

## The Emergence of The Arabic Language in Europe Since the Middle Ages

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### **Abstract**

This article describes the origins of the Arabic language and literature in Europe and the contributions of Europeans to the Arabic language during the Middle Ages. The history of the Arabic language in Europe begins with the Umayyad dynasty when they conquered Andalusia. And during this period, they started translating the sciences and arts from different languages into Arabic.

In this article, we will discuss the status of the Arabic language in Europe during the Middle Ages. In this context, translations of medical and philosophy books into European languages, and teaching in European universities will be highlighted. During this period, Arabic words were adopted by European languages. The establishment of the printing press in Europe and the publication of Arabic books will also be mentioned. The article will also highlight the collection, preservation, and publication of Arabic manuscripts by Europeans during this period. Along with this, the services of Europeans regarding Arab history and various Arabic sciences will also be explained. Finally, confessions regarding the specificity and comprehensiveness of the Arabic language by various European scholars will be included.

**Keywords:** Middle Ages, Translation of books, Integration of Arabic words, publication and printing, Arabic manuscripts, Arabic history and literature, confession by European scholars

### **Introduction:**

The era of European interest in the Arabic language dates to the tenth century AD. From that time on, they began amassing in their treasuries what the Arabs had written in medicine, philosophy, mathematics, natural sciences,

chemistry, astronomy, literature, and language. And they translated it into their languages, especially into the Latin language, which was, and still is, the language of science for them. This interest increased after the Franks met the eastern peoples during the Crusades (1096-1291). They used to buy what they saw from the eastern manuscripts. Because they consider it one of the ancient monuments of strange shape, and tongue, and unknown in their country.

Among the current evidence for that was Louis IX, King of France (1226-1270 AD), when he returned from the Crusades. He brought with him from DAMIETTA Arabic and Coptic manuscripts, and decorated the treasuries of his palace, and many French princes and their rich pilgrims who accompanied the king on his visit to the holy places followed suit.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, the orientalists and the consuls of the western countries, and the eastern countries at various times, benefited from the ignorance of its inhabitants, and their lack of heritage for the relics of their ancestors. So, they bought whatever was available to them from those biblical treasures and enriched the treasuries and museums of Europe. In sum, the thrashing of books and their lovers in the West set up agents who marketed manuscripts for them at high prices from all over the East. However, whoever has had the opportunity to inspect the role of the Arabic language in Europe, the monthly books in London, Paris, Rome, the Vatican, Florence, Milan, Madrid, Berlin, Munich, München, Bonn, Göttingen, Gotha, Belgium, Copenhagen, Uppsala, Leningrad ... etc., cannot help admiring what the Franks emptied of their efforts And the money they spent to hoard that scientific wealth that is not equivalent to a price.<sup>2</sup>

### **Translation of Philosophy and Medicine into Arabic, And Teaching Them in European Universities**

The Arabic language was common in the Middle Ages among European scholars for the large number of people who speak it; And for the fame of the philosophers of Islam, including *Ibn Rushd*, *Ibn Sina*, *Ibn Zahr*, *Al Farabi*, and *Al Razi*. Their books on philosophy and medicine were taught in European universities until the year 1650 AD.

In the year 1130 A.D., a college was established in *Toledo* to translate Arabic books into Latin under the auspices of Bishop Raymond. He was succeeded by Gerrard de Cremona in the year 1170 AD, and he translated the books of *Al Razi*, *Al-Zahrawi* and *Ibn Sina*. And what was the fifteenth century until the number of universities in Spain reached sixteen universities. Cordoba, with its thriving library, was the subject of European admiration. Arabic language was taught in The University of Seville.

Sicily and southern Italy were not less fortunate than Spain; In the eleventh century AD, the University of Salerino was established, which was dominated by Arab thought for two centuries. Constantine the African had

the upper hand in its administration. Then the Universities of Palermo and Montpellier, followed by the Universities of Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Padua, and others, were all concerned with teaching Arabic sciences, and sparked in the West a new intellectual revolution that illuminated the paths of Europe, and opened the doors of scientific wealth from which it benefited greatly.<sup>3</sup>

Among the greatest Europeans who were dedicated to spreading the Arabic language and motivating the people of Europe to study it was **Ramondel**, who realized the importance of Arabic language and its sciences in the beginning of the fourteenth century AD. He was the first to feel the danger of the Arabic language in Europe, so he mastered its origins and adored its literature. Rather, he was the first to strive to teach it, in the hope that it would be a powerful means of understanding between East and West.

