

Medici Oriental Press, Rome 1584-1614

Typographia Medicea



- Number of fiche: 69
- Scope: 12 titles
- Including MARC21 bibliographic records
- Languages: Arabic, Latin
- List Price € 862,50 / US\$ 1,106

See www.idc.nl for the complete title list.

*Customized price quotations are available on request: sales@idc.nl

The Müteferrika Press

Turkish Incunabula from the Müteferrika Press, 1729-1794



- Number of fiche: 237
- Scope: 23 titles
- Including MARC21 bibliographic records
- Language: Arabic
- Price: € 2,370 / US\$ 3,200

See www.idc.nl for the complete title list.

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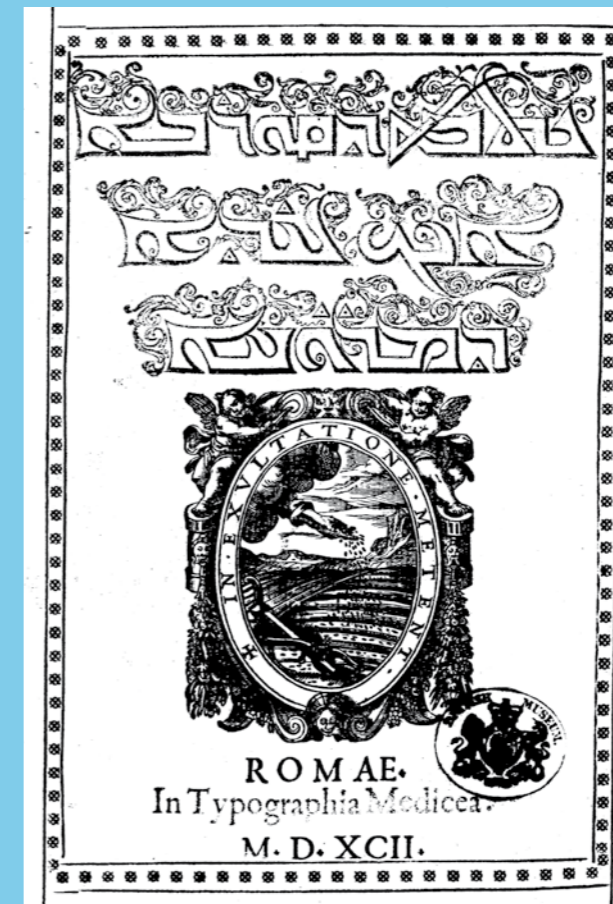
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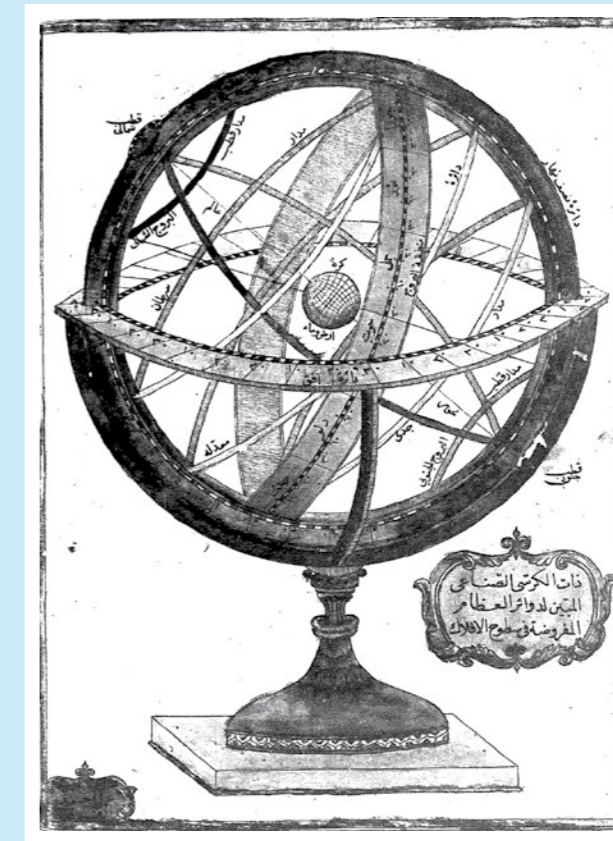
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PRIMARY SOURCE COLLECTION



Medici Oriental Press,
Rome 1584-1614
Typographia Medicea



The Müteferrika Press,
1729-1794
Turkish Incunabula
from Istanbul



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PUBLISHERS

Medici Oriental Press, Rome 1584-1614

Typographia Medicea

In 1590 an unidentified Arabic version of the *Gospels* was printed in Rome in two different editions. They were the first products of the Medici Oriental Press, which operated under the direction of the orientalist, Giovan Battista Raimondi (c. 1584-1614). Six other Arabic texts were printed by this press over the next four years, two Christian Arabic works, and five scientific texts by Muslim scholars. Unfortunately Raimondi's press operated for only a short period.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In nomine Dei misericordis miseratoris.

كتاب التصريف تأليف الشيخ الامام

Liber Tafriphi. Compositio fenis Elamami.

