Luisa Mora Villarejo | Head Librarian of the Islamic Library "Felix Mª Pareja"

Catalogue of early printed books in Arabic typography: a singular collection at the Islamic Library (AECID)
I have the honor to present you the ancient book collection: “Catalogue of ancient books with Arabic typography: a singular collection”, published by AECID, so that we could count on you to help us spread and disseminate, nationally and internationally, part of our valuable bibliographic heritage.

To start with, here we have the cover: title, author and the elegant alphabet designed by Robert Granjon in Typographia Medicea (Roma, 1592). For us it contributes to highlighting our spirit and main goal, that couldn’t be other than to be clear, pedagogic and attractive for a wide range of readers.
Let’s move on to and let’s focus now on the bibliographical tradition born in our institution 60 years ago. On the one hand let me show you the Bibliographic Bulletin that has recently reached its 195 issue. On the other hand, let me introduce you the “Humanism and Science collection”, that kindly has accepted to publish this book in 2013. Let me reiterate my acknowledgements to my institution for having supported this project!
Collection development

The organization of the collection library fell on the Jesuit Félix Mª Pareja, a prestigious Arabist with a wide background on the field who laid the foundations of what it would be considered one of the best specialized libraries.

Since the very beginning the Islamic Library has maintained a very active purchase strategy to increase bibliographical funds as well as playing an important role in the cultural exchange.

In our Register Book is stated how part of this collection was bought to national and international booksellers such as Bernard Quaritch or given from donors such as the King of Saudi Arabia, Saud Al Faysal Al Saud.
Ex libris

Here we can appreciate some examples of perfectly identified marks or ex libris from books that came from private collections such as the Manuela Marín and José Pérez Lazaro’s, Mariano Arribas, etc.
Books donations

And these are some of the catalogued books we have received as donations from Arabists as Arribas, Valderrama, Gil or Melis during the past ten years. Promoting this legacy better should be a priority for all of us.
As you can see, it is not unusual to come across the singularity that many of them are published in Arabic typography.

For example this is an interesting kind of book with the cover in parallel both in Arabic and French that has been studied.
Our ancient book collection must be **highlighted**. It gathers about 1,120 titles in 1,336 volumes in various languages as well as 16 manuscripts. We also own some rare books. This collection is being regularly increased thanks to different purchases through Spanish auctions or coming from antiquarian booksellers. Consequently, despite the important budget cuts we have undergone, this is the right and best moment to share our treasures!
As you surely know, we can find a wide variety of letter-forms according to their position within the word (4). That made it difficult for printers in Italy, Germany and other European countries at the beginning, like our catalogue shows.
Goals: what

Let’s define now what our goals are: one of our top priorities is just to make the population aware of these heritage funds, the best way to achieve it is through a digitalization process together with accurate bibliographical descriptions. We also aim to identify the corpus in Millenium catalogue (called CISNE) only with Arabic typography in order to describe them in a printed catalogue, what would lead to increase opportunities for researchers.
Where these books have been published: 319 masterpieces from 23 different countries. All of them together from a large and interesting geographical area that was politically different in the past, like the Ottoman Empire.
How: methodology

2/3 from European printings (s. XVII-XIX)

1/3 from Arabic printings (s. XIX)

Other countries: India (5) and Turkey (8)

How we worked: as you can see, at least two-thirds are European printers (17th-19th century) and another third comes from Arab countries from more recent times (from s. XIX), which will make it easier to delve into the history of the book and printing. In any case, we described significant examples of the cultural interrelationships that goes beyond the Mediterranean area.
When: Chronology

When were they printed? In this chronological chart, we can see that Gutenberg invented the print and the first book published with Arabic types was in Venice in the 16th century (a rudimentary and poorly done item). At the end of that century, Robert Granjon was a good example of the Western masterpieces that Erpenius or Golius carried out later. In 1726, Ibrahim Muteferrika started more than 22 years of successful printing activity in Turkey (to recover the Arabic calligraphy quality). At the end of the XIX century, printing was born in Bulaq (Egypt), reaching its highest importance.
Human resources at the library

Who are the authors? Nuria, Juan Manuel and Miren, who, thanks to their many skills and long experience as Arabists, managed to work as an extraordinary librarian team sharing common standards.

As the editor I was in charge of adding to each publication detailed commentaries as well as being sure of achieving the needed homogenization of the features in all the descriptions.
Contents and structure

INTRODUCTION
CATALOGUE
• EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
• ARAB COUNTRIES
• OTHER COUNTRIES
GLOSSARY
INDEX
APPENDIX

Through its 410 pages, the catalogue focuses on the history of this ancient book of Arabic typography, including a preliminary study in the introduction.

It is divided into three different sections: printing in European countries, the Arab world and finally in other countries.

Each record has been made following professional standards and is accompanied by the reproduction of the title page and a detailed review of the work (bibliographic data of the author, content, features of the sample, etc.).
Design

Design is perfectly done with iconographic particularities such as:

1. Arabic word "printing press" with a mirror effect.
2. The letter YA, with another mirror effect.
3. A geometric motif to include the number of works.
Great efforts have been made to establish a **system of cross-references** to interrelate the described works and authors. As complementary information, there is a **glossary** with a hundred of technical terms of Bibliology and about Arab and Islamic civilization, an index of names and an appendix with color graphical elements to illustrate some of the described formal features.
Characteristics: The history of printing with some topics, some general examples that will help us to clarify what we have found out.

In general, books were created by religious (Jesuits or Franciscans) that were living in Lebanon, Morocco, etc. by diplomats and English citizens living in Egypt and, of course, by wise and learned people.
Characteristics: the beginning
Characteristics: the colophon
الباب

الباب

بالرغم من

والمراجع


Characteristics: parallel texts
Characteristics: bookbinding
Characteristics: main subjects

Language and literary creation: grammars, dictionaries and lexicons, literary reviews and interpretation, poetry, geographical works, historical sources, biographical dictionaries, catalogues of manuscripts, religious or Islamic scientific works, books of prayers, scientific reports on medicine or pharmacology, algebra and agriculture.
2. Grammars and vocabularies
3. Scientific treatises
4. Historical sources and others
Dissemination

An active participation in meetings, conferences and congresses of specialists is needed to generate exchanges. Besides, reviews and any other promotional action will contribute to a better understanding of the bibliographic heritage of the AECID institution.

The catalogue reflects a collection rich and very complete, a precious and priceless library. This reference source for both Arabists and librarians is a professional work, which offers material for further research, allowing a certain amount of networking between institutions and scholars from different universities, thanks to editions of major centers’ printers.
Morocco presentations and future

The Spanish version will be translated into Arabic. And last but not least: the Digital Library BIDA will improve dissemination among our users and researchers!
Thank you very much for your attention!