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LIAS SPECIAL ISSUE: EMPIRES OF KNOWLEDGE: HOW OTTOMAN SCHOLARSHIP SHAPED ORIENTAL STUDIES IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

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Early modern Europe saw an unprecedented level of linguistic and scholarly activity in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. The engagement with languages of the East and works written in them came in many different forms including the study of religious, scientific, literary and philosophical texts, and the printing of the first dictionaries, grammars and phrasebooks of these languages. The three articles in this special issue consider the central role of Ottoman scholarly practices in the development of Oriental studies in Europe through the medium of books. We take into account the Oriental manuscripts brought to Europe from the Ottoman Empire and the printed editions produced in Europe as the result of the study of those manuscripts.

The staggering abundance of Turkish-language books copied and annotated by Western scholarly hands that are found in public, university and private collections around the globe and the near total disregard of these materials in current scholarship suggest that the intriguing history of Oriental studies in early modern Europe is yet to be written in earnest. It is simply untrue that there was little interest in the Turkish source texts or that Turkish was immaterial, as suggested by some experts in the field, such as Gerald Toomer and Noel Malcolm. In fact, some of the celebrated Orientalists and many others whose names are now forgotten were not only able to read Turkish but also utilised Turkish scholarly works extensively while preparing the European editions of the canonical texts from the Islamic world. A select few have even produced original works such as Ottoman histories, as well as grammars and dictionaries of Turkish.

This special issue challenges the existing assumption that the rise of European Orientalism was an independent deciphering of Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts without recourse to the vast resources of Ottoman scholarship. On the contrary, we argue that early modern Orientalism was, to a large extent, shaped by the work of Ottoman lexicographers and commentary writers. The findings presented in this issue show us that there was more to European Orientalism than refuting the Qur'ān in print or reading Avicenna in Arabic from the 1593 Rome

edition, although even these very pursuits were enhanced by the use of manuscript Ottoman Turkish commentaries, glossaries and lexica.¹ Our extensive research on hitherto unpublished material reveal that European Orientalists held the work of their Ottoman counterparts in high esteem and heavily depended on Turkish sources in their own studies and writings. The essays collectively fill an important gap in our understanding of the European knowledge of, and attitudes towards, Ottoman scholarship.

The history of Orientalism in early modern Europe has gained popularity in the last three decades and the field received many more worthy contributions since the mid-1990s than ever before. Yet the discussion so far has largely concentrated around the study of Arabic with much less emphasis on Turkish and Persian. There are some exceptions to this tendency, such as Hannah Neudecker's work on the Bible translations by Yahyā ibn Ishāq and 'Alī Ufķī Beg (Albertus Bobovius);² Paula Orsatti's articles on the European attitudes to the Persian language and the beginnings of Persian studies in Leiden;³ and Jan Schmidt's study of the Heyman papers, two volumes of documents mainly relating to early Dutch-Ottoman diplomatic relations collected in the eighteenth

¹ For instance, the humanist scholar Joseph Scaliger and the French physician and Orientalist Étienne Hubert used Turkish dictionaries to read the Qur'ān and the *Canon*, as shown in Nil Palabiyik, 'The Last Letter from Étienne Hubert to Joseph Scaliger: Oriental Languages and Scholarly Collaboration in Seventeenth-Century Europe', *Lias: Journal of Early Modern Intellectual Culture and its Sources*, vol. 45:1, 2018, pp. 113-143.

² H. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible Translation by Yahya bin 'Ishaq, also called Haki (1659)*, Leiden, 1994; id., 'Wojciech Bobowski and his Turkish Grammar (1666): A Dragoman and Musician at the Court of Sultan Mehmed IV', *Dutch Studies on Near Eastern Languages and Literatures*, vol. 2, 1996, pp. 169-92; id., 'Ordinal Numbers in Bobowski's Turkish Bible translation (1662-1664)', *Folia Orientalia*, vol. 36, 2000, pp. 219-225; idem, 'From Istanbul to London? Albertus Bobovius' Appeal to Isaac Basire' in: A. Hamilton, M. van den Boogert and B. Westerweel, eds, *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, Leiden and Boston, 2005, pp. 173-196. On Bobovius's music manuscripts and his Turkish Psalter, see C. Behar, *Ali Ufki ve Mezmurlar*, Istanbul, 2013. On his medical knowledge, see J. I. Haug, 'Medical Knowledge in 'Alī Ufuķī's *Musical Notebook* (Mid-17th Century)', *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, vol. 6, 2018, pp. 117-143.

³ P. Orsatti, 'The Judaeo-Persian Pentateuch of Constantinople and the Beginnings of Persian Linguistic Studies in Europe', in: Sh. Shaked and A. Netzer, eds, *Irano-Judaica IV. Studies Relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture throughout the Ages, Jerusalem, 3-6 July 1994*, Jerusalem, 1999, pp. 170-178; idem, "'Turco" e "persiano" nell' Europa del Rinascimento e la questione della lingua franca in Asia', in: U. Marazzi, ed., *Turcica et Islamica. Studi in memoria di Aldo Gallotta*, Napoli, 2003, vol. 2, pp. 677-705; idem, 'Prodromi degli studi europei sul persiano nel Rinascimento', in: M. Tavoni et. al., eds, *Italia ed Europa nella linguistica del Rinascimento, Atti del Convegno internazionale Ferrara, 20-24 marzo 1991*, Ferrara-Modena, 1996, vol. 2, pp. 551-567.

century by the Leiden Orientalist Johannes Heyman (1667-1737).⁴ Although very important in their own right, these handful of studies cover only a fraction of the Turkish and Persian material in Western European libraries.

As previous historians of Renaissance Orientalism largely focussed on Arabic to the exclusion of Persian and Turkish, they developed the erroneous idea that early modern orientalists were only interested in Arabic, and learnt it almost exclusively through Christian texts. Their interest was allegedly largely theological, driven by a desire to compare biblical Hebrew with the major semitic language of the time, Arabic. It is true that Arabic was termed the ‘handmaiden of theology (*ancilla Theologiae*)’ by some of the leading professors of the time; and equally true that leading figures such as Thomas Erpenius, Johann Melchior Mader and Christian Ravius argued in their orations that Arabic ought to be studied in part because it can help with understanding the Hebrew of the Bible.⁵ Theology was, however, only one of the many and variegated interests of the Renaissance polymaths that this special issue considers. Their private studies encompassed lexicology, etymology, poetry, paroemiology (study of proverbs), philosophy, astronomy, medicine, geography, geology, and arts and crafts. In printed discourse, we also find the idea that knowledge of Arabic will help convert the infidels or gain commercial and political advantage over Muslims. The annotated manuscripts, correspondence and private papers from European archives, however, tell a story of curiosity and cooperation rather than prejudice and conflict between European scholars and their Ottoman counterparts.

