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## ‘Amīra’s *Grammatica Syriaca*: Genesis, Structure and Perspectives

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### 1. George Amira, the Maronite College and the *Typographia Medicea*

A concise biographical notice on George ‘Amīra can be read, in Syriac, on the frontispiece of his *Grammatica Syriaca* printed in Rome in 1596: *Gewārgīs bareh d-mīkā’ēl men bēt ‘amīrā ‘edēnāyā marūnāyā men tūrā d-lebnān*, that is «George son of Michael from the ‘Amīra family of Eden, Maronite from Mount Lebanon». The Latin version adds some further information on ‘Amīra’s status and education, qualifying him as *philosophus* and *theologus* and as a pupil of the Maronite College.

‘Eden (Arabic Ehden), from where the *bēt* (house, family) ‘Amīra came, is a village on Mount Lebanon, near Qannūbīn. Several pupils of the Maronite College came from the same village,<sup>1</sup> or from its vicinity, from 1583 throughout the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup>

We don’t know much about ‘Amīra’s childhood and early education, except that his uncle Ya’qūb al-Duwāyhī had initiated him into the Syriac language before his arrival in Rome in 1583.<sup>3</sup> Then, he was one of the first pupils of the Maronite College, founded by Gregory XIII in 1584.

By the time of the publication of his *Grammatica Syriaca*, ‘Amīra had been appointed bishop of ‘Eden and had gone back to Lebanon, where he later became Patriarch of the Maronite Church (1635-1644).<sup>4</sup>

As a part of his apprenticeship at the Maronite College, ‘Amīra copied a number of Syriac and Arabic manuscripts, among which were also various texts of the Syriac grammatical and lexicographical tradition. In the colophon of BML Or. 441,<sup>5</sup> containing the Syriac lexicon by Eudochos (v. *infra*), copied ten years before the publication of the *Grammatica Syriaca*, Amira

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<sup>1</sup> Among which Sarkīs al-Rīzī, active in the copy of Syriac and Arabic grammatical manuscripts, who later participated in the printing of Tommaso Obicino’s *Thesaurus Arabico-Syro-Latinus*, printed in Rome in 1636.

<sup>2</sup> See Nasser Gemayel: *Les échanges culturels entre les Maronites et l’Europe. Du Collège Maronite de Rome (1584) au Collège de Ayn-Warqa (1789)*, 2 vols., Beyrouth 1984, esp. vol. 1, pp. 96-137.

<sup>3</sup> This anecdote is cited in the *Annales* (year 1644) by the Maronite Patriarch Stephanos al-Duwāyhī, quoted in *Ibid.*, I, 343.

<sup>4</sup> For further biographical information see *Ibid.*, I, 343-348.

<sup>5</sup> All of the BML manuscripts quoted in this paper can be viewed online on the website of the library: <http://teca.bmlonline.it/TecaRicerca/index.jsp>

describes himself as «a student in need of teaching, while I was writing (this manuscript)».<sup>6</sup>

The Maronite College entertained frequent relations with the *Typographia Medicea* and its director, as is apparent from the numerous manuscripts copied by the pupils and acquired by Raimondi, today preserved mostly in the BML.<sup>7</sup> As we will see, this was the case also for George ʿAmīra, who copied various grammatical texts for Raimondi’s use.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, he had translated five prayers from Latin into Syriac for the *Missale Chaldaicum iuxta ritum Ecclesiae Nationis Maronitarum*, printed by the *Typographia* in 1594.<sup>9</sup>

In the preface to the reader, ʿAmīra puts the composition and publication of his grammar under the auspices of Giovanni Battista Raimondi, who exhorted him to undertake such an enterprise. Indeed, as will be shown in §2, Raimondi was responsible for the whole printing process of the *Grammatica Syriaca*, which was published entirely at his own expense and with his own typeset, *In Typographia Linguarum Externarum. Apud Jacobum Lunam*.

### 1.1 *Dedicatory and cultural context*

In the dedicatory to Cardinal Caetani (1550-1599),<sup>10</sup> ʿAmīra describes the circumstances that led him to compose his Syriac grammar. First of all, he declares that he devoted several years to the study of the *lingua Chaldaica sive Syriaca*. In fact, as he explains a few lines further, he collected several notes on this subject and friends and scholars, eager to learn this language, urged him to write down in good order the *institutiones* of Syriac. Reference is also made to Pope Clemens V and to the Council of Vienne (1311-1312), whose decrees pushed ʿAmīra to compose his grammar. The reference to Clemens V, the founder of the *Studio di Perugia*, is certainly meant to flatter Enrico Caetani, who studied jurisprudence in that university between 1569 and 1573. At the same time, ʿAmīra was able to move from Clemens V to Clemens VIII, who was the Pope at the time of the publication of the *Grammatica Syriaca*. If Clemens V, at the Council of Vienne had ordered that teachings of the Chaldean language should be established all over Europe, Clemens VIII, faithful to the memory of his predecessor, showed a particular zeal in accomplishing the decree. Finally, the

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<sup>6</sup> F. 135r ll. 12-13. A reference to ʿAmīra’s apprenticeship is also found in the *Grammatica Syriaca*, in the preface to the reader, where he recalls the hardship of learning, due to the lack of an author that explained grammar with order and clarity.

<sup>7</sup> See Pier Giorgio Borbone: Syriac and Garšūnī Manuscripts Produced in Rome in the Collection of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, in *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*, 13, 2013, pp. 3-16.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the ownership statement in BML Or. 419, discussed *infra* in § 4.3.

<sup>9</sup> Gemayel, *Les échanges* (as in n. 2), vol. 1, 459. Some manuscripts related to the preparation of the *Missale* are preserved in BNCF (Cl. III 74, 75, 78, 79), ʿAmīra’s hand could possibly be recognized in some leaflets (III-XII) in Cl. III 78, and in Cl. III 79 ff. a-b, but all of these documents need more careful examination.

<sup>10</sup> Gaspare De Caro: Caetani, Enrico, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani vol. 16*, 1973, pp. . In 1585 Caetani had been appointed Latin Patriarch of Alexandria.

choice of Enrico Caetani as a protector is related to the memory of his old friend, the Cardinal Carafa (d. 1591). Antonio Carafa had been a patron of the Maronites and had been the *praefectus* of the *Congregatio Interpretum Concilii Tridentini*, a congregation that was responsible for the execution of the decrees of the Council of Trent.

The reference to the Council of Vienne, which is repeated also in the preface to the reader, established also a clear connection with Raimondi's agenda, setting the *Grammatica Syriaca* within his broader printing project.

In general terms, the publication of grammars was an essential element in the project of the Polyglot Bible, that was sketched under the pontificate of Gregory XIII and pursued under his successors Sixtus V and Clemens VIII. A special *Congregatione* of prelates and scholars was created, of which Raimondi was a member and under the auspices of which he set the editorial activity of his Oriental Press, especially after he bought it in 1595.<sup>11</sup> Didactic linguistic tools had to be provided for the reader, as it was the case, for example, in the Antwerp Polyglot printed by Plantin (1572). Within this plan, 'Amīra's Syriac grammar may have been intended to serve as a companion intended as a companion to the usage of religious and liturgical books (such as the above-mentioned *Missale*).

However, Raimondi's linguistic program was even broader and it aimed at promoting the study of the Oriental languages in the West. In a number of documents preserved today in Florence and Rome, most which have been published and studied by Mario Casari,<sup>12</sup> Raimondi illustrates parts of such a program, by enumerating the reasons for which Oriental languages should be taught in Rome, as well as by analyzing and praising the virtues of the Arabic languages.

Besides arguments in support of the Christian faith, as well as of humanistic interest in scientific texts,<sup>13</sup> Raimondi introduces a very important point, which was admirably summarized by

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<sup>11</sup> Guglielmo Enrico Saltini: Della stamperia medicea orientale e di Giovan Battista Raimondi, in *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani*, IV, 1860, pp. 257-308, pp. 273-276; Id., Bibbia Poliglotta Medicea secondo il disegno e gli apprendimenti di Gio. Battista Raimondi, in *Bollettino Italiano degli Studi Orientali*, 22-24, 1882, pp. 490-495 and Pier Giorgio Borbone: Un progetto di bibbia poliglotta di Giovanni Battista Raimondi e il ms. Firenze, Biblioteca medicea laurenziana, Or. 58 (9a1) in *Bibbia e Corano. Edizioni e ricezioni*, ed. by Baffioni, Finazzi, Passoni Dell'Acqua and Vergani, Roma - Milano 2016, pp. 191-229. See also doc. [Misc. Med. 722, 14, 2r-3r in Vol. I](#).

<sup>12</sup> Mario Casari has been the first to draw attention on such documents, by publishing and commenting upon such documents. Here follows a tentative list: **Florence**: BNCF Magl. III 81 fols. 5r-6v, 17r-18v; Magl. III 95 fols. 7r-8r, 9r-11r (Mario Casari: Eleven Good Reasons for Learning Arabic in Late-Renaissance Italy: A Memorandum by Giovan Battista Raimondi, in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Joseph Connors*, ed. by Israëls and Waldman, Firenze 2012, pp. 545-557; ASFi Misc. Med. 719, [all.](#) 21; Misc. Med. 721 fols. 327r-328r, 331r-332r (Margherita Farina: Uno scambio epistolare fra Mario Schepani e Giovanni Battista Raimondi. Lo studio della lingua araba nel tardo rinascimento, interesse scientifico e curiosità, in *EVO*, 36, 2013, pp. 63-72). Another analogous document that has been attributed to Raimondi is found in **Rome**, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, N. 36, fols. 121r-124v (Mario Casari: «This language is more universal than any other». Values of Arabic in early modern Italy, in *City, Court, Academy. Language Choice in Early Modern Italy*, ed. by Del Soldato and Rizzi, Oxford, New York 2017, pp. 173-198, see infra fn. [16](#)).

