Leiden Studies in Islam & Society

Social Codicology

The Multiple Lives of Manuscripts in Muslim Societies

Edited by Olly Akkerman

BRILL

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

This volume is dedicated to Kathryn A. Schwartz,
who was as brave and kind as she was brilliant.

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Preface

This edited volume is the material outcome of an international workshop entitled *Social Codicology: The Multiple Lives of Texts in Muslim Societies*, held in Rabat on 9–11 October, 2018. Organized by the Netherlands Institute in Morocco (NIMAR) and the Institute of Islamic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin in collaboration with the Centre Jacques Berque, the workshop focused on the social and material aspects of manuscripts in Muslim Societies.

The main objective of the workshop was to go beyond the dominant focus on the reading of texts, manuscripts, and script. Instead, we proposed that books and other written materials have many more uses than just reading, purposes which might often be even more important in the social practices of texts. We strongly encouraged interest in these other aspects of the social life of texts, looking at them as objects and commodities.

Starting from the idea that texts in their material, read, and recited forms have social lives and hence biographies, we explored the idea of *social codicology*, an interdisciplinary approach that combines philological methods, such as codicology and palaeography, with ethnographic approaches, such as participant observation and the conducting of interviews, as well as questions of positionality. This interdisciplinary approach encourages the study of ritual, mechanical, and social practices, such as book copying, consuming, collecting, storing, venerating, discarding, and preserving, both in historical and contemporary societies. Our particular focus was on the various material dimensions of manuscripts, printed books, documents, and other written materials, and on the specific practices and their social embeddedness in geographical, historical, and linguistic spaces in Muslim South and Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

The main objective of the workshop was to go beyond the dominant focus on the editing and reading of scripture, manuscripts, documents, and texts as books and other written materials. We emphasized that these materials are geared towards many more uses than merely reading, purposes which might often be even more important in practice. The aim of the workshop was to bring together specialists "working" with manuscript cultures in Muslim contexts, from Indonesia to Timbuktu, from Mozambique to Jerba, in Arabic, Urdu, Malay, Persian, Gujarati, and Malayalam, including academics, curators, collectors, librarians, archaeologists, publishers, and heritage specialists.

In Rabat, we addressed the following questions, thinking collectively about the possibilities and limitations of social codicology, crossing the boundaries of

our academic comfort zones and professional disciplines as historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, musicologists, philologists, and codicologists:

- How can we study manuscripts through a lens that includes both the social and the codicological, going beyond the notion of the "archaeology of the book" as a framework of inquiry?
- How can we use social codicology as a methodology, and what are its limitations?
- How can we best study the materiality and social embeddedness of collections, libraries, museums, inventories, book catalogues, and archives?
- How do manuscript production, ownership, collecting, and enshrining practices relate to power relations, the creation of religious, political, and intellectual authority, and forms of conspicuous consumption and preservation?
- What occurs beyond the practice of reading? What other kinds of *modi operandi* do texts have and what are their biographies? What are the meanings of these practices?
- What role do paratexts and marginalia play in this context?
- How can manuscripts be studied as material objects of production, consumption, and veneration? What is the materiality of cultural production and technologies?
- How can we study forms of the transmission of texts as material objects through deeds of endowment, gifts, exchange, selling, theft, and looting?
- How may we understand the presence of living manuscript traditions, or other modes of non-printed book production, in an era of printing or digitalization?

The papers were divided into no less than ten panels, respectively focusing on the social life of manuscripts and the relationship between history, philology, codicology and ethnography, including discussions on ethics, historicizing social codicology, manuscripts and participant observation, positionality, and gender.

1. Social usages of manuscripts: ritual, politics, authority, scholarship, cultural capital and prestige, leisure, veneration and, ostentation.
2. Practices, politics, and technologies of book production: scribal cultures, writing, copying, forging, collating, glossing, illuminating, illustrating, binding, recording, and digitizing.
3. Material manifestations of texts and their practicalities: codices; scrolls; decrees; broadsheets; *safīna* notebooks; catalogues and lists (*fihrist*); palimpsests, letters; talismans; coins; inscriptions, etc.
4. Practices of reading, memorizing and reciting, including teaching, transmission, and learning: aspects of orality and embodiment, *ijāzāt* and *samaʿāt*.

5. "Collectology," ownership, endowment and exchange; including booksellers and trade.
6. Archival practices such as collecting, storing, enshrining, endowing, cataloguing, and displaying.
7. Paratexts, rough edges, and the traces of the social lives of texts: including the recycling and upcycling of manuscripts, commentary cultures, stamps and seals, and talismanic marginalia.
8. Transmission histories and scholarly traditions: regional traditions of philology, including the scripting, editing, and translating of individual texts, anthologies, multiple-text manuscripts etc.
9. Books as textual monuments; heritage, preservation, collections, and power.
10. The afterlife of scripture, texts, and collections; *genīza-esque* practices of discarding (sacred) texts and the enshrinement thereof.

I warmly thank the participants of the workshop:

Christopher Bahl (Durham University)
Zahir Bhalloo (Universität Hamburg)
Léon Buskens (Leiden University/NIMAR)
Anouk Cohen (CNRS, Paris, Centre Jacques Berque, Rabat)
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I would like to especially thank Léon Buskens, for suggesting that we organize a series of annual social codicology workshops, and for plotting the first inaugural one in Rabat during our dinners in Dar es-Salam, Berlin, and Leiden. He left no stone unturned to host us with gracious hospitality in Rabat, and I look forward to many more conversations and social codicology workshops in the future. Moreover, I would like to thank my brilliant copy editor, Ingrid Austveg Evans, as well as the always optimistic and wonderful Abdurraouf Oueslati and Amatallah Aqlan from Brill. I thank Annabel, Said, Anwar, Zahir, Sarah Holz, and Ingrid for their help with translating the social codicology abstracts, as well as the reviewers for their details and helpful comments and suggestions.

Finally, I would like to thank my students, the next generation of critical thinkers, for essentially deconstructing my course, *Islamic Book Culture: from Manuscript to MacBook*, and questioning it without exception. Our discussions inside and outside the classroom have been instrumental in conceptualizing this volume. It has been a privilege to learn from you. You give me hope for the future.

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Social Codicology: Short Summaries

English

Starting from the idea that manuscripts in their material, immaterial, ritual, and recited forms have social lives, biographies, agency, and efficacy, this volume is dedicated to the idea of *Social Codicology*. It brings together a new generation of interdisciplinary studies which combine history, philology, codicology, and anthropology, which suggest a more social, local, reflexive, inclusive, yet at the same time material perspective on manuscript cultures in the Muslim world across time and space. Moving beyond the dominant focus on manuscripts as inert carriers of text, its focus is on the social framework in which manuscripts and other forms of writing constantly gain meaning through their interaction with communities, thus humanizing the people who write, use, and venerate manuscripts as part of their living, local, and day-to-day understanding of Islam in the past and present.

Arabic

انطلاقاً من فكرة أنَّ المخطوطات بأشكالها الماديَّة المختلفة، ونصوصها المقروءة المتنوعة، وظروف إنتاجها وتداولها، لها حياةٌ اجتماعيَّة وسيَرٌ ذاتيَّة غنيَّة. فإنَّ هذا المُجَلَّد مُخَصَّصٌ لفكرة علم المخطوطات الاجتماعيَّ. فهو يضمُّ جيلاً جديداً من الدراسات مُتعدِّدَة التخصصات تجمع بين التاريخ، وفقه اللغة، وعلم المخطوطات، وعلم الإنسان، التي تقترح منظوراً اجتماعيّاً، محليّاً وشاملاً، ولكن في الوقت نفسه منظوراً مادياً لثقافات المخطوطات في العالم الإسلاميّ عبر الزمان والمكان. وذلك من خلال الانتقال إلى ما هو أبعد من التركيز السائد على المخطوطات باعتبارها مجرد حاملات خاملة للنص. إذ ينصبُّ تركيز علم المخطوطات الاجتماعيّ على الإطار الاجتماعيّ الذي اكتسبت فيه المخطوطات وغيرها من أشكال الكتابة بُعداً إنسانياً جرَّاء تفاعلها مع المجتمعات. ومن ثمَّ تسليط الضوء على الأشخاص الذين ساهموا في صناعة المخطوطات، وقاموا باستخدامها وتداولها، وحفظها وصيانتها كجزءٍ من فهمهم الحيوي، المحليّ واليومي للإسلام في الماضي والحاضر.

Persian

با توجه به این که نسخههای خطی در قالبهای مادی، غیرمادی، آیینی و تلاوتشان دارای حیات اجتماعی، زندگینامه، عاملیت و کارایی هستند، این جلد به ایدهی کدشناسی اجتماعی اختصاص دارد. این کتاب نسل جدیدی از مطالعات میان رشتهای را گرد هم میآورد که تاریخ، زبانشناسی، کدشناسی و مردمشناسی را با هم ترکیب میکند، که دیدگاهی اجتماعی، محلی، بازتابی، فراگیر و در عین حال مادیتر را در مورد فرهنگهای نسخههای خطی در جهان اسلام در طول زمان و مکان پیشنهاد میکند. فراتر از تمرکز غالب بر نسخههای خطی بهعنوان حاملهای بیاثر متن، تمرکز آن بر چارچوب اجتماعی است که در آن نسخههای خطی و سایر اشکال نوشتار دائماً از طریق تعامل خود با جوامع معنا پیدا میکنند، بنابراین افرادی که دستنوشتهها را مینویسند، استفاده میکنند و به آنها احترام میگذارند، انسانسازی میکنند. بخشی از درک زندگی، محلی و روزمره آنها از اسلام در گذشته و حال است.

Turkish

Maddi, manevi, ritüel ve okunmuş biçimleriyle el yazmalarının sosyal yaşamları, biyografileri, eylemlilikleri ve etkinlikleri olduğu fikrinden yola çıkan bu cilt, Sosyal Kodikoloji fikrine adanmıştır. Tarih, filoloji, kodikoloji ve antropolojiyi bir araya getiren yeni nesil disiplinlerarası çalışmaları bir araya getiren bu çalışma, zaman ve mekân boyunca İslam dünyasındaki el yazması kültürlerine daha sosyal, yerel, düşünümsel, kapsayıcı ve aynı zamanda maddi bir bakış açısı öneriyor. Metnin durağan taşıyıcıları olarak el yazmalarına odaklanan hâkim bakış açısının ötesine geçerek, el yazmalarının ve diğer yazı biçimlerinin topluluklarla etkileşimleri yoluyla sürekli olarak anlam kazandığı sosyal çerçeveye odaklanıyor ve böylece el yazmalarını yazan, kullanan ve onlara hürmet eden insanları, geçmişte ve günümüzde yaşayan, yerel ve gündelik İslam anlayışlarının bir parçası olarak insanlaştırıyor.

Urdu

یہ کتاب سماجی کوڈیکولوجی کے اس خیال کی عکاس ہے کہ مخطوطات اپنی مادی، غیر مادی، لکھی، اور پڑھی جانے والی شکلوں میں سماجی زندگی، سوانح، طاقت اور افادیت کے حامل ہوتے ہیں۔ ہر لفظ کی اپنی ایک طاقت، ایک سماجی روح اور ہر کاغذ کا اپنا ایک قصہ ہوتا ہے۔ سماجی کوڈیکولوجی، تاریخ، زبان، اور بشریات کے تانوں بانوں کو پروتی ہے۔ معاشرت کی رنگینی میں مقامی عکاسی اور شمولیت کو ان کا جائز مقام دیتی ہے۔ اس علم کی نظر مسلم دنیا کی مخطوطاتی ثقافتوں، زمانی اور مکانی تفہیم پر ہے۔ اس میں مخطوطات کو ایسے نہیں سمجھا جاتا کہ جیسے وہ صرف متن کے غیر فعال حامل ہوں۔ بلکہ سماجی کوڈیکولوجی کا مرکز وہ سماجی ڈھانچہ ہے، جس میں مخطوطات اور دیگر تحریریں معاشرتی تعامل میں معنویت حاصل کرتی ہیں۔ یہ مخطوطات لکھنے، استعمال کرنے، اور عزت دینے والوں کی انسانی حیثیت کو تسلیم کرتی ہے اور ان لوگوں کی روزمرہ زندگی، مقامی فہم میں، اور اسلام کی ماضی اور حال کی سمجھ کی اہمیت کا ادراک رکھتی ہے۔

Hindi

इस विचार से शुरू करते हुए कि पांडुलिपियों में उनकी सामग्री, अभौतिक, अनुष्ठान और पाठित रूपों में सामाजिक जीवन, जीवनियां, एजेंसी और प्रभावकारिता होती है, यह खंड सामाजिक कोडिकोलॉजी के विचार को समर्पित है। यह अंतःविषय अध्ययनों की एक नई पीढ़ी को एक साथ लाता है जो इतिहास, भाषाविज्ञान, कोडिकोलॉजी और मानवविज्ञान को जोड़ती है, जो एक अधिक सामाजिक, स्थानीय, चिंतनशील, समावेशी, फिर भी एक ही समय में समय और स्थान पर मुस्लिम दुनिया में पांडुलिपि संस्कृतियों पर भौतिक परिप्रेक्ष्य का सुझाव देती है।. पाठ के निष्क्रिय वाहक के रूप में पांडुलिपियों पर प्रमुख फोकस से आगे बढ़ते हुए, इसका ध्यान उस सामाजिक ढांचे पर है जिसमें पांडुलिपियां और लेखन के अन्य रूप समुदायों के साथ अपनी बातचीत के माध्यम से लगातार अर्थ प्राप्त करते हैं, इस प्रकार पांडुलिपियों को लिखने, उपयोग करने और पूजा करने वाले लोगों का मानवीकरण होता है। अतीत और वर्तमान में इस्लाम के बारे में उनके जीवन, स्थानीय और दिन-प्रतिदिन की समझ का हिस्सा।

Malayalam

കൈയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതികൾക്ക് ഭൗതികവും, അഭൗതികവും, ആചാരപരവും, പാരായണപരവുമായ രൂപങ്ങളുണ്ട്. ആ രൂപങ്ങൾ അവക്ക് വ്യത്യസ്ത സാമൂഹിക ജീവിതങ്ങളും, ജീവചരിത്രങ്ങളും, കർതൃതവും, കാര്യക്ഷമതയും നൽകുന്നുണ്ട്. ഈ ആശയത്തിൽ ഊന്നിക്കൊണ്ട് സാമൂഹിക കൈയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതിശാസ്ത്രം (Social Codicology) എന്ന സങ്കല്പത്തെ കുറിച്ചാണ് ഈ വാല്യം ചർച്ച ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ചരിത്രം, ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം, കൈയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതിശാസ്ത്രം, നരവംശശാസ്ത്രം മുതലായ വ്യത്യസ്ത പഠനശാഖകളെ ഒരുമിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഒരു പുതുതലമുറ ശാഖാന്തര പഠനമാണ് ഈ വാല്യം മുന്നോട്ടുവെക്കുന്നത്. വ്യത്യസ്ത സമയങ്ങളിലും കാലങ്ങളിലുമുള്ള മുസ്ലിം ലോകത്തെ കൈയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതി സംസ്കാരങ്ങളെ അവയുടെ സാമൂഹികവും, പ്രാദേശികവും, പ്രതിഫലനാത്മകവുമായ തലങ്ങളിലും, കൂടുതൽ മാനങ്ങളിലും, അവയുടെ ഭൗതികരീതികളിലും ഒരേസമയം മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ ഇത് സഹായിക്കുന്നു. എഴുത്തിനെ നിഷ്ക്രിയമായി വഹിക്കുന്ന ഒന്നായി കൈയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതികളെ കാണുന്ന പ്രബലവീക്ഷണത്തിൽ നിന്ന് മാറി, സമൂഹങ്ങളുമായുള്ള ഇടപാടുകളിലൂടെ കൈയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതികൾ നിരന്തരം അർത്ഥങ്ങൾ കൈവരിക്കുന്ന സാമൂഹിക ചട്ടക്കൂടിലാണ് ഈ വാല്യം ശ്രദ്ധ കേന്ദ്രീകരിക്കുന്നത്. ചരിത്രത്തിലും വർത്തമാനത്തിലും, പ്രാദേശിക ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി കൈയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതികൾ എഴുതുകയും, ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയും, ബഹുമാനിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന മനുഷ്യരെ മാനുഷികവൽക്കരിക്കാനും, ദൈനംദിന ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഇസ്ലാം എങ്ങനെയാണ് മനസ്സിലാക്കപ്പെടുന്നത് എന്ന് അടയാളപ്പെടുത്താനുമാണ് ഈ പഠനം ശ്രമിക്കുന്നത്.

Bahasa Indonesia

Berangkat dari gagasan bahwa naskah atau manuskrip dalam bentuk lahir, batin, beradat, dan lisan memiliki kehidupan sosial serta silsilah, kekuatan, dan kemanjurannya sendiri, buku ini memperkenalkan dan menganjurkan konsep Kodikologi Sosial. Jilid ini menyatukan generasi baru kajian interdisipliner yang menggabungkan sejarah, filologi, kodikologi, dan antropologi, yang menyarankan perspektif yang lebih sosial, lokal, refleksif, inklusif, namun sekaligus material pada budaya naskah di dunia Muslim di sepanjang ruang dan waktu. Beranjak dari pengertian pokok terhadap naskah sebagai pembawa teks yang tidak bergerak, fokus buku ini adalah pada kerangka sosial di mana manuskrip dan bentuk-bentuk tulisan lain senantiasa mendapatkan makna melalui interaksi dengan masyarakat, sehingga memanusiakan orang yang menulis, menggunakan, dan memuliakan naskah sebagai bagian dari pemahaman mereka tentang Islam sehari-hari yang hidup dan lokal, di masa lalu dan masa kini.

1

Introduction: Towards a Social Codicology of Islamic Manuscripts

Olly Akkerman

Starting from the idea that manuscripts in their material, immaterial, ritual, and recited forms have social lives, biographies, agency, and efficacy, this volume is dedicated to the idea of *social codicology*. It brings together a new generation of interdisciplinary studies which combine history, philology, codicology, and anthropology, suggesting a more social, local, reflexive, inclusive, yet at the same time material perspective on manuscript cultures in the Muslim world across time and space. Moving beyond the dominant focus on manuscripts as inert carriers of text, its focus is on the social framework in which manuscripts and other forms of writing constantly gain meaning through their interaction with communities, thus humanizing the people who write, use, and venerate manuscripts as part of their living, local, and day-to-day understanding of Islam in the past and present.

1 Casablanca, October 2018

In their many forms and material manifestations, manuscripts tend to appear in places where one least expects them. It was in the late afternoon, a day before the Social Codicology workshop was held in Rabat, that I had the pleasure to visit *Darb al-Sulṭān*, a popular neighbourhood of Casablanca, with old friends. After strolling over the market and indulging in *kaab al-ghzal* pastries, we briefly visited my friend's family home to pay our respects. While being presented with a wide array of sweet delicacies by his mother, a precious object, carefully stored in a wooden chest, was taken from a shelf in the humble *majlis*-style living room of the apartment. It was the family's manuscript copy of the holy Qur'an, a beautiful exemplar, written in a fine multicoloured Maghribī book hand. The manuscript had been in the family for generations and was one of its most prized possessions. It was therefore presented with great pride. I observed, however, that revealing it was also an emotional moment, as a silence fell when the chest was opened. The *muṣḥaf*, I learned, belonged to the late *Ḥajj*, the father of the house who, *yarḥamuhu Allāh*, passed away a year ago. In

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addition to being a sacred, handwritten religious artefact, as an heirloom, the manuscript was an object of great sentimental value, thus fulfilling multiple roles at once in the family.

The Qadīrī family is certainly not the only household in Morocco where Qur'anic manuscripts and other handwritten devotional texts are kept, despite the wide availability of affordable, printed versions of the holy book, as the contribution of Anouk Cohen in this volume discusses. The phenomenon of treasuring manuscripts at home in Morocco and elsewhere, as Léon Buskens has described, is still prevalent, despite the growing commercial demand of Arabic manuscript copies from North Africa on the international rare book market.[1] It is no coincidence that these family manuscripts, and sometimes entire collections, have survived in the privacy of homes, apartments, and other dwellings. On the contrary, the example of the handwritten family Qur'an shows that in Morocco, and elsewhere in the Muslim world, manuscripts, documents, and other material forms of writing and inscribed objects, such as talismans, scrapbooks, and sticks, *mean* something to people. As written artefacts, they continue to play multiple roles in the daily life of their owners and their respective families and communities as everyday objects of common use, precious and collectable objects, instruments of action, or objects of contemplation and meditation.[2] Rather than being considered inert or forgotten objects of material culture, frozen in the histories of their creation, such manuscripts remain as significant as they did in the past, be it through acquiring new social lives in the present.[3]

2 The Return to Codicology

In the last decade, a shift has taken place in the field of "Islamic" manuscripts. Handwritten books and other artefacts are no longer merely part of a turn

1 Léon Buskens, "Paper Worlds: A Nesrani Ethnographer Entering the Manuscript Trade in Morocco," in *Pratiquer les sciences sociales au Maghreb. Textes pour Driss Mansouri*, eds. Mohamed Almoubaker and François Pouillon (Casablanca: Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud pour les Etudes Islamiques et les Sciences Humaines, 2017), 239–265.

2 Categories used by François Déroche and Carine Juvin, "Introduction," *Special issue: From Visual Power to Private Stories: Inscribed Objects from the Medieval Arab World, Journal of Material Cultures in the Muslim World*, vol. 4 (2023), 1–2.

3 For changing social roles of written artefacts throughout their material life span, see Karl Schaefer, "Malleable Magic: Medieval Arabic Block Printed Amulets and Their Audiences," in *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities*, eds. Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz (Hamburg: Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, 2023), 149–167.

of some sort—a documentary turn, a digital turn, an archival turn, or part of a "return" to philology—but have become the object of study instead of the means. Manuscripts and other forms of writing are no longer regarded as vehicles of something—knowledge, text, or script—per se. As tangible objects, surrounded by social practices and local meanings, they *are* the something. As part of this development, anthropologists and social historians have recently "gone textual" by studying the social embeddedness of books, documents, amulets, and other forms of text, and of various practices of writing and reading, collecting, veneration, transmission, and exchange. They have stressed the cultural specificity and multiple local meanings of writing and reading, thus going against common-sense assumptions of the universalist characteristics of these technologies.

The renewed interest in the tangible materiality of texts and manuscripts, and especially in the writing cultures of the *Other*, is hardly surprising. In the digital, post-print era of mass social media and fake news we find ourselves in, we seem to have not only estranged ourselves from the materiality of books and documents, but even more so from the physical practice of reading and writing in our daily lives. Paper has made way for the screen, libraries *in situ* no longer have books on their shelves, school children are taught "digital literacy," and the physical act of writing is taken over by keyboards, digital to-do lists, and encrypted signatures.

Paradoxically, our digitized readerly and writerly practices of today's world all refer to the oldest practices and manifestations of writing in their etymology, such as the act of "scrolling" (from a *rotulus*) on "tablets" or "pads" (derived from the cuneiform clay tablet), and software such as "Scrivener" and "PalmLeaf."[4] One could argue that borrowing the vocabulary from primordial writing cultures and their writing surfaces is nothing more than clever marketing. Yet at the same time, references to the history of writing and reading are so powerful and marketable precisely because they still hold meaning in our cultural memory. In other words, despite, or perhaps because of the introduction of these technologies and the collective screen fatigue they cause, our fascination with the question of *what people do with handwritten texts and why* is re-kindled. The further we become removed from the analogue experience of reading and writing ourselves in the present, the more interest is sparked in writing cultures and bookish societies, and the manuscript as object in particular.

4 For the link to the cuneiform tablet and tablet computers, see Katja Weirauch and Michele Cammarosano, "WoW! Writing on Wax in Ancient Mesopotamia and Today: Questions and Results from an Interdisciplinary Project," in *Traces of Ink. Experiences of Philology and Replication*, ed. Lucia Raggetti (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 9.

This perspective is, of course, not entirely new. In the 1990s, Stephen Nichols already suggested focusing on the material characteristics of written artefacts, rather than focusing on them as vehicles of text within the framework of "material philology."[5] The renewed interest in book cultures through the lens of material philology could be viewed as a way to reconnect to our written heritage in the digital age, or as what Patricia Crain calls a quest to find a "codicology of the modern self."[6]

In recent years, research on the materiality of the book has flourished in all its facets, including the introduction of new fields, technology, and terminology, ranging from "digital codicology", "provenance-aware material philology", "bio-codicology", and "conservation-codicology", to the study of parchment as "animal archives."[7] Michael Johnston and Michael van Dussen's *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches*, Kathryn Rudy's *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized their Manuscripts*, Lambertus Cornelis van Lit's *Among Digitized Manuscripts: Philology, Codicology, Paleography in a Digital World*, and Bridget Whearty's *Digital Codicology: Medieval Books and Modern Labor* should be mentioned in this regard.[8] The mass digitization of manu-

5 Stephen Nichols, "Introduction. Philology in a Manuscript Culture," *The New Philology. Special Issue of Speculum* 65, no. 1 (1990): 1–10 and "Why Material Philology? Some Thoughts," in *Philologie als Textwissenschaft: Alte und Neue Horizonte*, eds. Helmut Tervooren and Horst Wenzel, *Special Issue of Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* 116 (1997): 10–30. See also Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the 14th and 18th Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) and *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

6 Patricia Crain, "Reading Childishly? A Codicology of the Modern Self," in *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in the Postprint Era*, eds. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman (Minneapolis: MN, 2013; online edition, Minnesota Scholarship Online, 24 Aug. 2015).

7 See, on "digital codicology," Bridget Whearty, *Digital Codicology: Medieval Books and Modern Labor* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2022); on "bio-codicology," Sarah Fiddyment, Matthew D. Teasdale, Jiří Vnouček, Élodie Lévêque, et al. "So you want to do biocodicology? A field guide to the biological analysis of parchment," *Herit Heritage Science* 7, 35 (2019) online; on "conservation-codicology": Patricia Engel, "Reversibility—Minimal Intervention—Conservation-Codicology: Terminology as a Tool for Awareness Raising," *Journal of Paper Conservation* 1 (2023), online. On "animal archives," see Bruce Holsinger, *On Parchment. Animals, Archives, and the Making of Culture from Herodotus to the Digital Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023); and on "Provenance-aware Material Philology", see Liv Ingeborg Lied, *Invisible Manuscripts: Textual Scholarship and the Survival of 2 Baruch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021).

8 Michael Crain Johnston and Michael van Dussen, *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches*, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kathryn Rudy, *Piety in*

script databases available online—at least available to scholars in the Global North—has fundamentally transformed the field and its methodologies.[9] "Digital codicology" and the ethics and social justice of working with digital written artefacts (see discussion below), however, is still in its infancy. According to Whearty, at present we have not fully understood what these digital written artefacts actually are, nor have we grasped the material and collective labours of digitization and scholarship.[10]

With the exception of digital codicology, the predicament attendant to these fascinating developments in codicology is that the dominant focus remains rather on European manuscript cultures and written phenomena. Historically, the field of European codicology has been the main lens through which manuscript cultures of the *Other*, specifically those of the Global South, have been studied. Even though a lot can be gained from the methodology and new perspectives in this field, applying its perspectives to non-European book cultures is problematic for a number of reasons, as I will discuss towards the end of this introduction. As an alternative to the Eurocentric gaze in Manuscript Studies, progress has been made in the nascent fields of global book history[11] and comparative codicology.[12] Moving beyond disciplinary and regional boundaries, the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Studies (CSMC) in Hamburg has been exemplary in the comparative study of codicological features, such as paper,

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Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized their Manuscripts (Open Book Publishers, 2016); Whearty, *Digital Codicology: Medieval Books and Modern Labor*; Lambertus Cornelis van Lit, *Among Digitized Manuscripts: Philology, Codicology, Paleography in a Digital World* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

9 See Timothy Stinson, "Codicological Descriptions in the Digital Age" in *Kodikologie und Paläographie im digitalen Zeitalter—Codicology and Palaeography in the Digital Age*, eds. Malte Rehbein, Patrick Sahle, and Torsten Schaßan, 35–51 (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2009).

10 Whearty, *Digital Codicology: Medieval Books and Modern Labor*, 1–40.

11 For contributions on global book history, see Elleke Boehmer et al., eds., *The Global Histories of Books. Methods and Practices* (London: Palmgrave Macmillan, 2017); Michael F. Suarez and H.R. Woudhuysen, eds., *The Book: A Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Two edited volumes were published recently on the phenomenon of colophons in a global perspective. See Stefan Hanß and Christopher D. Bahl, eds. *Scribal Practice and the Global Cultures of Colophons, 1400–1800* (London: Palmgrave Macmillan, 2022); George Anton Kiraz and Sabine Schmidtke, eds., *Literary Snippets. Colophons Across Space and Time* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2023).

12 Alessandro Bausi et al., eds. *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies. An Introduction* (Hamburg: Tredition, 2015); Malachi Beit-Arié, "The Advantages of Comparative Codicology: Further Examples," in *Exploring Written Artefacts: Objects, Methods, and Concepts*, ed. Jörg B. Quenzer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 395–404.

bindings, colophons, and paratexts, as well as in introducing new typologies and standards.[13]

The field of comparative codicology has led to new and exciting avenues of research, especially in regards to the question of the multiple local understandings of the materiality of manuscripts beyond European manuscript cultures. Examples in this regard are the study of agency and efficacy of manuscripts, research on the embodiment of manuscripts and the corporality of scribal traditions, the studies on less-studied written artefacts in their cultural contexts, such as notebooks, lists, albums, and personal manuscripts, as well as the introduction of new terminology, such as "one-volume libraries," and "composite" and "multiple-text manuscripts (MTMs)."[14] Its largest contribution, however, has been in making the traditional subject of "manuscripts" more inclusive by widening its scope to "written artefacts," including inscriptions, textiles, graffiti, and other inscribed everyday objects into the field.[15]

Moving to the study of written artefacts in Muslim contexts, also traditionally known as "Islamic" codicology, one cannot help but observe that codicology is all too often still associated with the study of individual anatomical features or typologies of books. These important contributions, which I will discuss below, are unfortunately often still perceived as being on the margins

13 https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de. See also the CSMCS's book series *Studies in Manuscript Cultures* (De Gruyter). See also the *Collaborative Research Centre 933* (*CRC 933*), *Material Text Cultures: Materiality and Presence of Writing in non-Typographic Societies* at Heidelberg University: https://www.materiale-textkulturen.org, and their book series *Materiale Textkulturen* (De Gruyter).

14 Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz, eds., *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities* (Hamburg: Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, 2023); Antonella Brita et al., eds., *Manuscripts and Performances in Religions, Arts, and Sciences* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024); Michael Clarke and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, eds., *Medieval Multilingual Manuscripts*: *Case Studies from Ireland to Japan* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022); Dmitry Bondarev, Alessandro Gori, and Lameen Souag, eds., *Creating Standards: Interactions with Arabic Script in 12 Manuscript Cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019); Alessandro Bausi, Michael Friedrich, and Marilena Maniaci, eds., *The Emergence of Multiple-Text Manuscripts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019); Michael Friedrich and Cosima Schwarke, eds. *One-Volume Libraries: Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).

15 Jörg B. Quenzer, ed., *Exploring Written Artefacts. Objects, Methods, and Concepts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016). On "manuscript textiles," see "Manuscript Textiles: Weaving the Thread of Faith," https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2023/07/manuscript-textiles-weaving-the-thread-of-faith.html, accessed December 17,2023; Nikolaus Dietrich et al., eds., *Theory and Classification of Material Text Cultures: Concluding Volume of the CRC 933*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024); Karin Scheper, "Modest Manuscripts in Fine Fabrics", *The New Bookbinder*, vol. 40, (2020): 9–18.

of our field. Whereas the above-discussed fields of European, global, and comparative codicology have evolved in a direction which focusses on the materiality and social embeddedness of manuscripts as written artefacts, the study of "Islamic" codicology still has the aura of a field isolated from its social context. To draw on my own experience, at Islamic Studies conferences I would often get comments such as: "What could possibly be the relevance of codicology? It is just about a few strings and bindings."

It is the aim of this volume to change this rather obsolete perspective by bringing together a selection of interdisciplinary contributions on the social role of written artefacts in Muslim contexts which are rooted in social history, philology, musicology, and anthropology, thereby starting a conversation on the return of codicology.

3 "Islamic" Codicology

The materiality of written artefacts in Muslim contexts is traditionally associated with studies on the codicology of Quranic manuscripts, such as François Déroche's *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, Annabel Teh Gallop's *The Art of the Qur'an in Java*, and, more recently, Cornelius Berthold's *Forms and Functions of Pendant Koran Manuscripts* and Zulfikar Hijri's *Approaches to the Qur'an in Sub-Saharan Africa*.[16] As monumental commodities, a renewed interest in Qurʾanic manuscripts can be observed on the international art market, where "masterpiece" copies from all over the Muslim world, at times of dubious provenance, are auctioned at record prices to private collectors and museums. Examples are the recent sales of two fifteenth-century Qur'ans by the auction house Christie's: an autographed, royal Mamluk copy written for Sultan Qaitbay (r. 1468–1496), sold for 4.9 million pounds, and a Timurid Qur'an on Ming gold-painted multi-coloured paper, auctioned at 8.8 million pounds. The auctioning of these masterpiece commodities has resulted in heated academic debates on ethics and provenance, which will be discussed towards the end of this introduction.[17]

16 Cornelius Berthold, *Forms and Functions of Pendant Koran Manuscripts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021); François Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads. A First Overview* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Annabel Teh Gallop, "The Art of the Qur'an in Java" *Jurnal SUHUF* 8, no. 01 (2015): 215–229; Zulfikar Hirji, "The Siyu Qur'ans: Three Illuminated Qur'an Manuscripts from Coastal East Africa," in *Approaches to the Qur'an in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Zulfikar Hirji (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 431–472, *Special issue "Manuscripts of the Qur'ān," Journal of Islamic Manuscripts Volume* 11, no. 3 (2020).

17 For instance, the sale of a fifteenth-century Timurid or Aqquyunlu Qur'an on Chinese

The rich tradition of the "Islamic book," however, goes far beyond the Qurʾanic *muṣḥaf*, including many other material manifestations of writing, varying from recording the traditions of the prophet Muḥammad in booklets, to classical codex treatises on Islamic law, theology, mysticism and science, to chronicles, miniature prayer books, diplomatics, letters, and certificates written on scrolls, to single-leaf manuscript receipts, talismanic clothing, paper-wheel head pieces, divination manuals, and amulets.[18] The codicological features of these written artefacts, in the shape of a codex or otherwise, have been studied and mapped in great detail, focusing on features such as bindings, paper, layout, colophons, holographs, seals and impressions, inks, and tools and features of transmission.[19] A recently emerged codicological topic concerns the objects

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Paper. See Anna Brady, "Quran quietly sells for record £7m despite questions over its provenance," *The Art Newspaper*, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/quran-sells-for-record-price, accessed December 17, 2023. On provenance and "provenance-aware material philology," see Liv Ingeborg Lied, *Invisible Manuscripts: Textual Scholarship and the Survival of 2 Baruch*. See also Cecilia Palmobo and Birte Kristiansen, "It belongs in a museum … or does it?" online: https://emco.hcommons.org/2021/03/19/it-belongs-in-a-museum-or-does-it/.