In his influential *Eastern Wisdom and Learning* (1996), Toomer argued that Arabic was the language that was most useful to Europeans who increasingly engaged with the Ottoman Empire. He asserted that the ‘two factors favouring the study of Arabic in Europe’ were (1) the European involvement with the Ottoman Empire through wars and trade, and (2) the missionary activities in the Middle East.⁶ On reflection, however, neither point does make much sense.

⁴ J. Schmidt, ‘Between Author and Library Shelf: The Intriguing History of Some Middle Eastern Manuscripts Acquired by Public Collections in the Netherlands prior to 1800’, in: A. Hamilton, M. van den Boogert and B. Westerweel, eds, *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, Leiden and Boston, 2005, pp. 27-51; id., ‘An Ostrich Egg for Goliath: the John Rylands MS Persian 913 and the History of Early Modern Contacts between the Dutch Republic and the Islamic World’ in: id., ed., *The Joys of Philology: Studies in Ottoman Literature, History and Orientalism (1500-1923)*, Istanbul, 2002, vol 2, pp. 9-74.

⁵ A. Vrolijk, ‘Arabic Studies in the Netherlands and the Prerequisite of Social Impact – A Survey’ in *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by J. Loop, A. Hamilton and Ch. Burnett, Leiden and Boston, 2017, pp. 13-32 (15).

⁶ G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England*, Oxford, 1996, p. 14.

When Europeans engaged in diplomacy and trade with the Ottoman Empire, they communicated almost exclusively in Turkish through local dragomans or specially-trained language assistants to ambassadors and consuls. Arabic, on the other hand, would only be of use for the individual merchant trading directly with local partners in Syria, Egypt and North Africa, and only after obtaining necessary permits from the Turkish authorities.

Turkish was the official language of the Ottoman Empire in which most diplomatic correspondence was conducted, trade agreements drafted, and privileges to foreigners bestowed. Turkish was spoken by Christian, Jewish and Muslim subjects of the Empire scattered across the Balkans, Anatolia and the Levant. Other local languages of the Empire varied across the regions: Greek was spoken widely in the Balkans, Constantinople and Asia Minor alongside other local languages of those regions such as Bosnian and Albanian, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) and Armenian.⁷ In Thessaloniki, for instance, the dominant spoken languages from early sixteenth century onwards were Greek, Turkish and Ladino, owing to the cosmopolitan nature of this port city with its original Orthodox Greek population and the later Turkish and Sephardic Jewish settlers. Venetian Italian had a specific importance in the capital Constantinople, especially in its Galata quarter, as a *lingua franca* between the European agents themselves, and in their dealings with the local authorities.

This can be illustrated by two examples. First, when the English Ambassador Thomas Roe (in office 1621-1628) communicated with the Patriarch Cyril Lucaris, the spiritual and administrative head of the populous Greek Orthodox *millet* of the Empire, he did so in Italian.⁸ Roe acted not only as the representative of the King James I and the Levant Company in Constantinople but also as an agent sourcing manuscripts, coins and ancient artefacts to many important patrons in England including the king himself and Archbishop George Abbot. Roe was instrumental in the acquisition of the *Codex Alexandrinus*,

⁷ On the linguistic diversity of the Ottoman Empire, see Ch. Woodhead, 'Ottoman Languages', in: *The Ottoman World*, ed. by Ch. Woodhead, London, 2012, pp. 143-158. For later centuries, see the work of Johann Strauss, especially his 'Linguistic diversity and everyday life in the Ottoman cities of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans (late 19th-early 20th century)', *The History of the Family*, 16:2 (2011), pp. 126-141 and 'The Millets and the Ottoman Language: The Contribution of Ottoman Greeks to Ottoman Letters (19th-20th Centuries)', *Die Welt des Islams* 35:2 (1995), pp. 189-249.

⁸ See the hastily written notes from Lucaris to Roe on the matter of a Greek printing press and the confiscation of it by the authorities are deposited in London, National Archives, SP 97/13, fol. 74; SP 97/14 fols 1-4, 13-16, 19-24, 33-40; 43-45 etc. On the Greek press of Constantinople, see N. Palabiyik, 'An Early Case of the Printer's Self-Censorship', *The Library*, 7th series, 16:4 (2015), pp. 381-404.

a fifth-century uncial Greek Bible, now one of the most prized items at the British Library.

Second, the Leiden printer and orientalist scholar Justus Raphelengius (1573-1628) used Italian as a means to understand the *Tales of Naşreddin Hōcā* (*Hikāyāt-ı Naşreddin Hōcā*), a collection of humerous folk tales. He stayed in Constantinople in the early seventeenth-century in order to learn Turkish, and it was there that he purchased a manuscript of the *Tales of Naşreddin Hōcā*. He annotated this manuscript in Italian, and produced a Latin translation for publication on the basis of these Italian annotations. He evidently read the manuscript with a teacher who provided him with Italian summaries of the Turkish prose text.⁹ Therefore, although Arabic was the most important scholarly language in the Ottoman Empire, it was not the language of diplomacy, bureaucracy or trade, and not a commonly-spoken language in most of it—with the exception of North Africa, Syria and Egypt; but even there, the ruling classes corresponded and operated in Turkish.

The usefulness of Classical Arabic, the register of the language that European scholars aspired to acquire, for missionary activities across the Ottoman Empire is equally dubious. The two major Christian *millets* of the Empire were the Greek- and Armenian-speaking Orthodox and Catholic communities of the Balkans and Asia Minor. The liturgical languages in these regions were Slavonic, Greek and Armenian, while Coptic, Syriac and Arabic were in use in South-east Anatolia, Antioch, Syria, the Arab Peninsula and Egypt. The singular focus on Arabic as a language for missionary activity seems misplaced.

The same can be said about the disproportionate scholarly attention that has been devoted to the influence of a small number of Arabic-speaking Christian visitors to Western Europe in Toomer's own research and elsewhere.¹⁰ The eyewitness accounts and correspondence of figures such as Niqūlāwus ibn Butrus (Nicolaus Petri), a Greek Orthodox Christian deacon, and Šāhīn Qandī, an Armenian Christian merchant, both from Aleppo (Ḥalab), and both of whom acted as copyists for Jacobus Golius at Leiden University, have been taken at face value

⁹ Now Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS Marsh 47. On this manuscript, see N. Palabıyık, 'Justus Raphelengius (1573-1628) and Turkish Folk Tales', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139:2, 2019, pp. 333-359.

