Gian Luca D'Errico (ed.)

Il Corano e il pontefice. Ludovico Marracci fra cultura islamica e Curia papale (Rome: Carocci editore, 2015). Pp. 207. Studi storici Carocci 224. ISBN: 978 88 430 7380 1.

Reinhold F. Glei and Roberto Tottoli

Ludovico Marracci at Work. The Evolution of his Latin Translation of the Qur'ān in the Light of his Newly Discovered Manuscripts, with an Edition and a Comparative Linguistic Analysis of Sura 18 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016). Pp. 188. Corpus Islamo-Christianum. Series Arabica-Latina 1. ISBN: 978 3 447 10551 4.

For well over two centuries Ludovico Marracci was associated solely with his greatest achievement, the bilingual, Arabic-Latin, edition of the Koran which appeared in Padua in 1698, *Alcorani textus universus*. Many Arabists agreed that it was by far the best translation to date, and even those who thought they could improve on it remained profoundly influenced by it until well into the nineteenth century. Little attention was paid to the other aspects of Marracci's long career: his professorship of Arabic at the Sapienza, his part in editing the Arabic Bible for the Propaganda Fide, his role in the Congregation of the Index, his influence as confessor to Pope Innocent XI, and his other hagiographical and polemical publications. Even where his translation of the Koran was concerned, scholars limited themselves to studying the published text.

Timid attempts were made more recently to delve a little more deeply into Marracci's life and work, but the true advance has taken place within the last few years and is due largely to Roberto Tottoli's discovery of fifteen manuscripts belonging to Marracci and held at his convent of the Clerks Regular of the Mother of God at Santa Maria in Campitelli in Rome. The manuscripts, admittedly, are all connected with his great translation, but an impetus was nevertheless given to the study of the man and his career. One most rewarding result is *Il Corano e il pontefice. Ludovico Marracci fra cultura islamica e Curia papale* edited by Gian Luca d'Errico, containing nine papers originally delivered at a conference held in Rome in November 2012 and at another conference held in Lucca in December 2013. Here, for the first time, we have answers to many of the questions raised by Marracci's activities.

The editor, Gian Luca d'Errico, deals with Marracci's work for the Congregation of the Index. Marracci, like many of the men involved, occasionally found himself having to cope with the rivalry between religious orders. Sympathetic to the Jesuits, Marracci was liable to meet with opposition from the Dominicans. He thus gave a positive judgement of the *Lucubratio*, the work of an elderly Jesuit, Alberto Aberti, but, thanks to the machinations of the Order

of Preachers, his opinion was overridden; Alberti died without ever seeing his work in print. Generally, however, Marracci's judgements were taken into account—an example is the *Domenicale* by the Capuchin Mario De Bignoni, published in Venice in 1661 and placed on the Index in 1673. Marracci objected to the idea that baptism administered without the due sense of reverence was valid, and he held that it could not even be absolved with the sacrament of penance. Another example is the *Stati dell'oratione mentale* by the Ursuline Maria Bon which suggested that faith alone (without hope and charity) was infused by baptism. The work was placed on the Index in 1676. From this discussion of his part in the Congregation of the Index, Marracci emerges as a man of independent judgement with a strong sense of orthodoxy which he did not always share with all his colleagues.

New ground is also broken by Francesco Bustaffa in his article on Marracci as the confessor of Innocent XI. The reports about Marracci's relations with the pope are, admittedly, by no means always objective. Marracci was known for his opposition to the French on certain issues, and it is from French reports that we gather that the pope, to begin with at least, had considerable contempt for his confessor. At the same time Marracci was critical of the pope and his circle, believing them to be too strict when it came to morals, to overlook the perils of Jansenism, to be hostile to the Jesuits, and not to share his own fierce opposition to Quietism. In the last years of Innocent's life, however, Marracci's influence on him seems to have increased, even if the pope deliberately neglected his confessor's advice about dismissing his minister Lorenzo Casoni.

In the first article in this collection (by Ignazio Del Punta) there is a tendency to present Marracci as inclined to toleration and to play down his strong hostility to the Jews in his posthumous work *L'ebreo preso per le buone* which appeared in 1701. The work is studied more closely, however, by Luca Andreoni, who shows that Marracci's claims to debate the matter amicably and with moderation are soon submerged by violent attacks against the Talmud and the Jewish tradition. The work, he argues, forms a prelude to the ever harsher treatment of the Jews by the Roman Inquisition in the course of the eighteenth century.