<sup>13</sup> These are the main arguments of the documents published in Casari, *Eleven Good Reasons* (as in n. 12): the diffusion of the knowledge of the Oriental languages – Raimondi claims – would contribute to the spreading of Catholicism among the Eastern Christians, it would represent a powerful instrument in the confutation of heresies or of Islam. The

Casari:<sup>14</sup> «Arabic should be taught especially in Rome, because the city is a cosmopolitan mirror of the world, where every language should be accessible.» The idea of a linguistic (and graphic) cosmopolis dominates all of Raimondi's enterprises. In the *Typographia Medicea*, he tried to collect and represent all of the languages that he considered as essential and representative of classical, Christian and humanistic culture (Arabic, Aramaic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Persian, Slavonic, Syriac, Turkish), both in the form of the manuscripts and of the typesets that he produced.<sup>15</sup>

The importance of each language was also connected to its excellence in a specific domain or feature, which reflected man's capital gift of speech (see Casari in this volume). Thus, in a lengthy celebration of Arabic,<sup>16</sup> Raimondi describes it as «more universal than any other», because it spread greatly beyond its original geographic borders, has been used for writing about every science, and, by virtue of its diffusion, its vocabulary has been enriched by the contribution of eminent people of different languages and cultures.<sup>17</sup>

The same point of view on languages can be found also throughout the prefatory chapters of the *Grammatica Syriaca*. Here the primacy of Syriac is based on its identification with Chaldaic, as the pre-Babelic first language of humankind, which is supported by a powerful corpus of citation from biblical texts, as well as from classical authors.<sup>18</sup> However, a certain subordinate status of Syriac is hinted at, in veiled terms, when it comes to universality. In the *Praeludia* to the grammar, 'Amīra explains that Syriac suffered a *dispersion* (rather than a *diffusion*), that gave rise to dialectal differentiations (according to a Babelic model) and the interruption of mutual understanding.<sup>19</sup>

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knowledge of Arabic would provide access to important scientific texts, such as the ones of Avicenna, Razi, Al-Farabi etc. Mention is also made of the necessity of complying with the requirements of the Council of Vienne.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 551, Raimondi's Italian text reads «È necessaria perché essendo Roma quasi un piccolo mondo dove concorreno huomini da tutte le provincie, et di diversi linguaggi, et da dove deveno pigliare regula et norma tutti, che si leghino et vi siano anco huomini et dottrina di detta lingua.» (BNCF Magl. III 81, f. 18v).

<sup>15</sup> *Le vie delle lettere. La Tipografia Medicea tra Roma e l'Oriente*, ed. by Sara Fani/Margherita Farina, Florence 2012. On the identification of the languages that constituted the humanistic *cursus studiorum* in the second half of the 16th cent. see Angelo Michele Piemontese: G.B. Vecchietti e la letteratura giudeo-persiana, in *Materia Giudaica*, 15-16, 2010-2011, pp. 483-500.

<sup>16</sup> Casari, «*This language is more universal than any other*». *Values of Arabic in early modern Italy* (as in n. 12), esp. pp. 187-191. Although the attribution of the text to Raimondi is uncertain and questionable, according to Casari, the arguments it presents are clearly issued from Raimondi's entourage: "although we cannot ascertain its authorship, we may suggest that this document is tied to Raimondi's scholarship" Casari, *ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>17</sup> In a letter to the Neapolitan physician Mario Schepani of 1611, Raimondi briefly compares Arabic to Hebrew, observing that the first one has a richer nominal morphology (more genders, more patterns for plural formation). Moreover, praising the variety and richness of Arabic vocabulary, he observes that «il leone ha nella lingua arabica seicento et trenta nomi» («the lion has in Arabic six-hundred and thirty names»). In the same letter Raimondi encourages Schepani to learn Arabic because, through this language, he will also gain access to Persian and Turkish, by virtue of the great number of Arabic loanwords that they have received (cf. Farina, *Uno scambio epistolare* (as in n. 12), pp. 69-70).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the chapter *De linguae Chaldaicae sive Syriacae antiquitate*. On the identification of Syriac as the first language, or the language of Eden, see Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet: La langue du Paradis, la langue comme patrie, in *Les auteurs syriaques et leur langue*, ed. by Farina, Paris 2018, pp. 9-25.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the chapter *De linguae Chaldaicae, seu Syriacae nominibus ac discrimine*, discussed *infra* § 4.1.

From this point of view, we can consider 'Amīra's *Grammatica Syriaca* also as a brick in Raimondi's conception of a global (and hierarchical) representation of languages.

## 2. The printing process of the *Grammatica Syriaca*

### 2.1 Preparation of the book

In ASFi, several documents in the collection Miscellanea Medicea provide information on the various phases of the realization of 'Amīra's grammar. The printing process took about three years, from October 1593, when the first leaf was printed, until 1596 year of the publication of the book.

Misc. Med. 718, [all. 20](#), fol. 1v (see Appendix 1, below) gives detailed information on the timeline, materials and procedure for the printing of the grammar. The text begins:

La Grammatica Chaldaica ovvero siriana tradotta et composta da Giorgio Amira Chaldeo Marronita fu incominciata à stampare cioè il suo primo foglio alli 29 d'Ottobre 1593 et fu finita di stampare l'anno 1596. Fu stampata a spese di me Giovanni Battista Raimondo et ne furono stampate n° 1250 mille et ducento cinquanta [copie].<sup>20</sup>

From this note we understand that 'Amīra's *Grammatica* was ready to be printed in 1593 (which, according to Raimondi's methodology does not necessarily imply that the text was absolutely finished, but only that it was complete enough to begin printing parts of it). We also understand that the expense for the printing was undertaken entirely by Raimondi.

While we can set 'Amīra's grammatical studies in the late eighties of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent. and the process of preparation and print of his *Grammatica Syriaca* between 1593 and 1596, there is evidence suggesting that the project of a Syriac grammar had circulated in Raimondi's entourage already around 1589. Misc. Med. 717, fol. 84r carries the following title «Spese fatte per la stampatura della Grammatica Chaldaica del padre fra Thomaso».<sup>21</sup> The first expense noted is «A di

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<sup>20</sup> «The printing of the Chaldaic, or Syriac, Grammar translated and composed by Giorgio Amira Chaldeo Maronite began, that is to say its first leaf, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1593. And the print finished in the year 1596. It was printed at the expenses of me Giovanni Battista Raimondo, and it was printed n. 1250 one thousand and two-hundred and fifty of them.» More information can be deduced from Raimondi's diary (Misc. Med. 718, ins. 25, fol. 9r): «A 4 di Maggio 1596 si fece l'istrumento della compera delle Grammatiche con messer Giorgio Marronita il Notario lo chiamò messer Giacomo Luna à Ripetta». «On the 4th of May 1596, the *instrumentum* was made for the buying of the *Grammatica* with ms. Giorgio Marronita, Giacomo Luna in Ripetta called the notary.»

<sup>21</sup> «Expenses for the printing of the Grammatica Chaldaica of father Thomaso». This note refers to the Dominican friar Tommaso da Terracina, an orientalist who mastered Arabic, Persian and Syriac and who collaborated in many of Raimondi's editorial projects. He was a member of the congregation for the censorship of Raimondi's editions, among which 'Amīra's grammar. His name often features in the list of borrowers of Raimondi's books (Misc. Med. 718, [all. 20](#)) and the latter describes him as a fellow and a friend in the race for collecting oriental manuscripts in Rome ([see doc. XXX](#)). Fra' Tommaso also features on the pay-role of Ferdinando I in 1589, with 7 *scudi* per month for the Arabic printing (Giovanni Valentino M. Fabroni: *Dei provvedimenti annonarj, edizione II*, Firenze 1817, p. 113, fn. 1).

28 Gennaio 1589 à Clemente [Stangaporta] per 2000 spatii di più sorte per aggiustare la Latina Gregoriana con la Chaldea à 2 corpi, *scudi* 20». <sup>22</sup> Other expenses follow, suggesting that in 1589 a text on Syriac grammar was ready to be printed. At present, no record of a Syriac grammar composed by Tommaso da Terracina has been found. However, the miscellany BML Or. 459 fols. 80r-94v contain the Latin translation of a portion of a Syriac grammatical text that seem to be Barhebraeus' *Metrical Grammar*. <sup>23</sup> These folios follow a Persian quire that Piemontese, in his catalogue, ascribes to Terracina's hand. <sup>24</sup> BML Or. 298, a copy of this grammar that Raimondi got from Ni'matullah, contains on fol. 7r a gloss that seems to be by Terracina's hand. The only didactic text in Syriac that Raimondi printed before 1596 is the so-called *Alphabetum Chaldaicum* of 1592, which can hardly be described as a grammar, as it only contains the West-Syriac alphabet and a chrestomathy.