¹⁰ H. Kilpatrick and G.J. Toomer, 'Niqūlāwus al-Ḥalabī (c. 1611-c. 1661): A Greek Orthodox Syrian copyist and his letters to Poccocke and Golius', *Lias*, vol. 43:1, 2016, pp. 1-159; Alistair Hamilton, 'An Egyptian Traveller in the Republic of Letters: Josephus Barbatus or Abudacnus the Copt', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 57, 1994, pp. 123-150; Pier Mattio Tommasino, 'Bulghaith al-Darawi and Barthélemy d'Herbelot: Readers of the Qur'an in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10, 2018, pp. 94-120; Schmidt, 'Between Author and Library Shelf' and 'An Ostrich Egg' (both as in n. 4).

and their contribution to Oriental studies has been overplayed. Given that these visitors from the East have been obliged to leave the Ottoman Empire due to financial loss and lack of new career opportunities for them, and came to Europe in hopes of making a living there, relying on their personal statements with regards to their scholarly competence would be naive at best. When there were very few Arabic-speakers in Western Europe, they filled a void for professional language teachers and copyists as best as they could and as long as their employment provided adequate sustenance. They were not necessarily the most competent linguists nor the authorities on lexicology or grammar as they were expected to be by their European employers. Erpenius commented on how Yūsuf ibn Abū Daqn (Josephus Barbatus or Abudacnus), a Coptic Christian from Egypt, was unable to read Classical Arabic but only useful in teaching him the vocabulary of the Egyptian dialect.¹¹ Hamilton reminds us, too, that Barbatus was modest about his knowledge of languages and the education he received in Egypt in a letter that he wrote to Joseph Scaliger.¹²

According to Toomer's view, the Ottoman Empire was merely a political and military power, a bureaucratic machine with which the Western European states engaged at a diplomatic level to form alliances or to enable trade and other commercial activities in its vast territories. The collecting of manuscripts and artefacts, and learning of languages was a by-product of this one-sided relationship. Surprisingly, this narrow and simplistic interpretation of the role of the Ottoman Empire within the intellectual climate of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century has become the blueprint for many studies since.

This special issue argues against this view. Oriental studies in Europe did not arise as an internally-fuelled scholarly endeavour, an independent inquiry unaffected by the scholarly traditions in the Ottoman Empire. The scholarly output of European Orientalists was not merely the consequence of Renaissance thought and the Enlightenment. Humanist scholars in Europe did not decipher Arabic texts independently, or perhaps helped by visitors from the Ottoman Empire. We need to pay attention to the influence and intellectual legacy of the rich, multilingual and diverse scholarly communities of the Ottoman Empire and their works. The Ottoman learned practices, which mostly centred on Turkish-language translations, explications, commentaries and glosses, had an important bearing on the European understanding of those texts. Eminent historians have falsely assumed that Ottoman scholarship was ignored by humanist scholars in the same way that they have dismissed it, owing, perhaps, to subject bias and a

¹¹ Hamilton, 'An Egyptian Traveller' (as in n. 9), p. 128.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

lack of competence in Ottoman Turkish. Some, such as Noel Malcolm, have gone so far as to say that early modern Western readers saw Ottoman culture as a ‘nonintellectual, nonliterary’ one, only worthy of study for the ancient and medieval past that its territories geographically occupied.¹³ He could only arrive at this conclusion, because he accepted at face value the most extreme examples of hot propaganda that appeared in popular printed pamphlets.

Malcolm cites the ‘eyewitness’ accounts of Guillaume Postel, Bartholomew Georgević, Pierre Belon and Nicolas de Nicolay as the ‘canonical texts’ that gave Europeans ‘a detailed picture of Islamic life and practice, drawn from direct observation’.¹⁴ With the exception of Postel, none of these travellers to the East engaged with Oriental languages or the local culture in a meaningful way. The Turkish words and phrases quoted by them can only impress someone who has never heard Turkish. Frédéric Tinguely has discussed at length that these popular travel accounts had no didactic purpose and the Turkish and Arabic quotes were employed for ‘exotic’ effect. The phonetic representations of the strange sounds from this unfamiliar country gave credit to the authors and helped them gain popularity and financial profit.¹⁵ The readers at home wanted to ‘experience’ how living among Muslims would have felt without the effort and expense of travelling. These popular books, mostly printed in the vernacular, enabled European readers to entertain themselves and to get a taste of the East on the cheap and without any linguistic skill. Yet, according to Malcolm’s view, these works ‘commanded much respect’. But did they really?

One of the authors Malcolm quotes is Bartholomew Georgijević who allegedly lived among the Turks as a slave. There is no biographical information available on Georgijević other than his own writings. One of the popular printed tracts published under his name is *De afflictione tam captivorum quam etiam sub Turcae tributo viventium Christianorum* (On the suffering of the prisoners and Christians living under Turkish rule). It is a dramatic and touching first-person account of his life as a slave under several Ottoman masters and his determination to keep his Christian faith intact, and a critique of the the poll tax (*cizye*), which Christians and Jews had to pay to their Muslim rulers. Another tract Georgijević authored is *Exhortatio contra Turcas*, a fine specimen of propaganda literature. In it he laments the fact that superior and better-armed Christians are

¹³ N. Malcolm, ‘The Study of Islam in Early Modern Europe: Obstacles and Missed Opportunities’, in: P. N. Miller and F. Louis, eds, *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500-1800*, Ann Arbor, MI, 2012, pp. 265-288 (278).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ F. Tinguely, *L’écriture du Levant à la Renaissance: enquête sur les voyageurs français dans l’Empire de Soliman le Magnifique*, Genève, 2000, pp. 244-246.

still defeated by ‘ignorant and stupid’ Muslims. To quote just a short passage that gives a flavour of his rhetoric:

Nunc quaeso quas [sic] gentes secum in expeditionem trahant Scythas et Thraces, in quibus non sapientia Italica, aut Hispanica calliditas, sed inhumana quaedam feritas, barbaries, animi summa inscitia, indocta, stolidi: istis se addit Graecus ignavia perditus, Asiaticus luxu corruptissimus, Aegyptius non minus animo quam corpore euiratus, Arabs excoctus, minutus, et exanguis.

I now ask this: what peoples would lead the Scythians and Thracians into battle, who lack Italian know-how and Spanish cunning? Rather, they somehow are like wild beasts, barbarians, totally mindless and ignorant, uneducated and stupid. They are joint by lazy and useless Greeks, self-indulgent and extremely depraved Asians, Egyptians who are equally effeminate in mind and body, and dried up, shrivelled, and bloodless Arabs.¹⁶

Georgijević certainly does not paint a disinterested picture as Malcolm suggests. The register of his Latin is not on par with the ‘real’ Orientalists of the age, either. Even this short passage contains a rather basic error (*quas* [accusative] for *quae* [nominative]). But Latin was not his only weakness.