### **The Integration of Arabic Words Into The Languages of The Franks And Their Dictionaries**

The Franciscan kings did not lose sight of the Arabic language, but rather took the approach of the kings of Spain and Sicily to promote it. They established a public teacher in Paris, the capital, to teach it since the middle of the thirteenth century AD. This is how many Arabic words merged into the language of the Francis and in all the languages of Europe, especially in the marine and medical sciences, and Arabic medicine was the basis of the science of medicine for the Francis, they took it with many of its words, and the scholar, **Father Henri Lammens**, proved that the French language borrowed about **900** words from the Arabic language, And used it and officially entered it in its dictionaries.<sup>4</sup>

The German scientist Frenkel (1853-1909 AD), Professor of the Origin of Languages at Breslau College, published great writing and research, in which he identified the Arabic words foreign to European languages, and he also wrote a book on the expressions that the Arabs took from Syriac, so he checked and verified.<sup>5</sup>

### **Devotion of Orientalist Scholars to Publish The Most Important Arabic Books**

The orientalists in Europe were not content with studying the Arabic language and memorizing its books, but they devoted themselves, since the era of the invention of printing, to printing a lot of the Arab countries histories, geography, biographies of its people, and the origins of them. Thus, it was possible for the Europeans to publish the most important of these books in various mental and traditional sciences. Among them is the first edition of the Holy Qur'an in Arabic, published by **Papa Ganini** in Venice. Then **Andrea Ariaben** of Manto published the first edition of the Holy Qur'an in the Italian language, and it is not clear that this Qur'an was printed in all the languages of Europe such as English, French, Spanish,

German, Dutch, Russian, Greek, Latin, Bohemian, Hungarian, Danish, Polish, Castilian, Portuguese, Ruthani, Bulgarian, Serbian, Albanian and Osogian.

In the year 1617, the Leiden Press in the Netherlands published the story of Joseph the Righteous from the Qur'an. It is the first book produced by printing presses in full form, and the Oxford Press published in 1743 the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from the history of *Abul Fida*. Some historians have argued that what was printed of the writings of our ancestors in Europe and America by the Orientalists from those two continents amounted to many times what they printed in other languages of the East. All of this confirms the extent of the Franks' care for Arabic language, its civilization, its history, and sciences.<sup>6</sup>

In his book "*The Best of Poetry and the Best Prose*," Louis Sheikho proved the following:

"The Arabic publications alone that are published throughout Europe, in addition to the rest of the Semitic languages, add up every year to one thousand and three hundred between small and large compositions of medium and serious subjects, and that is indisputable."

The strongest evidence proves what Western scholars are tasked with publishing the effects of our language.

#### **Arabic Printing in Europe**

Arabic printing in Europe is closely linked to the paper industry first, Christianization fever second, colonial domination third, and the development of Orientalism and its connection to a system built according to organized rules fourth. Perhaps it is not exaggerating that if paper had not been made in Europe, there would have been no printing, and if it had not been for European colonialism in its various forms, there would have been no room for organized Christianization, and if it had not been for Orientalism and Christianization, there would have been no Arab printing in Europe. Christian scholars believed that Muslims' ignorance of the Bible was the most difficult obstacle in their Christianization. Therefore, we hardly see a European printing press that has Arabic letters that did not publish an edition or editions of the Bible or messages from it. European presses printed about 167 Arabic books before the first Arabic book printed in the East appeared. In 1486 A.D. a Dominican monk called "**Martin Roth**" printed the book "The Journey and Pilgrimage Overseas to the Tomb of Christ in the Holy City of Jerusalem" by "Bernard De Breydenbach" with the Dutch printer "Erhard Reuwich" in "Mainz" in Germany. Erhard painted and engraved the panels for the printing of this book, which showed a complete Arabic alphabet printed on wood, accompanied by its Latin script, a map of Jerusalem and a beautiful, engraved drawing representing a group of

Lebanese with luxurious turbans on their heads, described as Syrians in a vineyard.