18 The standard works on Arabic manuscripts and Islamic codicology in English are François Déroche, *Islamic Codicology: An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Scripts* (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2005); Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). In Arabic and Persian, the standards are Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid *Qawāʿid fahrasat al-makhṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-jadīd, 1973); ʿAlī Āq Qalʿah Ṣafarī, *Nuskhah shināsi-yi nusakh-i khaṭṭī-yi fārisī* (Tehran: Markaz-i pazhūhishī-yi mīrāth-i maktūb, 1390 Sh/2011). For recent publications on talismans and amulets, including on scrolls and in block print, see Petra Sijpesteijn and Marcela Probert (eds.), *Amulets and Talismans of the Middle East and North Africa in Context. Transmission, Efficacy and Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 2022); Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz (eds.), *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities* (Hamburg: Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, 2023). On paper wheels, see Farouk Yahya, "Paper Wheels with Strings Used for Divination from Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula," in *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities*, 31–44.

19 On bookbinding, see Karen Scheper, *The Technique of Islamic Bookbinding Methods, Materials and Regional Varieties* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); on paper: Jonathan Bloom, *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); on layout: Frederike-Wiebke Daub, *Formen und Funktionen des Layouts in Arabischen Manuskripten anhand von Abschriften religiöser Texte: Al-Būṣīrīs Burda, al-Ǧazūlīs Dalāʾil und Die Šifāʾ von Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016); on colophons: Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche, "The Colophon in Arabic Manuscripts. A Phenomenon without a Name," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 4 (2013): 49–81; on holographs: Frédéric Bauden and Elise Franssen, eds., *In the Author's Hand: Holograph and Authorial Manuscripts in the Islamic Handwritten Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); on seals and impressions: Annabel Teh Gallop, *Lasting Impressions. Seals from the Islamic World*

that store and safeguard written artefacts, such as pouches, chests, bags, cupboards, and boxes.[20]

The question of how manuscripts and the different material forms they come in have shaped the societies and communities they are produced in has been addressed by studies such as Brinkley Messick's *Sharia Scripts*, Konrad Hirschler's *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands*, Léon Buskens' *Tales According to the Book*, Houari Touati's *L'Armoire à sagesse*, and Beatrice Gründler's *The Rise of the Arabic Book*.[21] Worth mentioning in this regard are also studies on the mobility of manuscripts and scribal networks across continents, such as the reserach by Ghislaine Lydon, and Shamil Jeppie's and Souleymane Bachir Diagne's work in the context of the African continent, as well as scholarship on the movement of written artefacts across the Indian Ocean, such as the work of Elisabeth Lambourn, Christopher Bahl, Mahmood Kooria, and myself.[22] The writings of Konrad Hirschler, Said Aljoumani, and Boris

(London: British Library, 2010); on inks: Lucia Raggetti, ed., *Traces of Ink. Experiences of Philology and Replication*; and on transmission: Jan Just Witkam, "The Human Element between Text and Reader. The Ijaza in Arabic Manuscripts," in *The History of the Book in the Middle East*, ed. Geoffrey Roper (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 89–112; Jan Just Witkam, "Establishing the Stemma: Fact or Fiction?" in *Manuscripts of the Middle-East* 3 (1988): 88–101. See also Stefanie Brinkmann and Beate Wiesmüller, eds. *From Codicology to Technology Islamic Manuscripts and Their Place in Scholarship* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2012). Social media has also become a resource for the study of codicology in Muslim contexts, such as the website of Jan Just Witkam and the blog posts of Dagmar Riedel and Evyn Kropf. See http://www.islamicmanuscripts.info, https://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/islamicbooks/resources/ and https://guides.lib.umich.edu/islamicmsstudies/bibres/, all accessed December 10, 2023.

20 This was one of the recent foci at the *Archiving Artefacts* cluster of the CMCS in Hamburg. See also Karin Scheper, who is an authority in this field. Karin Scheper, "Bindings, Bags and Boxes: Sewn and Unsewn Manuscript Formats in the Islamic World," in *Tied and Bound: A Comparative View on Manuscript Binding. Studies in Manuscript Cultures*, eds. Allesandro Bausi and Michael Friedrich (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 121–154.

21 Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Brinkley Messick, *Sharia Scripts. A Historical Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Léon Buskens, "Tales according to the Book. Professional Witnesses (`Udul) as Cultural Brokers in Morocco," in *Narratives of Truth in Islamic Law*, eds. Dupret Baudouin, Drieskens Barbara, and Moors Annelies (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 143–160; Houari Touati, *L'armoire à sagesse: Bibliothèques et collections en Islam* (Paris: Aubier, 2003); Beatrice Gruendler, *The Rise of the Arabic Book* (New Haven: Harvard University Press, 2020).

22 On manuscript lives and mobility across the African continent, see Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne, eds., *The Meanings of Timbuktu* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008); Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails. Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-*

Liebrenz have drawn attention to the rich worlds of commentaries and scribal culture, bringing the "rough edges" of book and manuscript cultures, such as paratexts, glosses, and documentary notes, to the centre of study.[23] Moreover, the history of the transmission of texts has taken new turns with an interest in booksellers and collectors, publishers, paper makers, stationers, libraries, and archives.[24]

4 Aim of the Volume

Research on the social embeddedness of texts in Muslim contexts, as we have seen, has gained momentum in Islamic studies, as well as across the disciplines of philology, social history, and anthropology. Social historians, codicologists,

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Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Charles C. Stewart and Ahmed Chaouki Binebine, eds., *Manuscripts and Arabic-Script Writing in Africa* (London: Hali Publications Ltd, 2023); Andrea Brigaglia and Mauro Nobili, eds. *The Arts and Crafts of Literacy: Islamic Manuscript Cultures in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017). In the context of the Indian Ocean, see Elisabeth Lambourn, *Abraham's Luggage: A Social Life of Things in the Medieval Indian Ocean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Mahmood Kooria, "Texts as Objects of Value and Veneration. Islamic Law Books in the Indian Ocean Littoral," *Sociology of Islam* 6 (2018): 60–83; Olly Akkerman, "The Bohras as Neo-Fāṭimids: Documentary Remains of a Fatimid Past in Gujarat," *Journal of Material Cultures in the Muslim World* 1 (2020): 286–308.

23 Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler, eds. *Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources* (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2012); Said Aljoumani's contribution in the present volume; Boris Liebrenz, *Die Rifāʿīya aus Damaskus. Eine Privatbibliothek in osmanischer Zeit und ihr kulturelles Umfeld* (The Rifāʿiyya from Damascus: A Private Ottoman-Era Library and Its Cultural Context) (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

24 Said Aljoumani, مكتبة مدرسية في حلب نهاية العهد العثماني (The Library of a Madrasa in Aleppo at the End of the Ottoman Era: The Renewed Register of the Books Endowed by Uthman Pasha al-Duriki) (Würzburg: Ergon, 2020); Marina Rustow, *The Lost Archive. Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020); Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *The Book in Mamluk Egypt and Syria (1250–1517). Scribes, Libraries and Market* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Michal Biran, "Libraries, Books, and Transmission of Knowledge in Ilkhanid Baghdad," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 62, (2019): 464–502; Anne Regourd, ed. *The Trade in Papers Marked with Non-Latin Characters/Le commerce des papiers à marques à caractères non-latins. Documents and History/Documents et histoire* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library: The Ashrafiya Library Catalogue* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Said Aljoumani and Konrad Hirschler, *Owning Books and Preserving Documents in Medieval Jerusalem: The Library of Burhand al-Din* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023).

"digital philologists," palaeographers, and textual anthropologists all "work" with manuscripts, either *in situ* or with manuscripts as digital written artefacts, and are incorporating "the social" into their studies. However, as opposed to other disciplines such as European book culture, global book history, or comparative codicology, a perspective that methodologically unites these disciplines under one umbrella and connects social practices of reading, writing, and consuming, geographically, spatially, and temporally, remains absent.

Through the lens of social codicology, this volume suggests the contours of what such a perspective could look like: a perspective through which we disentangle how the social informs the textual and vice versa, how people make sense of the world, and often of themselves, through their books. It must be acknowledged that this idea is not entirely new, nor unique to the larger fields of manuscript studies and book history, as I discussed above. In the context of Muslim societies, Léon Buskens provocatively suggested already in the 1990s that scholars should "practice codicology as a social science".[25] As part of practicing codicology as a social science, this volume proposes a more critical, social, and reflexive habitus for the study of manuscripts in Muslim societies, one that, in scope, is more inclusive and broader than the classical "archaeology of the book" and engages with critical debates in the humanities and social sciences, such as decolonializing objects and museums, rethinking the institutional and conceptional dominance of Eurocentrism, preservation and climate change, digital humanities, ethics and provenance, gender, positionality, and access, and agency and efficacy.[26]

The aim of this volume is thus to provide an invitation to, and perhaps even tools for studying the social embeddedness and the local materiality of written artefacts on the one hand, and a critical reassessment of our own disciplinary backgrounds, research practices, and positionality vis-à-vis manuscripts on the other. In other words: social codicology is about analysing the relationship between people and manuscripts, and the tension that is inherent to the encounter between them, both in terms of the manuscript that is the

25 Buskens, "Paper Worlds," 137–145.

26 Léon Buskens, "Maliki Formularies and Legal Documents. Changes in the Manuscript Culture of the *'Udul* (Professional Witnesses) in Morocco," in *The Codicology of Islamic Manuscripts. Proceedings of the Second Conference of Al- Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation*, ed. Yasin Dutton (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1995), 137–145. This is in contrast to other disciplines, such as Medieval Spanish and Portuguese studies, where the study of manuscripts has been subject to critical (self-)reflection. See John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the Libro de Buen Amor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

object of study and its social context, as well as our personal relationship with it. As researchers, we must thus be reflexive of the fact that we are part of a larger field of study with its own particular practices and ethical framework.[27] The question is therefore not only what "the other" does with their written artefacts and why, but also what it is that we do as researchers and why.

Looking at written artefacts differently, a study in social codicology places the materiality of the written artefact at the centre, starting from the understanding that *agency* is attributed to texts in various ways, through which narratives of social life are created.[28] Arguing along the line of Arjun Appadurai and others, in order to allow these social lives to unfold, we must first consider manuscripts as *things*, or physical objects, and acknowledge their role as *commodities*.[29] The volume at hand demonstrates that, as "things," manuscripts have a wide variety of social lives in their capacity as commodities, as the contributions of Carl Dávila, Zahir Bhalloo and Sayyid Sadiq Husayni Ishkawari, and myself show. The individual material features of manuscripts, such as watermarks, bindings, notes, colophons, and autographs have their own social lives as well, as Torsten Wollina's contribution on Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn's autographed manuscripts exemplifies. We need to know about these social lives in order to understand handwritten texts holistically, instead of looking at manuscripts as clean texts.[30] It is in fact, as the work of John Dagenais has shown, the messier parts of manuscripts, including scriptural incoherencies and their "rough edges," that make the locality of manuscripts visible.[31]

Another line of inquiry where codicology has the potential to be practiced as a social science is that of handwritten texts and their various life cycles and biographies.[32] As material objects, manuscripts and documents have life cycles

27 The term "social codicology" was first coined in my PhD thesis, which is based on my archival and ethnographic research conducted in Baroda, India, between September and December 2012. Central to my research were encounters with, and active participation within, the community and its scribal, archival, and other social-philological practices. Olly Akkerman, "The Bohra Dark Archive and the Language of Secrecy: A Codicological Ethnography of the Royal ʿAlawī Bohra Library in Baroda" (PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 2016), 12.

28 Akkerman, "The Bohra Manuscript Treasury as a Sacred Site of Philology: A Study in Social Codicology," 17.

29 Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1986).

30 Buskens, "Maliki Formularies," 137.

31 John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the Libro de Buen Amor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), xvi.

32 Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1986), 64–92.

from the moment they are brought into being, through their various modes of consumption, and until their demise.[33] Throughout these life cycles, the social lives and sometimes even social afterlives of texts are constantly subject to change within different cultural, ritual, geographic, spatial, and temporal contexts.[34] Historians may trace these material life cycles and their social contexts through the rough material edges of manuscripts and documents, as demonstrated by Konrad Hirschler's paper on recycled book bindings, delivered at the conference in Rabat, entitled "Binding Decisions."[35] Anthropologists, on the other hand, may observe these material life cycles through ritual and ceremony during ethnographic fieldwork, in the context of venerating, enshrining, discarding, and ingesting of text.

Another aspect of the social lives and life cycles of manuscripts is the agency that is attached to them and through which believers experience their efficacy. In their volume *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities*, Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz make a distinction between individual types of agency attributed to written artefacts that directly influence human behaviour, and manuscripts that affect social relations between actors and shape communities and social groups.[36] Several contributions in this volume, including Anwar Haneef's and my own studies in the present volume, focusing on occult ontologies of Islamic manuscript preservation traditions and sensing secret Bohra manuscripts, respectively, address the ways in which people attribute agency to written artefacts and at the same time rely on their protective and healing powers.

In an ideal scenario, the social codicologist is in a situation where he or she is able to observe and consider the agency, efficacy, and life cycles of documents and manuscripts from both an ethnographic and a codicological perspective. The contributions of Ismail Warscheid and Paul Love, which document ethnographic fieldwork in the context of private manuscript collections in the Tuwāt Oasis of the Algerian Sahara and among Ibadi libraries in Jerba, Tunesia, are exemplary in this regard.

33 Akkerman, "Bohra Manuscript Treasury as a Sacred Site of Philology," 10.

34 Akkerman, "Bohra Manuscript Treasury as a Sacred Site of Philology," 10.

35 This presentation formed the basis of Hirschler's Chapter 3, "Binding Matters—From Stand-Alone Booklet to Monumental Composite Manuscript", *Medieval Damascus*.

36 Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz, *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities*, 3.

5 Ethnography and Codicology

Historically, a disciplinary gap exists between the philological practice of reading texts, which traditionally included the study of codicology, and anthropology. Annette Hornbacher and Richard Fox, however, have argued that this methodological opposition is, in fact, based on a textual paradigm centred around hermeneutical Eurocentric notions about text and script.[37] Even though these Eurocentric notions do not translate well to textual traditions and manuscript cultures in other non-European contexts, they still inform the way in which we analyse written artefacts in Muslim communities and societies. The local materiality and social context of written artefacts, however, cannot be fully understood without addressing the human element and an emic perspective on manuscript cultures.

Anthropologists are no strangers to the world of people and their books, as the work of Karen Barber and others has shown.[38] As libraries, private collections, auction houses, museums, and book markets have proven to be fruitful research sites for the ethnographer, written artefacts have become more commonly the object of study.[39] What we may gain from these perspectives is a better understanding of the human element in the world of books.

Bringing in the lens of the human element in codicology may be a first step for the field to come out of its relative obscurity. Rather than isolating individual anatomical features of the book, this requires a perspective in which we acknowledge that manuscripts and documents are handwritten and produced by human beings. As such, no matter how skilled the scribe or bookmaker or how sacred the text is, no manuscript or document is identical to another, regardless of the larger traditions and aesthetic practices it is part of. Moreover, as Dagenais argues, manuscript cultures never operated in isolation.[40] Instead, they were part of larger "living" manuscript and documentary cultures, some of which continue to exist today. This holds true for historic manuscript traditions, and it can be observed among the last living manuscript cultures of the Muslim world, such as among family libraries in Timbuktu, the Cham com-

37 Hornbacher and Fox, *Efficacy of Balinese Letters*, 1.

38 Karin Barber, *Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

39 For the discussion on collecting practices in archives and museums in the modern Arab world, see Sonja Mejcher-Atassi and John Pedro Schwartz's edited volume *Archive, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World* (London: Routledge, 2012).

40 Dagenais, *Ethics of Reading*, xvi.

munity in Vietnam, and the Bohras in Gujarat, among whom manuscripts are still transmitted manually.[41] In such cases, as I have documented elsewhere, a combination of archival, social-codicological fieldwork, including extended periods of participant observation combined with "hands on" archival and codicological scrutiny, is paramount.[42]

Participant observation, however, may not be an option for those working with historical written artefacts. Historicizing social codicology is a fertile field which this volume explores through various contributions. Even though operating in contexts that are spatially and temporally completely different, the same questions about the social lives of handwritten texts, their rough edges, and life cycles can be applied to the study of pre-modern manuscripts.[43] This is where the perspective of historical anthropology is relevant. It is only through the emic perspective of the communities and societies that brought forth these manuscript cultures, whether in pre-modern times or in the case of contemporary living manuscript cultures, that we can understand their social meaning. Even if the societies these manuscripts or documents originally belonged to are long gone, through the lens of historical anthropology documents or manuscripts from the past can still be read with their contemporary custodians, owners, collectors, scholars, and clerics, such as the work of Brinkley Messick among Zaydi *qadis* in Ibb, Yemen, and Bhalloo and Ishkawari's contribution to this volume on scribal artisans and collecting practices among clerical bibliophiles in Qum shows.[44]

Finally, through the lens of social codicology, we not only critically engage with the question of how we may go beyond our academic disciplinary comfort zones in studying manuscripts, but also shift our focus to understanding how codicology, palaeography, and philology are practiced locally by communities through their written artefacts.[45]

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41 Jeppie and Diagne, *Meanings of Timbuktu*; Hao N. Phan, "Cham Manuscripts, the Endangered Cultural Heritage from a Lost Kingdom," *Restaurator. International Journal for the Preservation of Library and Archival Material* 36, no. 2 (2015): 101–120; Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*.

42 Akkerman, "Bohra Treasury of Manuscripts," 18.

43 Dagenais, *Ethics of Reading*, xvi.

44 Messick, *Sharia Scripts*; Messick, *Calligraphic State*.

45 Richard Fox, *More than Words. Transforming Script, Agency, and Collective Life in Bali* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018); Hornbacher and Fox, *Materiality and Efficacy of Balinese Letters*; Esther-Miriam Wagner, Ben Outhwaite, and Bettina Beinhoff, eds., *Scribes as Agents of Language Change* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013); Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, Ch. 6. "Script and Scribal Politics."

6 Decolonizing Manuscript Studies: Power, Ethics, and Access

In addition to starting an interdisciplinary discussion on written artefacts and their social lives, this volume proposes a critical reflection on the ways we study manuscripts, access them, and interact with them. This would entail moving beyond the Eurocentric bias in the study of non-Western manuscript cultures, or, as Nur Sobers-Khan and Anwar Haneef argue in this volume and beyond, decolonizing the field of Islamic Manuscripts.[46]

In her article "Reclaiming Manuscripts," Nur Sobers-Khan argues that the Eurocentric dominance in the humanities and social sciences is especially prevalent in the field of Islamic codicology, which, despite its material turn, remains based on a positivist understanding of the world, and has a strong historic rootedness in colonial discourse and vocabulary.[47] In order to move beyond this discourse and vocabulary, Anwar Haneef argues for the appreciation of "diverse cosmologies, epistemologies and forms of knowledge embodied by Islamicate manuscripts," which, he contends, "would enable a decolonial, non-patriarchal and post-Enlightenment future of the field."[48] Instead of studying manuscripts in Muslim contexts as European handwritten books, this would entail humanizing the people who write, read, use, and venerate manuscripts as part of their day-to-day lives, and focussing on *their* understanding of manuscripts as written artefacts, rather than on our own academic interpretation.

Moreover, reflecting on our relationship vis-à-vis "Islamic" written artefacts, Sobers-Khan argues that researchers romanticize, or what she calls the "fetishize" and "Orientalize" manuscripts as exotic objects of the *Other*. The fact that they acquire a "relic"-like aura, as either objects from the past or a faraway land, she argues, should be acknowledged and requires a reflexive turn.[49] An example in this regard would be my own contribution in this volume, where I reflect on the experience of learning to "re-see" manuscripts and experience

46 Nur Sobers Khan, "Reclaiming Manuscripts. Divination, Social Justice, and Islamic Codicology," *Special Issue on Relics, Critical Muslim* 2, vol. 2 (2020): 86–90. See also Farid El-Ghawaby, "Localizing Johann Gottfried Wetzstein and other 'Western' Actors of Translocation Processes in the 19th and early 20th Century," (forthcoming).

47 For a discussion of the colonial hangover in cataloguing, see Jake Benson's presentation "Persian Manuscripts in the John Rylands Research Institute and Library: Aims and Approaches," *Taking the Past into the Future: Studying, Preserving, and Understanding Islamicate Manuscripts*, University of Edinburgh, Thursday and Friday, May, 11th–12th, 2023 (available online in the future).

48 This volume: add page number after editing.

49 Nur Sobers Khan, "Reclaiming Manuscripts. Divination, Social Justice, and Islamic Codicology", 76, 77.

their efficacy through the lens of the community I worked with vis-à-vis my own Western academic training.

In addition to analysing our often personal relationship to the object, this volume encourages critical reflection on the practice of *going to the archives*. Archives, libraries, and collections, as I have described elsewhere, are rich research sites that, despite the central role they play in our research, are often left out of the scope of our work.[50] The ritual and habitus of going to the archives, including the long waits, exchange of formalities, and the building of trust is rarely seen as a social practice despite the fact that, ultimately, our own involvement in them determines the studies we produce. The time we spend in reading rooms, browsing through manuscripts, glossing, scrutinizing, reading, photographing, and editing them, consists of social encounters and rituals which should be reflected on in our writing. It is thus not only the archival practices of the *Other*, but mostly also our own, which have considerable historical roots. As Buskens writes, these "are taken for granted instead of studied as specific cultural phenomena."[51] While going to the archives is considered a rite of passage to codicologists and philologists, the same can be argued for the tradition of cataloguing manuscripts, whether one is studying *catalogology* as a social phenomenon or is participating in it.[52]

Whether private, communal, or state-regulated, archives and libraries are sites of power where access depends on personal relationships and social hierarchies.[53] Recognizing these repositories as sites of power, one cannot get around the social, and thus gendered nature that is inherent to archival research. Gender, as I argue in my monograph, shapes the nature of research itself: in the access we negotiate, the obstacles female researchers encounter, and the kind of work we end up publishing.[54] Yet there has hardly been a con-

50 Akkerman, "Bohra Treasury of Manuscripts," 18. A rare exception in this regard is Ingrid Austveg Evans's account of digital archives, entitled "Researching Mamluk Syria from a Living Room in Berlin: Reflections on Positionality and Manuscripts in an Age of Digital Reproduction," (forthcoming). See also Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories. Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), and Jan Just Witkam for a slightly dated yet vivid account on working with manuscripts in the *Dār al-Kutub* library in the 1980s: Jan Just Witkam, "Manuscripts & Manuscripts. Research Facilities for Manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library," in *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 2 (1987): 111–115.

51 Buskens, "From Trash to Treasure," 182.

52 An interesting workshop in this context was: *All You Can Do with Catalogs: Accessing, Organizing, Disseminating Local and Global Knowledge* (15th–19th Centuries), 6–7 October 2016. Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin.

53 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 28.

54 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 16, 17.

versation on how gender affects the historical research we do, especially in the context of libraries and archives in the Global South.

In addition to gender, many other factors relating to our positionality such as skin colour, sexual orientation, age, nationality, class, ethnic, and socio-economic background shape our experiences, archive stories, and library journeys, and in many cases, these factors determine the fate of our research through either access or non-access. Following the so-called reflexive turn in cultural anthropology, reflecting on these factors has become standard in ethnographic writing. Yet among philologists, historians, and codicologists, the question of positionality is still considered taboo, taken for granted, deemed irrelevant, rarely discussed, or abandoned to an anecdote in the margins of scholarship.[55]

As digital manuscript databases are gradually replacing the physical research site of the library or archive, it is also time to critically reflect on a new set of directives regarding ethical research practices of accessing and working with digital artefacts. In her article "Researching Mamluk Syria from a Living Room in Berlin: Reflections on Positionality and Manuscripts in an Age of Digital Reproduction," Ingrid Austveg Evans argues for "the value of an 'epistemic politics' for a philology (and codicology) of the future," suggesting that "historicizing our own activity as researchers should become much more prominent within archival studies."[56]

Just as is the case with on-site libraries and archives, manuscript databases, regardless of whether they are commercially run or crowd- or state-funded by the academic community, should also be regarded as sites of power. Many of these databases restrict access to their online manuscripts by requesting high fees, thus making their collections less accessible to scholars from the Global South.[57] Leaving aside the argument of the high costs and labour of maintaining these databases for a moment, one could also debate whether these

55 Even though it has by now become a historic account itself, an exception is Ignaty Kratchkovsky's *Among Arabic Manuscripts*, which can be read as a philological "thick" description of his time spent among manuscript collections in Damascus and Saint Petersburg. The detailed way in which he reflects on his positionality while working with these collections, his personal agency vis-à-vis the librarians, and his intimate relationship with the manuscripts, makes the work a study in social codicology *avant la lettre*. Ignaty Y. Kratchkovsky, *Among Arabic Manuscripts: Memories of Libraries and Men* (Leiden: Brill, 1953).

56 Evans, "Researching Mamluk Syria from a Living Room in Berlin," forthcoming.

57 See Evans, "Researching Mamluk Syria from a Living Room in Berlin," forthcoming; and Hemmungs Wirtén 2020: 366–367, and Eva Hemmungs Wirtén: "Globalization," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Book*, ed. James Raven, 348–368 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

manuscript databases should even be run for profit, as they contain collections of objects of cultural heritage, often of problematic provenance.

In addition to the power dynamics of digital research sites, another phenomenon in need of critical reflexion is what Evans calls "'underground corpora' of manuscripts" and practices of "digital file-sharing."[58] Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and messenger apps such as Whatsapp and Telegram, have become alternative, if not illicit, ways of exchanging and sharing digital written artefacts among researchers.[59] This recent phenomenon raises ethical debates on transparency, digital materiality, ownership, provenance, and terms and conditions of access and copyright, as well as the question of what it means to practice codicology as a social science in the digital age.[60]

Finally, in addition to critically reflecting on the ways we study manuscripts, preserve them (see below), access them, and interact with them, this volume is also an invitation to rethink the ways in which we teach courses on manuscripts in Muslim contexts and train the future generation of codicologists. This requires not only updating the at times outdated textbooks on codicology and incorporating new digital tools[61] and databases, but especially engaging in discussions on decolonializing the humanities and social sciences as well as on transparency, positionality, and access, and the privileges and ethical responsibilities of working with written artefacts as cultural heritage, in the classroom.

7 Manuscripts as Cultural Heritage in the Age of the Anthropocene

As a final line of inquiry, social codicology potentially contributes to discussions on heritage preservation, provenance, endangered archives, object resil-

58 Evans, "Researching Mamluk Syria from a Living Room in Berlin," forthcoming.

59 Annabel Teh Gallop refers to this practice as "Facebook philology" in an article that discusses ethical debates on digital materiality, ownership, and access. Annabel Teh Gallop, "Facebook Philology: The Contribution of Social Media to the Study of Manuscripts from Indonesia and the Malay world," Simposium Internasional Pernaskahan Nusantara XVI MANASSA, Perpustakaan Nasional RI, Jakarta 26–29 September 2016, 1–12.

60 Another problematic phenomenon in this regard is the random selection of manuscript pictures on social media platforms and websites without referring to the manuscripts they came from, their context, or copyright. For an example brought up by Annabel Teh Gallop, see Annabel Gallop, @BLMalay, Twitter/X, https://twitter.com/BLMalay/status/1693188692658000368.

61 See, for instance, the interactive online classes entitled *Mouse & Manuscript* by Dorrit van Dalen: https://mouse.digitalscholarship.nl.

ience, and safeguarding documentary and manuscript cultures under threat in the age of the Anthropocene. In times of genocide, global warming, pandemics, and the rise of institutionalized anti-Muslim aggression, it is not only the people of communities that are under threat, but also their cultural memory. This is especially the case in the context of communities in the Global South who are at greater risk of being affected by natural disasters and environmental change in the age of the Anthropocene. Through understanding the emic perspective of communities and the importance of their written cultures, as well as documenting and preserving local preservation techniques, social codicology could offer an alternative to taking endangered handwritten heritage out of its social habitat through the translocation of manuscripts or preserving these collections digitally.

Open-access digital preservation of living and historic manuscript cultures as cultural heritage may be of great value to the academic community. Through the lens of social codicology, however, it becomes apparent that these efforts are not without problems. First, as discussed by Nancy Um, these initiatives and the "digital repatriation" of manuscripts "back" to their communities may provide access to scholars and communities of the Global South. Yet at the same time, these initiatives can cause harm in those cases where their symbolic meanings change in contexts of armed conflict and civil war.[62] Second, through their digital repatriation, manuscript and documentary cultures may be preserved for the next generations as digital cultural or religious heritage. However, in their transition from material to digital artefacts, their emic meaning, together with their tangible materiality and thus a sense of community, will be lost on the screen. Or, as Nancy Um, puts it, their "meaning and significance" are transformed, rather than sustained.[63]

For instance, to take the example of the Alawi Bohra community I discuss in this volume, the sacred materiality of Alawi manuscripts and talismans is mostly derived from the fact that the Arabic text is handwritten by their Dāʿī, the head of the community's sacerdotal family. It is through his calligraphed seal that believers are blessed and the ill are healed as they dissolve and drink his book hand in water. Whereas the digital humanities offer endless possibilities of studying manuscripts and documents and analysing their digital materiality on a meta-level through databases and easy access to digital collections,

62 Nancy Um, "Yemeni Manuscripts Online: Digitization in an Age of War and Loss," *Manuscript Studies*, 5, no. 1 (2020), 8; Sabine Schmidtke, "The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition: Virtual Repatriation of Cultural Heritage," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, (2018), 128.

63 Um, "Yemeni Manuscripts Online: Digitization in an Age of War and Loss", 8.

we run the danger of losing touch with the tangible, physical materiality of texts which is so central in understanding the relationship between people and their books. The talismanic and many other textual practices among the Alawi Bohras, which are central in the day-to day-lives of the community, become meaningless and obsolete when our only tool of preservation is digitalization.

As we have seen, through the lens of social codicology it becomes apparent that people attach various forms of meaning and agency to manuscripts. As objects of heritage, manuscripts become highly politicized artefacts, especially in discussions on ownership and provenance, as the many examples of restitution claims of handwritten objects in museums currently show. Whereas these discussions either tend to focus on the legal aspects of repatriation cases or on the contested objects as the symbol of colonial reparations, they rarely address the impact of the absence of these objects in their respective communities.[64] Fortunately, debates on the ethics and provenance of manuscripts as cultural heritage are gradually gaining momentum in the field. The issue of positionality, however, remains largely absent in these discussions.[65]

Manuscripts become even more politicized artefacts in the context of their illegal displacement or symbolic destruction in conflict zones.[66] If we do not make an effort to understand why these traditions matter to the people they belong to and take their physical materiality seriously, we will be unable to protect and preserve the cultural memory of those communities in the Global South, and we run the risk of losing them for good. With their destruction, the social contexts that give manuscripts, documents, and collections life and meaning will disappear.

8 Contents of the Volume

This volume presents a collection of critical reflections on how to practice social codicology as a social science, focusing on humanizing the people who

64 I thank Wendy Shah and Anwar Haneef for insightful discussions on this topic.

65 The Ethics Working Group of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures has recently produced a set of guidelines, entitled, "Ethical and Responsible Research at CSMC." https://www.csmc.uni--hamburg.de/about/ethics.html. See also Evans, "Researching Mamluk Syria from a Living Room in Berlin," forthcoming; Um, "Yemeni Manuscripts Online: Digitization in an Age of War and Loss"; Konrad Hirschler, "Saleroom Fiction Versus Provenance. Historicizing Manuscripts via Their Marginal and Material Logic (Schøyen Fragments 1776)," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 13, (2022): 1–54.

66 Palmobo, and Kristiansen, "'It belongs in a museum" … or does it'? https://emco.hcommons.org/2021/03/19/it-belongs-in-a-museum-or-does-it/

write, use, and venerate manuscripts as part of their living, local, and day-to-day understanding of Islam in the past and present. The contributions span a broad field geographically, from the coasts of Malaysia and Malabar to the clerical headquarters in Qum and the Saharan desert of Algeria, and temporally, from Ayyubid Damascus to contemporary Gujarat. One of the outcomes of the Social Codicology workshop was that, despite the importance of materiality in our work, photographic material which illustrates the materiality of manuscripts and documents is often lacking. It is for this reason that each contribution in this volume is richly illustrated with photographs of written artefacts and, where possible, their social context.

The volume is divided into five thematic parts. The first two contributions, by Said Aljoumani and Torsten Wollina, engage with paratexts in the context of the social usages of manuscripts beyond reading. The next two chapters, written by Carl Dávila and Anouk Cohen, focus on the sensorial experience of texts beyond reading. Nur Sobers-Khan, Annabel Teh Gallop, and Paul M. Love, deconstruct the impact of colonialism on the social meaning and displacement of manuscript collections in chapters six, seven, and eight. In chapters nine, ten, and eleven, Mahmood Kooria, Zahir Bhalloo and Sayyid Sadiq Husayni Ishkawari, and Anwar Haneef engage with the world of scribes, etiquettes of copying, and ontologies of preserving. Finally, Ismail Warscheid and Olly Akkerman reflect on their positionality during ethnographic and archival research as they examine the social role of written artefacts, communities, and cultural heritage in chapters twelve and thirteen.

In the first contribution in this volume (Chapter two), Said Aljoumani focusses on the *samāʿāt* (audition certificates) notes found in manuscripts and their central role in Arabic reading culture in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. His study demonstrates that there were specific criteria and etiquette that controlled the process of transmission, which had an impact on how educational success was achieved in these circles. Aljoumani shows how scholars were able to use audition certificates in their research, and how students had the agency of ensuring that their teachers were authorized to transmit the books that they studied with them.

Chapter three, written by Torsten Wollina, documents how readers and book owners of different social strata living between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries engaged with autograph manuscripts by Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 1546). In doing so, his paper is an argument in favour of taking the "discrepancies and irritations" one encounters in manuscripts seriously. Wollina contends that they should be part of the discussion on social codicology, as they reveal people's personal and textual engagements with them, as well as specific social conditions and concerns that informed manuscript production and consumption.

Moving to the section of manuscripts and the sensorium, Carl Dávila discusses the prestigious and less prestigious social lives and afterlives of musical manuscripts in eighteenth-century Morocco. In chapter four, he focusses the various exemplars of a popular North African songbook, entitled *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik*, which historically was considered to be of high social value in the prestigious performed tradition it was part of. As such, he argues that *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* manuscripts symbolized and "transmitted" prestige, erudition, and traditionalism to their owner-users as embodied cultural capital, even in the form of "workmanlike" copies.

In chapter five, Anouk Cohen discusses the ways in which the materiality of printed Qur'ans is used to mediate and standardize the sensory experience of the Holy book. She discusses the edition of a national Moroccan Qur'an printed in 2010 and commissioned by the monarchy, known as the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*. Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork she analyzes the production of the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* through the work of calligraphers, illuminators, and designers. As a national royal Qur'an, the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*, she argues, is considered a tool to standardize ways of seeing and hearing the holy book. Her paper aims to understand the way the believers' personal relationship to the Qur'an is being "mediated" by the book and how the materiality of the object is designed to establish an exclusive connection with the divine, through and by the monarch.

In chapter six, Nur Sobers-Khan explores knowledge production and the interplay between illustrated lithographs and manuscript culture in nineteenth-century South Asia. Her contribution focusses on the genealogy of *Tilismat-i ʿAjā'ib* ("Talismans of Wonder") texts, and the link to the Persian *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* ("Wonders of Creation") manuscript tradition. Establishing a basis for the empirical study of this genre of Urdu lithographs, Sobers-Khan's article examines the social use of these texts beyond reading, such as practices of bibliomancy and divination, to create new audiences and spheres of meaning made possible when mass-produced cosmological images were able to circulate more widely. She argues that, in bringing about colonial modernity, lithograph production gave new life to forms of premodern knowledge that we would describe as "enchanted."