Malcolm would have us believe that ‘captives’ such as Georgijević ‘became fluent in Turkish and could thus converse easily with Muslims’. The only piece of ‘evidence’ that we have on Georgijević the Pilgrim’s expertise on all things Turkish is a six-sheet octavo pamphlet entitled *De Turcarum ritu et caeremoniis* (On the religious practices and festivals of the Turks)¹⁷ and its numerous re-iterations in vernacular languages that circulated everywhere in continental Europe throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This hastily put together pamphlet on the religion, education, ceremonies, military formation, agriculture and production in the Empire is dotted with basic Turkish vocabulary and simple phrases that might have helped an aspiring traveller or merchant to greet someone in Turkish or point out to a food item and say its name. A word-list of 214 thematically arranged nouns, adjectives and verbs is appended to the pamphlet.¹⁸ This is followed by a fictitious dialogue between an interrogating Turk and a Christian merchant travelling to Constantinople, which ends with a sigh of relief on the part of the Christian: ‘Ben kurtuldom tsoch succur Allaha (I have been spared, thank God)’.¹⁹ The Turkish text of the dialogue contains many persistent grammatical

¹⁶ B. Georgijević, *Exhortatio contra Turcas*, Antwerp: [no publisher], 1545, without signatures or page numbers.

¹⁷ B. Georgijević, *De Turcarum ritu et caeremoniis*, Antwerp: Gregorius Bontius, 1544.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, sigs E2v-F1r.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. F2r.

errors most notably in the use of the possessive suffix *-(i)m* (first person singular) for *-(i)n̄* (second person singular) as in *issum for işiñ*; *gioldassum* for *yoldasıñ* and *iataghom* for *yatağıñ*.²⁰ The Turkish elements in this pamphlet show that Georgijević was unable to converse in Turkish, nor would his readers be able to do so after reading the book. In his epistle to the reader, he swears that he ‘pursued the naked truth’ and he never ‘consulted any writer on Turkish matters’.²¹ This we believe, for this book could not be the result of a scholarly inquiry requiring consultation of original sources. The likes of Georgijević, who should normally be seen as representatives of popular literature aimed at the pious poor, unfortunately inform the historiography of Turkish learning in Europe in our times.

Another example of a poor quality printed source that has so far been hailed as canonical is the *Institutionum linguae turcicae libri quatuor* (The Principles of the Turkish Language in Four Books) self-published by the German linguist, historian and poet laureate Hieronymus Megiser (c. 1554-1619) in 1612.²² According to antiquarian book expert Leonora Navari it is ‘a landmark in Turkish Studies’²³ while Rijk Smitskamp refers to it as ‘the first full-fledged Turkish grammar to be published in Europe’.²⁴ And it is not just those in the rare book trade: the Leipzig academic Heidi Stein devoted a considerable part of her career to studying the pronunciation of seventeenth-century Anatolian Turkish through Megiser’s transcribed texts without ever wondering how this book came into being.²⁵ Meanwhile, all the evidence suggests that Megiser had no knowledge of Turkish. Half of Megiser’s *Institutiones*, the first two books on orthography and grammar, was copied from a manuscript he received from Constantinople and printed by the Breslau physician

²⁰ I discuss the writings of Georgijević and the Turkish elements therein in the first chapter of my forthcoming monograph, *Silent Teachers: Turkish Books in Europe 1544-1680*.

²¹ Georgijević, *De Turcarum* (as in n. 15), sig. F4r: ‘Nam sanctè deierare possum, nudam veritatem me sectatum esse, nullo Turcicarum rerum scriptore inspecto.’

²² H. Megiser, *Institutionum linguae turcicae libri quatuor*, Leipzig: Megiser, 1612.

²³ L. Navari, *The Ottoman World: The Library of Şefik E. Atabey* [auction catalogue], 3 vols, London, 2002, vol. 2, p. 102.

²⁴ R. Smitskamp, *Philologia Orientalis: a description of books illustrating the study and printing of Oriental languages in Europe*, 3 vols, Leiden, 1976-1991, no. 346.

²⁵ See H. Stein, *Der türkische Transkriptionstext des Hieronymus Megiser. Ein Beitrag zur Sprachgeschichte des Osmanisch-Türkischen*. PhD Thesis, University of Leipzig, 1975; id., ‘Eine türkische Sprichwortsammlung des 17. Jahrhunderts’, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 38.1, 1984, pp. 55-104; id., ‘Zur Frage der gegenseitigen Abhängigkeit türkischer Transkriptionstexte’ in: C. Wunsch, ed., *XXV. Deutscher Orientalistentag vom 8. bis 13.04.1991 in München. Vorträge (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft Suppl. 10)*, Stuttgart, 1994, pp. 203-214; id., ‘Die *Institutionum linguae turcicae libri IV* als türkisches Sprachdenkmal’, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, vol. 22, 2004, pp. 75-105, all of which analyse the contents of Megiser’s grammar to trace certain linguistic phenomena in the development of seventeenth-century Anatolian Turkish.

and Orientalist Peter Kirsten with Arabic type. The manuscript work was composed by the Carinthian nobleman Hector von Ernau who mastered Turkish in the six years he spent in Constantinople. Megiser's plagiarism was evidenced by the account of the Arabist Johann Melchior Mader which appeared both in print and in his heavily annotated copy of the in the *Institutiones*.²⁶ Mader, who met Erpenius in Leiden and delivered his own oration in favour of learning Arabic as he started teaching in Augsburg, corrected the many errors Megiser committed in the last two books. This part containing a collection of Turkish proverbs and a dictionary in transcribed Turkish incorporates material from earlier printed sources including Georgijević. Megiser only compiled this Turkish grammar, yet he took credit for the work of others when he published the edition privately at his own expense.²⁷ Perhaps not surprisingly, Megiser's book was fairly inconsequential and did not garner much interest from any contemporary Orientalist other than Mader who perused the edition to expose Megiser, then a deceased colleague and no longer a threat, as a fraud. Among the fifty odd surviving copies I encountered in the leading university and research libraries around the world, I have not come across another copy with noteworthy annotations. Even those who wrote Turkish grammars in later decades were unaware of Megiser's grammar. When André du Ryer wrote the preface to his *Rudimenta grammatices linguae Turcicae* (Basics of the Grammar of Turkish Language) in 1630, he genuinely believed that he was publishing the first Turkish grammar in Europe.²⁸ It is hard to fathom why no scholar ever questioned the sudden and inexplicable flourishing of Turkish in Megiser in 1612 and its equally abrupt languishing immediately after. Why did so many credit him with writing the first printed grammar of Turkish just because the cover of his vanity publication said so, especially when it was already convincingly argued, as early as 1949, that Megiser had also plagiarised his most famous work, *Annales Carinthiae*?²⁹

²⁶ J. M. Mader, *Equestria, sive de arte equitandi*, Segoduni [Würzburg?]: Simon Halbmayer, 1621, sigs D2v-D3r. Mader's annotated copy of the *Institutiones* is now with Inlibris Gilhofer antiquarian bookshop in Vienna, awaiting a buyer. I thank Paul Quarrie of Maggs Books, London for allowing me to inspect the copy in the summer of 2015 when it was in their stock. I am also grateful to Alastair Hamilton for putting me in touch with Paul shortly before.