The last part of Or. 458 contains a hand-written draft of the *Grammatica Syriaca*, supposedly by 'Amīra's hand, with censorship notes (scattered throughout the draft) and *imprimatur* by three Dominicans involved in the activities of the Typographia Medicea: Bartolomeo de' Miranda (*Magister Sacri Palatii*, v. § 3 *infra*), Giovanni Battista Leopardus (also known as Hesronita, or al-Ḥaşrūnī) <sup>25</sup> and Tommaso da Terracina.

The draft, whose current binding has misplaced some leaves, seems to be copied by a Western hand or, at any rate, a hand that was trained in the West in writing Latin and seems to be different from Raimondi's hand, as attested by dozens of documents in BML, BNCF and ASFi (e.g. in the shape of the letters *f* and *l*). The Syriac portions of the draft, intertwined with the Latin text, can be ascribed to 'Amīra with certainty, hence it is safe to conclude that the latter was the copyist of this draft. It is also interesting to notice the clumsy and uncertain writing of the few Hebrew words on fols. 609r-v.

The draft is incomplete and contains portions of the introductory chapters (dedicatory, preface to the reader, on the usefulness of the Chaldaic language), of the third book on the verb, and of the fourth, fifth and seventh book. Some chapters feature twice, as fols. 572r-541r contain duplicates.

This draft clearly indicates that 'Amīra had an active role in the composition and redaction of the *Grammatica Syriaca*. The presence in the grammar of several quotations from Syriac authors

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<sup>22</sup> «On the 28 of January 1589 to Clemente [Stangaporta] for 2000 spaces of various sorts, in order to match the Latin Gregorian with the *Chaldea* in two sizes».

<sup>23</sup> A Syriac grammar of the second half of the 13th cent. On Barhebraeus see Hidemi Takahashi: Bar 'Ebroyo, Grigorios, in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (GEDSH), ed. by Sebastian P. Brock et al., Piscataway (NJ) 2011, pp. 54-56.

<sup>24</sup> Angelo Michele Piemontese: *Catalogo dei manoscritti persiani conservati nelle biblioteche d'Italia*, Roma 1989, p. 99.

<sup>25</sup> Gemayel, *Les échanges* (as in n. 2), vol. 1, pp. 349-353; 466-467.

whose works ʿAmīra had copied (see *infra* § 4) confirms his crucial contribution to the shaping of the text. A couple of annotations in Misc. Med. may contain some clue to the actual role that he played in the realization of Raimondi's (and Terracina's) editorial project. In 718, *all.* 20, fol. 1v quoted above, we read that the grammar was «tradotta e composta» (translated and composed) by ʿAmīra. Further on, in fol. 2r ʿAmīra is designated as «autore o vero traduttore» (author, that is to say translator). This evidence suggests, in my opinion, that ʿAmīra was employed by Raimondi to copy and to translate ancient Syriac (and Arabic, as we will see) grammatical texts, to be combined into a Latin grammar of Syriac.

## 2.2 The punches

Misc. Med. 718, *all.* 20, fol. 1v lists the costs for the paper, the composition, the print, the ink etc. ʿAmīra was paid 100 *scudi* «in contanti» (in ready money), but he also received 35 copies of the grammar (fol. 2r). The overall cost of the publication was 524 *scudi*.

FOL. 1v mentions also «la spesa fatta nella gittatura del Carattere Chaldeo, del Carattere Latino, et del stagno comperato per detti Caratteri», hence referring to the production of the tin types.<sup>26</sup>

The *Grammatica Syriaca* was printed with the Syriac type-set created in 1590 by Jean Cavillon for the *Typographia Medicea*,<sup>27</sup> and used in 1592 for the *Alphabetum Chaldaicum*<sup>28</sup> and in 1594 for the *Missale Chaldaicum iuxta ritum ecclesiae nationis Maronitarum*<sup>29</sup>. This type-set is identified as **W7** in Coakley's inventory of Syriac fonts (although there dated to 1592, on the basis of the first printed text in which it features).<sup>30</sup>

## 3. The sales, distribution and readership

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<sup>26</sup> «Expenses for the *gittatura* of the Chaldean character, of the Latin character and of the tin bought for the above-mentioned characters.»

<sup>27</sup> Misc. Med. 718, *all.* 10 «Ponsoni et madre del Carattere Caldaico secondo li Marroniti incominciato da Mastro Gianni a p.º di Luglio 1590», «Punches and *matrix* of the Caldaic font according to the Maronites, begun by Mastro Gianni on July the first 1590», Pier Giorgio Borbone: Ancora sul «negotio chaldeo», ovvero gli esordi falliti della stampa in caratteri siriaci orientali (Roma, 1587-1588), in *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, 39, 2016, pp. 217-245, (esp. p. 230 n. 41).

<sup>28</sup> <http://id.sbn.it/bid/BVEE074822> (viewed 19/05/2018).

<sup>29</sup> <http://id.sbn.it/bid/BVEE017650> (viewed 19/05/2018). The same font also features in the new edition of the *Missale*, of 1596.

<sup>30</sup> J.F. Coakley: *The Typography of Syriac: a Historical Catalogue of PrintingType, 1537-1958*, London 2006, pp. 43-45. This type is also discussed in Borbone, *Ancora sul «negotio chaldeo»* (as in n. 27), esp. p. 230. At the pp. 2-3, ʿAmīra's grammar contains an alphabetic chart in different Syriac scripts, where P.G. Borbone has recognized the first East-Syriac font of which we have notice, produced in 1587 for the *Typographia Medicea*, in the context of the so-called «Chaldean Business» Pier Giorgio Borbone: *The Chaldean Business. The Beginnings of East Syriac Typography and the Profession of Faith of Patriarch Elias* (Vat. Ar. 83, ff. 117-126), in *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, 20, 2014, pp. 211-258; Borbone, *Ancora sul «negotio chaldeo»* (as in n. 27).

Misc. Med. 718, *all.* 20. fols. 2r-v (see Appendix 1 below) gives us a list of people who received or bought 'Amīra's grammar right after it was printed, between 1596 and 1598, and later in 1603.

There are 35 copies. This list allows us to sketch a network of the people who were interested in such a work.

- 2 copies to the *Magister Sacri Palatii* 27 April 1596. This office belonged to a member of the Dominican order (Order of the Preachers), who lived in the papal residence. In 1596 this charge belonged to Bartolomeo de' Miranda, who, together with Tommaso da Terracina and Giovanni Battista Leopardus, was also involved in the censorship process of revision of some of Raimondi's editions, such as Avicenna's Canon (1593)<sup>31</sup> and Amira's Syriac grammar (as we saw above, his signature features in the draft in BML Or. 458, e.g. fol. 541v).
- 1 copy to Monsignor Serafino. This person, which I have not yet identified, features also in the list of books lent by Raimondi, he borrowed a manuscript Latin version of Ptolemy's *Perspettiva* on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 1598 (Misc. Med. 718, *all.* 24, fol. 3v).
- 2 copies to Monsignor Dossato(?) 29 January 1596, one for himself and one for monsignor di Perone
- 1 copy to Fra Tommaso, that is Tommaso da Terracina.
- 1 copy to Giovanni Battista Leopardus.
- 1 copy to Cardinal San Giorgio, that is Cinzio Aldobrandini (1551-1610).<sup>32</sup>
- 1 copy to the abbot of Guastalla.
- 1 copy to Giacomo Luna (he also sold 3 more). The Lebanese Luna (Ya'qūb al-Ḥilālī<sup>33</sup>) was the owner of the printing press that printed several of Raimondi's oriental editions, after that he had to buy the *Typographia Medicea* from Ferdinando de' Medici (1595).
- 1 copy to the fraiar Angelo d'Augubio agostiniano.

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<sup>31</sup> See Sara Fani: The *Typographia Medicea* and the Humanistic Perspective of Renaissance Rome. II. The Medicean Edition of Avicenna: an Early Contribution to "Scientific Orientalism", in *The Grand Ducal Medici and the Levant: Material Culture, Diplomacy and Imagery in Early Modern Mediterranean (Medici Archive Project)*, ed. by Maurizio Arfaio/Marta Caroscio, London/Turnhout 2016, pp. 172-177 (esp. p. 174 and n. 53).

<sup>32</sup> Elena Fasano Guarini: Aldobrandini, Cinzio, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. II, ed. by 1960, pp. 102-104. Pier Giorgio Borbone has informed me that this copy is today kept in the Bibliotheca Catheriniana in Pisa. Cardinal San Giorgio was involved in Raimondi's activities, especially after the latter had bought the *Typographia Medicea*. In ASFi 721, *all.* 56, doc. 2, fol. 8v Raimondi recounts that Aldobrandini, on the occasion of an embassy to the Persian King that he had supervised, had requested and obtained several precious manuscripts, that were now in his possession, and that he planned to print. On the embassy see the article by Sara Fani in vol. I XXXX, and also Angelo Michele Piemontese: *Persica Vaticana. Roma e Persia tra codici e testi*, Città del Vaticano 2017, p. 381.

<sup>33</sup> See Gemayel, *Les échanges* (as in n. 2), vol. 1 p. 74-77; Alberto Tinto: *La Tipografia Medicea Orientale*, Lucca 1987, pp. 82-84 and *passim*.