In 1492 AD, Isaac Gerson, one of the scholars of the Jewish immigrants, brought to Constantinople a printing press that printed books in several languages, namely Hebrew, Spanish, Latin, and Greek. The Torah was printed with its interpretation in 1494 AD, then the rules of the Hebrew language in 1495 AD.

For three centuries, this printing press was able to print more than a hundred books in various sciences and arts, with the help of the Jewish community in Constantinople, which had a good impact in spreading and promoting Hebrew literature.

The printing press was carried to the Ottoman capital, and no one paid any attention to it, and its use remained restricted to Jews. Rather, Sultan Bayezid II forbade the use of printing art to non-Jews.

In 1505 A.D., a Spanish press in Granada printed for the monk *Pedro de Alcala*, on wooden blocks, two books "The Way to Learn Arabic Quickly" and "An Arabic List of Castilian Letters." The purpose of these two books was to teach priests and churchmen the Arabic language so that they could Christianize the Moriscos who failed in the revolt of the Baghras Mountains and convince them of the validity of Catholicism and the dishonesty of Islam.

In 1514 A.D., some researchers confirmed that the first Arabic printing press to be printed with Arabic letters appeared in Fano, Italy, by the order of Pope Julius II, and it was inaugurated by Pope Leo X in the year 1514 A.D. It is referred to as the "Vatican Press," and the first Arabic book was printed in that year a religious book. Then the Psalms traveled in the year 1516 AD, and shortly after the Holy Qur'an was printed in Venice, but no copy of it reached us, because all copies were burned, and it was printed in the famous Paganini Press in Venice. Nevertheless, the Library of Alexandria came in its book "The Knowledge Bowl" with a picture of one of the pages of this Qur'an. In 1516 AD, the Petros Paulus Press in the Italian city of Genoa printed the book "The Psalms" commissioned by Father Augustinos Giustiniani, Bishop of Nabeu, from Corsica.

It was printed in four languages: Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, and Chaldean, with each of these languages a matching Latin translation, with notes and explanations, and it was a large book.

And 1524 AD was the beginning of Arabic printing in England when *Wynkyn de Worde* printed in London in 1524, Robert Wakefield's book called "The Latin Treatise on the Subject of the Arabic, Aramaic and Hebrew Languages, Prayer of Praise and the Use of the Three Languages: Oratio de laudibus & utilitate trium linguarum Arabicae", Chaldaicae & Hebraicae".

In 1538 AD, in France, the Arabic printer began printing the book "Arabic Grammar" as part of a collection published by the orientalist "Guillaume Postel" at the College of France on the principles of twelve oriental languages.

### **Arabic Manuscripts**

The Europeans provided great and important services in the field of preserving and cataloging Arabic manuscripts and taking care of them from loss and damage. This went beyond the investigation and publication of many of them, and they wrote a lot of valuable research and studies by investigating them scientifically and translated hundreds of Arabic and Islamic books as a result of this investigation.<sup>7</sup>

This valuable effort of caring for Arabic manuscripts resulted in steps of scientific value, in addition to the efforts to preserve and index them scientifically, where an accurate description of the manuscripts was drawn up, and an indication of what was included in each manuscript of subjects on the side of mentioning the author, the date of his birth, death, and the date of Authoring, writing, or copying manuscripts. These manuscripts were placed in public libraries for viewing, and for benefiting from their intellectual and scientific contents. Among these efforts is the one that was done by Al-Ward (in English) to develop an index of Arabic manuscripts in the London Library in ten volumes, in which he reached the goal of accuracy and comprehensiveness. It indexed ten thousand manuscripts at the end of the last century, and this work also happened in all European universities and libraries, and accurate indexes of manuscripts were made.

That is why preserving this great heritage of Arabic manuscripts was an entry point for its study and investigation after strenuous efforts were made to catalog it in a scientific and accurate manner, and to place it in many volumes arranged and revised, as it dealt with the names of the owners of these manuscripts, the date of writing each manuscript, its copy, its content, the type of paper, its size and the number of pages.