²⁷ I discuss Megiser's plagiarism of the Austrian nobleman Hector von Ernau's Turkish grammar and his appropriation of other printed material in the third chapter of my forthcoming monograph, *Silent Teachers: Turkish Books in Early Modern Europe*.

²⁸ A. Hamilton and F. Richard, *André du Ryer and Oriental Studies in Seventeenth-Century France*, London, 2004, p. 65.

²⁹ H. Megiser, *Annales Carinthiae: Das ist Chronica Des Löblichen Ertzhertzogthumbs Kharndten*, Leipzig: Abraham Lamberg, 1612. On how Megiser claimed authorship of it although it was mostly compiled by the Protestant priest Michael Gotthard Christalnack, see K. Großmann, 'Megiser, Christalnack und die Annales Carinthiae', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 57.3-4, 1949, pp. 359-374.

When books such as these constituted the majority of the small corpus of Turkish works printed in the seventeenth-century and comprehensive dictionaries such as those compiled by the Leiden scholars Jacobus Golius and Anton Deusing, discussed in the first article in this special issue, remained in manuscript, it makes little sense to write the history of Turkish learning and teaching only through printed editions. Why have these unreliable printed sources informed our understanding of Oriental studies in its formative period and why do the populist sentiments about Muslims in these sources continue to be quoted in the context of the study of Islam by humanist scholars?

It has long been shown by historians of early modern reading practices such as Donald McKenzie, Adrian Johns and David McKitterick, and more recently by Julia Boffey, that manuscripts remained in regular use even after the advent of printing.³⁰ They played a crucial role in the transmission of scholarly knowledge. Studies by Ann Blair, William Sherman and others have examined composite volumes incorporating readers' marginalia, pasted notes and inserted pages with handwritten notes suggesting that their owners and readers moved easily between both kinds of material.³¹ Fortunately, very recently the historiography of Oriental letters in Europe has also taken a similar direction. Yet the move from the focus on printed editions to the inclusion of manuscript sources has not only been slow but also extremely selective. Because the history of European Orientalism has so far been written by Renaissance historians rooted in a classical education (mostly in Latin and, to a lesser extent Greek) who have dabbled in classical Arabic, the field has been reduced to 'Arabic Studies in Europe through Latin sources'. These approaches do not reflect the historic reality of Oriental studies in early modern Europe but only the linguistic scope and the training of their students today. The systematic exclusion and dismissal of original source texts from the Ottoman Empire, especially those mainly written in Turkish and Persian, has stilted the development of the historiography of Oriental studies more than anything else.

It is not all doom and gloom for our field, though. The admirable work of Alastair Hamilton, who single-handedly contributed to it more than any other

³⁰ D. F. McKenzie, 'Speech-Manuscript-Print', *Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin*, vol. 20, 1990-1991, pp. 86-109; A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*. Chicago, IL, 1998; D. McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830*. Cambridge, 2003; J. Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London, c. 1475-1530*, London, 2012.

³¹ A. Blair, *Too Much To Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age*, New Haven, 2010; W. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*, Philadelphia, PA, 2008.

scholar, not only gave us a much more accurate and realistic view of Oriental studies in early modern Europe but also opened up new avenues for research. Hamilton repeatedly pointed out to the importance manuscript sources and the study of Oriental languages outside the university circles which have been followed up by the next generation of scholars including Jan Loop, who studied the intellectual legacy of Johann Heinrich Hottinger, and Asaph Ben-Tov, who investigated the teaching of Arabic in schools.³² Hamilton helped us understand the role of native-speakers visiting Europe as, for instance, Vāfir Hüseyn, Yūsuf ibn Daqn and Šāhīn Qandī in assisting Orientalist scholars such as Étienne Hubert, William Bedwell and Jacobus Golius in their readings of theological, philosophical, scientific and literary texts in Turkish, Arabic and Persian, while urging caution about the competence and undue reputation of some of these figures.³³ Most importantly, Hamilton, along with Francis Richard, drew attention to the importance of Turkish sources in their book-length study on André du Ryer, a diplomat and man of letters who gave us the first literary translations of Saʿdī's *Gulistān* and the Qurʾān into French.³⁴ According to Hamilton and Richard, 'the Europeans followed in the footsteps of the Turks' when it came to which lexicographic sources and commentaries to purchase and consult.³⁵ Their meticulous study of Du Ryer's library and annotated manuscripts leaves no doubt that bilingual dictionaries by native-speakers of Turkish such as *Luğat-i Aḥterī*, *Luğat-i Niʿmetullāh* and *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī* were reference works of choice; and that Turkish commentaries by esteemed authors such as Sūdī Bosnevī's *Gūlistān Şerḥi* (studied in detail in the third article in the issue), and Turkish translations such as those by Lāmiʿī constituted the basis of many scholarly European editions of not only Turkish but also Arabic and Persian texts.

The importance of the Ottoman learned practices in the historiography of Orientalism in Europe have recently come to be more widely acknowledged. Jean-Paul Ghobrial, Alexander Bevilacqua and Nathalie Rothman have all stressed the importance of Ottoman sources.³⁶ Yet no academic has so far engaged in

³² J. Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger: Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, 2013; A. Ben-Tov, 'Johann Zechendorf (1580-1662) and the Study of Arabic in Zwickau's Latin School' in: C. Burnett, A. Hamilton and J. Loop, eds, *Teaching and Learning Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden, 2017, pp. 57-92.

³³ Hamilton, 'An Egyptian Traveller' (as in n. 9).