- 1 copy to the friar Gregorio Nonio agostiniano.
- 12 copies to Giovanni Paolo libraro a Pasquino per venderle in consegna. 2 copies to Giovanni Paolo Terrarossa<sup>34</sup> May 1596, and 10 to be sold through the librarian Belardino
- 1 copy sold to a priest of the Chiesa nuova.
- 1 copy sold to the friar Mario dall'Aquila.
- 1 copy gifted to Gerolamo Vecchietti 1598.
- 1 copy gifted to a Spanish carmelitan father in the house of the very illustrious Cardinal Dezza.
- 1 copy given for the Vatican Library November 1598, to the *custode* Marino. It could be Marino Ranaldi, one of the *custodes* of the Libreria Vaticana under the direction of Baronio.<sup>35</sup>
- 1 copy sold to the treasurer of the Kingdom of Granada, for the bishop of Granada. In Raimondi's days this was Pedro Vaca de Castro y Quiñones (1534-1623)<sup>36</sup>
- 3 copies sold in Paris by a French librarian in 1603.
- 1 copy gifted to Fra Giovanni Bentivenga da Rimini cappuccino. This person borrows Raimondi's copy of the Chaldean Grammar by Münster<sup>37</sup> around 1599 (Misc. Med. 718, *all.* 24, fol. 4v).
- 1 copy sold the 24 January 1598 to a German from Mainz, who later came back also to buy a Pontificale.

A copy of the grammar today preserved in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence belonged to Jacopo Gaddi (FF.V.13204).

In April 1681 Jean François de la Croix translated into French the preface and the first two books of the *Grammatica Syriaca*, which are today preserved in the manuscript BnF Syr. 264.

#### 4. The content of the grammar

The *Grammatica Syriaca* does not have a table of contents. Therefore, in order to make the text

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<sup>34</sup> Terrarossa will buy, in 1603, the privileges for printing the *Canto Fermo* from Leonardo Parasole (see Tinto, *La Tipografia* (as in n. 33), p. 65).

<sup>35</sup> See Maria Antonietta Visceglia: La biblioteca tra Urbano VII (15 settembre 1590) e Urbano VIII (1623-1644): cardinali bibliotecari, custodi, *scriptores*, in *Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana III. La Vaticana nel Seicento (1590-700): una biblioteca di biblioteche*, ed. by Claudia Montuschi, Città del Vaticano 2014, pp. 78-121, (esp. p. 84, 88).

<sup>36</sup> For his relation with Raimondi, see BNCF II.V.157, fols. 23r-34v presented by Sara Fani in vol. I **XXXX**

<sup>37</sup> «La Grammatica Caldea di Mostero stampata con cartoni et pelle lionata».

more accessible, I have arranged a list of all the books, chapters and paragraphs in Appendix 2 of this paper.

#### 4.1 *The nature and identification of the Syriac language*

In a recent publication, Robert Wilkinson has shown how the identification by Western scholars of Syriac as a specific dialect within the Aramaic linguistic group was a lengthy process, that occupied European intellectuals all through the Renaissance and the Early Modern period.<sup>38</sup>

In the prefatory sections of the *Grammatica Syriaca*, 'Amīra discusses at length the problem of the identification of Syriac as a language, and of its relation to other Aramaic denominations, such as Chaldaic.

In the dedicatory to Cardinal Caietani, Syriac is identified with Chaldaic and 'Amīra states that the latter was the language spoken by Jesus and by the Apostles: «quae Christo Domino, et Apostolis (...) vernacula fuerit, ac maternal» (on the second page of the dedicatory, unnumbered).

At the beginning of the preface to the reader, Syriac and Chaldaic are opposed to Hebrew, in a criticism to some contemporary grammars that, claiming to describe Chaldaic, in fact extend to it features and categories of the Hebrew language.<sup>39</sup>

The first paragraph of the *Praeludia* is specifically devoted to the Syriac-Chaldaic denomination and identification: *De linguae Chaldaicae, se Syriacae nominibus, ac discrimine*. Here 'Amīra evokes some Syriac grammarians («quidam ex Syris Grammaticis»), who have related that, due to its great geographic dispersion and to progressive isolation, a confusion has arisen among the speakers of the Syriac-Chaldaic language, up to the point that people from different regions no longer understand each other. The source of this argument can be recognized as the *Metrical Grammar* by Barhebraeus (d. 1286), one of the most important Syriac grammars, that was available in Rome in various copies in 'Amīra's time, certainly in the manuscript BML Or. 298 (v. *supra* §2.1). In a commentary to its very first section, Barhebraeus observes:

It should be known that, being dispersed and diffused in remote regions, the Syriac language has suffered great confusion, more than any other language, and has undergone all sorts of transformations. So that those conversing in the same language do not understand each other, but an interpreter is needed, as for those conversing in foreign languages.<sup>40</sup>

Geographic dispersion is also the cause of the variety of names given to the Chaldaic

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<sup>38</sup> Robert J. Wilkinson: Working towards a Definition of Syriac in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, in *Les auteurs syriaques et leur langue*, ed. by Margherita Farina, Paris 2018, pp. 207-236.

<sup>39</sup> 'Amīra has been indeed credited by modern scholars as the first scholar in Europe to have delivered Syriac grammar from the Hebrew model (Riccardo Contini: I primordi della linguistica semitica comparata nell'Europa rinascimentale: le *Institutiones* di Angelo Canini (1554), in *Annali di Ca' Foscari*, 33, 1994, pp. 39-56, esp. p. 24).

<sup>40</sup> Jean-Pierre-Paul Martin: *Œuvres grammaticales d'Abou'lfaradj' dit Bar Hebraeus*, 2 vols., Paris 1872, vol. 2, p. 5.

language. The oldest one is, according to 'Amīra, «Chaldaic» (*Chaldaica*), from the Chaldean region where the first confusion of languages occurred. This is also why the same language is also called «Babylonian» (*Babyloniaca*). Other denomination of the same language are Aramaic (*Aramaica*), Syriac (*Syriaca*) and Assyrian (*Assyriaca*). Moreover, as the Jews have used this language as their vernacular, this language has also been called Hebrew (*Hebraica*). In analogous manner, it can be called Christian (*Christiana*), because it was the language of Jesus.

The identity of Syriac, Babylonian and Chaldaic is supported by means of biblical quotations, among which is the famous passage of 2 Kings 18:26 where the superintendent of the king of Jerusalem recommends the envoy of the Assyrian king to speak in Aramaic, rather than in Hebrew, so that the people on the walls do not understand him: «Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.»<sup>41</sup> According to 'Amīra, the Assyrian messenger is asked to speak «non Iudaice audiente populo, sed Syriace». However, neither the Hebrew original text, nor the Syriac Peshitta translation display here any reference to Syriac. On the contrary, both versions say «in Aramaic» (Heb. *'arāmīt*, Syr. *'ārāmā'īt*). The terms «syriace» and «iudaice» feature instead in the Vulgate, which appears to be 'Amīra's reference.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of his claim on the unity of the Chaldaic-Syriac language, 'Amīra then distinguishes Syriac from other Aramaic dialects that are designated as «Chaldaic». This term, he explains at the second page of the *Praeludia*, is also used to designate the language of the *Paraphrasis*, that is the Targum.<sup>43</sup> But in fact, targumic Aramaic is different from Syriac, and is described as a corrupted form of the language that underwent influence from Hebrew. In 'Amīra's view, such an influence was the result of the habit of the Aramaic-speaking Jews of writing Aramaic with the Hebrew alphabet and punctuation system,<sup>44</sup> that would have led people to read Aramaic as if it were Hebrew. However, 'Amīra adds, if one transcribes the consonants of the text of the *Paraphrasis* into the «Chaldaic» writing, removes the Hebrew vowels and substitutes the «Chaldaic» vowel signs, one easily realizes that it is indeed «Chaldaic», that is Syriac.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>42</sup> «Recamur ut loquaris nobis servis tuis syriace: siquidem intelligimus hanc linguam: et non loquaris nobis iudaice, audiente populo qui est super murum.» The Latin text follows here the Greek Septuagint: Λάλησον δὴ πρὸς τοὺς παῖδας σου Συριστί, ὅτι ἀκούομεν ἡμεῖς, καὶ οὐ λαλήσεις μεθ' ἡμῶν Ἰουδαῖστί, καὶ ἵνα τί λαλεῖς ἐν τοῖς ὤσιν τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ τείχους.

<sup>43</sup> That is Aramaic translations/paraphrases of the Hebrew Old Testament.

<sup>44</sup> Like many Semitic writing systems, the Syriac and Hebrew alphabets only record consonants, whereas the notation of vowels is made by means of diacritical marks added above and below the letters. Between Hebrew and Aramaic, however, things went the other way around: the Jews borrowed the squared Aramaic letter shapes during the Babylonian exile (6<sup>th</sup> cent. b.C.), so what 'Amīra (and current modern denomination) considers as the Hebrew alphabet should actually be regarded as an original Aramaic one.

<sup>45</sup> «si legatur cum punctis, ac vocalibus more Chaldaeorum; vel proprijs Chaldaicis elementis conscribatur, rejectis omnino punctis, et vocalibus Hebraicis additisque Chaldaicis, facile quilibet linguae Chaldaicae, sive Syriacae peritus intelliget, ac declarabit.» (third page of the *Praeludia*).

As odd as it may seem, the exercise proposed by ‘Amīra had illustrious predecessors among contemporary scholars.