After that came the stage of investigation and translation, which is the most difficult stage, if they intend - as Najeeb Al-Aqeeqi said - to: "revive it by verifying and publishing it with adequacy, perseverance, and fascination according to the latest scientific methods by reading its difficult texts in papers that time has blurred many of its features, then confronted it with its counterpart, and sought its originality, Verifying the correctness of its attribution to its owners by using multiple pens, and at different times, no matter how much trouble, time and money it cost them. For example, Flugel spent twenty-five years collecting manuscripts of the text of Ibn e Nadim's book AL FIHRIST, from libraries in Vienna, Paris and London, and he died, and it was not verified. It was corrected What is in it of distortion, criticism and scrutiny in the light of recent discoveries in antiquities, science,

literature and the arts, and the trustworthiness of the text so that it does not allow his pen to deal with a word or letter from it by deletion, addition or change, and the explanation of its obscurities and rectifying it and adding to it in the margins of its pages, this is to the introductions Extensive, interpreted dictionaries, and indexes for purposes, flags, and books are coordinated.

And as soon as the year 1883 came, the number of Arabic manuscripts in the National Library in Paris alone, according to the de Laslan catalog printed by Rothenberg, reached nearly ***Three Thousand and Four Volumes***, and it is also possible that many of these volumes contained more than one manuscript at the same time. In addition to this number, approximately four hundred and forty-nine manuscripts were brought to the National Library after the cessation of work on the catalog and prior to its publication.

Their love for science and knowledge of nations' civilizations, religions, languages, and scientific and cultural achievements prompted them to research and excavate these manuscripts with passion and understanding, so their research was safe, fair, and systematic in this aspect.

In these efforts, they followed the correct scientific method in publishing and investigation, not the random or unsystematic compilation method in publishing and studying Arabic and other oriental manuscripts, and this methodology was accurate and free of errors in most of them.

**Anthony Bevan** investigated the "Contradictions of *Jarir and Al Farazdaq*" in 1102 pages, and when he found a defect in the weights of one of its verses, he did not excuse it by appending the contradictions in a lexical index to explain some of the meanings of the words that were neglected by the old Arabic dictionaries, according to the clues that Bevan placed after that and what that index included From footnotes and new explanations, this lexical index came in 367 pages.

**Najeeb Al Aqiqi** talks about the efforts of the Orientalists in the field of manuscripts, saying:

"The Orientalists have provided us with thousands of Arabic treasures, an edited and documented rank that our libraries venerate, our universities depend on, and our scholars rely on, since the Orientalists preceded us to publish them, not only for our nation but most of them were translated into other languages, among the most famous of them; *Silkuk Bayan in the virtues of Qur'an*, *The interpretation of Qadi Al Baydawi*, *The biography of Ibn Hisham*, *The journey of Ibn Jubair*, *The journey of Ibn Battuta*, *The journey of al-Mushtaq by al-Idrisi*, *Al Kamil lil Mubarrad*, *Moroj ul Zahab by Al Masoudi*, *Muqaddima Ibn e Khaldun*, *The algebra and Al Muqabla by Al Khwarizmi*, *The book of amusements by Ibn Salamah*, *The origin of Ibn Bashkwal*, *Al Takmiala by Ibn Al Aabar*, *The History of the Scholars of Andalusia by Ibn Al Majdhi*, *The Good and Disadvantages of*

*Al Bayhaqi, Al Wuzaraa wal Kuttab by Al Jahshiari, The Book of Fihrist by Ibn Nadim, etc*".

Their eagerness to apply their scientific method has reached the point of publishing some of them in more than seven layers to meet them on the discoverer of their copies and to correct the mistakes of their first ones, and correct them, and reach the level of perfection: such as the biography of *Ibn Hisham*, the interpretation of *Al Qadi Al Baydawi*, *Nuzhat Al Mushtaq* and others.

And when our printing presses took it from them, some of them omitted the names of the scholars, their introductions, and their dictionaries, and their explanations and interpretations of Al-Jamhi were distorted with the investigation of Joseph Hill - and they acted in the texts of the manuscripts and attributed some of them to someone other than its owner.

In Baghdad, the most important publications of the orientalists were reprinted using the offset method, including.