³⁴ A. Hamilton and F. Richard, *André du Ryer* (as in n. 26).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³⁶ J.-P. Ghobrial, 'The Archive of Orientalism and its Keepers: Re-imagining the Histories of Arabic Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present* (2016), Supplement 11, pp. 90-111; A. Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment*, Cambridge, MA, 2018; N. Rothman, 'Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings

earnest with Turkish-language source texts that were perused by European Orientalists. Why do the otherwise thorough and rigorous scholars of our field have nothing to say about the authoritative Turkish dictionaries, commentaries and translations that shaped European Orientalism?

Given the high status of Arabic as the ‘handmaiden’ of biblical Hebrew, as the language of the Qur’ān and the main language of scientific discourse in the Muslim world, it may seem reasonable that the historiography of European Orientalism has concentrated on Arabic teaching. We all acknowledge that learning Arabic was one of the main aims of many European Orientalists. Yet we are never told how this was attained in practice at a time when Constantinople was the first port of call for any Western European who wanted to learn Arabic; when nearly all Arabic books were sourced from the markets of the Ottoman Empire; and when nearly all native-speakers who visited Europe were Ottoman subjects. The bias towards university education when there is ample evidence of language teaching and learning for vocational purposes, and the preoccupation with biblical and scientific material when there was comparable interest in literary texts have tipped the scales in favour of Arabic. One may argue that there were chairs of Arabic at major universities of Europe but no chair of Turkish. It is true that Erpenius wrote an oration on the importance of learning Arabic and not Turkish. In fact, he even argued that, as opposed to the high culture of medieval Arabs, the new rulers of these territories ‘the Turks — a tribe of Scythian barbarians ... neither were nor are lovers of learning’.³⁷ These remarks by Erpenius appeared in print, but did they reflect his own opinions and experience?

After his studies in England and France, Erpenius intended to travel to the East to improve his Arabic, but he never made it past Venice. It seems while awaiting a passage to Constantinople in Venice in 1612, he learned enough Turkish to be able to use standard reference tools such as Arabic-Turkish and Persian-Turkish dictionaries from the Ottoman Empire. In a letter to Isaac Casaubon that year, he also revealed his self-study method which followed the earlier advice

in the Early Modern Mediterranean’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 51:4, 2009, pp. 771-800; ead., ‘Dragomans and “Turkish Literature”: The Making of a Field of Inquiry’, *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 93:2, 2013, pp. 390-421.

³⁷ T. Erpenius, *Orationes tres de linguarum Ebraeae atque Arabicae dignitate*, Leiden: Erpenius, 1621, pp. 51-52: ‘neque enim arbitrari debetis, Auditores, tales eos fuisse, quales qui hodie in Oriente rerum potiuntur sese ostendunt Turcae, gens Schytica, & Barbara, tribus tantum abhinc seculis, cum iam nobile illud regnum Saracenorum disruptum esset, imperium nacta. eam fateor nec fuisse, nec esse eruditionis amantem.’

I used the translation by Robert Jones published in R. Jones, ‘Thomas Erpenius (1584-1624) on the value of the Arabic language, translated from the Latin by Robert Jones’, *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, vol. 1, 1986, pp. 16-25 (18).

of Scaliger: ‘... now I study Turkish in order to know better Arabic’.³⁸ Given his reliance on Turkish to learn Arabic, we should question whether his derogatory remarks on the Turks were Erpenius’s own observations or whether his words echoed those opinions reflected in the Turkish works of Ottoman scholars? After all, Erpenius never lived in the Ottoman Empire, but only learned Turkish through books sourced from there. What opinions on the ‘Turks’ would one find in these books read by Erpenius?

The school and early madrasah education the Ottoman Empire centred on teaching the Qur’ān and the traditions of the Prophet, with additional courses in algebra, geometry, logic and astronomy. In the important centres of learning such as Constantinople, Adrianople and Bursa and throughout the core territories of the Empire including Thrace and Asia Minor, the language of instruction was mainly Turkish. Arabic and Persian *şarf ve naḥiv* (grammar) and vocabulary were taught with the help of bilingual textbooks and dictionaries. Arabic and Persian texts were read with the help of Turkish glossaries, translations, commentaries and explications.³⁹ *Seven Stars (Kevākib-i Seb’a)*, an eighteenth century pamphlet on Ottoman scholarly practices and traditional education, records that the pupils would learn by heart an Arabic-Turkish dictionary, such as *Ferişteoğlu Luğatı*, then move on to memorising a Persian-Turkish dictionary such as the famous *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī*.⁴⁰ These two verse dictionaries were favoured in Europe although most probably not memorised as intended. Other bilingual reference tools that were used with efficiency by the *müderres* (university professors) and were widely available across the Empire, such as *Luğat-i Aḥterī* and *Luğat-i Ni’metullāh* (discussed in detail in the first article in this issue) were also used extensively by pioneering European Orientalists such as Erpenius, Golius, du Ryer and Pococke. In the Turkish prefaces to these textbooks and the bilingual and trilingual reference tools, the authors would present Arabic as the language of religious studies and intellectual sciences while Persian was accepted as the language of poetry and literary production. Many forewords to these scholarly works emphasised the importance of learning Arabic and Persian, with the Arabic language presented as the first and foremost skill an educated Ottoman subject should acquire. The idea that knowledge of one language would aid

³⁸ Quoted from London, British Library, MS Burney 364, fol. 24r in A. Hamilton and F. Richard, *André du Ryer* (as in n. 21), p. 61, and n. 12: ‘Ut linguam Hebraeam solidius intelligerem, coepi olim Arabicam discere; ut Arabicam melius, nunc Turcicam.’

³⁹ On Ottoman madrasah education, see C. İzgi, *Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlim*, 2 vols, Istanbul, 1997.

⁴⁰ N.Ü. Karaarslan, *XVIII. Asrın Ortalarına Kadar Türkiye’de İlim ve İlimiyeye Dâir Bir Eser: Kevākib-i Seb’a Risâlesi*, Ankara, 2015, p. 72.

the learning of the other was already commonplace in the Empire. In fact, the promise of better Arabic skills was often used as an argument for the necessity of learning Persian. Lütfullāh Ḥalīmī, the author of the famous fifteenth-century Persian-Turkish lexicon *Luğat-i Ḥalīmī*, argued that knowledge of Persian vocabulary would aid reading Arabic. Since all good Arabic dictionaries were written in Persian, those who know Persian would learn Arabic easily.⁴¹ Reading Arabic was the most important step, but ultimately it was not possible to attain high office without knowing Persian, as well. When ‘Atfī Aḥmed-i Bosnevī wrote the foreword (*muḥaddime*) to his commentary on the *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī* in 1710, he made it very clear:

After Arabic, learning Persian is necessary to reach the places of importance. Since the immortals of the Ottoman State built the rules of state affairs and rhetoric, and similar matters all around this language, all those who seek and desire to be privy to such knowledge would need a copy of [this Persian-Turkish dictionary].⁴²

There was no mention of Turkish in any of these arguments, mostly because knowledge of Turkish was assumed but also because of the perceived lower status of the vernacular language.

