviates from Marracci he does so at his peril. He claims, for example, that Marracci was wrong in translating *al-najm al-nāqib* (86:4) as *stella penetrans*, ‘the penetrating star’ rather than ‘ardent or burning star’. Marracci’s translation would be accepted to this day. Similarly he criticizes Marracci for translating 86:11, ‘alā rajʾihi la-qādirun, as ‘resurrecting the body’ rather than as ‘resurrecting the soul’. Marracci, however, has again been proved right by later translators. And finally there is Vriemoet’s translation of 32:20. He translated the verse as ‘At vero, qui probi sunt, habitaculum eorum erit ignis’, that ‘the good will go to hell’, whereas the Arabic *alladhīna fasaqū* obviously means ‘the wicked’.

Together with Golius and Erpenius, Vriemoet was one of the few compilers of a chrestomathy which included learned notes to the Qur’anic texts chosen. The Qur’an, certainly, continued to be used by a number of authors of

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84 A. Reland, *De religione mohammedica libri duo*, Utrecht, 1717, pp. 262–8.
86 Ibid., pp. 176–6, 200–02.
87 Ibid., p. 172.
88 Ibid., p. 173.
89 Ibid., p. 95.
The use of the Qur’an for linguistic exercises continued well beyond our period. In early modern Europe, however, it is of particular interest since it allows us to assess not only the degree of interest in the text, but also the various stages in translating it and the more general progress of Oriental studies. From a purely grammatical approach such as that of Erpenius, we see a marked advance with Golius, who drew on the ṭafsīr in order to add interpretations and who also introduced Persian material. Filippo Guadagnoli brings us into the world of Marracci – of the missionaries, the participants in the Arabic translation of the Bible, and the staff and consultants of the Propaganda Fide. By treating the Qur’an as poetry he foreshadowed developments in the eighteenth century and later. The German grammars of the eighteenth century demonstrate both the overpowering influence of Marracci’s translation of the Qur’an, which would last well into the nineteenth century, and the predominance of Hebrew studies in the German academies which would in fact inhibit progress in Arabic. By the late eighteenth century, however, as more and more versions of the entire text of the Qur’an appeared in the European vernaculars, chrestomathies ceased to play a significant part in the actual history of Qur’an translations

90 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 82, no. 116.
91 Schnurrer, *Bibliotheca Arabica*, p. 96, no. 140.