The Beginning and the History, The End of Courage and the Establishment of Circles, The History of the Wise, The History of Ibn Al Falansi, Astronomy, The Book of Points and Accuracy, The Butter of Discovering Kingdoms, The Image of the Earth and the Crown of Translations, The Brief of the Book of Countries, and The Book of Wonders of the Seven Regions And the best divisions and news of Al Hallaj, and the Diwan of Dhu al Ruma poetry, and the explanation of the Diwan of Al Mutanabbi, and the eyes and gardens, and Arabic literature in the twentieth century, printed in 1946 AD. The manuscripts that were taken from the Arab world varied in their topics and importance, and if we look at the catalogs of Arabic manuscripts that the German scholar *Karl Brockelman* counted at the beginning of the first part of his huge and important book "The History of Arabic Literature", because we will stand amazed at the wide spread of Arabic manuscripts In the vast majority of the major libraries known in the civilized world, in addition to their remarkable abundance among the followers, and this large number of indexes in Brockelmann's record - and it has become somewhat outdated in relation to the new catalogs of libraries and manuscripts that *Brockelmann* himself did not realize and did not see - indicates the magnitude of The Arabic manuscript heritage that stands behind it.

Some researchers believe that attempts to collect manuscripts in France with "Guillaume Postel" and present them to the Church to know the Arabs and Islam for missionary reasons, after that came "Scalifer" to complete what Postel started, but in a different way that he was liberated from missionary interests, as these sources say, as well as "Ferdinald Duvis" in 1586, who printed Ibn Sina's works on medicine and philosophy, as well as contributing to the printing of grammar, geography, and mathematics books for Arab and Muslim scholars.

The researchers mention that the interest in manuscripts and their investigation made a continual progress in the era of Western Enlightenment, or what some call the "Renaissance", when the desire to learn about the East and the Arab-Islamic world increased. In the first text of the seventeenth century, there were only twenty manuscripts in France only, and in the second half of the seventeenth century until the French Revolution in 1789 AD., French activity began to take an interest in Arabic and oriental manuscripts in general through travelers, envoys, and accredited consulates in the East, and went to study Arabic and other oriental languages, and the French Vansleben mission was able to collect nearly six hundred and thirty oriental manuscripts for the king's library, the number of Arabic manuscripts was four hundred and thirty.

### **Arabic Literary, Historical And Scientific Studies**

Literary, historical and scientific studies received great attention and great care by many European orientalists, and they prepared many studies and research that reveal Arab history and heritage in many aspects.

It included literary, scientific, philosophical, economic, social, epistemological, anthropological, sociological and other studies concerned with Arab heritage and history in its entirety.

The first steps to study Arab heritage and history were the "study of the Arabic language" as the main key to revealing its history and heritage, and German universities, especially the University of "Heidelberg", intensified their interest in studying Arabic and its literature, so the first fruits of that appeared in the year 1582 AD, with the publication of the book "The Arabic Alphabet" by Emmanuel Tremillos" and the issuance of an Arabic dictionary in 1597, then the book "Arabic Grammar" and a translation of Surat Yusuf and the book "Al Ajrumiyah".

It seems to us that the word "Arabist" was the first term, referring to those Europeans who took the study of Arabic and its literature, so that the word later turned into "Orientalist". However, a new turn appeared in the second half of the seventeenth century, which carried, despite the formality of its framework, a higher objectivity. The translation of Abi Fada's book, On the Prophet's Biography, was published by Rasiki in the year 1663. Then it was translated again into French in 1733 and then in 1837. It is worth noting that the intended turn is to link the history of the Messenger, for the first time, with the Islamic call.

At the forefront of the book was the image of the Messenger as a practical man who sought to unify the Arab countries, in which conflict, hatred, fanaticism and tribalism prevailed. He also portrayed the Messenger as one of the advocates of monotheism, and that his experience (was exemplary, based on forgiveness, and reconciliation, as he is a precious jewel in the

history of the Arabs). And this is what made Voltaire, one of the great thinkers who paved the way for the French Revolution, reconsider his assessment of the personality of Muhammad, and consider him a legislator for Muslims, calling for love, harmony and tolerance. Didro also talked about the Arab genius that produced such a great thinker.