Chapter seven, by Annabel Teh Gallop, addresses the question of provenance, displacement, and war booty manuscripts and libraries from the Malay world. Her paper focusses on the private library of Tengku Sayid Jafar, scholar, bibliophile, and military commander of Selangor, Malaysia. This library, consisting of Arabic, Malay, and Bugis manuscripts, was looted by in 1784 by the Dutch colonial government. Based on the analysis of colophons, owners' marks, seals, and decorative details, she argues that Jafar's manuscripts constitute the

only pre-modern library known to have survived from the Malay peninsula, offering a glimpse of the books that were copied, read, shared, and valued in Selangor in the eighteenth century.

In chapter eight, Paul M. Love, Jr. continues the discussion on private manuscript libraries, focusing on rumours and collections on the island of Jerba through the lens of historical anthropology. In his photo essay, he engages with the stories of a private manuscript library belonging to the al-Baʿṭūrī family. Drawing inspiration from Luise White's work on vampire narratives in colonial East Africa, he uses the library's history to reflect on the relationship between manuscript collections, accounts of their histories, and social dynamics in Jerba.

In chapter nine, Mahmood Kooria discusses juridical discourses in Arabic and Arabic-Malayalam on the etiquette of producing, preserving, and circulating manuscripts among Shafiʿi Muslims of the Indian Ocean littoral. Based on *Ajwibat al ʿajība* by Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī (fl. 1580s), he examines how jurist-scribes on the Malabar coast exchanged ideas with the Middle East on the ideal book culture and the scribal and bibliophilic praxis of their time, including etiquette on writing, disseminating, preserving, circulating, discarding, and objectifying books.

In chapter ten, Zahir Bhalloo and Sayyid Sadiq Husayni Ishkawari focus on the codicology and social life of three Bukharan *fatwa* documents as they changed hands between scribes, litigants, muftis, and the local authorities. These changes, they argue, involved intricate practices of writing, sealing, and preservation through which new meanings were ascribed to the document as it changed its codicological form and moved spatially from a loose-leaf sheet of paper to a glued-in treasure object, cut out for display in a private collection in Qum.

Chapter eleven, written by Anwar Haneef, moves the discussion on the potential of social codicology into the direction of botany, climate resilience, and decolonializing the field of Islamicate manuscript studies. Haneef focusses on the phenomenon of the *kabīkaj* invocation as a preservation practice and deconstructs its association with magic and occult practices and Islamicate genealogy. He argues that *kabīkaj* invocations should be seen as a technology in the context of object resilience rather than a talismanic or "magical" practice. As such, Haneef argues for recognizing a multitude of worldviews on *kabīkaj*, and introduces "sociotechnical codicology" as a methodology to understand the diverse sociotechnical lives of Islamicate manuscripts beyond current paradigms of colonial modernity.

In chapter twelve, Ismail Warscheid reflects on the ethnographic and documentary fieldwork he conducted in the oases of Tuwāt in southern Algeria,

in search of unedited manuscripts preserved in private '*ulamā*' collections. He makes the interesting observation that the rise of neo-traditionalism and the new visibility of scriptural religious knowledge (*'ilm*) in contemporary North and West African societies facilitate dialogue with locals on their cultural heritage. Yet at the same time, these factors impact the study of historical change and social cleavages that the discourse of continuity with the past tends to overshadow.

My own chapter, entitled "Social Codicology in the Digital Age: Sensing Secret Bohra Manuscripts in Situ and on the Screen," engages with the question of manuscript efficacy in the context of the Alawi Bohras and their secret manuscript culture. Based on archival and ethnographic fieldwork, I document how the community experiences secret manuscripts and other forms of writing in their daily lives through their sacred materiality. Instead of reading, I argue, believers interact with Bohra manuscripts and their esoteric content in ritually performed ceremonies through the senses. I end with a discussion on digital manuscript efficacy, including how the recent COVID-19 pandemic has turned secret Bohra manuscripts into digital and immaterial sacred artefacts.

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"Mouse and Manuscript" https://mouse.digitalscholarship.nl

PART 1

Texts beyond Reading: Social Lives of Paratexts

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2

توظيف العلماء العرب والمسلمين لطباق السماع في أبحاث تاريخيَّة وحضاريَّة في العهدين الأيوبيّ والمملوكيّ

د. سعيد الجوماني / *Said Aljoumani*

1 المقدمة:[1]

تُعدُ طباق السماع، بما تحويه من بيانات علميَّة يتعذر وجودها في مصدر آخر، مكنزاً مهماً للباحثين الراغبين في كتابة أبحاث حضارية وتاريخيَّة غير نمطيَّة، ولم تخلُ دراسة علميَّة حديثة تتعلق بعلم المخطوطات العربيَّة الإسلاميَّة، إلا نوَّهت بأهميَّة المعلومات الواردة في طباق السماع، مُحددةً النقاط التي يُمكن استغلالها بها.[2]

١ أتوجه بالشكر الجزيل إلى الأستاذ الدكتور كونراد هيرشلر الذي قرأ هذا البحث وكان لملاحظاته العلميَّة كل الأثر في خروجه على هذه الصورة.

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٢ انظر على سبيل المثال: المنجد. إجازات السماع في المخطوطات القديمة. مجلة معهد المخطوطات العربية، ع١، ج2 (نوفمبر 1955). ص 240–241. المشوخي: أنماط التوثيق في المخطوط العربي: 82–83، السامرائي: علم الاكتناه: 161–165، ليدر، ستيفان. ياسين السواس، مأمون الصاغرجي: معجم السماعات الدمشقية: 11–12. خان. سماعات مؤلفات الصغاني اللغوية. مجلة معهد المخطوطات العربية، مج 41، ج1 (مايو 1997). ص 55–90. الحافظ: جامع الحنابلة المظفري: 13–15. سيف، أحمد محمد نور: عناية المحدثين بتوثيق الروايات: 32–33،

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ولكنَّ هذا الحقل البكر ما زال خارج الاستثمار والتوظيف الحقيقي. لأن الاستثمار الأمثل له لا يكون إلا بمشروع كبير تتبناه مؤسسة علميَّة تقوم بتجميع طباق السماع من المخطوطات، ثم تنشر نصوصها مقرونة بصور فوتوغرافية عنها، مع تبويب للمعلومات الواردة فيها ليسهل الاستفادة منها.[٣] إلا أن كل هذه الدعاوى بقيت حبيسة الورق، أو قاعات المؤتمرات. والتجربتان الوحيدتان اللتان غرَّدتا خارج السرب، كانتا: ما قام به ستيفان ليدر وفريقه عندما أخرجوا "معجم السماعات الدمشقيَّة" الحاوي على (1308) طبقات، من بينها (249) طبقةً مُستبعدة، غير مسجلة لأنها خارج الحدود المكانية أو الزمانية للمعجم؛ فالباقي إذاً (1059) طبقةً.[٤] وما قام به عبد الله بن محمد الكِندري، وجاسم صالح الكِندري في كتابهما "خطوط العلماء من القرن الخامس إلى العاشر هجري: نماذج وأمثلة".[٥] الذي اختارا فيه (300) نموذجاً فقط من طباق الفترة المدروسة. والشكل الورقيُّ لهاتين التجربتين أقل فائدة مما لو أُعيدَ إصدارهما بشكل قاعدة بيانات تُتاح على موقع مؤسسة علمية على الانترنت.[٦]

Stefan Leder, "Understanding a Text through its Transmission," in *Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources*, eds. Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2011), 61–62; Tilman Seidensticker, "The Chamberlain's Sessions. Audience Certificates in a Baghdad Manuscript of *al-Ḫarā'iṭī's I'tilāl al-qulūb* (Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Ms. Orient. A 627)," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 11 (2020): 54–55.

٣ ويتكام، يان ياست. العنصر البشري بين النص والقارئ، في دراسة المخطوطات الإسلامية بين اعتبارات المادة والبشر: أعمال المؤتمر الثاني لمؤسسة الفرقان للتراث الإسلامي، ديسمبر 1993/ جمادى الآخرة 1414/ إعداد رشيد العناني، لندن: مؤسسة الفرقان للتراث الإسلامي، 1997. ص 172–173. السامرائي: علم الاكتناه العربي: 169.

٤ ليدر، ستيفان. ياسين السواس، مأمون الصاغرجي. معجم السماعات الدمشقية المنتخبة من سنة 550 إلى 750 هـ/ 1155 إلى 1349م، دمشق: المعهد الفرنسي للدراسات العربية، 1996.

٥ الكندري، عبد الله بن محمد والكندري، جاسم صالح. خطوط العلماء من القرن الخامس إلى العاشر هجري: نماذج وأمثلة. بيروت: دار البشائر الإسلامية؛ البحرين: مكتبة نظام يعقوبي الخاصة، 2014.

٦ وقد قامت الباحثة شتيفاني لوشيار من جامعة برلين الحرة، بإنجاز قاعدة بيانات للإجازات الواردة في معجم السماعات الدمشقية.

وربما الأسباب وراء أنَّ دعوات المُحْدَثين لم تلقَ آذاناً صاغية هي:

- أنَّ المخطوطات العربية موزَّعَة بين مكتبات العالم ودونها خرط القتاد.
- أنَّ خطوط طباق السماع من الصعوبة بمكان، وتحتاج إلى نوعٍ خاص من التأهيل العلميّ ومن الصفات التي يجب أن يتحلى بها المتصدون لهذه المهمة. أقلها الحب لهذا المجال وأعظمها الصبر عليه.
- أنَّ المادة الأساسية لهذه الطباق هي أسماء أعلام، وهذا أمرٌ لا تخفى مزالقه، خاصة أن الاسم العربيّ في الفترة المدروسة كان يتكون من (لقب، وكنية، واسم، ونسبة).[٧] وعلى رأي أبي إسحق النَّجيرمي: "أولى الأشياء بالضبط أسماء الناس، لأنه لا يدخله القياس، ولا قبله ولا بعده شيءٌ يدل عليه".[٨]
- أنَّ الضخامة العددية لطباق السماع يحتاج إلى فِرَق عمل، ولا بدَّ من توافر خطة منهجية واحدة يسير عليها الجميع، خاصة في مرحلة بناء قاعدة البيانات.[٩]

وإن كان العلماء المُحدَثين تنبَّهوا إلى أهمية طباق السماع، ونادوا إلى الاستعانة بها في تدعيم بعض النقاط البحثية[١٠]؛ فهل كان العلماء العرب والمسلمون القدامى غافلين عن أهميَّة الطباق، أو عن تسخيرها في أبحاث تاريخيَّة وحضاريَّة؟

هذا هو السؤال المحوري لهذه الورقة، وستسعى للإجابة عنه من خلال مطالعة بعض طباق السماع، وبعض كتب التراجم، والأثبات، والرسائل التاريخيَّة. لأنَّ الطباق بحدِّ ذاتها لا تفصح إلا عن جزء بسيط من مجالات توظيفها، كتوثيق النص وتوثيق النسخة وتبيان سند الشيخ، بينما

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٧ A.F.L. Beeston, *Arabic Nomenclature. A Summary Guide for Readers* (Oxford: Printed at the University Press, 1971), 1–8.

٨ السيوطي: تدريب الراوي: ج2: 40.

٩ أطلقنا في أكتوبر 2023، الإصدار الأول من منصة طباق السماع

Aljoumani/Hirschler: Audition Certificates Platform (version 1).

https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/

١٠ أقول: "بعض النقاط البحثية"؛ لأن منصة طباق السماع ستفتح أبواباً بحثية جديدة لم تطرق من قبل. مصدرها الأصيل طباق السماع، على سبيل المثال: موضوع دور المرأة في نشر علم الحديث في القرنين السادس والسابع الهجريين في دمشق أو بغداد أو القاهرة، لا يمكن أن يكتب من دون اعتماد ما ورد في طباق السماع، والأمر نفسه يُقال عن دور العبيد.

ينعكس دورها الأكبر في الكتب والرسائل الأخرى التي استفادت من المادة العلمية المُدرجة فيها في صياغة أبحاث تاريخيَّة وحضاريَّة، وهو موضوع هذا البحث. وقبل الكلام على المصادر المستخدمة، يجب التنويه إلى أن منهجية المؤلف التي حرَّضته على استخدام طباق السماع في أبحاثه ومناقشاته هي التي تهمنا؛ وليس الفترة الزمنية التي تناولها. فقد يستخدم مؤلفٌ من القرن السابع الهجري نصَ طبقة سماع يعود إلى القرن الخامس الهجريّ في مناقشة فكرة تتعلق بالقرن الخامس، فهل يعني هذا أن أهل القرن الخامس الهجريّ هم من وظفوا طباق السماع؟ طبعاً لا؛ لذلك أدرجنا كتاب الدرر الكامنة في أعيان المائة الثامنة ضمن القرن التاسع.

كما أن تصريح المؤلف بهذا التوظيف في أحد المجالات التاريخيَّة والحضاريَّة، يُعد المعيار الأساس لاختياره في هذا البحث. لذا تمت الاستعانة بمعجم الأدباء لياقوت الحموي (ت 626هـ/1229م)، للحديث عن توظيف طباق السماع في القرن السابع الهجريّ، كما تمت الاستعانة بكتابي تاريخ الإسلام، والعبر في خبر من غبر للذهبيّ (ت 748هـ/1348م)، وكتاب الوافي بالوفيات للصفديّ (ت 764هـ/1363م)، وثبت ابن طولبغا السيفيّ (ت 749هـ/1349م). للحديث عن توظيف طباق السماع في القرن الثامن الهجريّ، وبكتاب توضيح المشتبه لابن ناصر الدمشقيّ (ت 842هـ/1438م)، وبكتابي الدرر الكامنة، ولسان الميزان لابن حجر العسقلانيّ (ت 852هـ/1449م)، للتدليل على توظيف طباق السماع في القرن التاسع الهجريّ، وببحث حارات دمشق القديمة لشمس الدين محمد بن طولون الصالحيّ (ت 953هـ/1546م). كمثال على تسخير طباق السماع في القرن العاشر الهجريّ.

وأَطَّرَت الدراسة نفسها بالعهدين الأيوبيّ والمملوكيّ. لعدم العثور—حسب المصادر المُطلَع عليها—على توظيف للعلماء العرب والمسلمين لطباق السماع في أحد المجالات التاريخيّة والحضاريّة قبل العهد الأيوبي. وهذا لا يعني أن بداية هذا التوظيف كانت في هذا العهد، بل المقصود أن التصريح بتوظيفها في هذه المجالات لم نقف على أمثلة له قبل ذلك. أمَّا استخدام طباق السماع لتوثيق النص وتوثيق النسخة المدروسة وتبيان سند الشيخ المُسمِع والشهادة للسامعين بحق روايتهم للنص؛ فيعود إلى تاريخ كتابة الطباق نفسها على المخطوطات. كما تمَّ تعيِّين العهد المملوكيّ نهاية للدراسة. لأنَّ نهايات هذا العهد شهدت تحولاً في مجال طباق السماع من حيث نقصان عددها، وميلها نحو الاختصار في الصياغة. وهذه نقطة تحتاج إلى دراسة مفصلة ليس هنا مجال معالجتها.

مجالات توظيف العلماء العرب في القرون من السابع حتى العاشر الهجريين للمعلومات الواردة في طباق السماع:

قبل الخوض في المجالات التي وظفوا فيها مادة الطباق، حريٌّ بنا إيرادُ نصٍ يُبيّن أن طباق السماع كانت مادة للبحث والتقصي عندهم، فيذكر محمد بن رافع السَّلامي، عند ترجمته لعيسى بن عبد الله بن عبد العزيز الحَجّي (ت 740هـ/1339م).[11] نقلاً عن جمال الدين أبي إسحق إبراهيم بن يونس بن موسى البعليّ (ت 741هـ/1341م).[12] أنهم أخبروه بأن عيسى بن عبد الله الحَجّي سمع صحيح البخاري على قطب العارفين محمد بن أبي البركات. فقال: أخذتُ "البخاري جميعه، وقرأت الطباق؛ فوجدتُ المجلد الأول ليس عليه طبقة بالكلية، بل على الخمسة، وجميع الطباق بخط العلامة فخر الدين التوزري، فأما المجلد الرابع والخامس فسمعهما واسمه على كل مجلد منهما، وأما المجلد الثاني والثالث فيُحتمل أنه سمعهما ويُحتمل لا، وسماعه للمجلد الثالث أظهر من سماعه للثاني، وسبب ذلك أنه مكتوب في المجلد الرابع والخامس اللّذين سمعهما محققاً على هذه الصفة وهي: وعيسى ومحمد ولدا الحَجّي. أمَّا المجلد الثالث فمكتوب عيسى ومحمد وباقي السطر لما رثَّ لُصِق عليه ورقة. فليس ببعيد أن يكون بعد قوله ومحمد، ولدا الحَجّي، وأما الثاني فمكتوب عليه ما صورته: ومحمد وعيسى أولاً وباقي السطر لكونه قد رثَّ لُصِق عليه ورقة؛ فكونه قدَّمَ اسم هذا الشيخ المُسمَع عيسى على أخيه محمد في المجلدين اللذين هما سماعه أعني الرابع والخامس دلَّ على أنَّ عيسى أسن من محمد، وقد قدَّمَ عيسى أيضاً في المجلد الثالث، إن قلنا: إنهما ولدا الحَجّي. وأما هذا المجلد الثاني فيُحتمل أن يكون محمد وعيسى المذكوران ولديّ الحَجّي وقدَّم وأخَّر. ويُحتمل أن لا يكونا، ثم لما أمعنتُ النظرَ في مطالعة هذه الطبقات غيرة مرةٍ مع رثاثتها وجدتُ لعيسى المذكور فَوْتاً في المجلد الرابع الذي قلت: إنه سمعه، وهذا الفوْتُ من سورة الأعراف إلى آخر سورة الصف، وهو آخر المجلد المذكور، وعدد أوراقه أعني أوراق الفَوْت ست وأربعون ورقةَ ونصف ورقة، وهو ميعادان من المواعيد التي قرأها التوزري على محمد الهمداني كاملان. مع أنَّ التوزري صدَّرَ الطبقة على المجلد الرابع بما صورته: سمع جميع هذه المجلدة وما قبلها من صحيح البخاري، وذكر الجماعة واحداً واحداً إلى أن قال: وعيسى ومحمد ولدا الحَجّي، ثم قال بعد ذلك: وفاتَ عيسى ولد الحَجّي من سورة الأعراف إلى آخرها. فعلى هذا—والله أعلم—يكون المذكور قد سمع جميع البخاري إلا هذا الفَوْت المُعَيّن وإلا جميع المجلد السادس، وأوَّلُه كتاب الدعوات وآخره آخر الكتاب".[13]

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١١ انظر ترجمته عند ابن حجر العسقلاني: الدرر الكامنة: ج3: 205.

١٢ انظر ترجمته عند ابن حجر العسقلاني: الدرر الكامنة: ج1: 78–79.

١٣ محمد بن رافع السلامي: الوفيات: ج1: 296–298.

في هذا النص نقطتان مهمتان:

- أن طباق السماع هي القرينة المُثلى للتثبت من صدق أو كذب من ادعى تحمّل كتاب معين عن شيخ معين.
- أن طباق السماع كانت خاضعة في كتابتها لضوابط شكلية دقيقة. فترتيب سرد الأسماء ضمنها لا يكون اعتباطياً، بل خاضعٌ لأسس معينة، ويجب الالتزام بهذا الترتيب مهما تعددت مجالس تحمُّل الكتاب الواحد. ومعيار ترتيب الجلوس في الحالة السابقة كان مبنياً على أساس العُمر، وعندما اختل هذا الترتيب ما بين (عيسى ومحمد في المجلدات من الثالث حتى الخامس) وبين (محمد وعيسى في المجلد الثاني)، دخل الشك إلى قلب المُتَتَبِع في أن يكون الأخيران ولدا المحّي.

وهذا يقود إلى البحث عن شروط ترتيب السامعين في المجالس العلميَّة، وهل يعكس ترتيب أسمائهم ضمن طباق السماع، ترتيبَ أماكن جلوسِهم في مجلس العلم؟

بادئ ذي بدء لا بدّ من إيراد الحقيقة الآتية: وهي أنَّ الشيخَ المُسمِعَ هو حجرُ الزاوية في أي مجلس علم، فالسامعون يأخذون أماكنهم—مهما تنوعت مشاربهم الثقافية والطبقية—بناءً على مكان الشيخ المُسمِع. والاعتماد في ذلك على ما ذكرته كتب آداب العالم والمتعلم. حيث يقول ابن جَمَاعة الكناني (ت 733هـ/1330م):

- "وإذا كان الشيخُ في صَدْرِ مكانٍ، فأفضل الجماعةِ أَحَقُّ بما على يمينه ويساره".[١٤] أما معيار الأفضلية، فيبينه بقوله عن الملتحق بالمجلس بعد انعقاده: " إذا سلَّمَ فلا يتخطى رقابَ الحاضرينَ إلى قُربِ الشيخِ من لم تكن منزلته كذلك، بل يجلس حيث انتهى به المجلس كما ورد في الحديث، فإن صَرَّحَ له الشيخُ والحاضرون بالتَّقدُّمِ، أو كانت منزلَتُهُ، أو كان يعلم إيثار الشيخ والجماعةِ لذلك فلا بأس. ولا يُقيم أحداً من مجلسه أو يُزاحمه قصداً، فإن آثره الغَيرُ مجلسَه لم يقبل إلا أن يكون في ذلك مصلحةٌ يعرفها القوم وينتفعون بها من بحثه مع الشيخ لقربه منه، أو لكونه كبير السِّنِ، أو كثيرَ الفضيلة والصلاح. ولا ينبغي لأحدٍ أن يُؤثِرَ بقربه من الشيخ، إلا لمن هو أَولَى بذلك، لسِّنه أو علمِهِ أو صلاحِهِ، بل يَحرِص على القُربِ من الشيخِ إذا لم يرتفع في المجلس على من هو أفضلُ منه ".[١٥] وهكذا يتضح أن معيار الأفضلية تضبطه عدة معايير منها: المكانة الاجتماعية أو السياسية للمستمع (كأن يكون سلطاناً، أو أميراً)، أو عالماً جليلاً يستفيد الحضور من مناقشاته مع الشيخ، أو

١٤ ابن جماعة: تذكرة السامع والمتكلم: 119. الغزي: الدر النضيد: 275، العلموي: المعيد: 77.

١٥ ابن جماعة: تذكرة السامع والمتكلم: 118. الغزي: الدر النضيد: 273–274، العلموي: المعيد: 76–77.

رجلاً كبير السِّنِ ثَقُلَ سمعه، أو رجلاً عُرف بصلاحه وفضيلته. على أنَّ المعيار الأول في القرب من الشيخ هو معيار العلم وقوة الحفظ. فيقول ابن السُّنِّي (ت 364هـ/975م): وليُقدِّمْ أهلُ المجلسِ أَمَامَهم من هو أعلمُهم وأحفظُهم ليسألَ عنهم، عملاً بالحديثِ الشريف "ليَلِيَني منكم أولو الأحلامِ والنُّهى، ثم الذين يَلونهم، ثم الذين يَلُونهم".[١٦]

- "وإن كان [أي الشيخ] على طرفِ صُفَّةٍ أو نحوها فالمجلون مع الحائط، ومع طرفها قُبالَتَه".[١٧] والصُّفة من البُنيان: "شِبهُ البَهْوِ الواسع، الطَّويلِ، السَّمكِ".[١٨] أي المِصطبَة المرتفعة عن الأرض بقدر ذراع. ويمكن أن تكون مُستندة إلى حائطين متجاورين، أو محصورة بين ثلاثة حيطان كالإيوان.[١٩]
- ثم يقول: "وقد جرَتْ العادةُ في مجالسِ التدريسِ بجلوسِ المُتَمَيِّزِينَ قُبَالَةَ المُدَرِّس، والمُبَجَلين من معيدٍ أو زائرٍ عن يمينه ويساره".[٢٠] وهنا يُفرِّق بين المتميزين—وأغلب الظَّنِ أنهم أصحاب الأفضلية السابق ذكرهم—ومكانهم قُبالة الشيخ، وبين المُبَجَلين وهم المُعيد، والزوَّار ومكانهم عن يمين ويسار الشيخ.
- وهناك معيار آخر لترتيب الجالسين، وهو أسبقية الوصول إلى المجلس، ولكن مع مراعاة طبقة المفضلين، وطبقة المتميزين. فإن حضر أحدهم لا بُدَّ للسابق من تقديمه. فيقول بدر الدين الغزي (ت 984هـ/1576م): اعلمْ ان التلميذَ إذا سبقَ إلى مكانٍ في مجلسٍ وأَلِفَهُ، كان أحقَ الناس به، فليس لغيره أن يزعجه عنه، ولا يَبطُل حقُّه بانقطاعه عن الدرس يوماً أو يومين مثلاً لضرورة إذا حضر، وهذا بشرط أن لا يرتفع في المجلس على من هو أفضل منه، ولا يُؤثِر بقربه منه [أي بقربه من الشيخ] إلا من هو أولَى بذلك.[٢١] وهكذا يتبين أن شرط الأسبقية لازم لمن هم في المرتبة العلميَّة أو الاجتماعيَّة ذاتها.

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١٦ ابن السني: رياضة المتعلمين: 171.

١٧ ابن جماعة: تذكرة السامع والمتكلم: 119. الغزي: الدر النضيد: 274–275.

١٨ الزبيدي: تاج العروس: ج24: 26.

١٩ الزبيدي: تاج العروس: ج34: 218.

٢٠ ابن جماعة: تذكرة السامع والمتكلم: 119. الغزي: الدر النضيد: 275، العلموي: المعيد: 77.

٢١ الغزي: الدر النضيد: 274.

- أن لا يُفَرِق حاضرُ المجلس بين أخوين، أو أبٍ وولدِه، أو بين صاحبين إلا بإذنهما.[٢٢] ولهذا نجد أن عبيد السلطان الآتون برفقته يتقدمون على الفقهاء والقضاة في سرد الأسماء في طبقة السماع.[٢٣] وكذلك أطفال عالم لم يبلغوا الخامسة من العمر يتقدمون علماء أجلاء.[٢٤]

اللوحة (2.1). الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين:

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. Quart. 125, 67v

في السطر الثاني من الطبقة الأولى، جاء ترتيب ولدَيّ الشيخ أبي عمر محمد بن أحمد بن محمد بن قدامة المقدسي، أحمد وعبد الرحمن ذي السنوات الأربع، قبل باقي الشيوخ الأجلاء الذين حضروا المجلس.

ومما سبق يمكن القول: إن مجالس العلم كانت خاضعة لنُظمٍ في ترتيب الجالسين، أحد هذه النُظم التسلسل الهرمي الطبقي للحاضرين (مكانة سياسية اجتماعية، مكانة علمية بحثية، كِبَر السِّن، الفضيلة والصلاح). ومكانهم قُبالة الشيخ، وأحدها أن يكون مُعيداً أو زائراً ومكانهم يمين ويسار الشيخ، وأحدها أسبقية الوصول إلى المجلس مع مراعاة التسلسل الهرمي، وأحدها عدم التفريق بين أخوين،

٢٢ ابن السني: رياضة المتعلمين: 207، ابن جماعة: تذكرة السامع والمتكلم: 119، الغزي: الدر النضيد: 275–276، العلموي: المعيد: 77.

٢٣ انظر طباق السماع الستة من كتاب الخطيب البغدادي، أحمد بن علي بن ثابت. الكفاية في معرفة أصول علم الرواية (ج5، ج6،ج9، ج10، ج11، ج12)، التي حضرها الملك المحسن أحمد بن الملك صلاح الدين الأيوبي مع فتيانه، على الشيخة ست الكتبة نعمة بنت علي بن يحيى بن الطراح. الخطيب البغدادي. الكفاية في معرفة أصول علم الرواية. مخطوطات مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Landberg: 351(1/r, 16/r), 353 (15/r). 356 (14/v), 355 (15/v), 354 (15/v), ويحوي الجزء السادس بعض طبقات السماع من الجزء الخامس.

٢٤ حيث تقدَّمَ ابنا شيخ الإسلام أبي عمر محمد بن أحمد بن قدامة المقدسي، أحمد وعبد الرحمن وهو في الرابعة من عمره، على باقي شيوخ وعلماء المجلس. لأن والدهما ذكر أول الأسماء وهم ملحقون به. انظر مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Stabi. Ms. Or. quart. 125: (67/v). انظر اللوحة (1).

أو أب وولده، أو صاحبين إلا بإذنهما، ويمكن إضافة النظام الذي كان مُتّبَعاً أيام يحيى بن زياد الفراء (ت 207هـ/822م). وهو الترتيب حسب النسب أي المكانة الاجتماعيَّة؛ فلما "مات الكسائي اجتمع أصحاب الفرَّاء، وسألوه الجلوس لهم وقالوا: أنت أعلمنا؛ فأبى أن يفعل؛ فألحُّوا عليه في ذلك بالمسألة فأجابهم. واحتاج أن يعرفَ أنسابَهم؛ ليرتِّب كل رجلٍ منهم على قدرِ مجلسه".[٢٥]

كما أنَّ شكل المكان المُقام فيه مجلس العلم، يلعب دوراً في ترتيب الجالسين، ما بين غرفة أو فسحة في مسجد أو بستان إلخ، يكون فيها المُعيد والزوَّار عن يمين ويسار الشيخ والفضلاء قُبالتَه، وبين الصُّفَة ويكون فيها المُعيد والزوَّار مستندين إلى الحائط، والفضلاء قُبالته. وباقي الحضور يتخذون أماكنهم فيما يليهم من فراغ.

والآن يُمكن الانتقال للإجابة عن السؤال: هل يعكس ترتيب أسماء السامعين ضمن طبقة السماع ترتيب أماكن جلوسهم في المجلس؟

يقول كونراد هيرشلر: "إن طباق السماع تشير على نحو منتظم إلى وجود علاقة وثيقة بين ترتيب الجالسين في الجلسة وموضع الأسماء في طباق السماع. فأولئك المشاركون الذين كان لهم أعلى مكانة في المجتمع العلميّ، كانوا يجلسون بالقرب من الشيخ وأسماؤهم في السطور الأولى من الطباق، ويتبعها أو يختلط معها أقارب الشيخ، وأقارب العلماء الآخرين، والنخبة السياسية والنخبة العسكرية. وعلى النقيض من ذلك، فإن غير العلماء، والتجار، والحرفيين يمكن العثور على أسمائهم في السطور الأخيرة من الطباق، مما يعكس مواقعهم في ترتيب أماكن الجلوس. إذاً يمكن القول: إن كاتب الطباق قام بتسجيل المشاركين من خلال ترتيب صفوفهم من الأمام إلى الخلف".[٢٦]

صحيح أننا نجد الأسماء الأولى هي للسلاطين أو الأمراء أو القادة العسكريين—في حال حضورهم—وللعلماء وللقضاة وللفقهاء وللمحدِّثين، ثم للتجار وأصحاب المهن. ولكننا نجد أيضاً أن العبيد فتيان السلطان يسبقون العلماء والفقهاء في الترتيب، ونجد أن أطفال عالم ما يسبقون علماء أجلاء في الترتيب. من مبدأ عدم التفرقة بين الوالد وولده، أو الصاحبِ وصاحبه.

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٢٥ القفطي: إنباه الرواة: ج1: 255.

٢٦ Konrad Hirschler, "Reading Certificates (*samāʿāt*) as a Prosopographical Source: Cultural and Social Practices of an Elite Family in Zangid and Ayyubid Damascus," in *Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources*, eds. Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2011), 80.

وإذا سلّمنا أن ترتيب سرد الأسماء في الطباق يعكس—مع مراعاة عبيد السلطان، وأطفال العلماء—التسلسل الهرمي الطبقي لحاضري المجلس، فلا يمكن معرفة إن كان كاتب المجلس بدأ بتسجيل أسماء المبجلين الجالسين على يسار الشيخ، ثم من هم قُبالته، ثم من هم على يمينه، أو العكس؟ أو أنه بدأ بالمميّزين الجالسين قُبالته؟ في الحقيقة لا يمكن التوصل إلى ذلك.

ناهيك عن أنَّ أسماء الذين فاتهم شيء من تحمُّل الكتاب، كانوا يُذكرون في السطور الأخيرة من الطباق مهما كانت مكانتهم العلمية أو الاجتماعية. تمييزاً لهم عمَّن سمع الكتاب كاملاً.[٢٧] يُضاف إلى ذلك أنَّ مُثبتي طباق السماع أو كاتبيه، كانوا يُسجّلون أسماءهم بعد ذكر جميع من حضر المجلس، رغم أنهم—في الأعم الغالب- من ثقاة العلماء وأعيان الأعلام.[٢٨]

اللوحة (2.2). أحمد بن محمد بن عبد الله الظاهري. الجزء العاشر من موافقات الأئمة الستة: مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 515, 24r في السطر السابع يظهر شطب اسم ابن اللوزي من بين السامعين، وفي السطرين 23–24 تظهر الملاحظة التي كتبها ابن اللوزي نافياً فيها أن يكون من سامعي هذا المجلس، وفي السطر 16 يظهر اسم كاتب الطباق أحمد بن النصير بن نبأ المقرئ، وهو عالمٌ جليل وأحد شيوخ الإمام الذهبي، بعد أسماء الأطفال والعبيد. كما يظهر في السطور 17–20 أن قاضياً وولده وُضعا في السطور الأخيرة بسبب فوتهما.

٢٧ انظر اللوحة (2)، السطور 17-20 حيث ذكر: "وسمع القاضي الفقيه الإمام العالم مفتي المسلمين ضياء الدين أبو الفضل جعفر بن محمد بن حجون الحسيني وولده محيي الدين أبو زكريا من أول هذا الجزء إلى إسناد متن حديثه عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: ما من أيام أحب إلى الله عز وجل أن يتعبد له فيها من أيام العشر فإن اليوم من صيامها يعدل صيام سنة. الحديث، وسمعا من إسناد متن حديثه عن سهل بن سعد أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: لا يزال الناس بخير ما عجلوا إفطارهم. إلى آخر الجزء". فمن الصعب أن يكون العالم القاضي مفتي المسلمين ابن حجون الحسيني جالساً في آخر مجلس العلم. لأن اسمه ورد في نهاية الطبقة. وفي هذا المقام يُبيّن السخاوي كيفية كتابة طبقة السماع بأن على الكاتب سرد "أسماء الجماعة المُكملين، ثم المفوتين، مبيناً لقدر فواتهم مميزًا للحاضرين من السامعين من غير إسقاط لأحد منهم لغرض فاسد". السخاوي: كتاب الغاية: 85.

٢٨ انظر اللوحة (2)، السطر 16، وفيها يظهر كاتب الطباق: أحمد بن النصير بن نبأ المقرئ (ت 695هـ/1296م). وهو من شيوخ الإمام الذهبي، وقد جاء اسمه في نهاية الطباق بعد أسماء الأطفال والعبيد.