In 1568, Immanuel Tremellius, an Italian scholar of Jewish origins, published a *Grammatica Chaldaea et Syra*, in which he used the square Hebrew types and attempted at reconstructing a historical development within Aramaic, distinguishing a Targumic and a Syriac stage. His aim was to restore an «original» vocalization, to be used to recover a more genuine Aramaic reading of the Scriptures. Hence, after that, Tremellius published an edition of the Syriac New Testament, in which he used a vocalization corresponding to the «historical» Aramaic vowels that he had reconstructed in his grammar, as opposed to the one documented in the Syriac manuscripts.<sup>46</sup> It is clear that here Tremellius is an underlying target of ‘Amīra’s argument. Hence, he invites his reader to perform the opposite operation, taking Syriac as a starting point and restoring all extant Aramaic documents to their supposedly original Syriac form.

Finally, fourteen pages of the *Praeludia* of the *Grammatica Syriaca* are devoted to demonstrating that Syriac was the first language of humankind, before the confusion of Babel. With this chapter, ‘Amīra and his patron Raimondi set the *Grammatica Syriaca* at the core of the debate on the first language of humankind (or of Adam), that engaged European scholars between the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> cent.<sup>47</sup> ‘Amīra’s argumentation is long and articulated. On this occasion, I will only summarize its main points.

First of all, ‘Amīra only admits Chaldaic and Hebrew as potential candidates for the status of first language: all other languages must be ruled out. Moreover, he argues for the necessity of postulating only one language, common to all humankind, before the Tower of Babel. He thus refutes the theory of Philastrius bishop of Brescia (4<sup>th</sup> cent.), who maintained that, even before Babel, men spoke in a variety of languages, but God granted them a superior knowledge and mutual understanding.

Then, ‘Amīra moves on to demonstrate that the first language spoken in Chaldea was Chaldaic and not Hebrew, or, rather, that before Babel Hebrew and Chaldaic were one and the same language. After enumerating a number of arguments in support of the antiquity of Hebrew, ‘Amīra concludes that Chaldaic was the language that humanity spoke in its homeland of Chaldea, and that Hebrew represents a somewhat corrupted form of it, after the Tower of Babel. He is thus able to

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<sup>46</sup> On Tremellius’ undertaking see Robert J. Wilkinson: Immanuel Tremellius’ 1569 Edition of the Syriac New Testament, in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 58, 2007, pp. 9-25 and Id. Constructing Syriac in Latin - Establishing the Identity of Syriac in the West over a Century and a Half (c. 1550-c.1700), in *Babelao*, 5, 2016, pp. 169-283 (esp. pp.191-193).

<sup>47</sup> The bibliography on this subject is extremely rich. Among many others, see Jean-Claude Muller: Early stages of language comparison from Sassetti to Sir William Jones, in *Kratylos. Kritisches Berichts- und Rezensionsorgan für indogermanische und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft*, 31, 1986, pp. 1-31, Daniel Droixhe: *Souvenirs de Babel. La reconstruction de l’histoire des langues de la Renaissance aux Lumières [en ligne]*, Bruxelles 2007.

sketch a sort of line of descent of languages: *Chaldaei, Hebraei, Aegypti, Phoenices, Graeci novissimi, Romani*. Finally, ‘Amīra rehearses the arguments that he had adduced to maintain the antiquity of Hebrew, and demonstrates how they all could be better applied to Chaldaic, that is Syriac.

#### 4.2 *The Grammatica Syriaca and the Latin and Syriac linguistic tradition*

The *Grammatica Syriaca*, the first complete grammar of Syriac written in Latin and published in the West, reveals both in its structure and contents an interesting interweaving of Syriac and Latin elements. This combination of models is programmatic and explicitly recalled in the preface to the reader, where ‘Amīra explains that, because the students of the Maronite College, to whom his grammar is mainly directed, study Latin at the same time as Syriac and other languages, he has deemed it useful to provide them with a Syriac grammar in Latin. Here the main interest of Latin seems to be related to terminology, as ‘Amīra proposes a grammar «in qua Syriacae Grammaticae termini una cum terminis Latinae coniungerentur, et illius regulae, huius vocibus explicarentur».<sup>48</sup>

As was mentioned above in §1, ‘Amīra got acquainted with both Syriac and Latin linguistics in his youth, thanks first to the teachings of his uncle and then during his education at the Maronite College in Rome.

The Syriac and the Latin grammatical traditions were both modelled upon the Greek one, that they received and progressively adapted throughout the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Therefore, the two have a certain degree of compatibility that allowed ‘Amīra to match, at least in part, the expectations of a Western public, without diverting from his own linguistic tradition.

Moreover, from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Syriac grammars had begun to integrate several elements from Arabic linguistics that in the course of time reshaped parts of the Syriac linguistic theories, especially in the domain of syntax.

The interaction of these three models in ‘Amīra’s text can be observed, for example, in the discussion on the parts of speech, at the beginning of the Second Book (ch. 1, p. 56):<sup>49</sup>

De partium orationis numero, quoniam inter Syros Grammaticos non levis est disceptatio: ideo antequam de nomine agere incipiamus, earum numerum statuere debemus. Itaque quidam ex illis revocant omnes orationis partes ad tres *šmā* nomen, *meltā* verbum et *esārā* coniunctionem; ita videtur sentire auctor Grammaticae Arabico sermone explicatae. (p. 56)

<sup>48</sup> «In which the terms of Syriac grammar were joined with the terms of the Latin one, and the rules of the first one were explained with the words of the latter».

<sup>49</sup> Introducing the parts of speech by discussing the diverging theories of various authors was also a *topos* in Latin grammatical tradition. We find such a discussion in Quintilianus’ *Institutio oratoria* (I 4 18-20), in Priscianus’ *Institutiones* (see *infra*), as well as in Renaissance authors like Nebrija (Virginia Bonmati Sanchez: *Les grammairiens anciens et modernes dans les «Introductiones latinae» d’Antonio de Nebrija*, in *L’héritage des grammairiens latins de l’antiquité aux lumières*, conference proceedings (Chantilly 2-4 septembre 1987), ed. by Irène Rosier, Paris 1988, pp. 293-302, esp. p. 297).

As the passage observes, there is disagreement among the Syriac grammarians on the number of the parts of speech. Some of them claim that there are three: noun, verb and conjunction. This theory, originated in the Greek logic theory of language, that passed into Syriac from the 6<sup>th</sup> cent. through the translations of Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias* and the commentaries to this work.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, the tripartite analysis of the language is the basis of Arabic linguistic theory, that was assimilated by certain Syriac authors, such as Barhebraeus (13<sup>th</sup> cent.) and Išo'yahb Bar Malkon (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent.) but was stigmatized by other grammarians like Bar Šakko (13<sup>th</sup> cent.).

ʿAmīra goes on:

Alii vero septem tantum orationis partes omitta interiectione enumerant; quas mox enumerabimus; ita sentit Elias in sua Grammatica, ubi ait hoc idem quoque sensisse Syros doctores: idem etiam sentit Ioannes Estunio in sua Grammatica. Sed revera licet utraque opinio defendi possit: mihi tamen non omnino satisfacit: non prima, quia omnes orationis partes ad illa res enumeratas commode revocari non possunt (...): nec secunda; quia nihil video, cur interiectio a numero partium orationis excludatur, et non tamquam pars distincta, sicut aliae, enumeraretur. Quare ego, ut in lingua Latina, sic in nostra, octo, nec plures, nec pauciores orationis partes puto esse constituendas. (pp. 56-57)

The Syriac theory of the seven parts of speech, adopted by authors such as Elias of Nisibis (11<sup>th</sup> cent.) and John the Stylite (8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> cent.?), ultimately derives from the Greek model of the *Téchne Grammatiké*.<sup>51</sup> This text enumerates eight parts of speech, that are transposed into Syriac by an author called Huzāyā in the 6<sup>th</sup> cent.: noun, verb, participle, article, pronoun, preposition, adverb and conjunction.<sup>52</sup> Subsequently, the other Syriac grammarians retain only seven parts of speech, as Syriac, unlike Greek, does not have the definite article. So, for example, Bar Zō'bī (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent.) writes:

The parts of speech, according to the thought of Greek grammarians and according to what the composition of their language allows for, are eight. The Syriac masters, however, those who were expert in the art of grammar of the Greeks and tried it upon the Syriac language, found that there are seven parts of speech, according to what the Syriac language allows.<sup>53</sup>

A similar process took place in the Latin adaptations of the Greek grammatical theories, as Latin does not have a definite article either. However, Latin grammarians added the interjection to their list, reaching the number of eight parts of speech, as indicated also by ʿAmīra.

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<sup>50</sup> For an overview of the debate on the parts of speech in the Greek and Syriac grammatical and logic tradition see Henri Hugonnard-Roche: *La tradition du Peri Hermeneias d'Aristote en syriaque, entre logique et grammaire*, in *Les auteurs syriaques et leur langue*, ed. by Margherita Farina, Paris 2018, pp. 55-93.

