

The Venetian Qur'an: A Renaissance Companion to Islam.

Pier Mattia Tommasino.

Trans. Sylvia Notini. Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. xx + 30. \$59.95.

The Venetian Qur'an is a translation from Italian of *L'Alcorano di Macometto: Storia di un libro del Cinquecento europeo*, published by Il Mulino in 2013. It is a very well-threaded collection of essays dealing with a 1547 Italian abridged translation of the Qur'an developed using a Latin version. Tommasino has organized the results of his research into ten chapters. The first chapter addresses critiques offered by proto-Orientalist scholars of the period of a work misleadingly presented as a translation from the original Arabic: it was clear from a glance that the Italian version was developed on the basis of a Latin translation. Translated by Giovanni Battista Castrodardo and published by Andrea Arrivabene, *Alcorano di Macometto* was discarded and derided by Arabists and proto-Orientalists of early modern Europe; a similar rejection of the work can still be found in some of the recent bibliography. Nevertheless, Tommasino convincingly argues that deep and attentive study of this text and the circumstances of its production reveals a rich source of information about the Venetian milieu, hitherto overlooked by scholars. Having used the first chapter as a kind of *raison d'être* for his study, Tommasino moves on to describe material aspects of the text, further explored in the appendix. Chapter 3, "What Everybody Wishes for and Keeps Silent": Analysis of the Context Through the Paratext," links Arrivabene's publication to the figure of French ambassador Gabriel d'Aramon, who was sent on a mission to persuade Suleyman to attack the Habsburg forces in both Hungary and the Mediterranean. In this chapter, Tommasino argues that the publisher concealed a subversive political message in the dedicatory letter that precedes the translation.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the biography and literary legacy of Giovanni Battista Castrodardo, the translator of Bibliander's edition of Robert of Ketton's Latin Qur'an into Italian. Castrodardo was a churchman, a translator of history books, and a commentator of Dante. He enjoyed a prolific literary career during a five-year period (1543–48) and became mysteriously silent from the publication of *Alcorano di Macometto* until his death ca. 1588. The following chapter explores facets of Castrodardo as a Dante scholar by analyzing how he interpreted the episodes of the purification of Muhammad's heart and the Prophet's Night Journey (*al-'Isrā' wal-Mi'rāj*). Tommasino detects and describes therein Dantesque vocabulary and phrasing. Chapter 6, "The Religion of the Italians, or Purgatory and the Qur'an: A Belief and a Place Between Robert of Ketton and Roberto Bellarmino," is of particular interest. In this chapter we learn how the text of the Muslim holy book was manipulated and deformed in order to confirm the existence of the "third space," the purgatory, in accordance with Catholic dogma. Conversely, chapter 7 offers a political reading of a

part of Castrodardo's rendition of the biography of Muhammad. The close reading of the oration by Muhammad's mentor, the monk Sergius, reveals deep Machiavellian undertones. The final three chapters narrate the stories of the readers of the *Alcorano di Macometto*. The most striking cases are probably those of the prophet Scolio and the miller Menocchio, studied by Carlo Ginzburg (*The Cheese and the Worms* [1976]), and revisited by Tommasino in chapter 9.

In sum, *The Venetian Qur'an* is an inspiring example of how to conduct research on a seventeenth-century book. *Alcorano di Macometto* is studied from various angles and using different methods and disciplinary approaches, as the author himself admits (23). I have encountered a couple of slips, perhaps inevitable in a project that covers such a range of fields and immense secondary bibliography. First, Egidio da Viterbo (quoted in this study as Giles of Viterbo) did not translate the Qur'an (125, 126); rather he commissioned its translation to two different converts from Islam. Second, according to the most recent studies (García-Arenal and Starczewska; García-Arenal, Szpiech, and Starczewska), Juan Martín de Figuerola probably did not know Arabic but relied on Arabic-speaking intermediaries. Regardless of these minor slips, *The Venetian Qur'an* is a rich, carefully written, and attentively translated monograph that will surely be enjoyed by historians and philologists alike.

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"Women's Speaking Justified" and Other Pamphlets. Margaret Fell.

Ed. Jane Donawerth and Rebecca M. Lush. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*: Toronto Series 65; *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 538. Toronto: Iter Press; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018. xx + 224 pp. \$39.95.

This collection features eight pamphlets penned by co-founder of the Society of Friends and prolific writer, the indomitable Margaret Fell (1614–1702). It is high time that even a small part of Fell's substantial catalogue be made accessible to scholars, students, and general readers via modernized spelling, helpful footnotes, and an introduction that illuminates her contributions to early Quakerism and early modern literature. Heretofore, engagement with Fell's politics and theology have been largely limited to her most anthologized and subsequently most read pamphlet, *Women's Speaking Justified* (1666–67), which may result in the mistaken presumption that her rigorous defense of women's right to preach was her singular contribution to the Quaker cause and contemporary politico-religious discourse. While *Women's Speaking Justified* is remarkable, the genius of this collection lies in the editors' choice to place this most accessible of all Fell's pamphlets toward the end, a choice that emphasizes how Fell's consciousness of contemporary gender