أما جلوس طلبة العلم أمام الشيخ المُسمِع على شكل صفوف مترادفة من الأمام إلى الخلف فغير ممكن، لأنّ شكل المجلس كان: إما على شكل الصُّفة، وإما على شكل حلقة ومنها أتت (حِلَق العلم، أو حلقات العلم). ونبَّه ابن السّني (ت 364هـ/974م).على ذلك؛ فقال: إذا جلس العالم فليتحلّق الطلبة من حوله، مستنداً إلى خبر نقله عن أبي سعيد الخُدْرِي (ت 71هـ/690م).، الذي قال "جلستُ مع عصابة من ضعفاء المهاجرين، إن بعضنا ليستتر ببعض من العُري، وقارئ يقرأ علينا؛ فنحن نستمع إلى كتاب الله، إذ جاء رسول الله فجلس وسطنا ليَعدلَ نفسَه بنا، ثم أشار بيده استديروا فاستدارت الحلقة وتبرَّزَت وجوههم له".[٢٩] وفي كلتا الحالتين على الشيخ أن يستقبل القبلة في جِلسته، عملاً بالحديث الشريف " لكل شيء شرفٌ، وشرفُ المجالس ما استُقبِل بها القبلة".[٣٠]

وخلاصة القول: إنَّ مجالس العلم كانت خاضعة لضوابط مرعيَّة في ترتيب الجالسين، التُزِم بها لضمان نجاح سير العملية الدراسية وعدم المزاحمة، وقد لعب شكل المجلس ما بين حلقة أو صفَّة دوراً في ترتيب الحاضرين، وكان هناك حاضرون مميزون وآخرون مبجلون وسواهم عاديون، مع التنويه على أنَّ شكل الصفوف المترادفة لحاضري مجالس العلم لم يكن معمولاً به، وأنَّ طباق السماع لا تعكس صورة جلوس السامعين في مجالس العلم.

والآن يُمكن الانتقال إلى المجالات التي وظَّفَ فيها القدماء طباق السماع.

2 المجال الأول— كتابة السِّير والتراجم

يُلاحظ في كتب السير والتراجم أن مادة الطباق كانت أحد مصادر مؤلفي هذه الكتب، وفي بعض الحالات كانت المصدرَ الوحيدَ لترجمة الشخصِ المَعنِيّ، وقد صرَّح ياقوت الحمويّ (ت 626هـ/ 1229م). بهذه الحقيقة في ترجمته لشخصين الأول: هو "أحمد بن إبراهيم بن محمد السجزي أبو نصر، أحد الأدباء الفضلاء، قرأ على أبي بكر عبد القاهر، ثم قرأت بخط سلامة بن عياض الكفرطابي النحوي ما صورته: وجدت في آخر نسخة المقتصد، لعبد القاهر الجرجاني بالري مكتوباً ما حكايته: قرأ عليّ الأخ الفقيه أبو نصر أحمد بن إبراهيم بن محمد السجزي، أيده الله، هذا الكتاب من أوله إلى

٢٩ ابن السني: رياضة المتعلمين: 198.

٣٠ ابن السني: رياضة المتعلمين: 199.

آخره قراءة ضبط وتحصيل، وكتبه عبد القاهر بن عبد الرحمن بخطه في شهر الله المبارك من شهور سنة أربع وخمسين وأربعمائة".[٣١]

أما الثاني فهو علي بن محمد الأخفش النحوي. الذي قال عنه: "لم أجد ذكره إلا على كتاب الفصيح بخط علي بن عبد الله بن أخي الشبيه العَلَوي ما صورته: حَذِقَ عليّ هذا الكتاب وهو كتاب الفصيح أبو القاسم سليمان بن المبارك الخاصة الشرفي- أدام الله أيامه- من أوله إلى آخره قراءة فهم وتصحيح، وقرأت أنا على عليّ بن عميرة، رحمه الله، في محلة باب البصرة ببغداد عند المسجد الجامع الكبير، وقرأ هو على أبي بكر ابن مقسم النحوي عن أبي العباس ثعلب رحمه الله، وكتب علي بن محمد الأخفش النحوي سنة اثنتين وخمسين وأربعمائة عربية".[٣٢]

وهكذا يتضح أنَّ ما كتبه ياقوت الحموي في ترجمة السجزي مأخوذ من إجازة قراءة منقولة على عبد القاهر الجرجاني، أما ترجمته لعلي بن محمد الأخفش فقد ذكر صراحة أن مصدره الوحيد فيما كتبه عنه، هي إجازة قراءة منقولة كتبها الأخفش بيده سنة (452 هـ).

وفي إطار كتابة السير والتراجم، يجد المتتبع أنَّ المُترجِمين استعانوا بطباق السماع في بعض الأحيان لجلاء فكرة، أو تصحيح معلومة علقت بالمترجَم لهم ردحاً من الزمن؛ فعلى سبيل المثال: سَرَتْ بين أوساط أدباء القرن السابع الهجري معلومةٌ مفادها: أنَّ أبا إبراهيم إسحق بن إبراهيم الفارابي صاحب ديوان الأدب، ألَّفَ كتابه هذا في مدينة زبيد من أرض اليمن، وأنه توفي قريباً من سنة خمسين وأربعمئة هجرية، ولم يُقرأ كتابُه عليه. وممن تبنى هذه المعلومة وأذاعها، القاضي الأشرف يوسف بن إبراهيم بن عبد الواحد الشيباني القفطي (ت 624هـ/1227م).[٣٣] إذ كتبَ بها إلى ياقوت الحموي.[٣٤]

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٣١ ياقوت الحموي: معجم الأدباء: ج1: 187. أورد القفطي هذا النص بحرفه ما عدا أمرين، الأول: أن نسبته عنده هي الشجري، الثاني: إضافة العبارة "حامداً لربه، ومصلياً على محمد ورسوله وآله". القفطي: إنباه الرواة: ج2: 190.

٣٢ ياقوت الحموي: معجم الأدباء: ج5: 1958. ونقل هذه الترجمة بحرفيتها الصفدي.في الوافي بالوفيات: ج22: 103. لكنه أثبت (علي بن عبد الله بن أخي الشيبة العَلَوي). كما اعتمد عليها السيوطي في عبارة "وكان حياً سنة اثنتين وخمسين وأربعمائة". السيوطي: بغية الوعاة: ج2: 202.

٣٣ انظر ترجمته عند الزركلي: الأعلام: ج8: 212. وهو والد القاضي الأكرم علي بن يوسف القفطي صاحب إنباه الرواة.

٣٤ ياقوت الحموي: معجم الأدباء: ج2: 618.

وقد انبرى لدحض هذه المعلومة كلٌّ من القاضي الأكرم علي بن يوسف القفطي، وياقوت الحموي. أما القاضي الأكرم علي بن يوسف القفطي فقد اتخذ طريقاً استنتاجياً، فقال: "يقولون مات [أي الفارابي] بعد سنة أربعمائة، ويزعمون أنه دخل اليمن. وكأنهم خلطوا وظنوا أن الذي دَخلَ به من عند أبي العلاء [المعري] هو المُصَنِّف، وليس كذلك، وإنما هو المُصحِّح، ولم يُحققوا أمره لغفلتهم".[٣٥]

وأما ياقوت الحموي فقد استند إلى معلومات إجازة قراءة. فقال: "قرأت بخط الإمام أبي يوسف يعقوب بن أحمد النيسابوري اللغوي على كتاب ديوان الأدب بخطه ما صورته: سمعت هذا الكتاب من أوله إلى آخره عن الحاكم أبي سعيد عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن دوست بقراءته إياه علينا وذلك بنيسابور في شهور سنة تسع وعشرين وأربعمائة، قال: قرأت على الشيخ أبي نصر إسماعيل بن حماد الجوهري الفارابي السوى قال: قرأته على أبي إبراهيم رحمه الله [أي المُصنِّف] بفاراب، ثم على أبي السري محمد بن إبراهيم الأصبهاني ثم عرضته على القاضي أبي سعيد السيرافي ببغداد وقرأه جماعة كثيرة ورووه".[٣٦]

ثم قال: "فهذا مع وضوحه وكون هؤلاء المذكورين مشهورين معروفين، ومعرفتي بالخطوط الموجودة على النسخة كمعرفتي بما لا أشك فيه، يُبطِل ما كتب إلينا القاضي القفطي، من كون هذا الكتاب صُنِّف بزبيد، وأنه لم يُسمَع على مصنِّفه".[٣٧]

وعندما أراد مناقشة مترجمي أبي نصر إسماعيل بن حماد الجوهري الفارابي، وما قالوه عن كتابه الصحاح، بأنه لم يُبيضْه إلا إلى باب الضاد، وأنَّ الناسَ سمعته منه إلى هذا الموضع فقط. احتجَّ عليهم بما وجده على ظهر نسخة من كتاب الصحاح، أتت في مجلدة واحدة كاملة، بخط الحسن بن يعقوب بن أحمد النيسابوري اللغوي، وعليها ما صورته: "قرأ عليَّ هذا الكتاب من أوله إلى آخره، بما عليه من حواشيه من الفوائد، مُعارضاً بنسختي مُصححاً إياها، صاحبه الفقيه الفاضل السديد الحسين بن مسعود الصرام، بارك الله له فيه، وهو إجازة لي عن الأستاذ أبي منصور عبد الرحيم بن محمد البيشكي عن المصنف، وكتبه الحسن بن يعقوب بن أحمد في شهر الله الأصم سنة إحدى وسبعين وأربعمائة. فهذا كما تراه مُخالفٌ لما تقدم من أن الجوهري لم يعمل من الكتاب إلا إلى باب الضاد".[٣٨]

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٣٥ القفطي: إنباه الرواة: ج1: 88.

٣٦ ياقوت الحموي: معجم الأدباء: ج2: 620.

٣٧ ياقوت الحموي: معجم الأدباء: ج2: 619.

٣٨ ياقوت الحموي: معجم الأدباء: ج2: 660–661.

ومن النصوص السابقة يتضح أن مستند ياقوت الحموي في مناقشاته وردوده على العلماء والمؤلفين كان مما تضمنته طباق السماع، من معلومات عن اسم الشيخ المقرئ، ومكان المجلس، والمادة المقروءة من النص.

وعندما أراد أبو شامة التدليلَ على المكانة العلمية التي حازها تاج الدين أبو اليُمن زيد بن الحسن الكنديّ (ت 613هـ/1216م). وكيف ازدحم على بابه طلبة العلم وشيوخه، وأولاد الملوك. قال: "ومتى أريدَ اعتبارُ ذلك فلينُظر في الكتب التي عليها طبقات السماع عليه، ليُعلَم جلالة من كان يتردد عليه".[٣٩]

ومن نافلة القول إنَّ طباق السماع تُعَدُّ شهادات موثَّقةً للأطراف التي سمعت الكتاب بحقها في روايته، فمن الطبيعي إذاً أن تُبرَزَ هذه الشهادة، أو تُفحَص عند ادعاء أحدهم أنه تحمَّل الكتاب عن شيخ مُعيَّن. بل هي من أوثق الأدلة على صدق الرجل أو كذبه. فعندما ترجم ابن النجار لعبد الرحيم ابن الحافظ أبي سعد بن السمعاني (ت 617هـ/1220م). قال عنه: سماعاته بخط المعروفين صحيحة، أما ما كان بخطه فلا يُعتمد عليه، وأنه كان يدَّعي سماع أشياء لم توجد.[٤٠] فانبرى للدفاع عنه ابن حجر العسقلاني، ومن جملة دفاعه: "وأما كونه ادَّعى سماع أشياء لم توجد، فهذا إنما يتم به القدح فيه لو وُجد الأصل الذي ادَّعى أنه سمع فيه، ولم يوجد اسمُه فيه".[٤١]

ولهذا السبب كان تزوير طباق السماع سواء بوَضعِها وتلفيقها، أو بإلحاق اسم فيها، عملاً كفيلاً بتجريح فاعله، وترك روايته واتهامه بالكذب والتزوير. فيُحكى عن محمد بن أحمد بن إبراهيم بن المُجير الكُتُبي (ت 680هـ/1281م). أنَّه مُتَّهمٌ بكتابة الطباق، قليلُ الدين. قال عنه "الحافظ أبو محمد مسعود الحارثي: كان مزوِّراً كذَّاباً، وقال القُطب: كان مسعودٌ لا يَسمع على أحدٍ ممن اسمه في الطباق بخط ابن المُجير".[٤٢]

٣٩ أبو شامة: تراجم القرنين السادس والسابع: 95.

٤٠ نقلاً عن ابن حجر العسقلاني: لسان الميزان: ج5: 161.

٤١ ابن حجر العسقلاني: لسان الميزان: ج5: 161.

٤٢ ابن حجر العسقلاني: لسان الميزان: ج6: 502.

وكذلك هو الحال بالنسبة إلى نصر بن علي بن منصور، أبو الفتوح ابن الخازن الحِلّي النحوي (ت 600 هـ/ 1203م). فبعد أن سمع ضياء الدين محمد بن عبد الواحد المقدسي بقراءته ثلاثة أجزاء، عادَ ورجع عن سماعها والسبب: "أنه مُتَّهمٌ، يكتب الطباق على ما لم يسمعه".[٤٣]

ولذات السبب فقدَ عبيدُ الله بن علي بن نصر ابن المارستانية (ت 599هـ/1202م). ثقة العلماء ورواة الحديث به. فذُكِرَ عنه أنه استعار مرةً نسخة من كتاب المغازي للواقدي، فردَّها وقد طبَّقَ عليها السّماع على كل جزء وهو لم يسمعها، كذلك سمَّعَ لنفسه في جزء يرويه أبو الفضل الأرموي وهو لم يلقَهُ، لذلك كان يُنهى أن يُسمعَ على أحدٍ بنقله أو بخطه.[٤٤]

والأمثلة عن المُجرَّحين ومسلوبي الثقة لتزويرهم طباق السماع كثيرة جداً، والاكتفاء بهذه الأمثلة دالٌ، ولا داعي للإطالة. فرشفةٌ من ماء البحر تخبر عن طعمه.

ومن الطريف في هذه الجزئية إيراد نموذج مغايرٍ تماماً، وهو ما فعله أبو إسحق إبراهيم بن عبد العزيز بن يحيى اللّوزي (ت687هـ/1288م).[٤٥] الذي شَطَبَ اسمه من مجلس قراءة ذُكِرَ فيه سهواً، فنأى بنفسه عن شبهة التزوير والتدليس. فقد قُرِئَ الجزءُ العاشر من موافقات الأئمة الستة المُخرَّجة من مسموعات الشيخ عبد اللطيف بن عبد المنعم الحرَّاني، في ثلاث طباق مختلفة، الأولى قُرئ فيها الكتاب جميعه، والثانية قُرئ فيها الكتاب خلا الكلام على الأحاديث، والثالثة قُرِئت فيها الأحاديث المُلحقة بالجزء والمُعَلّم عليها بالحمرة فقط. وكان كاتب الطباق الثلاث أحمد بن النصير بن نبأ المقرئ (ت 695هـ/1296م).[٤٦] وكان ابن اللوزي حاضراً في الطبقتين الأولى والثالثة فقط، فَسَهَا كاتب الطباق ووضع اسمه بين سامعي الطبقة الثانية أيضاً، فما كان من ابن اللوزي، إلا أن كتب تحت ذلك الطباق: "لم أسمع بهذه القراءة ولا حضرت هذا المجلس. وكتبه إبراهيم بن عبد العزيز بن اللوزي، عفا الله عنه،

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٤٣ ابن حجر العسقلاني: لسان الميزان: ج8: 265.

٤٤ الذهبي: تاريخ الإسلام: ج42: 394، ابن حجر العسقلاني: لسان الميزان: ج85: 335–337، ابن ناصر الدين: توضيح المشتبه: ج3: 310. ابن الديبثي: ذيل تاريخ مدينة السلام: ج3: 556–557، وأما رد أبي شامة على كلام ابن الديبثي في حق ابن المارستانية فضعيف، لأن اتهام ابن الديبثي للرجل مبني على تزويره لطباق السماع. وأما أبو شامة فلم يذكر قصة تزوير الطباق، بل توقف عند تعيير ابن الديبثي بأن والده عاميّ. انظر أبي شامة: تراجم القرنين السادس والسابع: 34.

٤٥ انظر ترجمته عند الذهبي: العبر: ج3: 364، الزركلي: الأعلام: ج1: 47.

٤٦ انظر ترجمته عند الذهبي: معجم الشيوخ الكبير: ج1: 106. وقد ورد اسمه هناك خطأ أحمد بن نضر بن بناء.

بل سمعت بالقراءات المثبتة في الطبقة التي قبل هذه والتي بعدها، وهي قراءة المولى عز الدين أبي القاسم المذكور فيهما والحمد لله على ذلك كثيراً، وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وسلم تسليماً".[٤٧]

3 المجال الثاني—صناعة الأثبات

الثَّبَت، أو الفِهْرِسَة، أو المشيخة، أو البرنامج، أو معجم الشيوخ، هي تسميات لنوع واحد من الإنتاج الفكري في الحضارة العربية الإسلامية. اختص بحصر شيوخ العالِم وترجمتهم، وسرد الكتب التي رواها عنهم. والفيصل بين هذه المصطلحات أمران: الأول هو طريقة ترتيب المادة العلمية فيها، والثاني هو انتماء المؤلف إلى مشرق العالم الإسلامي أو مغربه. فإذا عُنِيَ المؤلِف بترتيب أسماء شيوخه على حروف المعجم سمَّى المشارقة عمله "معجم الشيوخ"، أما إذا ذكرهم حسب وفياتهم أو تاريخ سماعه منهم، أو على البُلدان التي سمعَ منهم فيها عندئذ يطلقون على عمله "المشيخة". في حين يطلق المغاربة على معجم الشيوخ، والمشيخة اسم "البرنامج". أما إذا عُني بذكر المرويات—الكتب—سمَّى المشارقة عمله "الثَّبَت" ، وأما المغاربة فيطلقون عليه "الفِهْرِسَة"، وقد استعمل بعض أهل الأندلس البرنامج بمعنى الفِهْرِسَة.[٤٨]

ولهذا النوع من الإنتاج الفكري أهميته البالغة، فهي من المصادر التي لا غنى عنها لمن يروم دراسة الحركة الثقافية والعلمية في إنحاء العالم الإسلامي، فالذين دوّنوها تحدثوا فيها عن شيوخهم المباشرين أو شيوخ شيوخهم، وحددوا الموضوعات والكتب المتداولة في عصرهم، والتي كان الطلبة حريصون على تلقيها، وسجلوا أسانيدهم إلى مؤلفي هذه الكتب، ومنهم من كان يضبط تاريخ الأخذ عن كل شيخ، ومكان المجلس، ويصف أسلوب التدريس وجوّه[٤٩]، وهناك معلومات ببليوغرافية مُقدَّمَة

٤٧ أحمد بن محمد بن عبد الله الظاهري. الجزء العاشر من موافقات الأئمة الستة: مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 515, 24r انظر اللوحة (2).

٤٨ ابن خير الإشبيلي: فهرسة ابن خير: 10–11.

٤٩ ابن عطية: فهرس ابن عطية: 41.

عن الكتب المدروسة، كاسم المؤلف، وعنوان الكتاب، وبالتالي صحة نسبة الكتاب إلى مؤلفه، وبعضها حدّد النسخة التي درسها وبيّن قيمتها.[٥٠]

ومن البداهة أنَّ الأثبات تكتب بعد قطع العالِم شوطاً معيناً في طلب العلم، والارتحال في سبيله، وقد يطول هذا الشوط سنوات عدة. فكيف كان العالِم يستذكر معلوماته؟

لقد كانت طباق السماع أحد مصادر المُحدِّث في كتابة ثَبَتَه عن شيوخه، بدليل ما قام به ناصر الدين محمد بن طولبُغا السَّيفي (ت 749هـ/1349م).[٥١] الذي كتب ثَبَته بعد (18—محرم—740هـ/1339م).[٥٢] ومع ذلك استطاع أن يُحدد بشكل دقيق تاريخ تحمّله (حديث أبي الحسن محمد بن طلحة النّعالي). الذي أخذه عن الشيخة زينب بنت الكمال المقدسية[٥٣]، قبل سنتين وثلاثة شهور من تاريخ كتابة الثَّبَت. ومع هذا استطاع ذكر تاريخ تحمُّله لهذا الجزء باليوم والشهر والسنة، مع تحديد اسم قارئ المجلس ومكان المجلس. فقد جاء في ثَبَته: "وعليها أيضاً [أي على زينب بنت الكمال أحمد بن عبد الرحيم المقدسية]. جزءاً فيه، حديث أبي الحسن محمد بن طلحة النعالي عن شيوخه بحق إجازتها من [ا]بن الخيّر بسماعه من خديجة بنت أحمد بن الحسن النهرواني، بسماعها من الحسين ابن أحمد بن محمد بن طلحة عن جده. وصح سماعهما. بقراءة شرف الدين عبد الله بن الواني، في يوم الأحد تاسع شهر شوال سنة سبع وثلاثين بمنزلها بدير الحنابلة بسفح جبل قاسيون بدمشق".[٥٤]

اللوحة (2.3). ابن طولبغا السيفي. ثبت فيه من الشيوخ ثمانية وأربعين شيخاً وخمسة نسوة. مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: 3827 [299/أ]. الإجازة الأخيرة فيها تحمّل محمد بن طولبُغا

٥٠ انظر منهج ابن طولبغا في ثبته، ابن طولبغا السيفي: ثبت فيه من الشيوخ: مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: رقم 3827.

٥١ انظر ترجمته عند الذهبي: العبر: ج4: 153. ابن حجر العسقلاني: الدرر الكامنة: ج3: 461. الصفدي: الوافي بالوفيات: ج3: 146.

٥٢ ابن طولبغا السيفي: ثبت فيه من الشيوخ: مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: رقم 3827: الورقة [307/أ].

٥٣ (ت 740هـ/1339م). انظر ترجمتها عند الذهبي: العبر: ج4: 117، ابن حجر العسقلاني: الدرر الكامنة: ج2: 117–118.

٥٤ ابن طولبغا السيفي: ثبت فيه من الشيوخ: مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: رقم 3827: الورقة [299/أ]. انظر اللوحة (3).

لجزء محمد بن طلحة النعالي عن الشيخة زينب بنت الكمال، مع تحديد اسم القارئ، وتاريخ المجلس باليوم والشهر والسنة، ومكان المجلس.

ولكن الدهشة من قدرة ذاكرته على الاستحضار تنجلي بمطالعة جزء ابن طلحة النعالي، الذي جاءت عليه إجازة قراءة بخط محمد بن طولبُغا السيفي، هذا نصها "سمع جميع هذا الجزء على الشيخة الصالحة العابدة الزاهدة المُسنِدَة المُعَمِّرَة الرحلة، أم عبد الله زينب بنت الكمال أحمد بن عبد الرحيم بن عبد الواحد المقدسية بحق إجازتها من إبراهيم [ا]بن الخيِّر بسنده باطنها، بقراءة الشيخ شرف الدين أبي محمد عبد الله بن الشيخ أمين الدين محمد بن الشيخ برهان الدين إبراهيم الواني. الجماعة: الشيخ برهان الدين أبو إسحق إبراهيم بن محمد بن إبراهيم القيسي السفاقسي، وأخوه لأبويه الشيخ شمس الدين أبو عبد الله محمد، والمحدث نجم الدين أبو الخير سعيد بن عبد الله الدهلي البغدادي، وعماد الدين أبو إسحق إبراهيم بن أبي بكر بن يعقوب ابن الملك العادل، وولده أحمد، وعلي بن الشيخ عبد الله بوَّاب المدرسة القيمرية، وصالحة بنت الشيخ شمس الدين محمد بن أبي بكر بن محمد بن طرخان، وصالحة بنت أبي بكر بن إبراهيم الناصح، ودنيا بنت سيف الدين خاص ترك الإبراهيمي، وخديجة بنت الشيخ عز الدين أحمد بن عبد الله بن شيخ الإسلام شمس الدين عبد الرحمن بن الشيخ أبي عمر، وحبيبة بنت مجد الدين يوسف بن أحمد الأنصاري، وخديجة بنت محمد بن علي، وفاطمة بنت إبراهيم بن محمد بن الشيخ العز إبراهيم، وفاطمة وزينب بنتا الشيخ إبراهيم بن عبد العزيز بن علي الموصلي الخباز، وسمع أخوهما أحمد من موضع اسمه، وملا محمد بن طولبُغا السيفي والخط له وصح ذلك في يوم الأحد التاسع من شهر شوال من سنة سبع وثلاثين وسبعمائة بمنزل المُسمِعة بدير المقادسة في جبل قاسيون ظاهر دمشق المحروسة والحمد لله رب العالمين وصلى الله على محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم. وسمع معهم خديجة بنت شمس الدين محمد بن أحمد العز عمر الحنفية. محمد بن طولبُغا".[٥٥]

اللوحة (2.4). النعالي، محمد بن طلحة. فوائد أبي الحسن محمد بن طلحة النعالي. مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: 3758: [135/ب]. طبقة سماع بخط محمد بن طولبُغا على الشيخة زينب بنت الكمال، لاحظ تطابق المعلومات مع ما ورد في ثبته عن هذا الجزء.

٥٥ النعالي، محمد بن طلحة: فوائد أبي الحسن محمد بن طلحة: مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: رقم 3758: الورقة [135/ب]. انظر اللوحة (4).

وهكذا يتضح أن ابن طولبغا السيفي عاد إلى طباق سماعه من الشيخة زينب بنت الكمال المقدسية، واستعان بها في كتابة ثبته.

4 المجال الثالث—إعادة بناء خِطط المدن[٥٦]

حظيت بعض المدن الإسلامية باهتمام وعناية المؤرخين من أبنائها، فوضعوا مصنفات تصف خِطط المدينة من حيث منشآتها الدينية والعلمية والاجتماعية، كالجوامع والمدارس ودو الحديث والرُّبط والحمامات والأسواق والتُّرَب والحارات والقلاع. وإنَّ تتالي مثل هذه المصنفات عبر القرون يرصدُ عمران المدينة في حقبة ما، كما يفسح المجال لمقارنتها بين عهدين، ورسم مسار تطورها أو تقهقرها عمرانياً وحضارياً. وكان نصيبُ دمشقَ من هذه العناية كبيراً. وأول من صنَّف في الكلام على مدارس دمشق ومساجدها وحماماتها وزياراتها—فيما نعلم—هو عز الدين ابن شداد في كتابه الأعلاق الخطيرة.[٥٧] ثم وضع الحسن بن أحمد بن زفر الإربلي (ت 726هـ/1326م). جزءاً يشتمل على محاسن دمشق ذاكر فيه عدد مدارسها، ورُبطها، ودور الحديث بها، وعدد جوامعها ودور القرآن فيها، وعدد حماماتها. ثم تلاه أحمد بن حجي بن موسى الحسباني (ت 816هـ/1413م)، في كتابه الدارس من أخبار المدارس، ذكر فيه ترجمة الواقف وشروطه، كما وضع يوسف بن حسن بن عبد الهادي (ت 909هـ/1503م). عدة رسائل مهمة في هذا الباب هي: ثمار المقاصد في ذكر المساجد، الإعانات على معرفة الحانات، عدة الملمات في تعداد الحمامات، نزهة الرفاق في شرح حال الأسواق، غدق الأفكار في ذكر الأنهار. كما وضع عبد القادر بن محمد النعيمي (ت 927هـ/1521م). كتاباً سماه تنبيه الطالب وإرشاد الدارس، ثم جاء ابن محمد بن علي بن طولون الصالحي (ت 953هـ/1546م). فوضع جزءاً في دور الحديث بدمشق،

٥٦ الخِطَّة وجمعها خِطَطُ، هي الأرض، يُعَلَّم المرء عليها علامة بالخط ليُعلم أنه احتازها ليبنيها داراً، ومنه خطط البصرة وخِطط الكوفة، ولهذا سمى المقريزي كتابه الخِطط. الزبيدي: تاج العروس: ج19: 250-251. أي أن خطط المدن هي مبانيها وعمائرها وشوارعها وأسواقها.

٥٧ الإربلي، الحسن بن أحمد بن زفر. مدارس دمشق وحماماتها؛ تحقيق محمد أحمد دهمان. مجلة المجمع العلمي العربي. ع 5-6 (مايو 1947). ص 235.

والشمعة المضيئة في أخبار القلعة الدمشقية، وملخص تنبيه الطالب وإرشاد الدارس لأحوال مواضع الفائدة كدور القرآن والحديث والمدارس.[٥٨]

وفي كتابه التمتع بالأقران بين تراجم الشيوخ والإخوان، يُورِد شمس الدين محمد بن علي بن طولون الصالحيّ، مذاكرةً جرت بينه وبين إبراهيم بن إسماعيل بن يوسف العكَّاري الصالحيّ (المولود سنة 870هـ/1465م). عن حارات دمشق القديمة. فسجَّل ابن طولون أسماء إحدى وسبعين حارةً كانت حصيلة مذاكرته مع زميله، ثم أضاف أسماء أربع حارات عثر عليها نتيجة فحصه لبعض طباق السماع؛ فقال: "ثم رأيت على جزء أبي عبد الله الغضائري طبقةً كُتبت في حارة البلاطة بدمشق في مسجد بدر الدين، ثم رأيت على جزء ابن حرب [طبقة][٥٩] كُتبت في درب الدعوة داخل باب الصغير بدمشق، وكذا أخرى في درب العجم بها، وأخرى في سوق الخشابين بها".[٦٠]

ومن الجدير بالذكر أنَّ حارة البلاطة كانت قائمة في دمشق سنة (677هـ/1278م)، وكان فيها منزل الشيخ ناصر الدين محمد بن عربشاه بن أبي بكر الهمذاني[٦١]، فهناك مجلس إقراء عليه في منزله هذا بحارة البلاطة.[٦٢] ولكن هذه الحارة لم تعد قائمة في زمن ابن طولون (ت 953هـ/1546م). الذي استدل عليها بوساطة طباق السماع، وبالتالي يُمكن تتبع تغير وجه المدينة ومُسميات الأحياء والدروب من خلال أماكن مجالس العلم في طباق السماع، كما فعل ابن طولون.

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٥٨ حول هذه المؤلفات وما نشر منها راجع المنجد: معجم المؤرخين الدمشقيين: 132، 229، 272، 291، 292، 294.

٥٩ أضفتها ليستقيم المعنى.

٦٠ الزيَّات، حبيب. حارات دمشق القديمة لشمس الدين بن طولون الدمشقي الصالحي (880–953هـ/1475–1546م). مجلة المشرق، ع1 (يناير 1937). ص 35.

٦١ المتوفى سنة (677هـ/1278م). انظر ترجمته عند الذهبي: تاريخ الإسلام: ج50: 289.

٦٢ شتيفان ليدر: معجم السماعات الدمشقية: 59.

5 المجال الرابع—اكتشاف مُحدِّثين جُدد

يُعد هذا المجال واحداً من أطرف المجالات التي وظَّفَ فيها العلماء القدامى طباق السماع في حياتهم العلمية وحتى الاجتماعية، كما سيتضح من خلال حادثتين جرتا في القرن الثامن الهجري، الأولى في دمشق والثانية في القاهرة.

ولتكن البداية من دمشق، ففي النصف الثاني من القرن السادس الهجري سكن جبلَ قاسيون جماعةٌ من المقادسة، وأنشأوا فيه أول مدرسة وهي المدرسة العمرية الشيخية[٦٣] (557هـ/1162م). ولاحقاً المدرسة الضيائية[٦٤](603هـ/1206م). فغدتا منارتا علم، وكان لهؤلاء المقادسة -وهم على المذهب الحنبلي- دورٌ كبيرٌ في إحياء رواية الحديث، إذ شجعوا الخاصَ والعامَ على ارتياد مجالس العلم، إضافة إلى ذلك كانوا حريصين على نسخ كتب الحديث واقتنائها ووقفها؛ فشهدت المدينة على أيديهم نشاطاً علمياً ملحوظاً[٦٥]، وأضحى الجبل موئلاً وقبلة لطلبة هذا العلم.

ولهذا السبب تنبَّهَ الشيخ أحمد بن الحلبية المقرئ[٦٦] سنة (706هـ/1306م). فقال لأصحابه: في الجبل شيخٌ حجَّارٌ مُعمِّر، سلوه هل سمعَ شيئاً من الشيوخ؟ فذهبوا إليه وسألوه: هل سمعتَ شيئاً؟ فقال: كان شيءٌ وراح. فسألوه عن اسمه فأجابهم: أحمد بن أبي طالب بن نعمة، ابن الشِّحنة. ففتَّشوا الطباق عن اسمه، فتحققوا أنه سمعَ أجزاءً على ابن اللتي[٦٧]، ثم ظهرَ اسمه على أوراق الأسماء لسامعي صحيح البخاري. فقُصِدَ بالسَّماع، وغدا رِحلةَ الآفاق.

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٦٣ النعيمي: الدارس: ج1: 77–87.

٦٤ النعيمي: الدارس: ج1: 71–76. وانظر الحافظ. دار الحديث الضيائية ومكتبتها بصالحية دمشق، ومعه تحقيق رسالتي النصيحة وأحاديث مسلسلة. دمشق: دار البيروني، 2006. هيرشلر، كونراد وسعيد الجوماني: تأريخ مكتبة المدرسة الضيائية بدمشق من واقع مخطوطاتها، في، علماء مكرمون، نزار أباظة بحوث مقالات مهداة إليه، دمشق، دار الفكر، 2023، الصفحات 268–329.

٦٥ شتيفان ليدر: معجم السماعات: 12.

٦٦ لم أقف على ترجمته.

٦٧ ابن اللتي، عبد الله بن عمر بن علي بن عمر بن يزيد (ت 635هـ/ 1238م). انظر ترجمته عند الذهبي: تاريخ الإسلام: ج46: 240.

وكان شيخاً كامل البنية، له همةٌ وجلادةٌ وصبرٌ على النعاسِ. وربما جلسَ للتسميعِ من بكرة النهارِ إلى المغربِ. وقد حدَّثَ بمصرَ مرتين بالصحيح، وبحماة وحمص وبعلبك، وكان يُعطَى على تسميع الصحيح من خمسين إلى مئة درهمٍ. وجمعَ في سَفراته ذهباً كثيراً، وخِلَعَ، وقُرِّرَ له جامكية. رغم أنه كان أمياً لا يقرأ ولا يكتب إلا اليسير من القرآن. توفي سنة (730هـ/1329م).[٦٨]

أمّا ما جرى في القاهرة، فيقول ابن رافع السَّلامي: إن والده في سنة (690هـ/1291م). عثَرَ في طباق السماع على اسم الحسن بن عمر بن عيسى بن خليل الكردي، بين السامعين على الشيخ ابن اللتي، وعلى مكّرم بن أبي الصقر، وعلى أبي الحسن السخاوي، وعلى الحسن بن سالم بن سلام. فسأل عنه بعض الطلبة، فقيل له: أنه مؤذن بالمعزيَّة بمصر، فطلبوه منها فقيل: رحل إلى الجيزة، فسألوا عنه هناك فقيل: سافر.

والحسن بن عمر بن عيسى بن خليل الكردي (630–720هـ/1233–1320م). هو ابن قيِّم وفرَّاش تربة أم الصالح بدمشق، أسمعه والده حضوراً في الرابعة على ابن اللتي. وتنقلت به الأحوال إلى أن انتقل إلى الجيزة، وكان يعمل مؤذناً بمسجدٍ، ويبيع الورق للشّهود على باب الجامع. وبقي خامل الذّكر غالب عمره.

إلى أن التقى به والد محمد بن رافع السّلامي سنة (712هـ/1312م). وقرأ عليه شيئاً، ثمَّ دلَّ عليه المُحَدِّثين فتكاثروا عليه.[٦٩] وبعد أن كان رأسُ مالهِ نحواً من درهمين، وصلوه بدراهم، منها في مرة مئة درهم، وأكثروا النقلَ عنه.[٧٠]

وهنا لا بدَّ من التنويه إلى أنَّ دافعَ القوم إلى التفتيش عن السامعين القدامى هو قربُ السند، وإن كان السامع أمياً أو غير حافظ للكتاب، فقد أجاز السَّلف رواية الكتاب الصحيح وإن لم يحفظ الراوي ما فيه، بشرط أن يكون سماعُ الراوي ثابتاً فيه، وكتابُه متقناً.[٧١]

كما يتضح أنّ طباق السماع كانت سبباً رئيساً في نقل أناس من الحضيض إلى مرتبة الشيوخ المُبجلين، وفي تبديل حياتهم من أشخاص مُهمَلِي الذّكر إلى شيوخٍ تصطف الطلاب عند عتبة مجالسهم،

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٦٨ الذهبي: معجم الشيوخ الكبير: 118–119.