<sup>51</sup> *Dionysius Thrax and the Techne Grammatike*, ed. by Vivien Law/Ineke Sluiter, Münster 1995. On the Syriac translation see Adalbertus Merx: *Historia artis grammaticae apud Syros*, in *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 9, 1889, pp. 291+ 84 and Riccardo Contini: *Considerazioni interlinguistiche sull'adattamento siriano della Techné Grammatiké di Dionisio Trace*, in *La diffusione dell'eredità classica nell'età tardoantica e medievale - Il Romanzo di Alessandro e altri scritti*, ed. by Rosa B. Finazzi/Alfredo Valvo, Alessandria 1998, pp. 95-111.

<sup>52</sup> Merx, *Historia* (as in n. 51), p. \*50. Eight parts of speech (although not the same as those enumerated in the *Téchne*, are also listed by Aristotle in *Poetics*).

<sup>53</sup> My translation, on the basis of BL Add. 25876.

The 4<sup>th</sup> cent. Latin grammarian Aelius Donatus, in his *Ars grammatica* (*Ars maior*) devotes a chapter to each of the following eight parts of speech: *de nomine, de pronomine, de uerbo, de aduerbio, de participio, de coniunctione, de praepositione, de interiectione*.

In the chapter *De oratione* of Priscianus' *Institutiones Grammaticae* (6<sup>th</sup> cent.), one of the main references for Renaissance grammarians,<sup>54</sup> we find a discussion of the parts of speech, presenting different theories of Greek origin, that have subsequently increased their number, from two even up to eleven. Priscianus accepts the addition of interjection, whereas he explains that the definite article is missing in Latin. He then lists and presents the seven parts that he recognizes, besides interjection. They are the same parts that we found in the *Téchne Grammatiké*, in the same order. Each part of speech is dealt with in a specific section of the book, as can be seen in the table below.

On the Syriac side, a preliminary discussion of the different reckonings of the number of the parts of speech is found also in the Syriac *Metrical Grammar* by Barhebraeus (d. 1286), one of the most important Syriac authors. We already saw in §4.1 how the *Grammatica Syriaca* has drawn from this text in the prefaces. About the parts of speech, Barhebraeus says that:

Language ... is divided in three (parts): the noun, the conjunction and the verb. And the four other parts that the ancients have established in the books are (in fact) nouns and conjunctions, according to the real investigation. Therefore, we divide the exposition into four chapter, rather than in seven: noun, verb, conjunction and composition, that is the speech.<sup>55</sup>

A gloss on the margin, also by Barhebraeus, explains: «And you have to know that the ancients divided the discourse into seven parts: noun, verb, conjunction, pronoun, participle, adverb, preposition. And the main parts are the first three, and besides them there is no other part.»<sup>56</sup>

This text shows that the individuation of the parts of speech is crucial also for the structuring of the grammatical treatise. In the *Metrical Grammar*, Barhebraeus wanted to combine the traditional Syriac seven-parts model with the Arabic three-parts theory. Hence, he has subdivided his text into four sections: on the noun, verb and conjunctions, plus a section on syntax. However, the chapter on the noun includes a number of sub-sections devoted to the remaining parts of speech, namely pronoun, adverb, participle, a number of prepositions, so that the seven-parts Syriac tradition is not really rejected, but rather incorporated into the Arabic model.<sup>57</sup>

Let us now compare this structure with the table of contents of 'Amīra's grammar. Besides

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<sup>54</sup> On the limits of Priscianus' and Donatus' influence on Renaissance grammarians see Bernard Colombat: Les «parties du discours» (partes orationis) et la reconstruction d'une syntaxe latine au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, in *Langages*, 92, 1988, pp. 51-64.

<sup>55</sup> Martin, *Œuvres grammaticales*, vol. 2, pp. 4-5.

<sup>56</sup> Martin, *Œuvres grammaticales*, vol. 2, II, pp. 4-5.

<sup>57</sup> Margherita Farina: La Grammatica Metrica di Barhebraeus (XIII sec.) e le sue glosse. Siriaco, greco e arabo in contatto, in *Rappresentazioni linguistiche dell'identità. Quaderni di AIQN N.S. 3*, ed. by Marina Benedetti, Napoli 2015, pp. 107-125 (esp. p. 118).

the prefatory material, the text has seven books, but four of them are devoted to phonetics and orthography, metrics, punctuation and syntax. On the one hand, the parts of speech are all dealt with inside the first three books, and are all grouped around the categories of noun, verb and «other», in a structure that is much closer to the model of Barhebraeus than to that of Priscianus. On the other hand, the structure of the *Grammatica* differs both from the Latin and from the Syriac model in the distribution of the other parts of speech within this scheme: only pronouns are subsumed under the noun, whereas participle is treated together with the verb and adverb, preposition, interjection and conjunction are all considered as «other» and grouped in Book four.

The *Grammatica Syriaca* is structured as follows (see Appendix 2 for the detailed table of contents):

ʿAmīra’s <i>Grammatica Syriaca</i>	Priscianus’ <i>Institutiones</i>	Barhebraeus’ <i>Metrical Grammar</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicatory to Cardinal Enrico Caetani</li> <li>• Preface to the reader</li> <li>• <i>Errata</i></li> <li>• <i>Praeludia</i> on the Chaldaic and Syriac language</li> <li>• Epigram by <i>Petrus Ureta</i></li> <li>• Book one – on the alphabet and on orthographic and phonetic matters</li> <li>• Book two – On noun (includes pronoun)</li> <li>• Book three – On verb (includes participle)</li> <li>• Book four – On the other parts of the discourse (adverb, preposition, interjection, conjunction)</li> <li>• Book five – On syntax</li> <li>• Book six – On metrics and poetry</li> <li>• Book seven – On punctuation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praefatio (et epilogus)</li> <li>• Generalia et uaria</li> <li>• De litteris</li> <li>• De syllabis (etiam metrica ratione)</li> <li>• Generalia et uaria</li> <li>• De oratione eiusque partibus</li> <li>• De nomine</li> <li>• De uerbo</li> <li>• De participio</li> <li>• De pronomine</li> <li>• De praepositione</li> <li>• De aduerbio</li> <li>• De interiectione</li> <li>• De coniunctione</li> <li>• De constructione uel syntaxi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proem</li> <li>• Definition and subdivision of the language</li> <li>• On the variation of the vowels</li> <li>• Chapter 1 – On noun (includes also paragraphs on pronoun, on adverb, on participle, on prepositions)</li> <li>• Chapter 2 – On verb</li> <li>• Chapter 3 – On conjunction</li> <li>• Chapter 4 – On syntax</li> </ul>

The structure of the works by ʿAmīra, Priscianus and Barhebraeus.

This rather detailed discussion on the parts of speech is intended to show how ʿAmīra is deeply involved in issues that are crucial for the Syriac grammatical tradition, and how complex and well informed his presentation of the problematic to the Latin public is.

Donatus’ *Ars grammatica* is certainly a plausible source for ʿAmīra’s interest in interjections, as well as for his conception of the parts of speech. Although we do not have any specific information on the Latin grammatical model followed by ʿAmīra, among the books that were available in the library of the Maronite College, we find the following grammars.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Gemayel, *Les échanges* (as in n. 2), vol. 1, p. 176. Gemayel provides the list of the books available in the library of the Maronite College in 1584, on the basis of Vat. Lat. 5528, fols. 35r-47v.

- Donatus (12 exemplars);
- Grammatica Sidicini (1 exemplar) [that is the Latin grammar by Luigi Antonio Zompa (d. 1557), nicknamed «il Sidicino»];
- Grammatica Emanuilis in 4° (6 exemplars) [*De institutione grammatica libri tres*, an extremely popular Latin grammar by the Jesuit Manuel Álvarez (d. 1583), first printed in Lisbon in 1572];<sup>59</sup>
- Grammatica Emanuilis in 8° - reformata (15 exemplars).

#### 4.3 'Amīra's Syriac sources

The *Grammatica Syriaca* refers frequently to older Syriac grammatical sources. Some of them are cited explicitly, as is the case for David bar Paulos (pp. 1, 7, 31 etc.), Elias Syrus (of Nisibis, pp. 9, 56 etc.) John the Stylite (p. 57, *Ioannes Estunoio*, *Ioannes Syrus*) and also a mysterious «auctor Grammaticae Arabico sermone explicatae/declaratae» (pp. 32, 40, 56 etc.) that I will try to identify in what follows.

Other important sources can be recognized, as we will see, even though 'Amīra has not mentioned them overtly.

A first assessment of 'Amīra's sources can be based on the grammatical manuscripts that, as we mentioned before, he had copied in his youth. Two collections of Syriac grammars and one lexicon by 'Amīra's hand are today kept in the BML:

- Or. 441, Syriac vocabulary (*De vocibus aequivocis*) by Eudochos (or Ebdochos) of Melitene (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent.).<sup>60</sup> Copied in 1586 (colophon fols. 134v-135r).
- Or. 419, *Ktābā d-mnahrānūtā b-gramaṭīqī* by Išo'yahb Bar Malkon (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent.)<sup>61</sup>, copied in 1589.
- Or. 100, collection of Syriac grammatical texts ascribed to Elias of Nisibis (11<sup>th</sup> cent.),<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> On which see Rolf Kemmler: The First Edition of the *ars minor* of Manuel Álvares' *De institutione grammatica libri tres* (Lisbon, 1573), in *Historiographia Linguistica*, 42, 2015, pp. 1-19. We are not able to identify which of the numerous editions and compendia of this grammar were adopted in the Maronite College.