Then there is the whole issue of what exactly was meant by the words ‘Turk’ and ‘Turkish’ in the Ottoman context. It was a common trope in Ottoman court poetry and elite literature to denigrate the vocal qualities of the Turkish language and to argue that it would be impossible to write beautiful verses unless one embellished the vernacular with Arabic and Persian vocabulary and constructions. An Ottoman *literatus*, just like Erpenius, could have easily argued that the Turks were ‘uncivilised’ and ‘unrefined’ and described the Turkish language ‘raucous’ and ‘vulgar’ while at the same time writing in Turkish.

It was in this vein the Ottoman poet Nef‘ī (1572-1635) wrote ‘God has banned the Turks from the fountain of knowledge (*Türk’e Haḫḫ çeşme-i ‘irfānı ḥarām etmişdür*)’ just like Erpenius argued.⁴³ Among the Ottoman elite who sometimes referred to the highbrow language they used as *Lisān-ı Osmanī*, the Turks were the nomadic tribes half-settled in Anatolia who lacked the necessary sophistication

⁴¹ Quoted in Y. Öz, *Tarih Boyunca Farsça-Türkçe Sözlükler*, Ankara, 2016, p. 50: ‘Ya’nī bil ki bu luğatlar ‘Arabī luğatları bilmek için gereklüdür. Ekşer ‘Arabī luğatların tefsiri Farsça vākı’ olmuştur. Çünkü Farsī ma’lūm ola ol ‘Arabī luğatlar ma’lūm olur.’

⁴² Ibid.: ‘Lisān-ı ‘Arabīye’den soñra lisān-ı Pārsī bilmek umūr-i mühimme mertebesine bālig olup bā-vücūd ki devlet-i ‘alīye-i ‘Oşmāniyenin ebbedullāhları, umūr ve kitābet-i aḫkām ve sâ’ir mevādda ekşer bu lisāna dā’ir olmağın herkes bu ‘ilmin ma’rifetine ṭālib u rāğīb olup birer nüşhaya muḫtāc olmuştardır.’

⁴³ M. F. Köprülü, *Edebiyat Araştırmaları*, 2nd ed., Ankara, 1986, p. 197.

and elegance to contribute to civilised life, sciences and written culture; and the crudeness of their language reflected their lifestyle. In the Ottoman context, this was a demarcation between the urban elite and the rural subjects of the Empire, who were perceived as uneducated, unruly and unrefined. When it came to choosing which Arabic and Persian works to read and study, European scholars opted for those that were the most popular and esteemed among the Ottoman *literati*. They followed the methods and strategies laid out by Turkish grammarians, lexicographers and commentary writers. Is it not possible that they followed the arguments of the Ottoman elite with regard to the Turkish identity and language, too?

At a time when the works of their Ottoman counterparts became increasingly available to European scholars through manuscripts sourced by diplomats, merchants and travellers to important centres of learning and commerce, even those Orientalists who never travelled to the Levant became immersed in original sources and reference tools penned by native speakers. The manuscripts brought to Europe from the famous book markets of Istanbul, Edirne, Bursa, Smyrna, Konya, Antioch, Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo would more often than not come with Turkish glosses even when the main text is in Arabic or Persian, making Ottoman Turkish an indispensable skill for understanding and utilising these books fully. The readily-available reference tools that the Turkish lexicographers, translators and commentators of the sixteenth century Ottoman intellectual climate produced shaped not only the understanding of Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts among European humanists but also re-fashioned their methodologies and working practices. The articles included in this issue explore how this mutual flow of information between Western Europe and the Near East worked in more complex ways than previously maintained.

Each of the three contributions included in this special issue focuses on a different figure, a competent Orientalist scholar of the seventeenth century who was important in his own intellectual milieu but now either forgotten or marginalised by current scholarship. This is no coincidence. I have already discussed the ideological and linguistic barriers to the inclusion of Turkish-language manuscript sources that were procured from the Ottoman Empire, were studied by humanist scholars, and became part of Oriental collections of the public, university and private libraries in the West in the historiography of Oriental studies in early modern Europe. All three scholars studied in this issue were well-versed in Turkish and engaged deeply with Turkish-language reference works.

The first article brings to light the fascinating Anton Deusing (1612-66) and his Persian-Turkish-Latin and Turkish-Latin dictionaries recently discovered in Munich. Deusing, first a star student of Jacobus Golius in Leiden, then Professor

of Medicine at Groningen (and Leiden, had it not been for his unexpected death), advanced Oriental studies greatly by his translations, editions and compilations in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Deusing, in addition to his formal training in Arabic under Golius, studied Turkish and Persian in his leisure hours. As a student in Leiden, he was entrusted with editing the expanded edition of Thomas Erpenius's Arabic grammar (1636) and later on he translated and published Avicenna's *Poem on Medicine* (1649). Deusing was respected as a physician and an Arabist, but it seems his pursuits in Turkish and Persian were the most fruitful. Although published under the name of Louis de Dieu, the first Persian grammar printed in Europe owed much to Deusing's input. Deusing's autograph manuscript in Göttingen suggests that he had transliterated Jacob Tavūs's Judaeo-Persian version of the Pentateuch, published in Constantinople in 1546, from Hebrew into Arabic characters in its entirety. This was partially printed in de Dieu's *Rudimenta Linguae Persicae* (1639) without any mention of Deusing.

Two important dictionaries compiled by Deusing also remained in obscurity, although they formed the basis of the later and more famous Persian and Turkish dictionaries of Golius. The two hefty manuscript dictionaries discussed in the article show us that European Orientalists were heavily dependent on the works of contemporary Ottoman lexicographers of the sixteenth century in providing Latin equivalents not only for Turkish head-words but also for Arabic and Persian. Deusing's dictionaries open up a window into the working methods of Leiden Orientalists and the primary sources that were available to them, while preserving the otherwise lost works of earlier scholars such as the Leiden professor Paullus Merula's Persian-Dutch wordlist and the Danish merchant Willem Level's Persian vocabulary.