٦٩ ابن رافع السلامي: معجم الشيوخ نقلا عن ابن حجر العسقلاني: الدرر الكامنة: ج2: 31–32.

٧٠ الذهبي: العبر: ج4: 58، الصفدي: الوافي بالوفيات: ج12: 122.

٧١ الخطيب البغدادي: الكفاية في معرفة أصول علم الرواية: ج2: 87، 95.

ويُرحَل لتلقي العلم عنهم لقرب سندهم. ومن فقراء مُعدَمي الحال إلى ذوي مال وصلات وجامكية. فتغيَّرت بذلك مكانتهم الاجتماعية في محيطهم وارتقت.

6 المجال الخامس—المنهج العمليّ في تتبع سند الشيوخ، من خلال العلامات الحمراء في طباق السماع

إن مسلك الشيخ جمال الدين رافع بن هجرس بن محمد بن شافع السّلامي (ت 718هـ/1318م)، في التنقيب عن سند الشيخ الحسن بن عمر بن عيسى بن خليل الكردي، يأخذ باليد للبحث عن كيفية ومنهج السلف في التفتيش عن سند شيوخهم.

في الحقيقة، تُعدُّ الآليات التي اعتمدوها في ضبطهم وتوثيقهم لسند شيخهم من الأمور التي لم يلتفت إليها الدارسون. وهنا تظهر أهمية فهم المصطلحات التي ترد في طباق السماع وتفسيرها، مثل: (السماع حضوراً، والسماع نقلاً، والسماع أصلاً، والسماع أصلاً ونقلاً، وإن لم يكن سماعاً)[٧٢]، كما تظهر أهمية التمييز بين طبقة السماع المنقولة وطبقة السماع الأصليَّة[٧٣]؛ فلكل منهما دوره. وهذا التمييز بين الطبقتين، وذاك الفهم للمصطلحات يُعد مفاتيح الولوج إلى مملكة طباق السماع.

وفيما يخص سند الشيخ المسمع، يتبادر إلى الذهن السؤال الآتي: كيف كانت تتم عملية التأكد من أصل سماع الشيخ، والبحث عنه؟

يُلاحظ الدارسُ لطباقِ السماع أن هناك بعض الأسماء—دون سواها—عُلِّم عليها بخط أحمر. وبتتبعها تبيَّن أن هذه الأسماء بالتحديد تصدَّرت لاحقاً تدريس الكتّاب نفسه. فعلى سبيل المثال جاء على الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان:

"سمع جميع هذا الجزء وهو الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد على الشيخ الإمام العالم موفق الدين أبي محمد عبد الله بن أحمد بن محمد بن قدامة المقدسي بسماعه فيه عن محمد بن عبد الباقي

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٧٢ الجوماني. دلالات المصطلحات الواردة في مجالس السماع والقراءة في المخطوطات العربية. *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 11 (2020): 106–132.

٧٣ الجوماني. صور الإجازات المنقولة في المخطوطات العربية: السبب والوظيفة. *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 9 (2018): 72–100.

بقراءة الفقيه أبي سليمان عبد الرحمن بن الحافظ عبد الغني بن عبد الواحد، ابنه سليمان، وابن أخيه عبد الغني بن العز محمد بن الحافظ، وأحمد ومحمد وعبد الرحمن بنو المجد عيسى بن الشيخ موفق الدين، ومحمد وأحمد ابنا الشرف أحمد بن عبيد الله بن أحمد، ومحمد وعبد الله حضر ابنا أحمد بن أبي بكر بن إبراهيم، ومحمد بن عبد الرحيم بن عبد الواحد، وعمه محمد بن عبد الواحد، وسعد وأحمد ابنا منصور بن سعد، والفقيه عبد الحميد بن محمد، وبنوه عبد الرحيم وعبد الحافظ وعبد الخالق وعبد الساتر وعبد القادر ويحيى وعيسى وأبو بكر، وعلي بن عبد العزيز، وابن أخته محمد بن عبد الحميد، وعلي بن محمد بن عبد الملك، ومحمد وعبد الله وإبراهيم وعلي حضر، بنو الرضي عبد الرحمن، وعيسى وعبد الرحيم وعبد الله بنو عمر بن عوض، وإبراهيم بن الشرف عبد الله بن الشيخ أبي عمر محمد، ومحمد بن أحمد بن كامل، محمد بن نصر بن أبي الحسن المزين، وعبد العزيز بن العفيف عبد الرحمن بن أبي الفتح، والفقيه عثمان بن حامد بن حسن، وعبد الرحمن بن غازي بن عمر المقدسيون، وحسين بن عبد الله الآمدي المؤدب، وعمر بن محمد بن هارون الضرير، وعبد القوي بن بدران بن الناصح ؟، وفارس بن منصور بن عبدان الخياط، وإسماعيل بن المحب الحراني، وأبو محمد بن الفقيه أبي محمد الخيمي، وإسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو الفراء، وعبد الله بن أبي بكر الخباز، وعثمان بن أبي الفضل بن حسان النجار، وإبراهيم بن علي بن أحمد الواسطي، ويوسف ويحيى وإبراهيم بنو عيسى بن مسلم، وأحمد بن أبي محمد العطار، وإسماعيل بن يحيى الخباز، ومحمد بن إبراهيم بن أحمد الهيتي، وأبو بكر بن عبد الرحمن بن محمود الكناني، وإبراهيم بن أبي بكر بن جلدك، وعثمان بن معضاد بن عثمان الخباز، وإبراهيم بن كامل بن عمار. وذلك يوم السبت ثالث عشر شهر الله رجب من سنة عشرين وستمائة بالجامع المظفري والحمد لله وحده وصلى الله على محمد وآله وسلم تسليماً كثيراً".[٧٤]

اللوحة (2.5). الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. Quart. 125, 46r. الطبقة الأولى فيها السامع علي بن الرضي عبد الرحمن في السطر السادس، والسامع إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو الفراء في السطر الحادي عشر. وكلاهما عُلِّم على اسمه بالحمرة.

٧٤ الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. Quart. 125, 46r. انظر اللوحة (5).

في هذا الطباق عُلِّم بالحُمرة فوق اسمي السامِعَين: علي بن الرضي عبد الرحمن وهو طفل صغير سنة (620هـ/1223م)، وإسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو الفراء.

ثم نجد على النسخة نفسها الطبقتين الآتيتين:

"سمع جميع هذا الجزء على الشيخ الجليل العدل المسند عز الدين أبي الفداء إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو الفراء بسماعه من الشيخ موفق الدين بسنده بقراءة علي بن مسعود بن نفيس الموصلي ثم الحلبي، وهذا خطه، عفا الله عنه ورفق به، السيد الشريف شجاع الدين حسين بن علي بن يوسف الحسيني، وشمس الدين محمد بن ناصر بن محمد التكريتي، وحسن بن علي بن ثابت التلباشري، وعبد الرحمن بن رشيد الزراد، وأخوه يوسف، والحاج محمود بن علي بن محمود السّراج، ومحمد بن الحاج شرف الدين أحمد بن مسخان، وسمع من نصفه إلى آخره علاء الدين علي بن علي بن إبراهيم الأنصاري ابن الصيرفي، والشيخ حسن بن مزيد بن أميلة المراغي ثم الحلبي، وابنه محمد، وصح ذلك وثبت في يومي جمعة آخرهما الثالث والعشرون من شهر رمضان المعظم سنة أربع وثمانين وستمائة بجامع دمشق المحروسة. والحمد لله وحده وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم تسليماً".

وتحته "قرأت جميع هذا الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان على الشيخين الجليلين المسندين جمال الدين أبي العباس أحمد بن أبي محمد بن عبد الرزاق العطار، وسيف الدين أبي الحسن علي بن الرضي عبد الرحمن بسماعهما فيه، والثاني حاضر في الخامسة، من الشيخ موفق الدين بن قدامة عن ابن البطي، عن ابن أيوب البزار، عن أبي علي بن شاذان، عنه، فسمعه الفقيه الإمام نور الدين أبو الحسن علي بن أبي بكر بن بحتر الأنصاري، وأحمد بن أبي بكر بن عبد الغني الحراني. وصح عشية الأحد يوم عيد النحر سنة خمس وثمانين وستمئة بالجامع المظفري بالجبل وأجازا لنا وكتب يوسف بن الزكي عبد الرحمن المزي عفا الله عنه".[٧٥]

اللوحة (2.6). الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. Quart. 125, 47r. الطبقة الأولى: الشيخ المُسمِع فيها هو إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو الفراء، والطبقة الثالثة: الشيخ المُشمِع

٧٥ الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Ms. or. Quart. 125: الورقة [47/r]. انظر اللوحة (6).

الثاني هو علي بن الرضي عبد الرحمن. وكاتب المجلس يوسف بن الزكي عبد الرحمن المزي (ت742هـ/1341م). وقد ذكر اسمه في نهاية الطبقة.

وإليك مثال آخر جاء على جزء (الأحاديث المُخرَّجة من رواية أبي طالب محمد بن علي بن الفتح العُشاري). عُلِّمَ فيه بالحمرة على اسم أمة الحق شامية بنت محمد البكري عندما كانت سامعة لهذا الجزء، ثم نجدها في طباق أخرى أصبحت الشيخة المُسمِعَة له.

"سمعه من أبي حفص عمر بن محمد بن طبرزد بقراءة أبي علي الحسن بن محمد بن محمد بن محمد البكري، ابنته أمة الحق شامية، ومحمد بن عبد العزيز بن المعافري النوبي، وبخطه السماع في السادس والعشرين من صفر سنة أربع وستمئة. نخصته من خط أبي الطاهري عن خط النوبي، وشاهدته أنا بخط النوبي نفسه، وصح وكتب مسعود بن أحمد ومن خطه نقل محمد بن مكي بن أبي الثناء الدنيسري عفا الله عنه وعن جميع المسلمين".[٧٦] والملحوظ في هذا المجلس المنقول، أنَّ هناك ثلاثة نقلة له، وغرض كلٍ منهم إثبات سند شيخه الذي تحمَّل الكتاب عنه، وكان سامعاً في هذا المجلس.

اللوحة (2.7). العشاري، محمد بن علي. الأحاديث المُخرَّجة من رواية أبي طالب محمد بن علي بن الفتح العُشاري. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1712, 116v الإجازة الأخيرة فيها سند السامعة أمة الحق شامية بنت محمد البكري عن ابن طبرزد.

ثم يرد على النسخة ذاتها "سمعه على أمة الحق شامية بنت الحافظ أبي علي الحسن بن محمد بن محمد بن محمد البكري بسماعهما من ابن طبرزد بقراءة السيد الشريف الإمام الحافظ عز الدين أبي القاسم أحمد بن محمد بن عبد الرحمن الحسني، ابنه أبو الحسن محمد، والحافظ جمال الدين أحمد بن محمد بن الطاهري، وابنه عثمان في آخر الخامسة، وأبو الفرج عبد الرحمن سنه الرابعة بن الإمام سعد الدين مسعود بن أحمد الحارثي، وشمس الدين أحمد بن خالد الفارقي وولده محمد الأصغر وآخرون، وأحمد بن النصر

٧٦ العشاري، محمد بن علي: الأحاديث المُخرَّجة: مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1712, 116v. انظر اللوحة (7).

بن ثناء، وكتب السماع في يوم الثلاثاء ثاني العشرين شهر رمضان سنة أربع وسبعين وستمائة بمنزل المسمعة بالقاهرة وأجازت لهم ما ترويه".[٧٧]

اللوحة (2.8). العشاري، محمد بن علي. الأحاديث المُخرَّجة من رواية أبي طالب محمد بن علي بن الفتح العُشاري. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1712, 117v الشيخة المُسمعة في الطبقة الأولى هي: أمة الحق شامية بنت محمد البكري.

ومثل هذا كثير في طباق السماع التي كان فيها عالمٌ معينٌ سامعٌ للكتاب، وفي مرحلة أخرى أضحى شيخاً مُسمِعَاً للكتاب ذاته. وكأن السامعين الجُدد كانوا يرجعون إلى النسخة التي قال شيخهم أنه سمع عليها، ويفتشون عن اسمه بين الحاضرين، وعند العثور عليه يضعون هذه العلامة الحمراء مكتفين بذلك في حال كانت قراءتهم من النسخة نفسها، أو يضيفون نقل سماع شيخهم من النسخة التي سمع عليها إلى النسخة التي يقرأون منها.

وخلاصة القول: إنَّ العلماء العرب والمسلمين في العهدين الأيوبي والمملوكي كانوا عمليين ومهنيين فيما يخص الاستفادة من المادة العلميَّة الواردة في طباق السماع، بل إنَّهم خطوا خطوة متقدمة عن المُحدَثين، بأن اتخذوا منها مادةً أساسة في أبحاثهم، وقد رصدت الدراسة تنوعاً وغِنى في الميادين التي وظَّفوا فيها مادة طباق السماع. فالمُدقِق الآتي من خلفية تقصِّي هذه الطباق سيجد أنهم تعاملوا معها على أنها مصدر معلومات، وأحياناً وثيقة رسمية في تعزيز شهادة أو دحض ادعاء. والسبب الذي أعانهم على اتخاذ هذا النهج، ممارستهم الاعتيادية لكتابة الطباق وتسجيلها في حياتهم التعليميَّة والعلميَّة. فهُم أدرى الناس بظروف تشكلها، ووظيفتها، ودلالة مصطلحاتها، وأهميتها التوثيقية للنص. لذلك نبَّه ابنُ الصلاحِ طالبَ العلمِ: "إذا نسخَ الكتاب فلا ينقل سماعه إلى نسخته إلا بعد المقابلة المُرضية، وهكذا لا ينبغي لأحد أن ينقلَ سماعاً إلى شيء من النُّسخ أو يُثبته فيها عند السّماع ابتداءً، إلا بعد المقابلة المُرضية بالمسموع؛ كيلا يغترَ أحدٌ بتلك النسخة غيرِ المقابلة".[٧٨] فطباق السماع المنقولة—من

٧٧ العشاري، محمد بن علي: الأحاديث المُخرَّجة: مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1712, 117v. انظر اللوحة (8).

٧٨ ابن الصلاح: مقدمة ابن الصلاح: 103.

الناحية التنظيريَّة—لا تُثبَت إلا على نسخة مُقابلة مُصححة، إضافة إلى شدة اعتنائهم بعلم الحديث خاصّة، والتفتيش عن رجاله، وعن قرب السند. لذلك استغلوا المادة العلميَّة الواردة في الطباق لإنجاز أبحاثهم، وتحرِّيهم عن الرجال وصحة رواياتهم، جرحاً وتعديلاً، كما كانت الطباق في أحايين كثيرة البوصلة الوحيدة بين أيديهم لكتابة سيرة الرجل، وللكشف عن قرب السند وتتبع السامعين القدامى، إضافة إلى تصحيح معلومات تاريخيَّة عاشت ردحاً من الزمن ثم بان بطلانها من خلال معلومات جديدة كشفتها طباق السماع، كما استعانوا بها في إعادة اكتشاف خِطط المدينة، يُضاف إلى ذلك ما كشفته الدراسة عن الأسماء المُميَزة بالحمرة في طباق السماع، بأنها خاصة بسامعي الكتّاب الذين أصبحوا لاحقاً مدرسين للكتّاب نفسه. ومن ثمَّ كشفت عن إحدى آليات القدامى في تتبع سند شيخهم والتثبت منه، وعن جانب من توثيق العمليَّة التعليميَّة.

كما تبينَ أن ترتيب الحاضرين في مجالس العلم لم يكن أمراً اعتباطيا متروكاً للمزاجيات، بل أمرٌ خاضعٌ لنُظمٍ قعَّدَ لها القوم والتزموا بها، مما ضمن لهم نجاح العمليَّة الدراسيَّة، ومع التسليم بأنَّ شيئاً من التراتبية الطبقيَّة موجود في ترتيب الأسماء ضمن طباق السماع، إلا أنه لا يمكن القول: بأن ترتيب الأسماء في الطباق يعكس ترتيب أماكن الجالسين في المجلس، ولا بدَّ من لفت الانتباه إلى أنَّ شكل الصفوف المترادفة لحاضري مجالس العلم لم يكن معمولاً به.

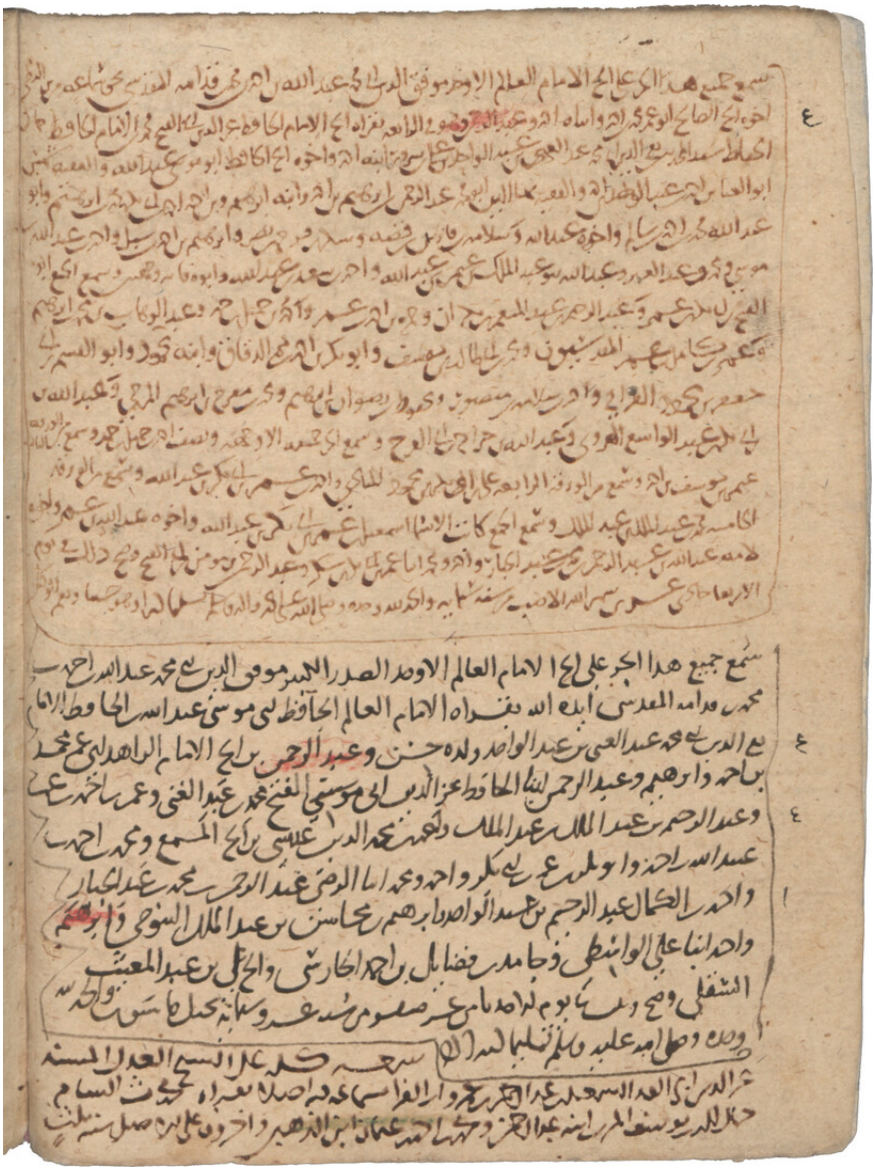

FIGURE 2.1 اللوحة (1). الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. Quart. 125, 67v في السطر الثاني من الطبقة الأولى، جاء ترتيب ولدَيّ الشيخ أبي عمر محمد بن أحمد بن محمد بن قدامة المقدسي، أحمد وعبد الرحمن ذي السنوات الأربع، قبل باقي الشيوخ الأجلاء الذين حضروا المجلس

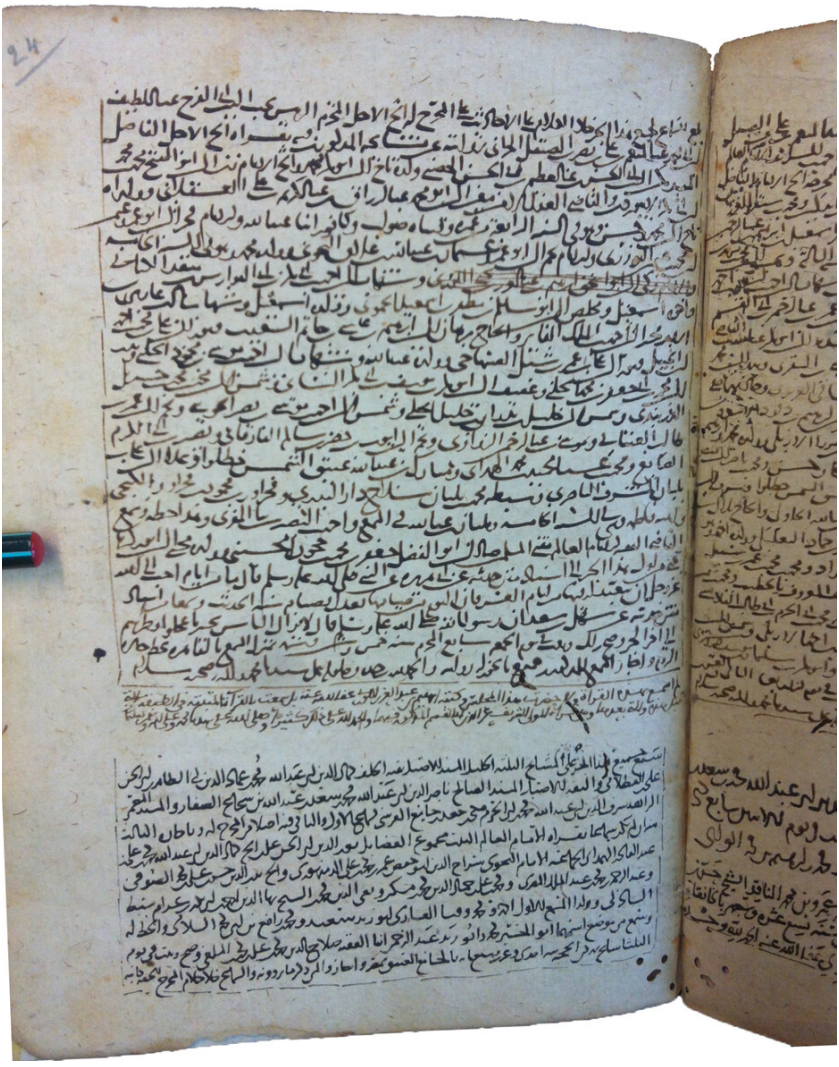

FIGURE 2.2 اللوحة (2). أحمد بن محمد بن عبد الله الظاهري. الجزء العاشر من موافقات الأئمة الستة: مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 515, 24r في السطر السابع يظهر شطب اسم ابن اللوزي من بين السامعين، وفي السطرين 23–24 تظهر الملاحظة التي كتبها ابن اللوزي نافياً فيها أن يكون من سامعي هذا المجلس، وفي السطر 16 يظهر اسم كاتب الطباق أحمد بن النصير بن نبأ المقرئ، وهو عالمٌ جليل وأحد شيوخ الإمام الذهبي، بعد أسماء الأطفال والعبيد. كما يظهر في السطور 17–20 أن قاضياً وولده وُضعا في السطور الأخيرة بسبب فوتهما

FIGURE 2.3 اللوحة (3). ابن طولبغا السيفي. ثبت فيه من الشيوخ ثمانية وأربعين شيخاً وخمسة نسوة. مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: 3827 [299/أ]. الإجازة الأخيرة فيها تحمّل محمد بن طولبُغا لجزء محمد بن طلحة النعالي عن الشيخة زينب بنت الكمال، مع تحديد اسم القارئ، وتاريخ المجلس باليوم والشهر والسنة، ومكان المجلس

FIGURE 2.4 اللوحة (4). النعالي، محمد بن طلحة. فوائد أبي الحسن محمد بن طلحة النعالي. مخطوطة المكتبة الوطنية بدمشق: 3758: [135/ب]. طبقة سماع بخط محمد بن طولبُغا على الشيخة زينب بنت الكمال، لاحظ تطابق المعلومات مع ما ورد في ثبته عن هذا الجزء

FIGURE 2.5 اللوحة (5). الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. Quart. 125, 46r. الطبقة الأولى فيها السامع علي بن الرضي عبد الرحمن في السطر السادس، والسامع إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو الفراء في السطر الحادي عشر. وكلاهما عُلِّم على اسمه بالحمرة

FIGURE 2.6 اللوحة (6). الجزء الحادي عشر من حديث أبي سهل بن زياد القطان. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. Quart. 125, 47r. الطبقة الأولى: الشيخ المُسمِع فيها هو إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن عمرو الفراء، والطبقة الثالثة: الشيخ المُسمِع الثاني هو علي بن الرضي عبد الرحمن. وكاتب المجلس يوسف بن الزكي عبد الرحمن المزي (ت742هـ/1341م). وقد ذكر اسمه في نهاية الطبقة

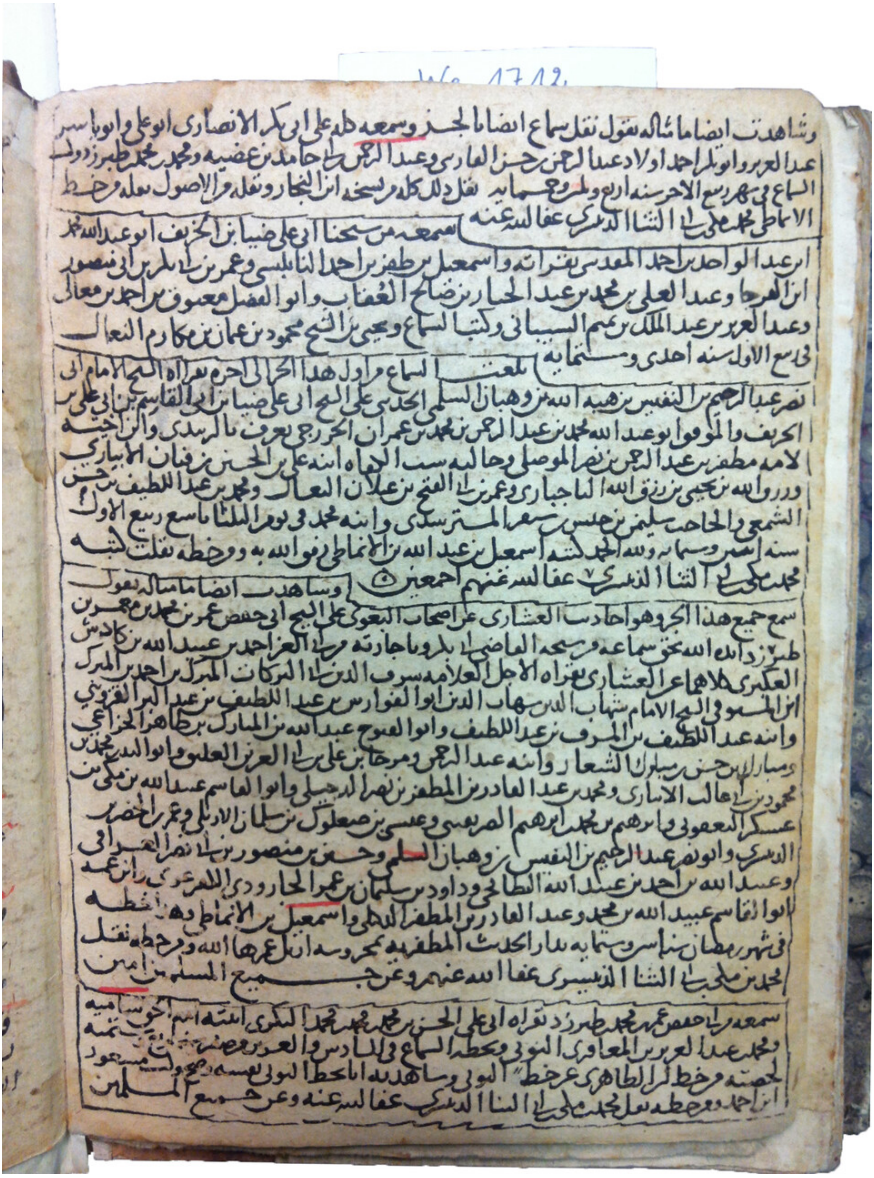

FIGURE 2.7 اللوحة (7). العشاري، محمد بن علي. الأحاديث المُخرَّجة من رواية أبي طالب محمد بن علي بن الفتح العُشاري. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1712, 116v الإجازة الأخيرة فيها سند السامعة أمة الحق شامية بنت محمد البكري عن ابن طبرزد

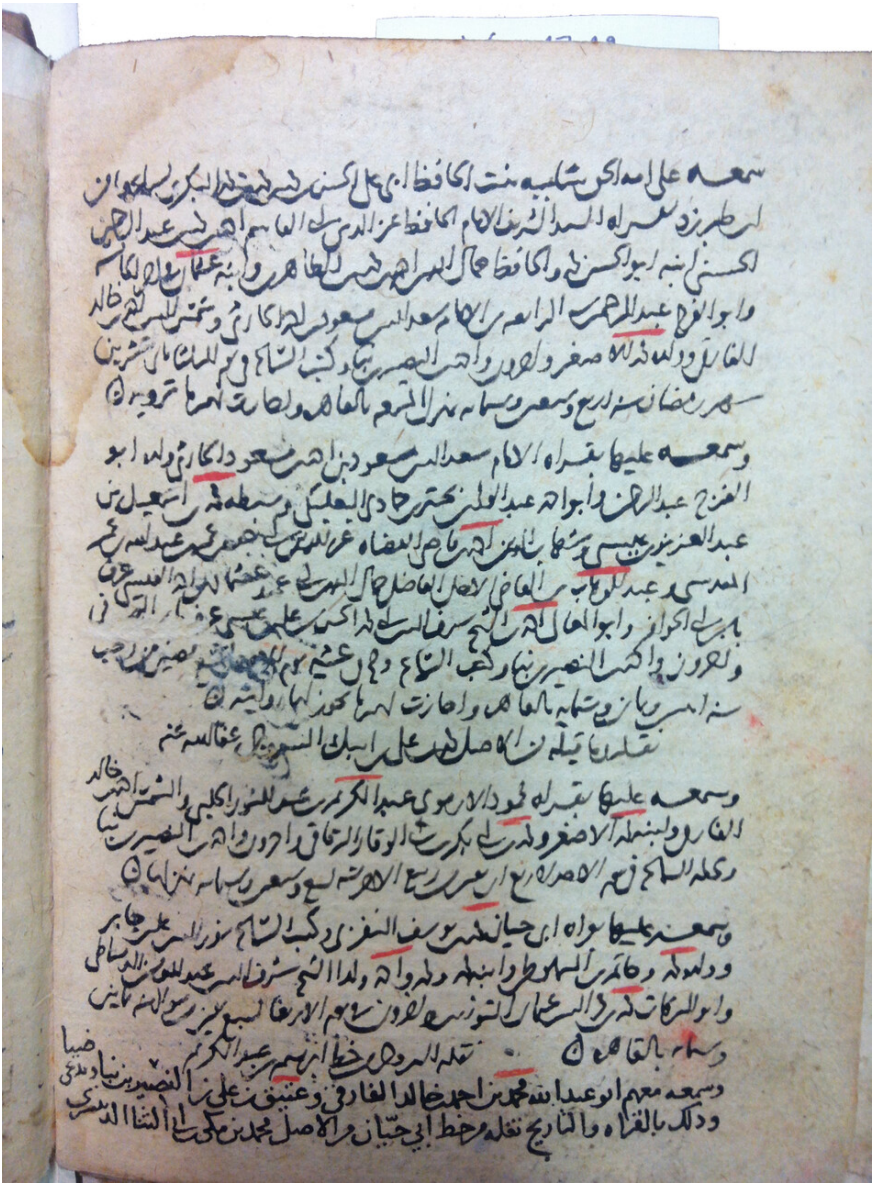

FIGURE 2.8 اللوحة (8). العشاري، محمد بن علي. الأحاديث المُخرَّجة من رواية أبي طالب محمد بن علي بن الفتح العُشاري. مخطوطة مكتبة الدولة في برلين. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1712, 117v الشيخة المُسمعة في الطبقة الأولى هي: أمة الحق شامية بنت محمد البكري

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3

Traces of Reception: How Did Users Engage with the Autograph Manuscripts of Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn?

Torsten Wollina

1 Introduction

This contribution takes its cue from a central point raised by Olly Akkerman at the workshop "Social Codicology: The Multiple Lives of Texts in Muslim Societies," namely "What do people do with manuscripts? Why do they do it, and how?"[1] Recently, the turn to life cycle studies of manuscripts has acknowledged the two-tiered importance of such interventions: On the one hand, each intervention in the manuscript changes conditions for further engagements with the texts and the object. On the other hand, those shifts constitute additional epistemological layers through which the researcher has to "dig" in order to trace older forms of engagement. Social codicology must therefore approach manuscripts as artefacts whose existence and materiality "bridge time," like an antique vase:

> Unlike people and ideas, artefacts survive sometimes centuries and millennia. A beautiful Chinese Ming vase [...] is both a source for historians in the present and an object that existed 400 years ago when it was made. [...] The example is fetching because it reveals an even more complex notion of time. The vase is an artefact that existed not just now or 400 years ago when it was made, but has existed since. It has a lifespan, or what [has] been also defined as 'career' and 'biography,' that the present-day object bears physically [...] and in its meaning (for instance: Who owned it? Where did it go over time? How was it used?). Artefacts are therefore complex entities whose nature and life story can only partially be understood and recovered.[2]

1 "Social Codicology: The Multiple Lives of Texts in Muslim Societies," organised by Olly Akkerman, Léon Buskens, Adrien Delmas, Rabat, 9–11 October 2018.

2 Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, "Introduction. Writing Material Culture History," in *Writing Material Culture History*, edited by Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (London: Blooms-

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In their introduction to the edited volume *Writing Material Culture History*, Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello bring up several points which correlate with the aims of social codicology. First of all, social codicology treats manuscripts as meaningful artefacts as much as carriers of textual meaning. In this way, each manuscript "can become a powerful instrument to unearth a different world, one that might not be well recorded in written documents."[3] Using mostly written records within manuscripts themselves, Berat Açil and others have shown the value of corpus analysis to illuminate a library owner's intellectual biography and cultural context.[4] The stated lack of written records holds true, however, for much of the book economy: The underlying labour of papermaking, book binding, and even the manuscript trade remain severely underresearched, partly because written evidence is lacking.