<sup>60</sup> Ignatios Aphram Barsoum and Matti Moosa (transl.): *The Scattered Pearls. A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, Piscataway 2003, p. 424-425, n. 201; Claudio Balzaretto: Ancient Treatises on Syriac Homonyms, in *Oriens Christianus*, 81, 1997, pp. 73-81. See the description by P.G. Borbone and M. Farina on the BML website: [http://opac.bmlonline.it/GEIDEFile/orientale\\_441.pdf?Archive=191941391912&File=Orientale+441\\_pdf](http://opac.bmlonline.it/GEIDEFile/orientale_441.pdf?Archive=191941391912&File=Orientale+441_pdf)

<sup>61</sup> Lucas Van Rompay: Išo'yahb bar Malkon, in *GEDSH* (as in n. 23), p. 219. See the description by P.G. Borbone and M. Farina on the BML website:

[http://opac.bmlonline.it/GEIDEFile/orientale\\_419.pdf?Archive=191952491913&File=Orientale+419\\_pdf](http://opac.bmlonline.it/GEIDEFile/orientale_419.pdf?Archive=191952491913&File=Orientale+419_pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Hermann G.B. Teule: Eliya of Nisibis, in *GEDSH* (as in n. 23), p. 143.

David bar Paulos (9<sup>th</sup> cent.?),<sup>63</sup> Yuḥannān the Bishop,<sup>64</sup> ‘Eninīshō’ (7<sup>th</sup> cent.)<sup>65</sup> and other anonymous fragments. Undated.

We have already seen that the copy of Or. 441 was part of ‘Amīra’s training at the Maronite College. The manuscript contains the Syriac lexicon of Eudochos, a treatise on the homographs, that is words that have the same consonantal writing, but different meaning. ‘Amīra’s draft in Or. 458 carries several annotations along the margins coming from Eudocho’s work (*Ebdocos*, fols. 718v, 716r, 672r, 666v e.g.), aiming at clarifying the spelling and vocalization of verbal forms.<sup>66</sup>

From a note on lent books in Raimondi’s diary (Misc. Med. 718 ins. 24 fol. 3v), we learn that Giovanni Battista Leopardus borrowed on the 3rd of July 1596 «a vocabulary of the anomalous voices declined, written by messer Giorgio Amira, Chaldean. And also, the entire great Chaldean grammar». This note must refer to the manuscript BML Or. 441, which contains the vocabulary on the Syriac homonyms by Eudochos, and, of course, to Amira’s *Grammatica Syriaca*. If Raimondi had this manuscript in his possession, it was most probably copied for him, at his request, or possibly he had acquired it from ‘Amīra for his own proposes.

Or. 419 contains the *Ktābā d-mnahrānūtā b-gramaṭīqī*, a Syriac grammar in Syriac and Arabic by Išo’yahb Bar Malkon (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent.). We don’t know of any other copy of this text in Rome. As we will see, there are good reasons to identify the text of Or. 419 with the Syriac grammar *Arabico sermone explicata* that ‘Amīra frequently quotes in the *Grammatica*. In Or. 419 we do not find any mention either of the author or of the title of the text it contains, it is possible that ‘Amīra was copying from an exemplar that lacked such information, and that would explain why he could not find a clearer way to refer to this text in his grammar. On verso the second guard-leaf of this manuscript we find the following ownership statement, by the hand of G.B. Raimondi: «Di Gio: Ba:tta Raimondo. comparato». The note was perhaps meant to distinguish this manuscript from those that were bought for the *Typographia Medicea* and thus belonged to Ferdinando de’ Medici.<sup>67</sup>

Ms. Or.100 contains various grammatical texts. The first two are two well-known treatises by Elias of Nisibis (11<sup>th</sup> cent.), one of the most important Syriac grammarians.<sup>68</sup> Then follow three

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<sup>63</sup> Sebastian P. Brock: Dawid bar Pawlos, in *GEDSH* (as in n. 23), pp. 116-117.

<sup>64</sup> Possibly to be identified with the author mentioned in the catalogue of ‘Abdisho’ Bar Brikha as ܘܫܘܝܗܒ ܒܪ ܡܠܟܘܢ (Johannes Chamisii, Episcopus», Assemani B.O. III, 1, p. 256)?

<sup>65</sup> Jeff W. Childers: ‘Enanisho’, in *GEDSH* (as in n. 23), p. 144.

<sup>66</sup> On the possible manuscript source of Eudocho’s text, see Pier Giorgio Borbone: “Monsignore Vescovo di Soria”, also known as Moses of Mardin, Scribe and Book Collector, in *Journal of Studies in the Christian Culture of Asia and Africa*, 8 (XIV), 2017, pp. 79-114, esp. p. 87, note 38.

<sup>67</sup> See doc. XXX in this book

<sup>68</sup> The first one, *Turāš memllā*, a Syriac grammar dealing mainly with phonological and morpho-phonological matters, has been edited by Richard J.H. Gottheil: *A Treatise on Syriac Grammar by Mār(i) Eliā of Sôbhā*, Berlin 1887. The



Syriac translation of Aristotle's definition, the way it features in Išo'yahb Bar Malkon's Syriac grammar (e.g. BML Or. 419, fol. 3r).<sup>74</sup>

It is interesting to observe that copies of such a Syriac translation were available in Rome, that 'Amīra could have perused, for example BML Or. 174 (Ass. 183), copied in 1592 by Melchisedech of Ḥiṣn Kīfā from Vat. sir. 158.<sup>75</sup> 'Amīra does not seem to have recognized the source of his grammatical model.

#### 4.4 Syriac tradition and Western linguistic perspectives

In a number of passages, 'Amīra's grammar reveal a comparative attitude and the search for a method of linguistic comparison, setting the study of Syriac in a broader context of linguistic observation.

a) The first section of the *Praeludia auctoris*, entitled *De linguae Chaldaicae, seu Syriacae nominibus ac discrimine*, discusses the various designations *Chaldaea, Chaldaica, Aramaea, Syriaca, Assyriaca*. Such a variety calls the unity of the language described into question: «dubitatio est, an una, et eadem sit, licet varia habeat nomina; an vero pro varietate nominum, ac distinctione, varia sit, ac distincta, ita ut Chaldaica sit lingua distincta a Syriaca et haec ab illa». <sup>76</sup> In order to answer this question, 'Amīra distinguishes between essential and accidental differences, and sets to demonstrate that all these denominations are not based on essential linguistic features. These latter are identified as «characteribus, litterarum pronuntiatione, sono vocalium, verborum coniugationibus, affixis, dictionibus et tota fere structura orationis». For two languages to be one and the same, they have to share all of these elements. According to 'Amīra, Chaldaic and Syriac share essential features.<sup>77</sup>

In this way the grammarian establishes precise phonetic, morphological and syntactic criteria for comparing two languages and assessing their correlation. Such criteria correspond more

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<sup>74</sup> The two extant Syriac versions of this text can be found in Johannes G. E. Hoffmann: *De Hermeneuticis apud Syros Aristoteleis*, Leipzig 1873, pp. 22-24. On the Syriac tradition of *Peri Hermeneias* see and Henri Hugonnard-Roche: *La logique d'Aristote du grec au syriaque : études sur la transmission des textes de l'Organon et leur interprétation philosophique*, Paris 2004 and Hugonnard-Roche, *La tradition* (as in n. 50). The definition of the noun given in *Peri Hermeneias* is used, with variable degree of paraphrasing, by several 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent. Syriac grammarians, such as Bar Zo'bī and Barhebraeus.

<sup>75</sup> See the description by P.G. Borbone and M. Farina on the BML website:

[http://opac.bmlonline.it/GEIDEFile/orientale\\_174.pdf?Archive=191958091913&File=Orientale+174\\_pdf](http://opac.bmlonline.it/GEIDEFile/orientale_174.pdf?Archive=191958091913&File=Orientale+174_pdf)

<sup>76</sup> The pages of the prefatory section of the *Grammatica Syriaca* are not numbered. This quote, as well as the one that follows, come from the first page of the section.

<sup>77</sup> Further on (third and fourth page in this section) 'Amīra lists a number of «accidental» differences between Chaldaic and Syriac, which are mainly phonetic and phonological and seems to correspond to the dialectal differences between East and West Syriac.

or less to the sections of grammar, also in their hierarchical presentation, and are thus meant to cover different domains of language. In this respect the absence of nouns and of lexical elements in general from this list is quite remarkable, as it implies that not all of the components of language are equally meaningful for linguistic kinship.

b) In the section of the *Praeludia* devoted to demonstrating the antiquity of Syriac, 'Amīra discusses a number of possible etymologies of the word «Hebrew» («lingua Hebraea denominata, et populus Hebraeo»). Here he refutes a derivation from the name *Abraham*, basing on a comparison between three cognate forms: Syriac ܠܚܒܝܐ ('*ebrāyā*), Hebrew עברי ('*ibrī*) and Arabic عبراني ('*ibrānī*). In all of these forms, 'Amīra observes, the first consonant is a '*ayn* (pharyngeal fricative), whereas the name Abraham begins with an '*ālahp* (glottal stop), hence the etymology has to be rejected.

c) In Book I, chapter VII, treating the use of *garšūnī* (Arabic language written in Syriac script) and of Syriac in Arabic-speaking countries of his day, 'Amīra introduces a comparison with the use of Latin in Italian-speaking regions: Christian speakers of Arabic use the Syriac writing just like Italian speakers use the Latin one, with the important difference that Arabic also has a writing of its own: «... illud tamen certissimum est, linguam Arabicam nunc se habere ad Chaldaicam, ut Italicam ad Latinam; et sicut Italica Latinis, sic Arabica Chaldaicis communiter a Christianis scribitur elementis; quamquam Arabica proprios (ut dictum est) habeat characteres.» (p. 23)

This apparently mechanical and somewhat naive remark is based on a number of interesting assumptions. On the one hand, the status of Syriac as a cultivated language, comparable to Latin, encourages the use of its writing to record also the Arabic of Syriac Christians. On the other hand, Italian language is viewed as a vernacular, that borrows a writing system from Latin. Finally, 'Amīra seems to observe that the same condition of cultural diglossia proper of the Syriac Christians of his time also characterizes Italy. All of these considerations are merely synchronic and there is no reference to a historical derivation of Italian from Latin.<sup>78</sup> Finally, this remark also recalls a similar observation made by Raimondi in one of his praises of the Arabic language (v.