Vera Keller's essay examines the lives and afterlives of the *Historia Literaria Turcarum* of Georg Hieronymus Welsch (1624-1677) of Augsburg. Welsch, who placed Ottoman scholarship within the Baconian genre of *historia literaria*, studied Turkish, Arabic and Persian, and corresponded in these languages with Ottoman scholars. In 1675, he published the first facsimile edition of an Islamic manuscript under the title *Commentarius in Ruzname Naurus*. The copperplate design of its title-page, which proudly re-fashions Welsch's name in Arabic characters, shows how much the author, who never travelled to Turkey, considered himself part of the Ottoman scientific discourse. The title-page features two Turkish astronomers one holding a celestial sphere and the other a quadrant and reproduces the original title of the manuscript, *Şerḥ-i Rūznāme-i Nevrūz*, in square kufic script. Above the title is an Arabic saying which reads 'The Moon is bright but the Sun is brighter (*Fī l-qamari ḍiyā'un wa-l-šamsu aḍwa'u minhu*).' The *Rūznāme* contains sixteen engravings reproducing the *muḥaddime* (foreword),

tables and figures from a Persian calendar, and the accompanying Turkish *şerh* (commentary), all in Ottoman calligraphy with lavish floral borders. To the facsimile edition, Welsch appended his own Latin commentary and notes and additional plates featuring a globe and an astrolabe, and months and zodiac signs in the various languages of the Empire including Arabic, Turkish, Greek, Armenian and Syriac.

Welsch had fully grasped the importance of contemporary Ottoman learned practices, as well as material and craft knowledge that had flourished in the Empire. Like many of his contemporaries, he was interested in medicine, astronomy, alchemy and minerology, but his interests went beyond those of a typical Orientalist of the age. Through his Ottoman contacts such as Muffaz, he was able to obtain specialist information, for instance, on the local manufacturing methods for artificial bezoar stones, as well as their medicinal use. A chapter of his *Historia Literaria Turcarum* introduced Ottoman paper, decorative paper arts and writing instruments to the readers, while another chapter focused on reading practices and university education in the Empire. Welsch's encyclopaedic study of Ottoman erudition and practical knowledge was never published but survived through the printed summaries and responses penned by his contemporaries. Keller tells us the riveting story of Welsch's lost manuscript, its prevailing influence and the enduring search for it by later Orientalists.

Paul Babinski surveys the early study of Persian literature in non-Ottoman Europe with Georg Gentius (1618-1687) at the centre. Ottoman-Turkish manuscripts copied by Gentius, his corrections and marginalia, and his correspondence suggest that the German scholar, who never traveled further East than Constantinople, was profoundly influenced by Ottoman scholarly practices. Gentius's annotations in the printer's manuscript of the *Rosarium Politicum*, the first printed edition of Sa'di's *Gulistān* (Rose Garden), published in 1651 in Persian alongside the Latin translation, show that he worked mostly from Ottoman sources, and in particular the Turkish commentary of Aḥmed Sūdī Bosnevī, to produce both his translation and the almost one hundred pages of learned notes that accompany it. Babinski looks at sixteenth-century Ottoman literature and its exploitation by seventeenth century Orientalists such as du Ryer and Adam Olearius, in order to reconstruct the practices involved in reading and translating Persian and the central role played by Ottoman commentary writers in bringing Persian literature to a European readership.

It emerges from these three articles that, far from being marginal or peripheral, Ottoman erudite literature and reference works were central to the scholarly activity of the members of the so-called Republic of Letters. The collective findings of the papers help us draw a more accurate picture of the intellectual,

cultural and artistic dimensions of the intricate ties between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe during the early modern period. More importantly, we hope that the special issue will bring about the much-needed paradigm shift in the historiography of Oriental studies in early modern Europe by doing justice to the influence of Ottoman scholarship and source texts on the development of Arabic, Persian and Turkish studies.

The idea for this special issue was conceived during the double panel on Oriental Studies in Early Modern Europe that I organised at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America (Toronto, 17-19 March). Other than the three contributors to this special issue, the panel included papers by Alexander Bevilacqua, Maryam Patton and Alexandra Brown-Hedjazi.

Bevilacqua's talk entitled 'Comparative Thinking in the Republic of Arabic Letters' argued that European scholars often understood Islam by analogy to Christian beliefs and by further comparisons to Judaism. Through the example of Ludovico Maracci, who published a monumental edition and Latin translation of the Qur'an in 1698, Bevilacqua discussed both the opportunities and limits of comparative approaches in the study of Islam.⁴⁴

Patton's paper, "'Partial Knowledge is Better than Total Ignorance': The Never-Published Arabic Proverbs of Edward Pococke" considered the Oxford Arabist Pococke's unpublished translations of the proverbs collected by the twelfth-century scholar al-Maydanī. The manuscript, completed during Pococke's stay in Aleppo, and its marginalia in different hands reveal the collaborative nature of the project. Patton has shown us that, although Pococke never sent this work to press, he often drew upon this manuscript in his later publications.

Finally, Brown-Hedjazi presented a paper on 'Representations of the Safavid Embassy to Rome: Translations in Print, Fresco, and Marble'. It focused on the depictions of Persian ambassadors from the Safavid Empire that were recorded in the most important civic spaces of Rome: frescoes in Palazzo Quirinale and Biblioteca Vaticana, and Paul V's tomb in Santa Maria Maggiore. She argued that these vivid visualisations signaled a new moment of accelerated Persian studies in Rome—encompassing grammar and lexicology, but also ancient history and anthropology. These representations served as symbols of two simultaneous events: a burgeoning seventeenth-century diplomatic relationship, and a reawakening of a Romano-Persian bond that reaches back to classical antiquity.

⁴⁴ Incorporating some of the ideas he discussed at the RSA panel, Bevilacqua's "'Banish All the Greeks": Ancients, Moderns, and Arabs in Étienne Fourmont's *Oratio de Lingua Arabica* (1715)' is forthcoming.

The Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung supported my research and scholarly activities, and allowed me to come to the Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) of Munich, where Christoph K. Neumann hosted me. Members of staff at the Institute for Near and Middle Eastern Studies at LMU offered their unstinting support in the preparation of this special issue. Moreover, my trip to Toronto was made possible by funding from the LMU and The Renaissance Society of America. All the presenters benefitted greatly from the ensuing discussions, to which many friends and colleagues, among them Anthony Grafton and Mordechai Feingold, contributed. Vera Keller and Paul Babinski kindly accepted to expand their presentations into substantial research articles to be included in this special issue. And, last but not the least, Alastair Hamilton has been a constant source of inspiration for my own research and generously agreed to write an afterword to this issue. I would like to record my profound gratitude to all of them and express a wish: may our 2019 panel and this resulting special issue mark a new departure towards a more inclusive and broader understanding of European Orientalism and the scholarly traditions that influenced Oriental studies in Europe.

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