In addition, a focus on the tangible engagement with manuscripts carries its own meanings; they are "not just material objects but they point at the affective, social, cultural and economic relationships that form our lives."[5] We can certainly agree that books were important for those who collected, read, copied, or traded them. Especially considering the effort required for the preservation of manuscripts, their centuries-long survival alone proves that they "are not simple props of history, but are tools through which people shape their lives."[6]

This contribution will exemplify the importance of materiality for a social codicology by exploring different stages of the history of the autograph corpus of the sixteenth-century Damascene author and scholar Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 1546), who will be introduced briefly in the following section. He was a prolific author who also took care to secure the survival of his writings by endowing them in the ʿUmariyya madrasa in Damascus. In three case studies, I will explore the changing materiality of engagement with his works and manuscripts between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries. Each case presents a different form of engagement with one or several autographs. All these engagements were informed by divergent material, technological, and epistemological conditions. The first case addresses Ibn Ṭūlūn's creation of his autograph corpus, with a focus on what it can still tell us about his social sta-

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bury, 2016), 9. Similar points have recently been raised within manuscript studies as well. See Michael Friedrich and Cosima Schwarke, "Introduction—Manuscripts As Evolving Entities," *Studies in Manuscript Cultures* 9 (2016): 1–26.

3 Gerritsen and Riello, "Introduction. Writing Material Culture History," 2.

4 Berat Açıl, ed., *Osmanlı kitap kültürü: Cârullah Efendi Kütüphanesi ve Derkenar Notları* (Istanbul: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2015).

5 Gerritsen and Riello, "Introduction. Writing Material Culture History," 2.

6 Gerritsen and Riello, "Introduction. Writing Material Culture History," 2.

tus and financial restrictions. The second case revolves around one manuscript that came into possession of the prominent al-Ghazzī family by the seventeenth century, later entered the library of the Jawharī family in Nablus, and was annotated heavily and even rebound with additional works by other authors. The final case study addresses the copying of manuscripts. In the early twentieth century, the two Egyptian collectors Aḥmad Zakī and Aḥmad Taymūr both ordered copies of an Ibn Ṭūlūn autograph manuscript held in Alexandria. However, they took rather opposing approaches to the mode of reproduction.

While this contribution does not offer a full life-time cycle of any given manuscript, it combines evidence from different stages of the history of one corpus to illuminate how Ibn Ṭūlūn's reception and notions of "the book" more generally changed over time and how those changes were related to shifting materiality.

2 Ibn Ṭūlūn: A Brief Introduction

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ṭūlūn's social background is rather obscure, even though he was the primary chronicler of the Mamluk-Ottoman transition period in his native Damascus. Most of what we know about him ultimately goes back to his own writings, which were cited over and over by biographers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[7] His name suggests that Ibn Ṭūlūn might not have been an ethnic Arab but rather of Turkish, perhaps Anatolian origin. His mother Azzdān is referred to as *rūmiyya*, a designation which might indicate a geographical or religious characteristic.[8] Ibn Ṭūlūn spent much of his life in the *extra muros* settlement of al-Ṣāliḥiyya, which was renowned for its strong tradition of hadith transmission and a notable Ḥanbalī element in its population. Connections to other centres such as Cairo or Mecca were well-established, and several Ṣāliḥiyyan *isnāds* were sought after.

After his uncle Yūsuf, Ibn Ṭūlūn was only the second scion of his family to enter a career as an *ʿālim*. As far as we know, the Banū Ṭūlūn were traders, which

7 Torsten Wollina, "The Changing Legacy of a Sufi Shaykh. Narrative Constructions in Diaries, Chronicles, and Biographies (15th–17th Centuries)," In *Mamluk Historiography Revisited—Narratological Perspectives*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2018), 211–234; Torsten Wollina, "Tracing Ibn Ṭūlūn's Autograph Corpus, with Emphasis on the 19th–20th Centuries," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 9 (2018): 311–314.

8 Stephan Conermann, "Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548): Life and Works," *Mamluk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004): 116.

would support the notion that their origin lay outside of Damascus.[9] Thus, Ibn Ṭūlūn could be called a social upstart, and indeed he profited greatly from his affiliation with the Ḥanafī school as well as from connections forged by his uncle when the Ottomans came to rule Damascus. He was given the post of imam at the first Ottoman mosque in the city, the Salīmiyya.[10]

We know less about his subsequent life, as those parts of his own contemporary chronicle have not survived. In particular, we lack contextual information for the further development of his career and the rivalries it brought with it. Allegedly, he withdrew from public life towards the end of his life, after his entire household (as well as his uncle) had perished in the course of several epidemics.[11] As his refuge, he chose the ʿUmariyya madrasa, a peculiar choice as it was a symbol of pre-Ottoman Damascus in the immediate vicinity of the new Salīmiyya mosque. Moreover, the ʿUmariyya also became the place where Ibn Ṭūlūn endowed his autograph corpus. This can partly be explained out of convenience, as it gave Ibn Ṭūlūn the chance to continue changing the corpus and adding to it after the endowment.

This endowment constitutes the starting point for any investigation into the histories of his autograph manuscripts. Although the ʿUmariyya library was dissolved in the nineteenth century and Ibn Ṭūlūn's corpus had been dispersed to other places even before that, his surviving "autograph compilations" (see below for clarification of the term) still demonstrate his concern for the preservation of his written legacy. As I see it, Ibn Ṭūlūn aspired to keep all his books together as a corpus rather than as a number of separate works. He might not have written an encyclopedia as such, but an encyclopedic impulse is certainly tangible in his corpus.[12] This corpus, to which we will turn in the first case study, allowed for intertextuality between all his works and, arguably, also with the works cited in them.

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9 A comparable case would be the Shaṭṭī family, three brothers of which arrived as merchants in Damascus in the eighteenth century and would stay on to form each their own lineage which lasted into the twentieth century; cf. Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart: Steiner-Verlag-Wiesbaden-GmbH, 1985), 177–179; Torsten Wollina, "A Family of Books: The Damascene Shaṭṭīs and Textual Transmission," *Philological Encounters* 6 (2021): 1–32.

10 Torsten Wollina, "Sultan Selīm in Damascus: The Ottoman Appropriation of a Mamluk Metropolis (922–924/1516–1518)," in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilād al-Shām in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2016), 224.

11 Kristina Richardson, *Difference and Disability in the Medieval Islamic World: Blighted Bodies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 123.

12 Elias Muhanna, "Why Was the Fourteenth Century a Century of Arabic Encyclopaedism?" in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Greg Woolf, Cambridge 2013, 342–356.

3 Case Study 1: Ibn Ṭūlūn and the Establishment of His Autograph Corpus

Which precautions did Ibn Ṭūlūn take to preserve his corpus for posterity and guard it from changes in textual transmission that inevitably follow the death of an author? In short, he organised it as a corpus and made each autograph manuscript an identifiable part of it. For this purpose, he did not invent any new tools but combined existing ones in his own ways. His method can be reconstructed long after the corpus has ceased to exist at its intended place. It includes the endowment of his entire corpus to be placed in a specific section of the ʿUmariyya library, the compilation of his diverse writings into larger multiple-text manuscripts (henceforth MTMs), the equipment of those MTMs with a uniform layout and particularly title pages which featured contents statements, and the listing of his corpus in at least one work list.

This list, which is part of his so-called autobiography, *al-Fulk al-mashḥūn fī aḥwāl Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn* (The full ship concerning the [different] states of Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn), contains more than 760 entries in alphabetical order and arguably records Ibn Ṭūlūn's corpus at around the time of its endowment.[13] Chaim Nissim has identified several additional works that do not appear in the list.[14] The sheer number of titles might serve as one justification for my decision to approach the corpus through case studies. A second one is that, in general, transmission notes and other annotations are rather few in Ibn Ṭūlūn's autographs. Most of the annotations to be found are in the hand of the author himself and in that of his student Akmāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Mufliḥ (d. 1011/1602), who added beautiful title pages to some works, marginal rubrication and/or additions to others.[15] In contrast, annotations informing us about other uses (e.g., recitation) and later trajectories of these manuscripts are rather rare. Thus, the vast majority of annotations in Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph manuscripts were intricately tied to their own production and point at continuous efforts at improving and "updating" the works they contained.

This is not to say that Ibn Ṭūlūn's manuscripts are rough drafts. The regular appearance of these volumes and particularly their title pages indicate the

13 Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Fulk al-mashḥūn fī aḥwāl Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn. Sīra dhātīya li-l-muʾallif wa-bayān bi-muʾallafātihī al-bāligha (753) Kitāban*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat at-Taraqqī, 1929).

14 Chaim Nissim, "The Historiography of Syria in the Late Mamluk Period and the Beginning of Ottoman Period: The Historical Writings of Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn Ṭūlūn (1475–1546)," (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2012) 153–155.

15 See, e.g., Wollina, "Tracing Ibn Ṭūlūn's Autograph Corpus," 320, 322, 328.

opposite. Yet, those annotations show that even after their endowment, Ibn Ṭūlūn had access to those manuscripts, and he continued to use and add to them. The codex format, in which most of Ibn Ṭūlūn's short writings are preserved, offers itself for exactly that: preservation. In this format, short texts would receive their own title, as given on each volume's title page, and the volume would be fitted into a library based on the first work's title.[16]

The compilation of MTMS is even more like a deliberate strategy of preservation if we consider Ibn Ṭūlūn's favourite mode of writing. While his corpus includes several book-length and even multi-volume works, he most frequently describes his writings as *taʿlīq*. This term is not well defined, although a certain affinity to education has repeatedly been claimed by modern scholars. In a way, we can transpose Gerhard Endress' statement on MTMS also to the *taʿlīq*: They are "the least formal genre of books among the familiar types of collecting and organising knowledge in medieval manuscripts."[17] That is, if we can count them as books in the first place. They have usually been described as either the preparatory writings of a student on his way to the final examination (*taʿlīqa*), or as excerpts from books read and notes made and perhaps organised in order to write a book.[18] Either way, a *taʿlīq* itself does not seem to have constituted a published work but rather a preliminary stage in the process of publication.[19] Moreover, as these texts were rather short, often one quire would have sufficed to contain one—or sometimes several—of them. By compiling them into an

16 Nikolaj Serikoff, "Beobachtungen über die Marginal- und Schnitttitel in christlich-arabischen und islamischen Büchersammlungen," in *Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources*, ed. Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2011), 169.

17 Gerhard Endress, "One-Volume Libraries and the Traditions of Learning in Medieval Arabic Islamic Culture," in *One-Volume Libraries: Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts*, ed. Michael Friedrich, Harunaga Isaacson, and Jörn Quenzer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 177.

18 In Gregor Schoeler's classification, most of Ibn Ṭūlūn's *taʿālīq* would fit into the category of "hypomnema." See Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

19 See, for example, George Makdisi, "The Diary in Islamic Historiography: Some Notes," *History and Theory* 25, no. 2 (1986): 171–205; George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges. Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 104, 111–120; Stephan Conermann, "On the Art of Writing History in Mamluk Times," in *Mamluk Historiography Revisited—Narratological Perspectives*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2018), 13; Endress, "One-Volume Libraries," 175; Bernard Weiss, "Medieval Islamic Legal Education as Reflected in the Works of Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī," in *Law and Education in Medieval Islam. Studies in Memory of Professor George Makdisi*, ed. Joseph Lowry, Devin Stewart, and Shawkat Toorawa (Warminster: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004), 111–112.

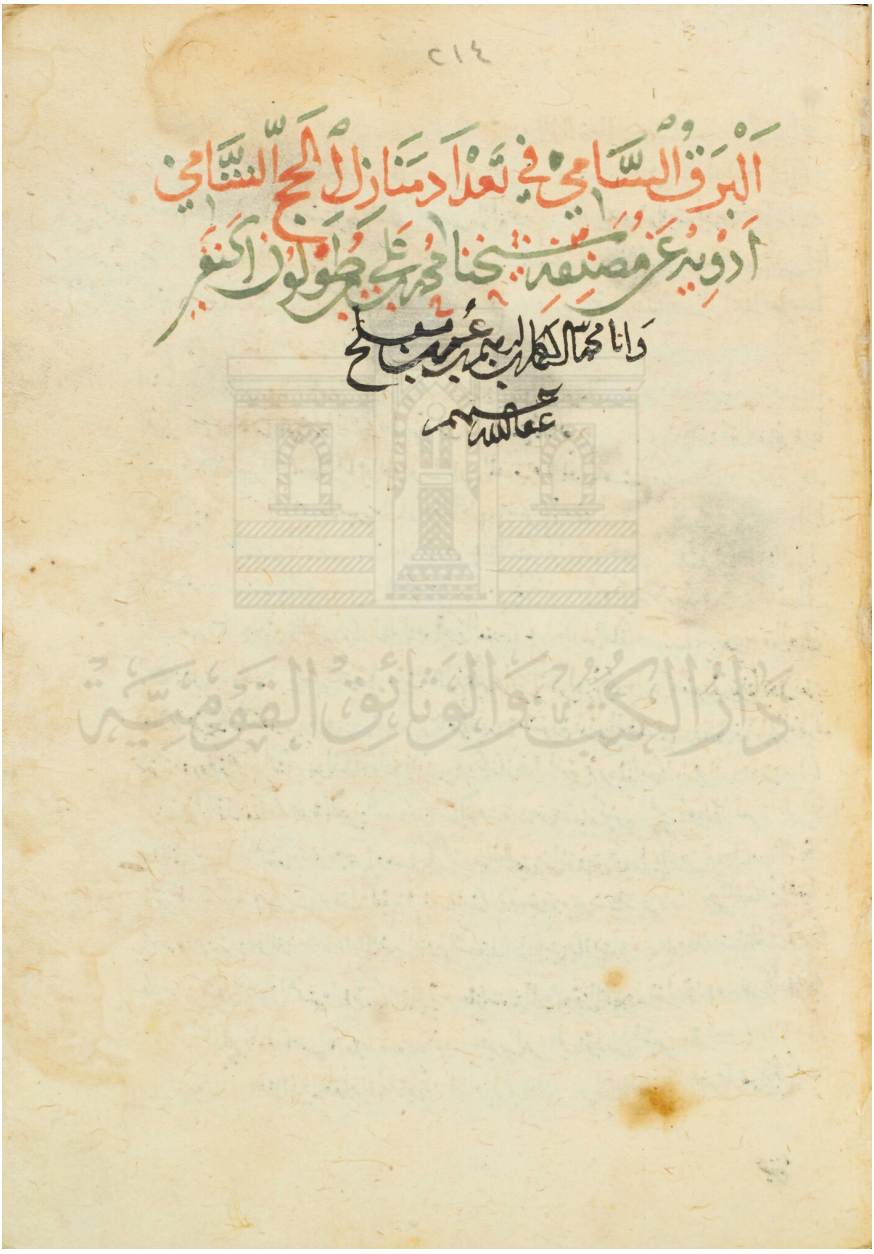

FIGURE 3.1 Ibn Mufliḥ's added title to Ibn Ṭūlūn's travelogue to Mecca, "*al-Barq al-sāmī fī ta'dād manāzil al-ḥājj al-shāmī*"; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, MS Majāmī' Taymūr 79, 214
COURTESY OF DĀR AL-KUTUB

MTM, Ibn Ṭūlūn preserved and even upgraded those writings—successfully, I would add, as several of them would be read and copied as treatises in the following centuries (later titles usually denote them as '*risāla*').[20]

This transformation of individual works would not have been possible had they not been part of the corpus. Note that not all of Ibn Ṭūlūn's surviving autographs carry endowment notes. They were identified as part of his endowment on the basis of, on the one hand, his distinct handwriting, and, on the other hand, their regular layout, particularly that of the title page of each volume. Admittedly, manuscripts only containing Ibn Ṭūlūn autograph texts exist which lack this title page. As Kristina Richardson has shown with regard to two Princeton manuscripts, such manuscripts were usually the product of later recompilations.[21] As I have argued elsewhere, only those manuscripts that contain a title page for the volume with its contents statement can be counted as Ibn Ṭūlūn's own autograph compilations. They consist exclusively of his autograph writings in the order he intended and which he recorded on that title page.[22]

Ibn Ṭūlūn could not, however, be certain of the success of these strategies. His biographer Ibn Ayyūb (d. 1592) cites him with this pessimistic poem:

كتبت الكتّاب واتممته—واتعبت نفسي الى ان حصل (حمل؟)
واني اخاف اذا مت—يباع الكتّاب بسعر البصل

فلما وقفتُ انا عليها قلتُ

كتبت الكتّاب وفتحتُه—واتعبت نفسي ارجى الاجور
واني اخاف اذا مت ان—يباع الكتّاب بسعر القشور

I wrote the book and supplemented it—I troubled myself so for its existence
and now I fear that when I die—the book will be sold for the price of an onion.

20 Or, as Gregor Schoeler puts it, "manchmal sind Kolleghefte u.a. trotz ihres privaten Charakters weiter-überliefert worden, und die Überlieferung ist zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt 'erstarrt', so daß die Hefte uns jetzt als quasi-literarische Werke vorliegen." Gregor Schoeler, "Schreiben und Veröffentlichen zu Verwendung und Funktion der Schrift in den ersten islamischen Jahrhunderten," *Der Islam* 69, no. 1 (1992): 29.

21 Kristina Richardson, "Reconstructing the Autograph Corpus of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn," *JAOS* 135, no. 2 (2015): 319–327.

22 Wollina, "Tracing Ibn Ṭūlūn's Autograph Corpus," 315–316.

> And after I had endowed it, I spoke:
>
> I wrote the book and I prefaced it—I troubled myself and I hope for remuneration (*ujūr*)
> and I fear that when I die—the book will be sold for the price of garbage.[23]

Admittedly, this could be read as a trope of (false?) humility. Yet, looking at the poem in relation to the material evidence, his complaint seems to hold some truth. On the one hand, I read *fataḥtuhu* as an allusion to the compilation of his autographs and the penning of their title pages. As mentioned before, Ibn Ṭūlūn's autographs display an almost suspicious dearth of transmission notes or of documentation of repeated public readings, which leads me to believe that the extant autographs were only produced for the endowment. The evidence from narrative sources, including Ibn Ṭūlūn's own works and compilations, emphasises his activity as a teacher and public intellectual. This stands in stark contrast to the pristine state of even his devotional writings and, judging by the number of copies made, his most successful historical-topographical work.[24]

On the other hand, almost all of Ibn Ṭūlūn's autographs are written on the same thick Oriental paper. Not all leaves were polished or finished, and throughout they show large fibre remains.[25] In conjunction with the quarto format, to which the autographs adhere, we can conclude that he did not produce his writings for an elite audience. The question remains, however, whether Ibn Ṭūlūn decided to buy the locally produced and arguably cheaper paper or whether the paper was provided for him at the ʿUmariyya madrasa? In any case,

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23 Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā Ibn Ayyūb, "Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-ʿāṭir fīmā tayassara min akhbār ahl al-qarn al-sābiʿ ilā khitām al-qarn al-ʿāshir," Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Wetzstein II 289, fol. 236ª. I have not found this passage in any of Ibn Ṭūlūn's autographs and cannot say to which work it refers.

24 This is "al-Shamʿa al-muḍiyya fī akhbār al-qalʿa al-dimashqiyya," at the beginning of which is even stated that it was composed at the request of the Meccan hadith scholar and historian Jār Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Fahd (d. 1547). It survives in four copies. The autograph is found in Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, MS Majāmīʿ 759. Further copies are Istanbul, Süleymaniye, MS Reis ül-Küttab 1213, fols. 145ª–167ª; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, MS Tārīkh Taymūr 2058; Damascus, Asad National Library, MS 7498.

25 The only notable exception I could find is the fragment of his biographical work *Dhakhāʾir al-qaṣr* which was compiled by the Syrian scholar ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf "from loose pages" in 1899. This is his only autograph manuscript on thin, glazed European paper bearing a watermark. Beirut, Jafet Library, MS 920.02: I 132.tA, fol. 1ª.

I would argue that at this late point in his life, Ibn Ṭūlūn was concerned more with structuring and preserving his written legacy for posterity than with presenting it in a shiny form to potential patrons. As a result, an interested reader could find his entire corpus in a uniform format in one location.

4 The Shifting Materiality of an Ibn Ṭūlūn Autograph

Moving ahead one century, the second case study concerns one of Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph compilations, today held by the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, which had become part of the personal library of a member of the prominent Damascene al-Ghazzī family. MS 3317 is an eclectic compilation containing on 179 folios twelve works on hadith, history, ethics, and other topics. Those works remain in the same order as they are given by Ibn Ṭūlūn on the manuscript's title page:

1) *Kashf al-ẓallām ʿan maʿnā al-salām* ("Informing the tyrant about the meaning of the peace")
2) *Naqd al-ṭālib li-zaghal al-manāṣib* ("The student's critique of the debasement of the offices")
3) *Rafʿ al-malāma ʿammā qīla fī l-ḥijāma* ("Lifting the blame regarding what is being said about cupping")
4) *al-Arbaʿīn min al-abdāl al-ʿawālī* ("Forty [hadith] of those equivalent to the high hadiths")
5) *al-Arbaʿīn min al-muwāfaqāt* ("Forty [hadith] of those in agreement")
6) *Jawāb al-suʾāl ʿan ḥukm al-dajjāl* ("The reply to the question about the judgement of the Antichrist")
7) *Takmīl al-wuʿāʾ li-kayfiyyat al-duʿāʾ* ("Perfection of the attentive regarding the quality of the supplication")
8) *Iltizām mā lā yalzam fī-mā warada fī māʾ Zamzam* ("Abiding by what is not necessary regarding what is found about the water of the Zamzam [well]")
9) *Faṣṣ al-khawātim fī-mā qīla fī l-walāʾim* ("Stone of the rings about what is being about the feasts")
10) *Taʾyīd al-inkār li-ityān al-ṭuyūr wa-naḥwihā fī l-awkār* ("Strengthening the disapproval of the nesting of birds and their like")
11) *Ḍawʾ al-sirāj fī-mā qīla fī l-nassāj* ("The lamplight regarding what is being said about the weaver")
12) *Sharḥ iʿlām al-warā bi-man wuliya nāʿiban min al-atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-kubrā* ("Commentary informing the mortals about who among the Turks ruled over Damascus as governors")

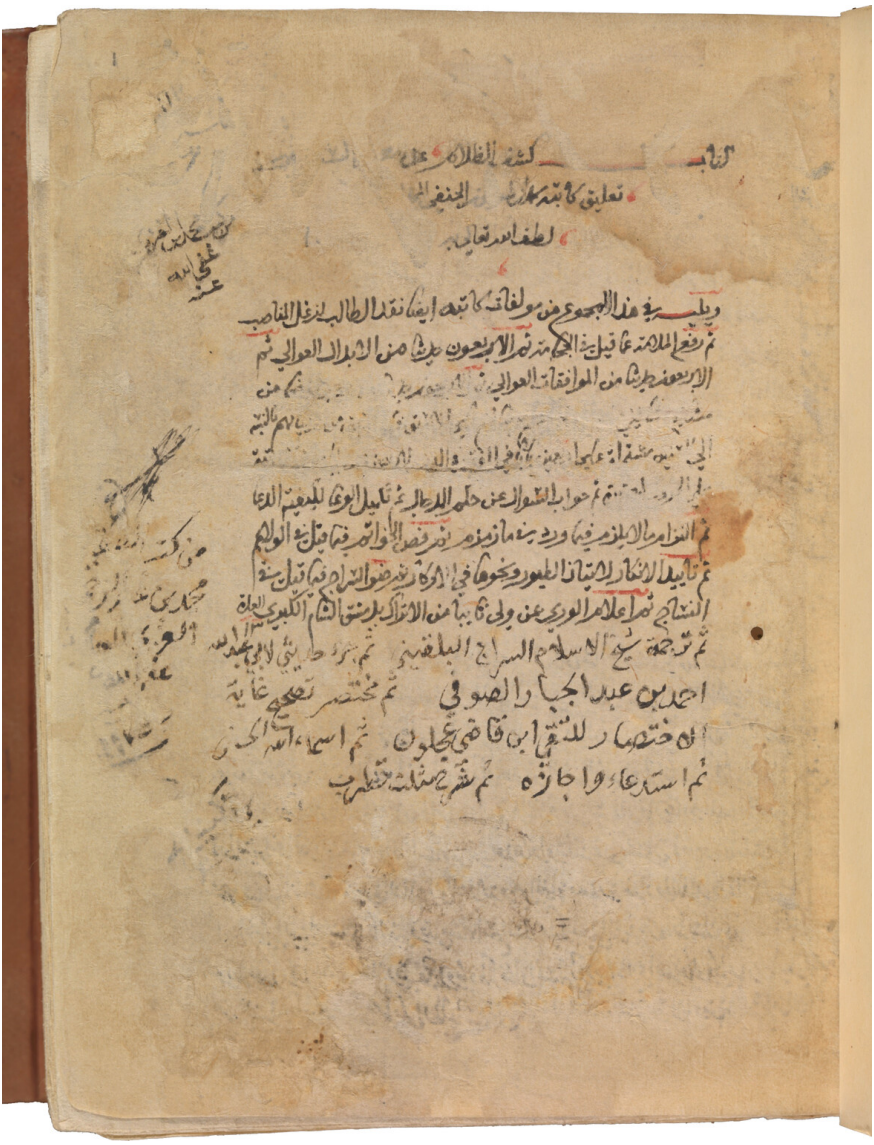

FIGURE 3.2 Title page of one of Ibn Ṭūlūn autograph compilation; Chester Beatty Library, MS 3317, fol. 1ª

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Three ownership notes on the title page attest that the manuscript had left the ʿUmariyya by the late seventeenth century. The only decipherable ones are signed by members of the al-Ghazzī family; one of them is dated 1114(?) AH. The same handwriting is found throughout the manuscript, annotating, rubricating and, in some cases, continuing Ibn Ṭūlūn's writings.[26] The same person further added full and marginal titles for each individual work, always acknowledging Ibn Ṭūlūn as the author. In this, MS 3317 is an exception from the general state of Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph corpus as outlined above. The early extraction of the manuscript from the ʿUmariyya might be the reason for that, which, in turn, poses questions as to the regulations with regard to book use in the ʿUmariyya library itself. As soon as this item had shifted from the ʿUmariyya to someone's private collection, we see traces of textual engagement on its pages, whereas said engagement is all but invisible in other manuscripts that remained part of the autograph corpus in the ʿUmariyya for a longer time. As has been stated above, the latter works look rather pristine, and even in cases where we can say for sure that they were copied, the autograph source texts themselves do not display any sign of reader engagement.[27]

In this new context, we can observe that this manuscript became a tool "through which people shaped their lives." It was not only valued for its content but also as an object and a writing surface. In this respect, annotations without a clear connection to the content of the contained works are even more significant. Several of those, probably made by the same member of the al-Ghazzī family, can be found on blank pages between the texts. They betray a conspicuous calendrical regularity: Three of four entries made between 1114 and 1117 AH refer to the month Shaʿbān (fol. 23ª: 1–3; fol. 131ª: 4–5):

Entry	Translation	Arabic Text
1.	The first day of Kānūn I was Wednesday, the 3rd of the brilliant Shaʿbān in the year 15, and the first of the 40 days of Winter was on Sunday, the 23rd of Shaʿbān	كان اول كانون الاول يوم الاربعا ثالث شعبان المنور سنة خمسة عشر وكان اول اربعينة الشتا يوم الاحد ثالث عشري شعبان المنور(ثلث؟)

26 The few lines on the last page that concludes the first work (fol. 22ª) are in a different hand than Ibn Ṭūlūn's. The folio is otherwise blank and might have been added to replace a damaged folio.

27 Ibn Ṭūlūn's impact as an author on traditions of learning has long been debated. The dearth of surviving copies as well as annotations in his autographs has often been interpreted as proof for his peripheral position within those traditions.

(*cont.*)

Entry	Translation	Arabic Text
2.	The first day of Ādhār was Wednesday, the 5th of Dhū al-Qaʿda in the year 1115	كان اول آذار يوم الاربعا خامس ذي القعدة المبارك سنة ١١١٥
3.	The first of the 40 days of Winter was on Wednesday, the 6th of Ramaḍān in the year 1117	كان اول اربعنية الشتا يوم الاربعا سادس شهر رمضان سنة ١١١٧
4.	In the month of Shaʿbān 1115	في شهر شعبان سنة ١١١٥
5.	And by Ibn Ṭūlūn is also a book on those who served as judges of Damascus {1114} which he entitled … *Sharḥ iʿlām al-aʿlām bi-man wuliya al-Shām*, which he begins with Abū al-Dardā al-Ṣaḥābī (may God be pleased with him) and he ends with Muḥammad Efendī, the office holder from before sultan Sulaymān in the year 946	ولابن طولون ايضا كتاب فيمن ولي قضا الشام {١١١٤} سماه … شرح اعلام الأعلام بمن ولى قضا الشام ابتدا فيه من ابي الدردا الصحابي رضي الله عنه وانتهى فيه الى محمد افندي المولى من قبل السلطان سليمان ابن عثمان سنة ست واربعين وتسعماية

Whereas the fifth annotation is clearly related to the final text in the manuscript,[28] the meaning of the other entries is more obscure. Do they indicate readings of the respective texts? In his text-anthropological study on authors' libraries (as opposed to the traditional focus on text generation), Magnus Wieland has proposed a typology of annotations which focuses on "the modality and habituality of reception and reading processes."[29] In total, he defines

28 The final entry points to Ibn Ṭūlūn's work on judges of Damascus and is placed on the title page of his work on governors of Damascus. This work has been annotated systematically by the same person in between the rubrication in a different hand. The date between {} was written above the line.

29 Translations from the German are my own. In this case, it makes sense to give the full statement in its original: "Nicht nur der rezipierte Inhalt, sondern insbesondere auch die Rezeptionsweise, ist von Interesse. Gerade die Modalität und Habitualität der Lektüre bildet eine entscheidende Informationsbasis für ein adäquates Verständnis des vollzogenen Leseprozesses." Magnus Wieland, "Materialität des Lesens. Zur Topographie von Annotationsspuren in Autorenbibliotheken," in *Autorenbibliotheken. Erschließung, Rekonstruktion, Wissensordnung*, ed. Michael Knoche (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), 158.

nine types, four of which are of interest here. The annotations and rubrications described above match his third type, "actively receptive traces" which "attest to an intensive textual engagement."[30] The fifth entry in the list above is rather a "productive-receptive trace," as it adds information to the text, in this case that Ibn Ṭūlūn had penned a work on the judges of Damascus in addition to the one on governors which is included in this volume.

The other four entries in that list are much more difficult to classify as they offer so little information as to what they were meant to signify. They could fit into one of two types; either they are "situational-receptive traces" (type 2), and, as indicated, simply give information about "when and in which context the book was read," or they belong to Wieland's first type, "non-receptive traces," namely "incidental or casual inscriptions which are neither motivated by a book's content nor the situation of reading but use the book as a more or less arbitrary writing surface."[31] This would, in fact, be the most intriguing option, as it would indicate that the owner kept Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph close at hand and probably felt some affection for the object itself beyond its contents. However, the placement of the annotations is curious, as they are found on the respective title pages for the only two historical works in the manuscript, *Naqd al-ṭālib li-zaghal al-manāṣib*, a glossary of military, administrative, and religious positions in the Mamluk Sultanate, and *Sharḥ iʿlām al-warā bi-man wuliya nāʿiban min al-atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-kubrā*, a historical work on "Turkish" (Mamluk and Ottoman) governors of Damascus. It thus seems more likely that the owner repeatedly returned to the manuscript to read, and possibly teach, Damascene history. Moreover, both works could be read in the light of discussions on "good governance," the former providing descriptions of the responsibilities and positions of offices, and the latter illuminating the office of the governorship through historical examples.

Although MS 3317 today only contains those titles Ibn Ṭūlūn mentions in his contents statement on the title page, the title page proves that this autograph compilation did not retain its integrity throughout its entire life cycle. Ibn Ṭūlūn's original statement ends after nine full lines with "*al-ʿidda* 12." Below, a different hand takes over, retaining the original separation of titles by *thumma* but not keeping to the *masṭara* or the text block. The added titles are all by other authors. Circumstantial evidence further suggests that the extended manu-

30 The distinction to the fourth type, "selectively receptive traces," is not entirely clear-cut. One could argue that the use of sign-posting through *maṭlab* or *qiff* should rather be subsumed under this category, especially when a work was not heavily annotated. Wieland, "Materialität des Lesens," 161–164.

31 Wieland, "Materialität des Lesens," 159–161.

script was split into two volumes at one point before 1927.[32] It is unclear when that recompilation was done and by whom: someone from the al-Ghazzī family, someone from the al-Jawharī family to whose library the manuscript belonged until at least the mid-1920s, or by an unknown person in between those two identifiable stations on its trajectory?

In light of al-Ghazzī's identifiable focus on historical works, I would place the additions to the manuscript in the period when it belonged to the al-Jawharī library (nineteenth–twentieth centuries). Whereas al-Ghazzī did not engage with the manuscript's devotional components very much, at least judging by the density of annotations, those might well have been the reason for the manuscript's acquisition by the Jawharīs. In this way I interpret the inclusion of the texts added to the original compilation. Their titles are, in this order, a biography of *shaykh al-Islām* al-Sirāj al-Bulqīnī, the third part of *al-Fawā'id al-muntaqāt al-gharā'ib ʿan al-shuyūkh al-ʿawālī* on hadith by Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Ṣūfī, *Mukhtaṣar ghāyat al-ikhtiṣār* by Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī ʿAjlūn (d. 928/1522), several pages on God's beautiful names, and a commentary on *Muthallath Quṭrub* by Saʿd al-Dīn al-Bārizī. These are followed by an *ijāza* by Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Faraj al-ʿUthmānī al-Maghārī, a fragment of an *Arbaʿūn* collection, and finally a biography of "the author of the aforegoing *risāla*s," Ibn Ṭūlūn. These additions correspond to Ibn Ṭūlūn's own devotional works, in particular the two forty-hadith collections. Through those additions, Ibn Ṭūlūn's transmissions, included in his own multiple-text manuscript, were embedded in a wider tradition of hadith transmission through rebinding the volume as a composite manuscript.[33]

Eventually, however, someone reconstructed Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph compilation from these two volumes. This was done at some point after 1927, when it was photographed by the Egyptian bibliophile Aḥmad Taymūr (d. 1930) in its two-volume state. The reconstruction indicates another shift in textual engagement, shedding much of the manuscript's history in the process, and it might even be connected to its purchase by Chester Beatty. Whereas the two prior engagements were based on parts of the manuscript's contents, this reconstruction rather hints at a different motivation, namely that a "pure" autograph compilation was valued higher than one that had been tampered with. I would even say that the specific works included in the manuscript did not play much of a role at that stage.

32 Wollina, "Tracing Ibn Ṭūlūn's Autograph Corpus," 319.

33 On the distinction, see Friedrich and Schwarke, "Introduction—Manuscripts as Evolving Entities," 15–16.

In conclusion, this manuscript displays perhaps the most turbulent—traceable—history among Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph corpus. It therefore also allows us to establish tentative conclusions on diverse modes of textual engagement with that corpus more widely. It displays shifts between documented and undocumented engagements and between different content-based interests of readers and owners. On an even wider scale, the changes made to the manuscript point to a shift in underlying notions of "the book." Whereas al-Ghazzī valued the volume for specific local historical contents, it was reinterpreted as a primarily devotional work in the al-Jawharī library. In the early twentieth century, however, its original state as an autograph compilation was deemed superior to its later reconfigurations and was restored by standards that seem to agree very much with the author's original intentions.

5 Copying and the Reorganisation of Knowledge

The final case study takes up again the question of Ibn Ṭūlūn's reception in the early twentieth century. Whereas the former case has shown how an autograph compilation could be approached when it was available for sale, this section addresses engagements with autographs where this was not the case. We do not know when the public library of Alexandria acquired MS 2208d. It is a recompilation of thirteen Ibn Ṭūlūn autograph works on 141 folios. As it lacks the original title page, much of its history is obscure. A later hand has, however, added a table of contents with reference to folio numbers on the first page.