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<sup>78</sup> In Book I, chapter VII, 'Amīra gives an interpretation of the so-called *garshuni* writing, that is the practice of writing Arabic (or other languages, such as Armenian or Turkish) in Syriac alphabet: «It is clear that the Arabs do not use these Chaldaic letters. Indeed, they have their own characters - on which v. the Alphabetum of the very learned and very expert G.B. Raimondi - Nevertheless, all and only the Eastern Christians use them. I think the reason they applied the Syriac characters to the Arabic language is as follows. Among the infidels they would be spotted, the Arabic language being common to Christians and infidels. On the other hand, many of our sacred texts and our Christian rites are written in the aforesaid language, for the people who know only this one; for this reason it has been conceived to write these things and others of the same kind with Chaldaic letters, which the infidels ignore.» This is potentially the first time that the phenomenon of *garshuni* is interpreted as a sort of cryptography, that Syriac Christians would use not to be understood by their Muslim fellow citizens, and might be the source for all other modern theories along the same lines.



languages.<sup>83</sup> ‘Amīra’s approach to Greek loanwords seems to show that the mechanisms that will be adopted by the first comparatists were already familiar to the Orientalists and that it was the prolonged contact between different linguistic systems that had triggered them.

Linguistic historiography – with some illustrious exceptions, such as Contini (1994) – has long considered the first Syriac grammars produced in the West as a secondary phenomenon, modeled upon Hebrew grammars and relevant only for the domains of Biblical and religious studies.

On the contrary, a careful examination of texts such as ‘Amīra’s *Grammatica Syriaca* shows that they are largely inspired by the medieval Syriac tradition, duly adapted to the descriptive strategies of Latin grammar generalized in the West.

Moreover, as I have shown in this paper, the authors and readers of these grammars were involved in a vast cultural debate on the relations between the languages of the world and on their structures, which will culminate in the first attempts at linguistic comparison.

## Appendix

### 1. Misc. Med. 718, all. 20

(fol. 1v)

La Grammatica Chaldaica ovvero siriana tradotta et composta da Giorgio Amira Chaldeo Marronita fu incominciata à stampare cioè il suo primo foglio alli 29 d’Ottobre 1593 et fu finita di stampare l’anno 1596.

Fu stampata à spese di me Giovanni Battista Raimondo et ne furono stampate n° mille et ducento cinquanta.

Si spese per ogni foglio

Per carta resime 2 et meza à ragione di

Giulij 13 la resima ---d 3-25

Per compositura----- d 1-50

Per tiratura ----- d -70

Per inchiostro e mazzi ---- d -15

Che sono ---- d 5-60

Ogni Grammatica è fogli 65 moltiplicati n° 65 per d 5-60

fanno ---- d 364

Hebbe il detto Giorgio Amira

In contanti --- d 100

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<sup>83</sup> Daniel Droixhe: Avant-propos, in *Genèse du comparatisme indo-européen* ed. by Daniel Droixhe, *Histoire Epistémologie Langage*, 6/2, 1984, pp. 5-16; Jean-Claude Muller: Early stages of language comparison from Sasseti to Sir William Jones, *Kratylos. Kritisches Berichts- und Rezensionsorgan für indogermanische und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft*, 31, 1986, pp. 1-31.

Che sono tutti ---- d 464

Resta la spesa fatta nella gittatura del Carattere Chaldeo, del Carattere Latino, et del stagno comperato per detti Caratteri.

Il piggione della casa.

Il salario dato ad'un'homo per la

Bagnatura, della carta compratura (?)

Sceglitura, spanditura, et facitura

Di volumi. Il tutto si stima per q.a (?)

Gram.ca sola scudi 60 dico d 60-.

Resta anco il guadagno che haurebano fatto da mano à mano che sono spesi q(uest)i danari dal'anno 1593 finché si vendiranno tutte ò vero quanto importa il detto danaro per essere in certo non si mette. Et hebbe anco il detto Giorgio delle dette Grammatiche n° 35.

[In verticale a fianco, margine sinistro:]

Il danaro dunque certo speso in detta Grammatica è come si vede in questo conto Δ 524.

Finiti di spendere l'anno 1596 et scudi d 362\_68 à ragione di 7 per 100 l'anno dal detto anno 1596.

(fol. 2r)

Esito delle Grammatiche Chaldee fatte stampare da me nell'anno 1596.

A di 27 d [sic!]

Al magister Sacri Palatij n° 2

A di 27 d'Aprile 1596.

Al messer Giorgio Amira authore, o vero traduttore, oltre li scudi cento, che hebbe in contanti, hebbe delle dette grammatiche n° 35

A di

A monsig.or Serafino n° 1

A di 29 di Gennaro 1596.

A monsignor Dossato una per se

Et un'altra per monsignor di Perone

n° 2

A di

Al padre fra Thomaso n° 1

A di

Al padre fra Giovanni Battista Leopardi n° 1

A di

Al' Illustrissimo Cardinale San Giorgio n° 1

A di

Al signor Abbate di Guastalla n° 1

A di

A messer Iacomo Luna stampatore n° 1

A di

Al p. frat' Angelo d' Augubio Augustiniano n° 1

A di

Al p. fra Gregorio Nonio Augustiniano n° 1

A di 17 di Novembre 1597.

A messer Giovanni Paulo libraro à pasquino per venderle in consegna n° 12

(fol. 2v)

A 29 d' Aprile 1596.

A messer Giovanni Paulo Terrarossa n° 2

A 21 di Maggio 1596.

A messer Giovanni Paulo Terrarossa per darli

à vendere <sup>à Belardino libraro</sup> n° 10

A di

Vendute per mano di messer Iacomo Luna n° 3 per prezzo di scudi 4-50.

dico n° 3

A di

Venduta ad un padre della Chiesa nova per prezzo di scudi 1-50 n° 1

A di 18 di settembre 1598.

Venduta al padre fra Mario dell' Aquila(?) per prezzo di scudi 1-50 n° 1

A di 28 di settembre 1598.

Donata al signor Gerolamo Vecchietti n° 1

A di

Donata ad un padre spagnolo carmelitano in casa del' Illustrissimo Cardinale Dezza (?)

n° 1

A 7 di Novembre 1598.

Donata per la libreria Vaticana à messer Marino custode n° 1

Venduta al signor Tesoriero del Regno di Granata per il Vescovo di Granata n° 1 scudi 1-50

A 11 di Gennaio 1603.

Sono vendute delle dette Grammatiche

n° 2 scudi 3

d'un libraro francese di Parisi.

al Padre fra Giovanni Bentivenga da Rimini cappoccino n° una in dono fù à 8 d' Agosto 1603.

{Vertically, on the left margin}

A 24 di Gennaio 1598 ad un todesco di Magonza venduta una Grammatica per prezzo di scudi 1-50

Ritornò poi in Roma à 13 di Novembre 1598 et pigliò un Pontificale.

## **2 Index of the *Grammatica Syriaca* (1596)**

Dedication to Enrico Caetani

*Praefatio ad studiosum ac benevolum lectorem*

*Errata*

*Praeludia auctoris in grammaticam*

*De linguae Chaldaicae, seu Syriacae nominibus ac discrimine*

*De linguae Chaldaicae sive Syriacae antiquitate*

*De linguae Chaldaicae sive Syriacae dignitate, ac praestantia*

*De Chaldaicae linguae utilitate*

*Epigram by Petrus Burgensis*

*Georgi Amirae Syri Edeniensis e Libano Grammaticae linguae Chaldaicae sive Syriacae*

*Liber primus*

*De litteris chaldaicis seu Syriacis et de earum divisione – caput primum p. 1*

*De harum litterarum nominum significatione - caput secundum p. 2*  
*De numero harum litterarum – caput III p. 6*  
*De divisione, pronuntiatione, et ordine ipsarum litterarum – caput IIII p. 7*  
*De simili, vel dissimili figura et sono litterarum – caput V p. 10*  
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*De litteris, quae in vocibus quibusdam scribuntur et non pronuntiantur – caput VIII p. 24*  
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*De interpundae [sic!] orationis ratione liber septimus*

*Quaenam sint notae ac nomina punctorum – caput I p. 475*

*De officio singulorum punctorum praecedentium - cap. II p. 476*

*De punctis varios animi affectus significantibus - cap. III p. 479*