After that came the exploratory trips to the Arab world with the progress of some Europeans in mastering the Arabic language and some ancient Semitic languages, as a number of them traveled to the East with the aim of delving into the history of the Arabs, their culture, their social and economic customs, and searching for the effects of ancient civilizations and the history of their rise and decline.<sup>8</sup>

### **Confessions Of Scholars Who Studied The Arabic Language**

The European scholars studied the Arabic language and were impressed by its charm and wonderful eloquence, so they did justice to it and recognized its value and superiority.<sup>9</sup>

1. **The French Ernest Renan** (1823-1892 A.D.): Ernest Renan says about the characteristics of the Arabic language and its advantages that dazzled the whole world: "One of the strangest things is that this national language has sprouted and reached a degree of perfection in the deserts of a nomadic nation, that language surpassed its sisters, with the abundance of its vocabulary, the accuracy of its meanings, and the good organization of its buildings, and it was known in all the phases of its life, childhood or old age.
2. **Theodor Noldeke** (1836-1930 A.D.): The German scholar Theodor Noldeke says fairly about the Arabic language: "The Arabic language did not really become universal except because of the Qur'an and Islam, and the scholars of the Arabic language put before us, through their diligence, the structures of the classical language, as well as its vocabulary in a state of complete perfection. One must be amazed at the abundance of the vocabulary of the Arabic language when one knows that the living conditions of the Arabs are very simple, but within this circle, they symbolize the subtle difference in meaning with a special word, and classical Arabic is not only rich in vocabulary but also rich in grammatical formulas, and Arabic is concerned with linking sentences with each other... Thus, it (اللغة البدوية) became the language of religion, forums, and high life affairs, and in the streets of the city, then it became the language of transactions and sciences.

3. **Alfred Guillaume** (1888-1966: A.D.): The British scientist Alfred Guillaume responds to the accusations leveled against the Arabic language, saying: "It is easy for one to realize the extent of the Arabic language's assimilation and its breadth to express all the scientific terms of the ancient world with ease, with the presence of plurality in changing the meaning of use Verb and noun.
4. **Johann Fock** 1894-1974 A.D.): The German scholar Johann Fock acknowledges the status of the Arabic language and its superiority over other languages, saying: "The immortal tyranny of the Arab heritage has proven that it is stronger than every attempt intended to dislodge Classical Arabic from its dominant position. And if the signs are true and the evidence is not mistaken, then Arabic will retain this long-standing status in terms of being the language of Islamic civilization.
5. **The German Sigrid Hunke** (1913-1990: A.D.): The German scholar Sigrid Hunke was so enchanted by the Arabic language and its beauty, saying: "How can a person resist the beauty of this language, its sound logic, and its unique charm? The Arab neighbors themselves in the countries they conquered fell to the magic of that language, and the people who remained on their religion in this current rushed to speak the Arabic language with passion, so that the Coptic language, for example, died completely, and even the Aramaic language abandoned its position forever to occupy its place the Arabic language.
6. **Gustav Grunbaum** (1909-1972: AD): Likewise, the Austrian scholar Gustav Grunbaum did, saying: "There is no language that can surpass the Arabic language and honor it, because it is the means that was chosen to carry God's final message, and its spiritual status is the only one that transcends what God has entrusted in all languages of strength and clarification. As for the capacity, the matter is clear in it, and whoever follows all the languages will not find in it, according to what I heard, a language comparable to the Arabic language, and the beauty of the voice is added to its amazing wealth in synonyms.

### Conclusion:

This article deals with the history of the Arabic language in Europe during the Middle Ages. The connections between Arab East and West date back to ancient times. The first contact between Europe and Arabia was established during the Umayyad period when Islamic rule was established in Andalusia. During this time several translation movements were started. Many books were translated into Arabic from other languages. Later, this relationship between East and Arabia continued in different contexts.

Later, this relationship deepened in the Middle Ages and many academic activities took place during this period. Arabic books on medicine, philosophy, and other sciences were translated into European languages. Many Arabic books continued to be taught in European universities. Hundreds of Arabic words were added to European languages. At that time, printing presses were established, and many Arabic books were published.

During this period, the Europeans brought tens of Arabic manuscripts from around the world to their countries and managed their protection, correction, and research. They made their catalogs and managed their publication. Many European scholars recognized the distinction of the Arabic language and compiled dictionaries in this regard.

Therefore, the relationship between the Arabic language and Europe is very old, and in different dimensions, Europe established its relationship with the Arabic language.

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