This manuscript piqued the curiosity of two of Egypt's major manuscript collectors. Both Aḥmad Zakī (1868–1934) and Aḥmad Taymūr (1871–1930) ordered copies to be made from various works contained in this manuscript. They chose very different approaches to this endeavour, which, in turn, attest to divergent notions of knowledge in book form, or of books as such. Despite their undeniable impact as collectors and collaborators of several regional and Western scholars, neither has received much scholarly attention. This is puzzling as both their libraries contained around 18,000 volumes, large parts of those being manuscripts that have been used in hundreds of studies. Whereas Zakī has been the subject of two recent articles,[34] Aḥmad Taymūr's library received its

34 Umar Ryad, "'An Oriental Orientalist': Aḥmad Zakī Pasha (1868–1934), Egyptian Statesman and Philologist in the Colonial Age," *Philological Encounters* 3 (2018): 129–166; Islam Dayeh, "From *Taṣḥīḥ* to *Taḥqīq*: Toward a History of the Arabic Critical Edition," *Philological Encounters* 4 (2019): 245–299.

first study in Arabic in 2020.[35] For now, the most comprehensive pieces on him remain the reminiscences in Ignaz Kratchkovsky's *Among Arabic Manuscripts* and the obituary that Joseph Schacht wrote of Taymūr for the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* in 1930.[36] The following biographical sketches are thus focused on their collections rather than on their other exploits.

Aḥmad Zakī started collecting books and manuscripts in the 1880s, while still a student. It says a lot about his social position that by 1911 he had "obtained a permanent official permit for a special section of the Dār al-Kutub, the Egyptian National Library, to be allocated for his private collection of books and manuscripts."[37] Zakī relied on a variety of methods to get hold of valuable and rare books, allegedly using half his monthly salary for new acquisitions. These included manuscripts bought from the heirs of deceased local collectors, photographic reproductions bought from "public or university libraries and facsimile shops" in Europe and Istanbul, and, as we will see shortly, the ordering of new manuscript copies.[38] The library was finally relocated to the National Library in 1935.

Umar Ryad, in an article on Aḥmad Zakī, also mentions Aḥmad Taymūr (1871–1930) in passing, characterising him as "a wealthy and elite bibliophile who dedicated his fortune to books and manuscripts."[39] Ryad further focuses on the differences between the two:

> Unlike Taymūr Pasha, Zakī Pasha often made a point of publicising his literary discoveries to the press. In a lecture in Cairo, the Syrian writer Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī (1876–1953) compared the two Egyptian "Aḥmads" as follows: Aḥmad Taymūr was marked by religious zeal, whereas Zakī Pasha had a more worldly inclination. This made Zakī Pasha "*mustashriq sharqī* (an oriental orientalist)", while Taymūr Pasha remained an "ori-

35 Tāmir ʿĀdil al-Ḥusaynī al-Kāshif, *Khawārij al-naṣṣ fī l-kitāb al-ʿarabī al-makhṭūṭ. Al-Khizāna al-taymūriyya al-mulḥaqa bi-Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya anmūdhajan* (Cairo: Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyya, 2020). Both collectors are also mentioned in Ahmed El Shamsy's latest book, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics. How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

36 Joseph Schacht, "Aḥmed Pascha Taimūr. Ein Nachruf," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 84 (1930): 255–258; Ignatiy Yulianovich Kratchkovsky, *Among Arabic Manuscripts. Memories of Libraries and Men*, trans. Tatiana Minorsky (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 40, 44.

37 Ryad, "An Oriental Orientalist," 150.

38 Ryad, "An Oriental Orientalist," 151–152 (quote).

39 Ryad, "An Oriental Orientalist," 136.

> ental before anything." Zakī chose to mingle with society to widen his perspectives, but Taymūr preferred to remain in his isolated circle of elite people in order to preserve his "peaceful" world of literary work without any "social disturbance." Kurd ʿAlī maintained that Zakī's "democracy" was evident in his joyful life, whereas Taymūr's "aristocracy" was marked by an austere and gloomy life. Regarding their education, Taymūr received his knowledge from religious teachers, unlike Zakī. "Therefore Taymūr became an Islamic scholar before anything, who likes to benefit from the production of the people of the West; whereas Zakī is an Oriental scholar who looks like the scholars of the West to a great degree."[40]

This statement seems at least a little biased if we compare it with Schacht's obituary and its second sentence in particular: "In him [i.e. Taymūr] Oriental Studies have lost an outstanding expert of Arabic literature, the creator of the most eminent private library in the Orient and an altruistic supporter of European scholarship."[41] From Schacht's retrospective perspective, Taymūr apparently was as much an "Oriental Orientalist" as Zakī and, at that, one that opened the gates of his library to other scholars. Far from an "isolated circle," these scholars included Damascenes such as the mentioned Kurd ʿAlī and Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī, who visited the library around 1912, as well as European scholars.[42] Kratchkovsky adds to this that he enjoyed a lengthy correspondence with Taymūr centring on one of his favourite Arabic poets, and describes Taymūr's library as one of the three major libraries in early twentieth-century Cairo—even though he himself did not ever come to visit it:

> I was unable to visit the third large library in Cairo for its owner was away. Later it became famous and in the course of time it was bequeathed to the Khedivial, now the Egyptian Library. In those days it was known only to a few specialists like [Jurjī] Zaydān, who told me about it. It belonged to Aḥmad Taymūr Pasha […] who was a bibliophile and connoisseur of manuscripts, had formed a unique collection in which every copy was

40 Ryad, "An Oriental Orientalist," 136.

41 "In ihm [i.e. Taymūr] hat die Orientalistik einen hervorragenden Kenner der arabischen Literatur, den Schöpfer der bedeutendsten Privatbibliothek des Orients und einen selbstlosen Förderer europäischer Forschung verloren." Schacht, "Aḥmed Pascha Taimūr. Ein Nachruf," 255.

42 Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, "الخزانة التيمورية/ al-Khizāna al-Taymūriyya," *al-Muqtabas* 7 (1912): 437–458.

> supplied with a description and in some cases with a whole treatise by its owner. Something like half of the manuscripts must have been priceless unique specimens. My acquaintance with them came much later and only at a distance through correspondence with the owner.[43]

Thus, while Ryad's verdict might apply to Taymūr as a public intellectual, it certainly does not apply to his activities as a collector and scholar of manuscripts. Taymūr began planning his library in 1889, shortly after and perhaps influenced by Zakī. Already in 1902, he endowed his library with the necessary resources for its maintenance. His collection, which likewise contained "manuscripts as well as [recent] copies of manuscripts and photographic reproductions,"[44] was placed in the National Library in 1932. At least as valuable as the collection as such are its catalogue and the many annotations and explanations Taymūr inscribed in the manuscripts. Those include tables of contents and indices, identifications of authors and copyists, and corrections.[45]

This textual engagement is perhaps what distinguishes the two libraries from each other the most. Whereas Zakī was quick to publish his findings, Taymūr's work was focused on enhancing the accessibility of the manuscripts themselves.[46] In a different way, this distinction is also visible in the copies they ordered from the Alexandrian Ibn Ṭūlūn manuscript. Zakī ordered copies of nine of the thirteen works the manuscript contains (see table below), each to be bound as an individual manuscript. Taymūr chose a more comprehensive approach. Only the two lengthy hadith texts, *ʿUnwān al-rasāʾil* and *Irtiyāḥ al-khawāṭir*, were extracted into their own manuscripts (classified as *tārīkh*), whereas the remaining works were again combined into a new MTM, MS Majāmīʿ 315 (see table 1).[47]

It is puzzling that Zakī first selected one work on the olfactory qualities of flowers and one on former rulers of Egypt. Zakī's selective interest in the Alexandria manuscript seems to have moved from topic to topic and arguably

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43 Kratchkovsky, *Among Arabic Manuscripts*, 40.

44 Schacht, "Aḥmed Pascha Taimūr. Ein Nachruf," 256; the 1947–1948 catalogue corrects Schacht's estimation of the library's holdings from 12,000 to more than 19,000 volumes.

45 Schacht, "Aḥmed Pascha Taimūr. Ein Nachruf," 256; Kratchkovsky, *Among Arabic Manuscripts*, 40.

46 Schacht remarks that it was Taymūr's "larger-than-life modesty" (*übergroße Bescheidenheit*) that kept him from publishing more of his extensive research. Schacht, "Aḥmed Pascha Taimūr. Ein Nachruf," 256.

47 Oddly enough, MS Majāmīʿ 315 does not have a Taymūriyya call number. Yet, it carries his stamp on the first and last page, once in red and once in blue ink.

TABLE 3.1 Comparison of contents in Taymūr's and Zakī's copying acts from the Alexandria autograph

Title	Translation	MS Alex 2208d	MS Taymūriyya	MS Zakiyya
al-Niḥla li-mā warada fī l-nakhla	The gift regarding what is found on the date palm	1	MS Majāmīʿ 315/6	MS 375
ʿUnwān al-rasāʾil fī maʿrifat al-awāʾil	The model of epistles regarding the knowledge of the first generations	2	MS Tārīkh 1467	MS 364
Irtiyāḥ al-khawāṭir fī maʿrifat al-awākhir	Delight of the minds regarding the knowledge of the later generations	3	MS Tārīkh 1468	MS 363
Risāla fī l-fīl	Treatise on the elephant	4	MS Majāmīʿ 315/9	MS 361
Laqsh al-ḥanak fī mā warada fī l-samak	Conversation of the palate regarding what is found on the fish	5	MS Majāmīʿ 315/8	MS 373
Sharḥ al-ṣudūr fī mā ruwiya fī l-fakhkh wa-l-ʿuṣfūr	Opening the chest regarding what is transmitted about the snare and the sparrow	6	MS Majāmīʿ 315/10	MS 374
Ibtisām al-thughūr ʿammā qīla fī nafʿ al-zuhūr	The smile of the front teeth regarding what is said about the benefits of flowers	7	MS Majāmīʿ 315/7	MS 357
Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb fī manṭiq al-ṭayr wa-l-dawābb	The lovers' gift regarding the logic of bird and beast	8	MS Majāmīʿ 315/11	MS 360
Araj al-nasamāt fī aʿmār al-makhlūqāt	The fragrance of breath regarding the age of creatures	9	MS Majāmīʿ 315/4	–
al-Mulḥa fī-mā warada fī aṣl al-subḥa	The witty tale about what is found on the origins of the rosary	10	MS Majāmīʿ 315/5	–
Nafaḥāt al-zahr fī dhawq ahl al-ʿaṣr	The flower fragrance regarding the taste of the contemporaries	11	MS Majāmīʿ 315/2	–
al-Taʿrīf li-fann al-taṣḥīf	The instruction about the art of faulty reading	12	MS Majāmīʿ 315/3	–
al-ʿUqūd al-durriyya fī l-umarāʾ al-miṣriyya	The pearl necklace regarding the Egyptian amīrs	13	MS Majāmīʿ 315/1	MS 358

in several intervals, resulting in the minimal clusters of their call numbers. These call numbers could, however, also result from a different circumstance, namely that he had several other manuscripts copied in Alexandria at the same time. It is likely that one copyist worked on the manuscript at hand, while others took to copying other manuscripts. That not all of the copies listed above

constitute one larger cluster seems to be a result of other copyists working at a faster pace. This might explain the large gap following the rather sizable hadith work *ʿUnwān al-rasāʾil* (the following copied work is ten call numbers away). Can we further deduce from the call numbers, which do not comply with the order of works in the Alexandria manuscript, a certain hierarchy of desire? Did Zakī prioritize those works to be copied which appear under an earlier call number? This was certainly the case with regard to those works that were not copied at all. Or could the new order which Ibn Ṭūlūn's works acquired in his library also result from the working schedule of the local copyists? Whereas in Zakī's case I could only attempt an answer with recourse to conjecture, the agency of the collector becomes much clearer in Taymūr's case. It is particularly visible in MS Majāmīʿ 315, as this MTM contains and reorganises the majority of works contained in the Alexandra manuscript.

MS Majāmīʿ 315 is a thick volume of 533 pages measuring 22.7 × 17.2 cm, with 15 lines of text each. Headings are written in red ink and larger script, aligned centrally on the page. The paper is of good quality and in white colour. It bears a very prominent watermark reading "Gouvernement Egyptien 1915–1917." The dating of the copy is made even more precise by a note on a separate brown leaf: 1336/1917–1918 (the copyist is not mentioned). The page's centre is occupied by a table of contents, which gives the eleven works in the order listed in the table above. Only two works from the source compilation are missing. It is possible that they were excluded on purpose. Both were hadith works and would have weakened Taymūr's new organisation of the remaining contents. Other, smaller works using hadith were, however, retained in the new MTM. Another explanation can be found in the materiality of the new copies. As each page contains considerably less text than Ibn Ṭūlūn's autographs, MS Majāmīʿ 315 was already a thick volume; the inclusion of the two lengthy hadith works would have increased the size of the manuscript to more than one thousand pages.[48] In my opinion, the two aspects cannot be fully separated from each other, but both weighed in on the decision to create three manuscripts out of one.

That MS Majāmīʿ 315 was conceived as a new MTM of Ibn Ṭūlūn works already becomes apparent from its table of contents, which immediately familiarises the reader with the entirety of what they can expect to find within this book. Admittedly, the Alexandria manuscript also contained a table of contents, but the one in the new MTM imposes a very distinct order on the original contents. First of all, it moves the title on rulers of Egypt to the first position, followed

48 MSS Tārikh 1467 and 1468 contain 123 folios and 117 folios respectively.

by another historiographical work, *Nafaḥāt al-zahr fī dhawq ahl al-ʿaṣr*. Much of the remainder of the manuscript was reorganised according to some understanding of nature. This cluster is now introduced by the seemingly most general text on *makhlūqāt*.

Two works do not fit into this thematic restructuring (*al-Taʿrīf li-fann al-taṣḥīf* and *al-Mulḥa fī-mā warada fī aṣl al-subḥa*). They might owe their places to the manuscript being copied quire by quire. They do follow after the same work as in the source manuscript. Even in light of Taymūr's reorganisation of the contents or of Zakī's extraction of individual works, the materiality of the original manuscript retained a certain impact on the new copies.

6 Conclusion

For the longest part of its history, Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph corpus remained restricted to its original location. However, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the corpus was dispersed in a global distribution. Since around 1900, his works on the history of Syria and Damascus in particular have received renewed attention, as they fit neatly into narratives of first the *Naḥda* and then both Arab and Syrian national historiography. In the first decade after the foundation of the Arab Academy in Damascus alone, fifteen articles in their journal addressed works of his.[49] At the same time, an unknown number of his works and his autograph manuscripts might still be stowed away in private libraries, about many of which we have practically no information. Both these phenomena conjointly create difficulties for researchers.

In light of these uncertainties, this contribution has chosen a different path by analysing exemplary modes of engagement with that corpus, which in turn had their own effect on the resurgence of the reception of Ibn Ṭūlūn's oeuvre in the last century and a half. As a large part of this oeuvre survives in autograph form, I have focused on questions of materiality regarding those engagements. The first case study has looked at the creation of the corpus as the basis for a continuing reception, especially of Ibn Ṭūlūn's short writings. The second case study has demonstrated how long-lived the interest in Ibn Ṭūlūn's works really was; it indicates that some part of his oeuvre always found a readership. MS 3317 was initially valued in a Damascene context for its local historical contents, and then, once it moved out of Damascus, its more devotional contents had more

49 Torsten Wollina, "Placing Ibn Tulun: Evidence from the Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿilmi al-ʿarabi," in: *Damascus Anecdotes*, 15/09/2018, https://thecamel.hypotheses.org/335.

of an appeal. Finally, when it entered its current holding place, its value lay in its status as an Ibn Ṭūlūn autograph compilation that could be restored from its changed form. On the other hand, the third case study shifts the focus to an intermediate engagement through the creation of copies. This differs from the former decisively in the way that the text of the manuscript was acquired. While Taymūr, in particular, enacted his own vision of order upon the contents, this did not mean a definitive break with the original's materiality. Meanwhile, the temporality of manuscript reproduction becomes apparent in Zakī's copies from the same source manuscript.

The two later cases thus build upon the first case study. I have proposed that the tools which allow us to reconstruct Ibn Ṭūlūn's autograph corpus to a certain degree were all embedded within a concise strategy of preservation on the author's part. In conclusion, I would like to take a step back from presenting it as such with full certainty. Perhaps I should be more careful not to confuse result with intent. The uniform appearance of Ibn Ṭūlūn's autographs seems to follow a strategy that identified the manuscripts as part of his corpus within the vast holdings of the ʿUmariyya. But can we assume that Ibn Ṭūlūn anticipated the dispersal of that institution and thus his corpus? That future collectors would have recognised his name on the title pages, if not his handwriting? Can we really say that Ibn Ṭūlūn planned his autograph compilations as eclectic selections from diverse fields of knowledge in anticipation of the dispersal of his corpus? Surely, the sheer numbers of his writerly production would have allowed for compilations focused on single disciplines. In the end, it seems more likely that this seeming lack of organisation was the result of time constraints—after all, Ibn Ṭūlūn endowed his corpus close to the end of his life and, arguably, reconfigured it in this context.

At several points in this contribution, I have pointed out the importance of the materiality of manuscripts for the outcome of people's textual engagement with them. The simple basis of making books from quires which, in turn, are built through the arrangement of paper leaves, one put into the other, puts certain constraints on the production—and alteration—of writing. None of the cases presented here could escape from this simple fact. Book-binding techniques entailed further constraints for the size and format of compilations. Consequently, the work of copyists was attuned to these conditions. Both Ibn Ṭūlūn and the copyists hired by Taymūr and Zakī had to consider the organisation of leaves into quires. Thus, even where the latter attempted to reorganise contents to match a changed understanding of order, this system was abandoned when it conflicted with the material organisation into quires. The same must be said for Ibn Ṭūlūn's own organisation of content. Thus, the specific placement of short works, in particular, probably did not follow a system of

knowledge organisation, but rather served to "fill the gaps" at the end of the last quires of larger works. I am convinced that a social codicology should embrace such "discrepancies and irritations."[50] Exactly because they point to shortcomings of more or less abstract notions of knowledge, they reveal specific social conditions and concerns that informed manuscript production, engagement, and, ultimately, codicology itself.

Manuscripts Consulted

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Beirut, Jafet Library:	MS 920.02: I 132.tA
Cairo, Dār al-Kutub:	MS Majāmīʿ Taymūr 79
	MS Majāmīʿ 315
	MS Majāmīʿ 759
	MS Tārīkh 1467
	MS Tārīkh 1468
	MS Tārīkh Taymūr 2058
Damascus, Asad National Library:	MS 7498
Dublin, Chester Beatty Library:	MS 3317
Istanbul, Süleymaniye:	MS Reis ül-Küttab 1213

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PART 2

Texts beyond Reading: Sensing Manuscripts

⁘

4

The Social Life of Musical Manuscripts in Eighteenth-Century Morocco: The Case of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik*

Carl Dávila

> *I just couldn't make that link between text and community, because the way I was taught about it, they were such separate realms. But they're not …*
>
> OLLY AKKERMAN, "Secret Archives and Sacred Texts in Gujarat" *Ottoman History Podcast #394* (December 23, 2018)

1 Introduction

The theme of this anthology, social codicology, represents an approach to manuscript works and the texts they bear that has lain on the margins of manuscript studies for a very long time, but whose full significance has only just begun to be appreciated. The idea that the form of a written work follows its function and the purpose for which it was created has long been a fundamental assumption in the field. For example, when looking at a pre-modern Arabic *dīwān*, you can see that the texts you have before you are poems because of the way the words are arranged on the page, even if you know nothing about Arabic. They are set out in lines, usually with one caesura in the middle, a form designed, among other considerations, to make the text easier to read, to mirror to some extent the metrical and recitational expectations, and to highlight the important end rhyme.

In much the same way, the layout of poetry on the page in an anthology can be diagnostic: Departures from this format may signal departures in linguistic register and other matters of style, or in the function or intended use of the work. With a few exceptions (such as the *muthallath* type of didactic verse), pre-modern poetry arranged in strophes, or with multiple caesurae (to highlight internal rhymes within the line), can mark the work as post-classical

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before one has read a single word, which may then carry with it expectations about the register of language in use, whether or not it adheres to the traditional poetic metres and licenses, and perhaps even whether it was created to be sung. In short, many considerations have helped to establish the marking of text as poetry quite firmly in Arabic letters. Conversely, an anthologist who departs from these conventions risks undermining the text's use-value.

But the conventions of representing poetry on the page carry social meaning as well. Departing from these conventions of visual presentation risks undermining the reader's perception of the work's social value. Poetry is, of course, the idiom of literary prestige in Arab culture. This is so obvious that one notes it only in order to underscore the fact that the arrangement on the page consequently imparts a certain prestige to the written text. The reader approaches a poetic text differently from prose, with different expectations, a different understanding of the level of discourse that will be in play, and a concomitant construction of the work's social meaning or value. (And yonder lies Arabic poetics, beyond the scope of this essay.)[1]

Considerations like these have long been taken for granted in traditional manuscript studies, without a great deal of attention being devoted to their larger social implications. Social codicology, in contrast, has the potential to bring a new focus upon the social and cultural implications of a manuscript's "functions," with accompanying implications for understanding the form and content in deeper ways. Interweaving concern for social realities with material and/or formal considerations brings forward a number of interesting questions, among them: What socio-cultural practices are manifested or embedded in the document? How might a more careful scrutiny of its form and content lead us to a more sophisticated understanding of its functions, and vice-versa? And most significantly for this essay: How does a given written work come to embody meanings in various social domains?

This essay focuses on one work, *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* ("Al-Ḥā'ik's Notebook"), an anthology of song texts originally compiled in Fez by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥā'ik (d. after 1788), and in particular one exemplar: manuscript #144 found at the Khizāna Dāwūdiyya in Tetouan (hereafter D144). This anthology will serve as a test case for approaching manuscripts and their texts from three related dimensions, each one more or less overlapping with the others, in order to suggest a framework for exploring the complex relationship that obtains between the text of the work, its form, and its function:

1 This and the remarks that follow of course apply mainly to "non-modern" forms of poetry in Arabic. Modernist poetry in Arabic, as in other languages, is another animal altogether.

– The meaning (that is, the *value*) the work holds as a function of its social frame,
– The manuscript as *objectified cultural capital*,

and emerging from these two,

– The social life (and afterlives) of the manuscript.

Each of these dimensions requires some explanation of how they can be applied to a work like *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* in its various iterations, but understanding them together may lead to a fuller appreciation of how complex processes of signification and embodiment bind these anthologies into the social frameworks within which they circulate. Form and content come to be seen, not merely as products of function, but as mutually implicated with function within a larger social frame that may account for both the social life and the complex and diverse afterlives of the work and its specific exemplars.

2 Value and the Social Life of Cultural Capital

Written works are created for one or several purposes. They are copied and circulate narrowly or widely within and across communities (of users and non-users); they may come to represent or stand in for institutions or traditions or indeed any number of socially informed belief systems, values, and so on; and just as is true for other material objects, they circulate as items of economic and social exchange and can be repurposed, reframed, and revalued within and beyond the symbolic systems that conditioned their creation, often even while retaining traces of their "original" purposes, values and so on.

What is *literature* after all—simply a thing (or a body of things) intended primarily to be read, or is it also a more complex socio-cultural phenomenon, even an ethos, that engages with larger domains of intellectual and social life? Is "literature" merely a private experience, an exchange between the author and reader we might term *Lesevergnügen*? Or does it also embody interpersonal dimensions not focused entirely upon the reader?

There is obviously a robust, often self-referential body of works that wrestle with the question of what it means to speak of *literature*, usually defined by its relationship to processes of production and/or interpretation. Alongside these approaches, however, one may engage more directly with the position of the reader (or more appropriately for our purposes, the *user*) within the social frame. Conceptions of value and meaning may be employed to unpack that position and the ways in which the manuscript comes to represent or embody it. The theoretical frame adopted in this essay thus bears some affinity with

reader-response varieties of literary theory, although such theories usually are more concerned with the construction of linguistic meaning than with social value, as such.

On the other hand, one of the limitations inherent in studies of value and meaning within the usual conceptions of literature has been their typical focus on "modern" socio-economic relations in which literary objects seem almost inevitably to be reduced to "commodities." Although the literal meaning of this word has also to do with usefulness, it is loaded nowadays with mainly economic connotations that are not so appropriate to this discussion because the works in question are situated within stereotypically "traditional" modes of production and consumption, in which personal relations overshadow the institutional and mass-production contexts that preoccupy much of the literature. In other words, these manuscripts are not notable for their economic value as such, and so do not sit comfortably within frameworks that too firmly emphasize economic exchange. All social life is in some sense "exchange," but that does not mean that the language of economy (commodity, consumption, and so on) is always the best way to describe it. Indeed, the argument here rests upon the insight that "value" and "meaning" are ways of talking about something else more fundamental to human experience: the importance that people attach to action within the social frame and the relationships that it generates. We shall therefore be reading theoretical frameworks against the grain, in order to tease from them the more useful elements that might actually be relevant to the non-modern ("traditional") economic and social frameworks in play here.

Coming at the problem from another angle, Roy Harris in *Rethinking Writing*[2] observes that written language exists to integrate various forms of communicative and even non-communicative acts. Such a view places a literary work like *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* in a much more comprehensive context, revealing it as something much larger than simply a collection of speech acts. Writing may have evolved in ancient times as an effort to "freeze" speech or enhance the memory of it, but in societies characterized by extensive reliance upon the written word, writing becomes capable of "speaking" for itself, in its own way(s) and bearing functions in and of itself that may in some contexts transcend the boundaries of what we normally think of as the meaning of the text per se.

As a simple example, imagine the cover of a songbook. It is of course intended to tell a potential reader what to expect from the pages inside, and its

2 Roy Harris, *Rethinking Writing* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000).

typeface and design will have been created both to generate interest and to evoke the spirit of the contents. Yet an image of the same book cover, when posted on a social-media platform in the context of an announcement of a concert, can operate in an iconic way to communicate a great deal of cultural (i.e., not explicitly textual) information about the event, the social position of the organizers or performers, expectations about the audience, and so on. The actual text of the book cover has not changed at all, nor has the literal meaning of the words, but the title of the book (as well as its typeface and presentation) encourages it to take on larger meanings. Because it calls to mind the texts between the covers, the book has come to serve the organizers of the concert by importing socially significant details of the music's cultural-symbolic realities into the post. The text on the book cover has helped to integrate the songbook's social meaning into the communicative act of the concert advertisement.

It is important to keep questions like these in mind, because traditional manuscript studies have rarely considered a) how the symbolic, referential, and even iconic potential of works can condition their form and contents, and b) how these reframings can sometimes point us toward layers or dimensions of meaning in the text itself that might otherwise go unnoticed. Ultimately, a songbook like *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* is not only a work of "mere" literature but also a sophisticated signifier communicating larger social meanings associated with the song tradition it represents, such as traditionalism, prestige, and authenticity, because meaning may converge with value, and value with cultural capital. The manuscript's social life is informed by these factors, but it also informs them in turn. It both operates and is operated upon, in a back-and-forth movement of signification and embodiment that is not unique to this work or this social-cultural context.

Arjun Appadurai, in his introduction to the book *The Social Life of Things*, reminds us that the meanings of things "… are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories."[3] While Appadurai himself seems mainly concerned in his essay with *commodities* (that is, things-as-they-circulate—either engaging with or pushing against Marx), and accordingly modern, production-consumption economies, it should be obvious that the social life of objects is not limited to their circulation through exchange but also encompasses their positions when they are "at rest." The social relations that determine how a thing moves do not alone necessarily define its value, which may also derive from the

3 Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodoties and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5.

social meaning(s) associated with its *immobility*. When an object is regarded as unique and intended for display as well as for its material uses, its meaning may be measured as much by the cultural attributes it embodies (prestige, exclusivity, etc.) as by its "velocity."

Indeed, the social life of the thing may appear to be as much a function of the limitations on its "sociability" as the fact of its tendency to circulate. We might even say that a thing may have *no social life at all* (or nearly none, or one so sharply constrained that it may not appear to exist) and yet still bear significant social meaning by virtue of its simple presence in an individual's hand or library.[4] I would argue as well that it is effectively impossible to determine across all cases which came first, the "chicken" of the object itself or the "egg" of the social value(s) it embodies.

As David Graeber observes, *value* is not limited to *exchange value*, because the various domains within which we use the term are not as distinct as they may appear to be. In his search for an anthropological definition of value, he points out that in English, the word may be used in three contexts: *economic value* (the cost of things, monetary or otherwise), *social values* (the significance attaching to objects and actions), and *linguistic value* (meaning). These three domains, which we are accustomed to thinking of as distinct, are in fact phases of a single phenomenon, the fact that humans attach significance to actions within the social contexts that form our lives.[5]

Social values seem obviously to be driven by relativistic cultural considerations, but even the economic cost of a thing is by no means merely an objective measure of its worth. Traditional economics is very good at explaining why a given object costs a given amount of money in a given context, but it is notably bad at explaining why people in one society value one thing and not another. Why, for example, do some people in the U.S. prefer pickup trucks to land rovers, even when the two cost about the same amount of money? They may be equally functional and equally expensive, but in the end the often elaborate social rituals, even mythologies, around pickup trucks demonstrate that the preference for those has less to do with material considerations than with conceptions of tradition, masculinity, patriotism, and so on. Owning and driving a land rover makes an entirely different social statement.[6] The economic

4 I do not actually have to see the painting *Guernica* on the wall to know that the Reina Sofia's displaying of it means that that institution is one of the elite art museums in the world.

5 David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

6 The entire industry of marketing would seem to have been built largely upon this principle: To sell one company's product in a field of similar products requires attaching it to social val-

cost of the thing (what people are willing to pay for it) may influence who owns it to some degree, but it does not really account for its value in particular social contexts.

Seemingly, the odd one out in Graeber's formulation is linguistic meaning, but it is in fact cut from the same cloth (and intimately engaged with the subject of this article). The meanings of words are related to economic or social value because they are entirely the result of how we use them in social interactions. The meaning of *shirt* rests upon the reality of all the things we use the word to indicate, so in a universe without shirts, the word would not exist. Moreover, both the specific meaning *and* the socio-cultural implication are important. *Shirt* and *blouse* refer to approximately the same kind of garment, but one would never regard them as completely interchangeable. Anthropologically speaking, the meaning of a word appears the moment we use it to talk with someone about something.

Hence, a social value such as *prestige* cannot be separated from the economic value attaching to the objects and actions that impart prestige, nor from the linguistic values (meanings) attaching to the use of words or texts that "speak prestige" to their users and hearers. They are of a piece, bound together by how people evaluate (i.e., attach importance to) behaving, using things, and speaking in particular ways in social contexts and thus in the construction and maintenance of social relations. All of this turns upon the contexts in which prestige has social implications. A poetic-musical tradition that bears significant social prestige does so because people a) have a meaning-full concept of prestige in their socio-cultural repertoire, and b) evaluate the tradition as meaningful in one or more domains. The more domains, and the greater the depth of the engagement in each, the greater the sense, the aura, of prestige. And so it goes with other socially valued concepts, like traditionalism, honour, erudition, generosity, and so on. For the same reasons that social (and economic and linguistic) contexts change, values (such as prestige or traditionalism) shift in meaning, as do the objects that signal or embody them. It is precisely the nature of the underlying value-matrix that generates a manuscript's social life, and the mutability of that value-matrix makes its "afterlife" appear.

One way that the social life of an object like a manuscript may manifest can be seen in its ability to reflect (or embody) its owner's "cultural capital." It may do so because of the way in which it engages value in all these dimensions,

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ues beyond its use-value, the "folklore of industrial man" studied by Marshall McLuhan in *The Mechanical Bride* (New York: Vanguard, 1951).

within a particular social frame. And by the same token, the social life of such a manuscript can be expected to change as the value-structure upon which that social life stands changes.

In "Forms of Capital," Pierre Bourdieu employs the idea of cultural capital to explain the role that education plays in the maintenance of capital (i.e., the ability to appropriate the products of others' labour), how it disguises power-capital, and why it represents an expensive but productive investment of economic resources. In doing so, he reduces all social interactions to economic terms, which, if understood too crudely, is problematic for reasons laid out by Graeber. But if we take *economic* in Bourdieu's work to refer rather to the general fact of *exchange* in social life, then cultural capital may be seen as a way to describe social inequality as embodied not merely in the brute force of economic domination but also in the non-material facts—the meanings, the values—of social exchange. To the extent that cultural capital functions as a value-signifier, it does so within economic, social, and linguistic dimensions.

Bourdieu goes on to describe cultural capital as existing in three forms: *embodied* ("long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body"), *objectified* ("cultural goods" which are the "realization of theories"), and *institutionalized* (e.g., "educational qualifications" which "guarantee" cultural capital).[7] Of the three, the objectified state would seem to be the most relevant way to describe the cultural capital inhering in a work like *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik*. Each exemplar—whether a fine manuscript like D144, a musician's notebook, or a modern print edition—is a "cultural" item whose importance lies in the "theory" of its relationship to the prestigious performed tradition, which itself bears a range of cultural and social-hierarchical associations. It is thus less of an independent object than one element in a web or network of objects and actions that together signal certain social values, including (but not limited to) some that imply "capital" in the sense that Marx and Bourdieu used the word, namely in the sense of the ability to appropriate resources.

Bourdieu recognizes the complicated interrelationship between the object and the value it possesses, pointing out that an object that represents objectified cultural capital may be "transmitted" without "appropriating" the cultural capital itself. For that, one must also acquire the embodied cultural capital that makes "consuming" the object valued (in the case of the song anthologies, what makes both "owning" them and "using" them meaningful).

7 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," trans. Richard Nice, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 243–248.

We may describe the social life of a manuscript like D144, then, in terms of the objectified cultural capital it embodies, understanding that that capital stands entirely upon a particular value-matrix deriving from a collection of social, economic, and linguistic values associated with actions within the social frame relating to a certain poetic-musical tradition, actions that signal attachment to highly-valued characteristics like erudition, traditionalism, and so on, and which then inform social relationships among users of songbooks, aficionados, performers, etc. Those social values (that cultural capital) may be detected in the form, content, and function of the object, but they are also contingent. When outside forces, such as technological, economic, or political changes, threaten to transform the society at large, they also threaten the foundations of the value-system which supports the social life of the object.

In this way it becomes possible to talk about both the social life of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* (and D144 in particular) as it relates to form and function, as well as the *afterlife* of the manuscript in the wake of social transformations. To understand this, we must consider the manuscript in its socio-cultural context.

3 *Al-āla, Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik*, and D144

Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik is an anthology of song texts associated with the Andalusian music tradition of Morocco, known colloquially as *al-āla*. This musical genre is one of several similar traditions found today across the modern North African nations. It comprises perhaps 800 or 900 songs (*ṣanā'iʿ*, sg. *ṣanʿa*) as well as a handful of instrumental pieces, structured around the large ensemble known as a *nūba*, of which there are eleven in the contemporary repertoire. *Al-āla* probably owes its origins ultimately to the courtly music of the Islamic period in Iberia (al-Andalus), though this connection is almost impossible to trace conclusively. There is no direct documentation of the music (no practical form of musical notation was in widespread use at the time), nor do the texts reveal much. The oldest surviving indication of a *nūba* repertoire as such in al-Andalus (from an encyclopedia compiled by Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, who died in Cairo in 651/1253) suggests that the repertoire at that time strongly emphasized songs composed by Andalusi individuals, but the modern North African repertoire, as defined by song anthologies dating back to the eighteenth century, draws on the whole of the Arabic poetic tradition, east and west (embracing selections of poetry going back even to Ḥassān b. Thābit, who died ca. 54/674), and includes a majority of song texts that are of unknown authorship. Yet the musical characteristics today differ enough from the musical

traditions of the eastern Mediterranean that a distinct origin in the Arab-Islamic west is more than plausible.