Another question raised by the career of Marracci is the extraordinarily long time it took him to publish his translation of the Koran. He had, after all, started working on it in 1674 and seems to have completed it not very much later. Not until 1691, however, did the typography of the Propaganda Fide in Rome publish his *Prodromus*, a detailed confutation of the Koran, and it was only in 1698 that, thanks to Cardinal Gregorio Barbarigo, he had the actual text of the Koran published by Barbarigo's oriental press in Padua. So what

happened? There has been much speculation. Was Innocent XI, who died in 1689, opposed to the publication? The Koran, after all, had been condemned repeatedly in a variety of Indexes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The matter is at last tackled by Giovanni Pizzorusso. His main sources are Marracci's correspondence with Magliabechi in Florence and the archives of the Propaganda Fide and of the Holy Office in Rome. Marracci's first requests to the Congregation of the Index, dating from 1677, met with incomprehension ('Mahomettani' was strangely transcribed as 'Mainotti') and systematic procrastination. By 1684 objections had accumulated, and the pope, 'sempre più disposto a negare che a concedere', as Pizzorusso puts it, did nothing to support his confessor. At the end of August 1684 the Holy Office refused permission to publish. In October the inquisitors changed their minds as the result of an appeal. In 1688 Marracci seems to have given up hope, but in 1689 the cardinals modified their position and, in the course of 1690, permission was granted to print the *Prodromus*. When it came to obtaining authorisation to publish the text of the Koran, however, the difficulties were renewed; the members of the Congregation of the Index found that the reasons given by Marracci in defence of his edition were unconvincing. The edition of the Koran, it was objected, could never serve to convert the Muslims to Christianity. If anything, a confutation of the work should be published in Turkish. By now, moreover, Marracci regarded his prospective edition as a contribution to learned discussions about Islam rather than as a vehicle of use to missionaries. There is little documentation about the intervening period. Yet not only was approval at last given, but the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Ambrosian Library in Milan were joined by the Vatican in providing Barbarigo with Arabic types.

Il Corano e il pontefice contains an article by Roberto Tottoli which can serve as an introduction to the study he has published together with Reinhold Gleis, *Ludovico Marracci at Work*. At Santa Maria in Campitelli, Tottoli, as we saw, discovered fifteen manuscripts connected with Marracci's translation of the Koran. These include copies of the *tafsīr*, the Muslim commentaries on the Koran which were so important for Marracci's edition, and different drafts of the translation itself. The existence of these manuscripts has enabled Tottoli and Gleis to provide a detailed reconstruction of how Marracci actually went to work. He started off with a copy of the *tafsīr* by the tenth-century Andalusian commentator Ibn Abi Zamanīn. It was a Maghrebi manuscript which had probably been acquired by Cardinal Camillo Massimo on a visit to Spain and had then entered the library of the Propaganda Fide from which Marracci borrowed it. Of it Marracci made two transcriptions, adding in the margins a first draft of his translation as well as exegetical notes. But although Marracci would

indeed refer to the *tafsīr* of Ibn Abī Zamanīn in his edition, it is apparent from the manuscript that it was not Ibn Abī Zamanīn's commentary that interested him so much as the actual text of the Koran, with its division into suras and verses, included in the *tafsīr*. A further manuscript has an entire Latin translation, with glosses in the text and notes in the margins, and reveals Marracci's preference from the outset for the considerably later *tafsīr* compiled by the Egyptian scholars al-Maḥālli and al-Sūyūṭī (known as the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*). He incorporated substantial sections of it in his translation.

From the different versions of Marracci's translation it is possible, Tottoli and Gleis show, to follow a highly interesting development. To begin with, the translation was in a perfectly standardised Latin, but as Marracci became increasingly familiar with a larger number of commentaries—those of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Tha'labī—and immersed himself ever more deeply in the Koran, so his 'Latin style became increasingly Arabic', imitating Arabic syntax and sentence structures, and, we might add, often proving highly effective in capturing the concision of the original.

The tables and commentaries with which *Ludovico Marracci at Work* ends contain Sura 18 in Arabic (transcribed), a word-by-word English translation, George Sale's English version, and two different versions of the Latin, the printed one and an earlier one. They enable us to follow Marracci's development step by step. But was Marracci satisfied with the work printed in Padua shortly before his death? Hardly. For, rather than using the version of the Arabic which he himself had so painstakingly pieced together, the printers took the Arabic text from Koranic manuscripts held in Padua. Marracci was only allowed to correct it in proofs. This is probably why, in his posthumous *L'ebreo preso con le buone*, he wrote that typographers and correctors had ruined his work.

Il Corano e il pontefice and *Ludovico Marracci at Work* are a gigantic step forward in the study of Marracci and, more generally, of Arabic studies in the seventeenth century. The two works have answered many questions, but others remain. We still do not know exactly how Marracci, who never set foot outside Italy, came to be such an accomplished Arabist. He allegedly learnt the language from Maronites in Rome, but we are left wondering who these were, when they taught him, and how. And then there is the question of Marracci's correspondence. His letters to Magliabechi survive, but he seems to have corresponded with many orientalists in the Republic of Letters. Tantalising remarks by Andreas Acoluthus in Breslau, for example, show that he imparted his criticisms of the *Alcorani textus universus* to Marracci, and that a lengthy correspondence ensued. But no trace of it has come to light. We can only hope that other scholars, endowed with the same skill, perseverance, and good fortune

which enabled Roberto Tottoli to make his revolutionary discoveries, may one day carry Marracci studies still further.

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