اعلم ان التصريف في اللغة التغيير في الصناعة
تحويل الاصل الواحد الى امثلة مختلفة لمعان
مقصودة لا تحصل الا به

Scias quod Tafriph in idioma est mutatio, & in arte est reuolutio trunci vnus in exempla variata pro significatis obiectis, quae non proueniunt nisi cum illis.

Scias dictionem Tafriph, secundum quidem idioma Arabicum, esse mutationem secundum autem artem Grammaticam, esse reuolutionem thematici vnus in exempla variata, pro significatis nobis occurrentibus, quae sine illis consequi minime possumus.

A Tas-

The Art of Printing

The Medici Oriental press was founded by Cardinal Ferdinando I de' Medici (1549-1609). His considerable financial investments were used to employ an outstanding type-cutter, Robert Grandjon of Lyon, who manufactured moveable metal type, the superb technical skill of which continues to impress today. The cursive Arabic script reproduced in the works of the Medici Press bettered all previous attempts in Europe, and would remain unsurpassed long after the press had closed.

West meets East

The press was not only an intellectual enterprise, it was also a commercial one. Raimondi clearly hoped to sell his books in the East, rather than the West. Ironically, while the works failed to sell in the Ottoman Empire, they did significantly stimulate the study of the Middle East in Europe. Ferdinando de' Medici had ordered Raimondi to print 'all available Arabic books on permissible human sciences which had no religious content in order to introduce the art of printing to the Mohammedan community'. Only more than a century after the Medici Press in Rome had closed, did it finally have the envisaged impact in the Levant; Ibrahim Müteferrika, the first Muslim printer, referring to it in his plea to the sultan to allow him to open his own printing house at Istanbul, which happened in 1729.

IDC Publishers now brings together the publications of the Medici Press, the limited number of which is outweighed by their importance for the study of Middle Eastern science and literature; the study of the Muslim world in the West; and book history, both European and Middle Eastern.

Maurits van den Boogert

MEDICI ORIENTAL PRESS CONTAINS

- 1590/91 - The *Gospels* in two versions (Arabic only, and Arabic and Latin)
- 1592 - Ibn al-Hājib's (d. 1249) *al-Kāfiya*, a tract on Arabic grammar
- 1592 - *Al-Muqaddima al-ājurrūmiyya* by the Moroccan scholar, Ibn Ājurrūm
- 1592 - The *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fi dhikr al-amāṣār*, an anonymous abridgement of the *Geography* composed by al-Idrīsī (1099-1166), who is known in the West as Dreeses
- 1592 - *Alphabetum Arabicum*, a Latin introduction to the Arabic alphabet
- 1592/94 - A Missal in Syriac and Karshūnī
- 1593 - Two works by the famous Avicenna (Ibn Sīna), *Al-Qānūn fi al-ṭibb*, known in Europe as the *Canon*, and his philosophical work, *Kitāb al-Najāt*
- 1594 - Euclid's *Elements* (*Tahrīr uṣūl li-Uqlidas*) in an Arabic recension attributed to Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (1201-1274), the Persian philosopher, scientist and mathematician
- 1595 - The Jesuit scholar, Giambattista Eliano's *I'tiqād al-amānah al-urtūdūsiyyah* (the Tenets of the Orthodox Religion) produced for Eastern Christians
- 1610 - The *Kitāb al-Tasrīf* ('Book of Derivation'), a work on Arabic grammar, by al-Zanjānī (990/91-1078/9)
- The edition of the *Gospels* of 1619

The Müteferrika Press, 1729-1794

Turkish Incunabula from Istanbul

In December 1727 the first printing house directed by Muslims was established in Istanbul by its director, Ibrahim Müteferrika (1674-1745), a Hungarian convert to Islam. Officially called the Imperial Printing House, the Müteferrika press – as it is known today – printed 16 books between 1729 and 1742, making several important contributions to graphic history.

Graphic novelties

The Müteferrika Press was established during the so-called Tulip Era, a period of blossoming cultural activity and increasing orientation towards the West, during the reign of Sultan Ahmed II. The Ottoman envoy to Paris, Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi Efendi, was the driving force behind the press, which was established by Müteferrika. The presses are believed to have come from France, the typefaces from Holland, and the personnel from Austria. While its books were predominantly Islamic, the Müteferrika press also produced J-B Holdermann's *Grammaire Turque* ('Turkish Grammar'; Istanbul, 1730), the first work in the Latin script printed by Muslims.

Printing by Infidels

Ibrahim Müteferrika had to overcome opposition to his plans from conservative Muslim religious scholars, as well as from professional scribes. Nevertheless, he managed to persuade the Grand Vizier and the sultan to allow him to continue. One of the arguments he advanced was that the production of printed books in Arabic was a task the Muslims surely could not be left to infidels, who already had a head-start (Müteferrika explicitly referred to the Medici Oriental Press). The anticipated market in the Ottoman Empire does not appear to have materialized, but the Müteferrika press and its prints were enthusiastically welcomed by Western students of the Islamic world.

Highlight of this collection

Highlight of this collection is the *Tarih-i Hind-i garbi* ('History of the West Indies'; Istanbul, 1732), which reports on the discovery of New World. It is the first book by a Muslim author about the Americas, and includes 13 woodcut illustrations. In 1783 the press was reopened and a second series was published, consisting of another six extremely rare titles.

Maurits van den Boogert