Despite the uncertainty of the connection, the modern *al-āla* retains significant cultural prestige in the public mind by virtue of this association with the cultural florescence of al-Andalus.[8] Enjoying significant patronage from the national government, as well as from private music lovers' associations, *al-āla* serves as a kind of national classical music, with its own conservatories, festivals, and gala performances attended by the wealthier classes.

The *nūba* tradition as known today has been preserved throughout its history by both oral and written means. The performed versions of these songs have always been taught orally through rote memorization, which remains the preferred mode among traditional performers and aficionados. Since at least the early eighteenth century, however, scholars and aficionados of the music have collected the texts in more or less comprehensive anthologies, often accompanied by discussions of the legitimacy of music as a field of study, the anthologist's interest in the subject, and music theory. Consequently, the tradition has been marked for at least three centuries by the interweaving of oral and literary processes of preservation and transmission across generations. This cultural ethos of "mixed orality" has fundamentally conditioned the production of the manuscript anthologies discussed here.[9]

In this regard, while these works may represent the musical tradition, they embody it only imperfectly. The anthologies are, after all, collections of repertoires that would not exist without the performed tradition. Given that the performed *ṣanāʾiʿ* typically involve repetitions, instrumental passages between words (and even between syllables of individual words), and often elaborate use of nonsense syllables (*tarāṭīn*, such as *hā nā nā* and *yā lā lā*)—none of which are reproduced in the songbook—it is impossible to learn the performed *ṣanʿa* from the written one alone. One needs someone who already knows it (or nowadays a recording, which is practically the same thing, though widely regarded as insufficient), in order to derive the sung version from the written text. Consequently, these works are much more than collections of poetry: They are also signifiers of the social frameworks of their use, *and* of the larger performed tradition that they in some sense embody, however incompletely.

8 On this topic, see for example Jonathan Shannon, *Performing al-Andalus* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015). For a full appreciation of the significance of Andalusi musical culture, see Dwight Reynolds, *The Musical Heritage of Al-Andalus* (Oxford: Routledge, 2021).

9 For a more elaborate history of this tradition, see Carl Dávila, *The Andalusian Music of Morocco: History, Society and Text* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2013). Concerning mixed orality in particular, see Part 2 of the book.

Moreover, the ability to read and be able to derive the sung version from the written page marks the owner as an individual with significant cultural capital in the context of Moroccan society. The slippage between the oral and the literary thus highlights the social lives, the social contexts and functions, that have occasioned the creation of these anthologies and, in part, conditioned their construction.

Furthermore, there is another cultural logic behind presenting the repertoire as poetry per se, which involves the value placed on poetry in the broader Arabic culture and the historical lack of a socially valued way to represent songs on the page. The ability to read and understand poetry combines with the prestige of the poetic genre itself, linking the texts (and hence, the performed tradition as well) to the grand heritage that is poetry in Arabic and imparting all on the owner/user of the songbook. The form, content, and use(s) of the anthologies of this musical tradition do not operate in simple cause-and-effect relationships, but actually inform one another.

Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik was not the first effort at compiling a more-or-less comprehensive anthology of the texts of *al-āla*.[10] But in the decades after its creation, al-Ḥā'ik's work came to be recognized as bearing a unique relationship to the tradition as a whole. Exactly how and when this came to be is impossible to determine now, for the evidence surely lay in the day-to-day lives of musicians and audiences, probably in many places in Morocco. Perhaps it was partly a result of the *Kunnāsh* being copied more frequently (only one exemplar of al-Bū'iṣāmī's anthology has survived, suggesting that few copies were ever made). However it happened, certainly by the middle of the nineteenth century *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* had become the reference work *par excellence*.

In the 1880s, one Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Jāmi'ī (d. after 1886) was commissioned by the Moroccan Sultan al-Ḥasan I (d. 1894) to assemble another anthology of *al-āla*, but even this was understood to be a re-compilation or revision of the *Kunnāsh*, based upon the repertoire current in his day (at least in Fez, though not necessarily elsewhere in Morocco). This *Majmū' al-Jāmi'ī* differs from its precursor in the arrangement of *nūbāt* and some of its content: Quite a number of songs in the various *Kunnāsh* manuscripts are not to be found in it; a few songs (or individual lines in songs) are found in it that do not appear in any of the *Kunnāsh* manuscripts; and others are reduced to two or three lines. This is relevant to our social-codicological analysis as well, since this anthology probably represents the influence of various regional

10 Muḥammad al-Bū'iṣāmī created one about a half-century earlier, embodied in a single, incomplete manuscript edited by Ibn 'Abd al-Jalīl in 1995.

sub-repertoires which seem to have come to the fore in the century after al-Ḥāʾik. Nevertheless, the al-Jāmiʿī anthology testifies to and depends upon the value assigned to the *Kunnāsh*. Indeed even today, many copies of this work deposited in libraries and archives across northern Morocco are identified as "*Kunnāsh al-Ḥāʾik bi-tartīb al-Jamiʿī*" ("*Kunnāsh al-Ḥāʾik* in al-Jāmiʿī's arrangement").

To judge from the diversity of the surviving manuscripts, the history of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥāʾik* is complicated and has yet to be worked out satisfactorily. The main subject of this essay, D144, bears a date earlier than any other existing exemplar, but it differs in content from all other surviving manuscripts (it contains some *nūbāt* that are not known today and some *ṣanāʾiʿ* that are not found in other manuscripts or the modern repertoire, and it does not include others that appear in later manuscripts), and because some folios have been lost from the beginning, the anthologist's name no longer appears in it. What remains of its introduction, however, is entirely in keeping with the introductions to later manuscripts clearly attributed to al-Ḥāʾik, and the contents are also broadly similar to those manuscripts, including the use of some technical terminology in common with later iterations of the work.

The manuscript itself is 20 cm × 17 cm, executed on modern laid paper with no watermarks, and bound in a typical leather-board cover. The text has been rendered in an ornate *maghribī mabsūṭ* hand, fifteen lines to the page, in brown-black, red, and blue inks, and with the text block set in a red and blue frame (see fig. 4.1). Occasional green ink and gilt highlights are found in the early folios, especially in the text of a well-known poem about the melodic modes, *Ṭabāʾiʿ mā fī ʿālam al-kawn arbaʿun* ("The Natures of Created Things are Four") attributed to ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Wansharīsī (d. 955/1549?)[11] and the related illustration of the *shajrat al-ṭubūʿ* (the Tree of Modes that represents elements of the musical theory) that follows it (fig. 4.2).

An unknown number of pages has gone missing from the beginning of the document, and parts of the first folio that remains have been torn away. For this reason, neither the title of the work nor the anthologist's name are to be found in the manuscript. However, a note on the last page gives a date of 1202 AH (1788 CE, fig. 4.3), and the colophon indicates that the manuscript was "executed at the hand of its collector" (*nujiza…ʿalā yad jāmiʿihi*). Given that no

11 However, Manuela Cortés García shows that all but the last few lines in fact belong to the Andalusi literatus Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1374–1375)—further evidence of the tradition's Iberian roots. See Manuela Cortés García, "Nuevos datos para el estudio de la música en al-Andalus de dos autores granadinos: aš-Šuštārī e Ibn al-Jaṭīb," *Musical Oral del Sur* no. 1 (1995): 177–194.

FIGURE 4.1 A page from D144
COURTESY HASNA DAOUD / KHIZĀNA DĀWUDIYYA

FIGURE 4.2 *shajarat al-ṭubūʿ* from D144
COURTESY HASNA DAOUD / KHIZĀNA DĀWUDIYYA

other compiler of the tradition has ever been identified with this time period, neither in written documentation nor in oral tradition, and that what remains of the introduction, the work's overall structure, and the terminology used in it, all mirror exactly the characteristics of later manuscripts clearly identified with al-Ḥā'ik, there can be no doubt that D144 belongs within the stream of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* manuscripts. There is also no question that it is the earliest known exemplar of the *Kunnāsh*, and it may well be the original which lies behind later versions.

The images of D144 in figures 4.1–4.3 illustrate well that this version of "al-Ḥā'ik's Notebook" was not created merely as a reference work for a performer or ensemble leader. The use of coloured inks, especially in the elaborate rendering of the *shajarat al-ṭubū'*, goes well beyond the utility of a document meant to be carried about to rehearsals, to be used as a reference for teaching, and so on. Moreover, the care revealed in the copyist's hand, as shown in figures 4.1 and 4.2, as well as the relatively high quality of the paper the work was written on shows clearly that this songbook was created as a library piece, a work intended to be both read and seen.[12] The socio-cultural logic that lies behind this relies upon the relationship between *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* and the performed tradition in particular, and in the position of *al-āla* within the larger culture of Morocco more generally. In turn, these factors emerge from the regimes of value and cultural capital that underpin the social lives of the work itself and the musical-poetic tradition it has come to represent.

In contrast, we find many other manuscripts in various archives and private collections, some of which are much less elaborate and formal in their presentation. Figure 4.4 presents a good example, a page from manuscript 838 ج at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Rabat. It makes use of coloured inks, but the hand is looser, and the overall presentation is much more relaxed and informal. Moreover, it bears indications in red ink for the number of turns through the rhythmic cycle for each line. While it certainly represents a significant investment of time and resources (it contains the entire repertoire), it seems to have been intended for the practical uses of a musician or teacher, rather than as a display item.

Little is certain about the economic structures that framed the production of the manuscripts considered here, but study of the papers upon which they were executed offers some clues, because the quality of the materials used in

12 On the materiality of this and other examples of *nūba* manuscripts, see Carl Dávila, "Al-Ḥā'ik's Notebook, Part 1: Annotated Annals of the Anthologies of al-Āla," *Al Abhath* no. 67 (2019): 1–38.

FIGURE 4.3 The last pages of D144
COURTESY HASNA DAOUD / KHIZĀNA DĀWUDIYYA

them varied with time and the purpose of the copy being made. From the late eighteenth century through the late nineteenth century, we find either relatively high quality "modern" laid paper for the finer exemplars, pages from manufactured accounting notebooks for the less decorative versions, or occasionally more decorative copies (i.e., rendered with well-controlled hands in several ink colours) in such notebooks (fig. 4.5). By the beginning of the twentieth century, higher-quality, machine-made wove paper (often with distributors' dry stamps) predominate for the finer exemplars alongside general-use papers for less ostentatious copies. Although the materials that went into them were commercially produced, the various examples of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* clearly were not mass-produced commodities, but rather were copied individually. Some appear to be the product of personal interactions between the user and one or more calligrapher-copyists, while others were executed for practical forms of use, possibly by the users themselves.

Behind all this there was very likely a latter-day version of the ancient system of booksellers.[13] It seems that a person of means could arrange to have

13 See the description of this institution in Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, trans. Geoffrey French (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 51–53.

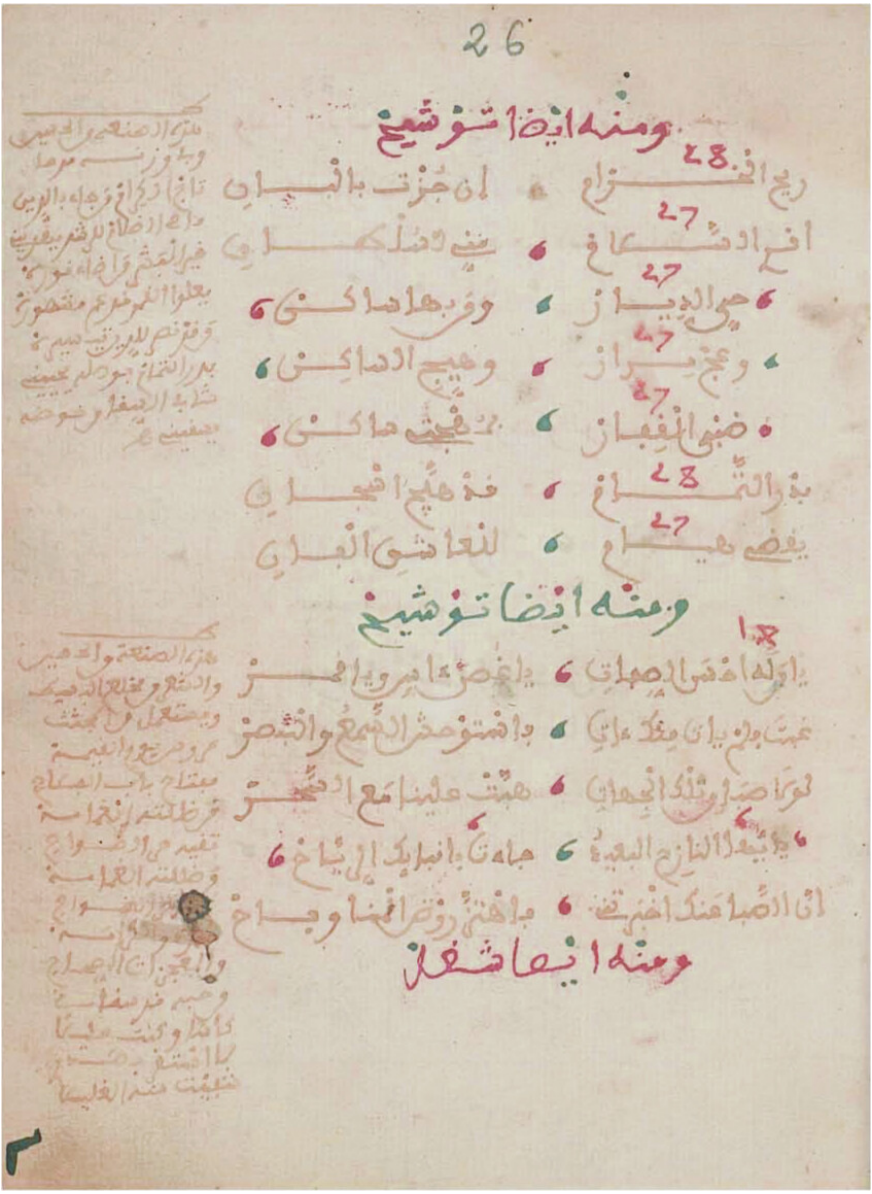

FIGURE 4.4 A page from ms. 858 ج
COURTESY LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU ROYAUME DU MAROC

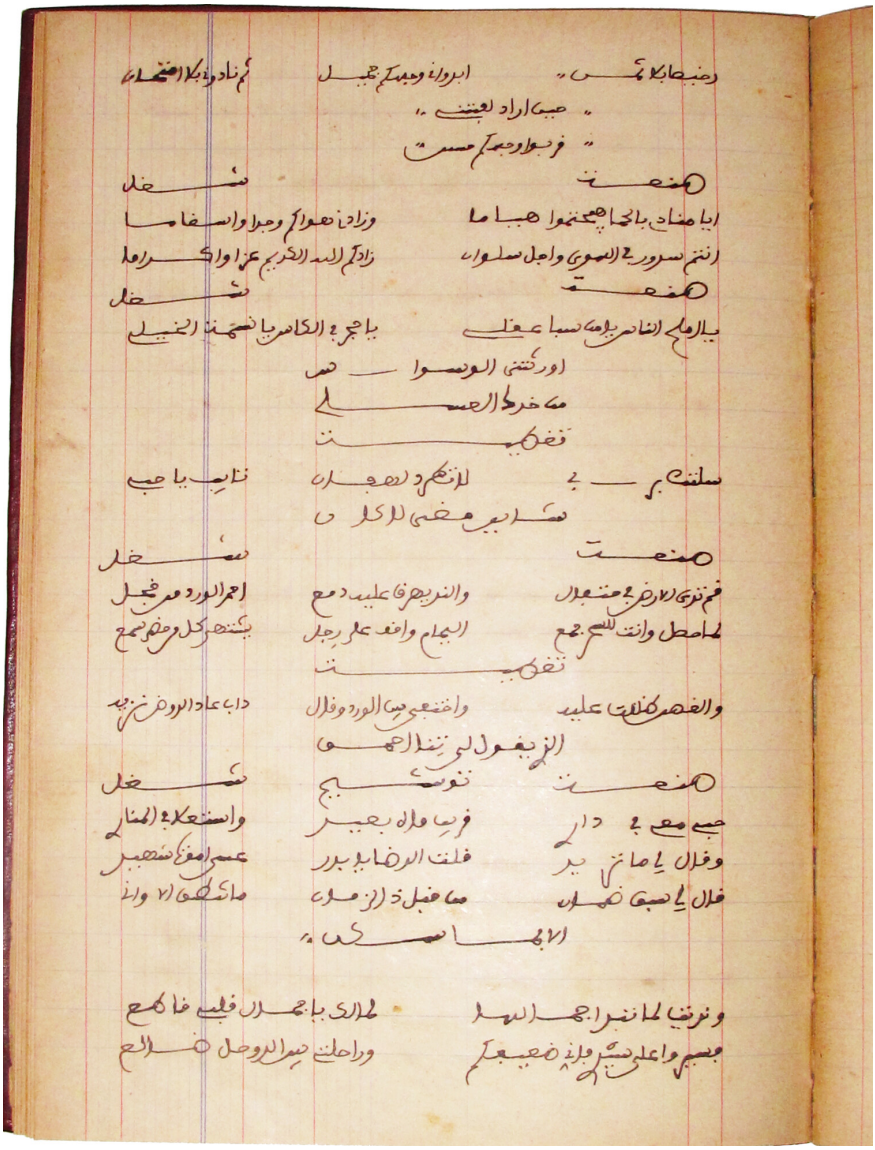

FIGURE 4.5 A page from an anonymous copy of the *Kunnāsh* executed in an accounting notebook
COURTESY DAR EL ALA

a fine copy of the *Kunnāsh* executed in an excellent hand by a local copyist on very nice paper that was available from one or two companies, while more pedestrian copies might be made on whatever commercial paper was available for personal use. For example, two sets of surviving al-Jāmiʿī manuscripts were each executed on paper with similar dry stamps in hands so similar as to suggest that each set derives from one copyist, who apparently used paper from one manufacturer for such work. Similarly, manufactured accounting books seem to have been an increasingly popular writing medium for this sort of work (the pages already being marked with lines and columns that facilitated the rendering of the poems, as in fig. 4.5). A number of late-nineteenth or early-twentieth-century exemplars attest to this.[14] Consequently, exchange value as such was more important to the production of the paper than it was to the social lives of the work in hand (even if the quality of the paper might to some degree index the social value of the finished product).

These manuscripts should therefore not be situated too firmly within regimes of exchange and "consumption." They were probably not understood as objects of significant commercial value (except perhaps by the professional copyists), but rather as bearers of repertoire with attendant use-values and linguistic and social meanings. If their economic value was significant, it was so as a marker of the owner's social status, not of the value of the manuscript itself.

4 Text, Repertoire, and Social Value

One key to grasping the position of D144 and its related manuscript tradition within their socio-cultural milieu is to recognize that although *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* (like its sister anthologies in other *nūba* traditions in North Africa) presents the texts in the form of poetry, its *function* is to re-present repertoire. The *nūba* is especially important to this discussion of the social lives of these anthologies, because song texts are grouped according to their *nūbāt*, which are then subdivided by rhythmic mode. In other words, the anthologies are organized according to performance practice, which is accordingly the first and most basic element in the social construction of these works that clearly separates them from a poetic *dīwān*, which is typically arranged according to other criteria, such as the author, theme, rhyme (*qawāfī*), poetic form (*qaṣīda*,

14 On which, see Carl Dávila, "Al-Ḥā'ik's Notebook, Part II: Managing a Medley of Musical Manuscripts" (forthcoming).

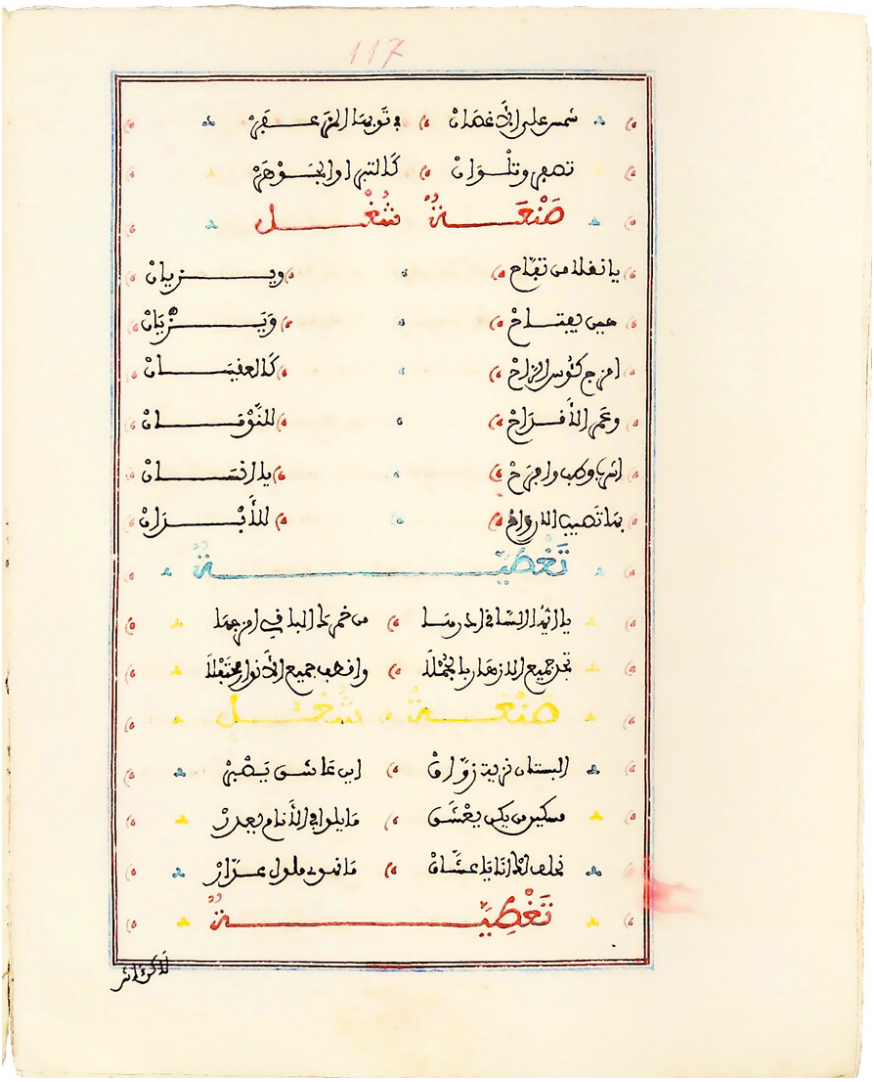

FIGURE 4.6 A page from the Bennānī al-Jāmi'ī manuscript at the Dar El Ala

muwashshaḥ, etc.), subject-matter, and so on. One could not reasonably see these Moroccan Andalusian music manuscripts as being exclusively anthologies of poetry.

The relationship between performance (clearly a socially situated practice) and text (which has a social life of its own) thereby drives structure, content, and use, so that the manuscript itself is easily identifiable as relating to the *al-āla* repertoire because its structure parallels that of the performed tradition.

For the same reason, a knowledgeable user can, for example, locate a specific text (such-and-such *ṣanʿa* in such-and-such movement of such-and-such *nūba*) even if the text is itself only minimally recognizable as reproducing the *ṣanʿa*-as-sung. The manuscript, in its conception, execution, and social position, therefore exists at the intersection of written text, performed repertoire, and practical use. The social life of this work is (or was) a function of all of them.

And yet beyond these considerations lies the curious ability of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥāʾik* not only to represent the repertoire, but also to represent the tradition as a whole as the definitive reference work, an ability rooted in questions of social values like prestige, erudition, and traditionalism. The tradition's historical associations, the style of the music, the style and content of the texts, and the ways that performances are socially constructed and presented, together mark *al-āla* in these ways. The form and content of the anthology intersect with its functionality in a way that imports the prestige-value of *al-āla* into the social construction of the work.

To the extent that aficionados trace the history of this musical tradition to al-Andalus, its associations with high culture begin there. The old Arabic sources indicate that from an early stage, art music as such (as opposed to work, mourning, or other "folk" music) among the Arabs was conceived as sound performed within organized rules and theory, deriving largely from Persian and Greek models.[15] What did not fall into the category of refined musical art was not termed *al-mūsīqā* as such.[16] The *nūba* tradition of Morocco belongs squarely within this domain of *al-mūsīqā* by virtue of its systematically defined melodic and rhythmic features (which also determine the structure of the parallel written tradition). Moreover, the standard narrative of its history in particular is usually held to begin with the arrival in Cordoba from the Middle East of the famous composer and man-of-taste, ʿAlī b. Nāfiʿ Ziryāb, in 206/822. He is said to have transformed the court culture and art music of the Umayyad emirate, ushering in an era of style and great sophistication, which later generations built upon, until the music itself was transplanted to North Africa.[17]

Yet although the art music of al-Andalus carried significant associations with erudition and highbrow taste (and therefore probably was not strongly associ-

15 For evidence, see the relevant parts of Ibn Khurradādhbih's (d. ca. 300/911) *Kitāb al-Lahw wa-l-malāhī*, ed. Ighnātyūs ʿAbduh Khalīfa al-Yawʿī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1969) and the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), Chapter V § 31.

16 See Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century* (London: Luzac, 1929), 48–49.

17 For a critical analysis of this standard narrative, see Dávila, *Andalusian Music of Morocco*, Part I.

ated with non-elites), when this high-class music made its way to North Africa, it ceased to be the purview of the elites alone and became equally the province of middling folk—still educated, but not of the true upper crust—through a process that is not entirely clear today.[18]

Moreover, with the advent of the Alawite dynasty in the seventeenth century, *al-āla* came to be regarded as a kind of national classical music associated with the monarchy itself, with significant implications for the social life of the music, including the songbooks. Since the end of the Protectorate period, the government has invested in institutional infrastructure intended to support the tradition and disseminate it throughout the country. A national conservatory system employs leading performers to teach the music as a pastime to students of all ages and to train successive generations of professional-level performers. Print versions of the repertoire serve as reference works in these conservatories.

Additionally, music lovers' associations (*jamʿiyyāt*) have sprung up in many cities, offering paid subscriptions to soirees (*ḥafalāt*) where leading ensembles perform, and the audience is educated in the tradition's history and culture. These *jamʿiyyāt* also team up with local and national government to sponsor Andalusian music festivals (*mahrajānāt*) that feature series of concerts presented in a gala format that highlight the tradition's highbrow associations. Finally, the status of this music as a national tradition has created a substantial passive audience of people who may not have a particular affinity to it, but who experience it as part of the soundscape of daily life, whether on speakers playing from the doorways of music shops or through radio and television broadcasts on important holidays.

Parallel with these developments, a market has sprung up for print anthologies of the song texts since the 1970s. Three books in particular (those by Binmansur, Binjallun, and al-Rāyis) have come to be regarded as authoritative representations of the tradition. The first two explicitly present themselves as editions or updates of al-Ḥāʾik's work, and the third embodies a comprehensive rendering of the al-Jāmiʿī material.[19] This modern print tradition clearly reflects the impact of several processes, including evolutions in the technologies of printing, the efforts of the government and others to promote *al-āla*,

18 This process initially probably had much to do with ethnic and communal identity among migrants from al-Andalus in cities like Fez and Tetouan. Sufi brotherhoods (*zawāyā*, some of them with strong ethnic Andalusi membership) probably played a role as well, although a more secular repertoire also survived alongside the mystical one. For more on this, see Dávila, *Andalusian Music of Morocco*, Chapter 3.

19 For a discussion of the modern print "canon," see Carl Dávila, *Nūbat Ramal al-Māya in Cultural Context: The Pen, the Voice, the Text* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2016), Chapter 3, especially 78–79.

and the simple economics of scale, which has made the expensive process of producing large written documents dramatically cheaper and thus more accessible to middle-class folk.[20]

In the face of this expansion of the audience beyond the palaces of the powerful, the texts of the songs and the musical style have continued to reflect a level of erudition and refined taste. To appreciate the lyrics and the subtleties of the music properly required—and continues to require—a commitment to both education and sophistication, and likewise to a certain sense of traditionalism (because of the genre's historical associations and the more recent efforts of the government and others to promote it precisely this way). An aficionado acquires these attributes by means of his or her association with *al-āla* through education, and through the social acts of attending concerts and/or by owning one or more anthologies of the song texts. In the heyday of handwritten manuscripts, a shelf work like D144, having been crafted from high-quality materials and executed in a fine hand, embodied its owner's personal investment in the tradition and the cultural capital that that represented.[21]

Just as the performed tradition is itself saturated with oral processes of preservation, the written texts also bear traces of orality interwoven into their content and organization, all the while answering to rather different values than the performed aspect of the tradition: The literary aspect of *al-āla* both represents and fails to embody the larger tradition that gave it birth. All this complexity emerges from social context.

5 Defining the Social Life and Afterlives of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik*

In general, the social life of a work has to do with how it functions within its owner's social milieu, understanding that its functions are conditioned by how its form and content engage with various domains of value. As one example, some works live the lives of sacrality. Their sacred form and content delimit how they are handled, by whom and in which circumstances.

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20 The social lives of these print editions in particular would be a worthy topic all of its own, one perhaps more closely aligned with the approaches of Appadurai and Bourdieu.

21 In more recent times, such erudite traditionalism could be displayed both by joining a music-lover's association that supports the tradition and by attending classes at the National Conservatory. In this context, owning a print anthology certainly brings with it some of the cachet of the performed tradition, but owning (and displaying) a *manuscript* copy like D144 elevates its owner's status even further, on which more below.

Some come to be revered within institutions that preserve them because of the links they represent to sacred doctrines and individuals and because of their use-value within these institutions, such as the manuscripts that populate the archives discussed by Olly Akkerman in this volume. Other documents acquire their sacrality in the context of historical processes, as with the US Declaration of Independence, which spent decades rolled up in libraries before being publicly displayed as a "sacred founding document" some sixty-five years after its creation (perhaps not coincidentally near the beginning of a long and painful national process of debate over state sovereignty and so on). From this point on, the document's condition (the state of the paper, the legibility of the signatures, etc.) increasingly became a cause of popular concern. Unusual steps for both preservation and display were finally begun in the context of its own centennial, after the crisis of the Civil War and at a point where its sacrality had become a matter of national attention.

The social life of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* has, broadly speaking, been shaped by its function as a re-presentation of an erudite and traditional performed repertoire, and yet its many iterations and exemplars have lived at least two distinct kinds of social lives. The erudition and traditionalism inherent in the repertoire really tell only part of the story, since even a songbook, constrained as it is by its chief function as container of repertoire, may nevertheless be used in more than one way. Finer exemplars, like D144 and some later manuscripts (including a number of the al-Jāmiʿī manuscripts, e.g., 4.6), might be said to have lived rather privileged social lives as objects of display (which could include demonstrating one's erudition or traditionalism to others by deriving the sung version from the written text) as well as sources of *Lesevergnügen*. Note the well-executed hand and the relatively elaborate use of colours—red, blue, yellow, and gilt—typical of such high-quality exemplars. Likewise, the text box is framed in colour in such manuscripts, adding another decorative touch. These details, along with the higher quality paper, point to the more privileged social lives of these manuscripts. It is unlikely that such works travelled much beyond their owners' libraries.[22]

Other, less finely crafted versions may have lived more active lives as teachers' notebooks, references for ensemble leaders, and so on. Figures 4.7 and 4.8 present a page each from two of these more workmanlike manuscripts:

22 At least while the owner was alive. Upon his or her death, the manuscript might be bequeathed or sold to another owner, who might cherish it as did the previous one, thereby living a similar social life. Or it might land in an archive, where it would live a very different afterlife (on which more in a moment).

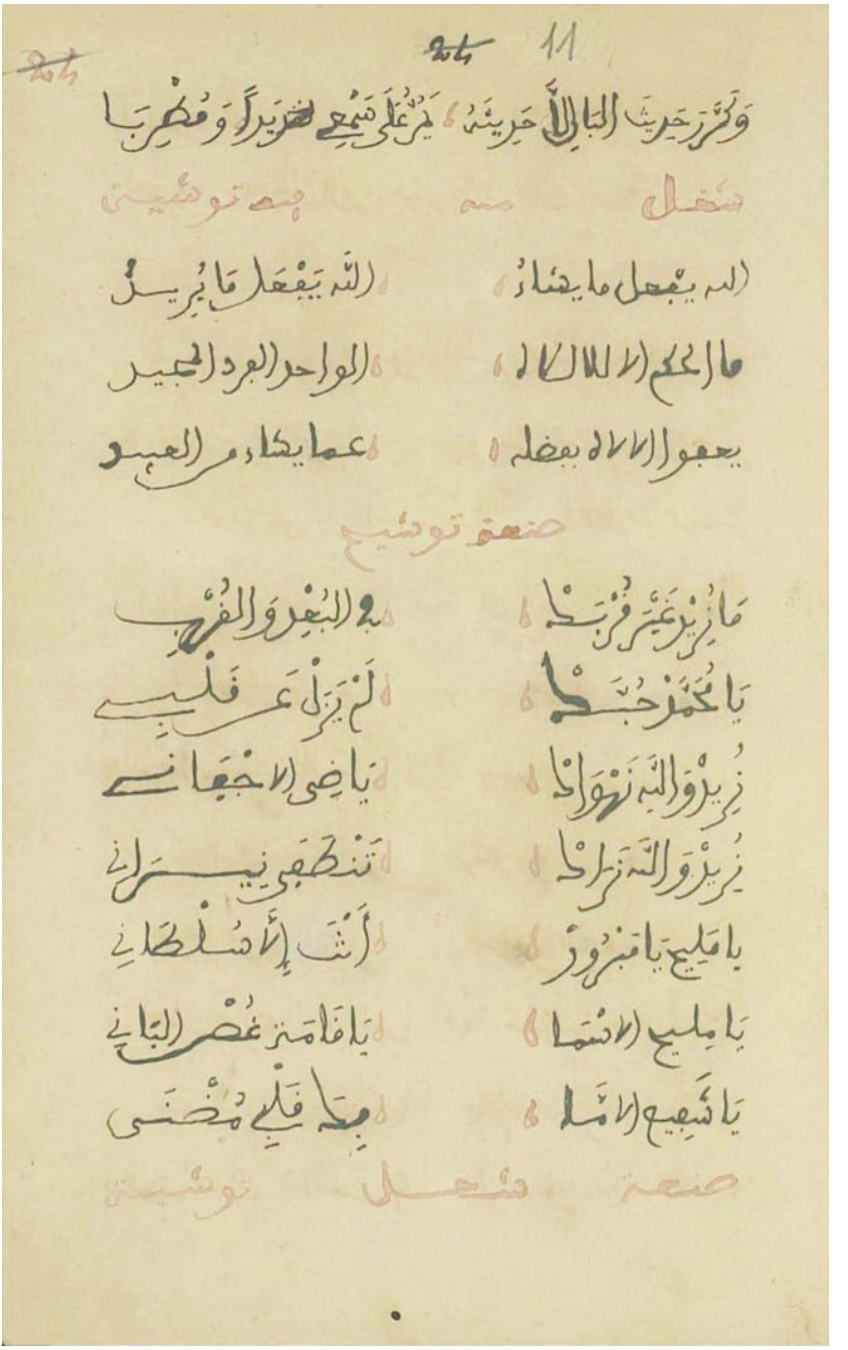

FIGURE 4.7 A page from 3376 د
COURTESY LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU ROYAUME DU MAROC

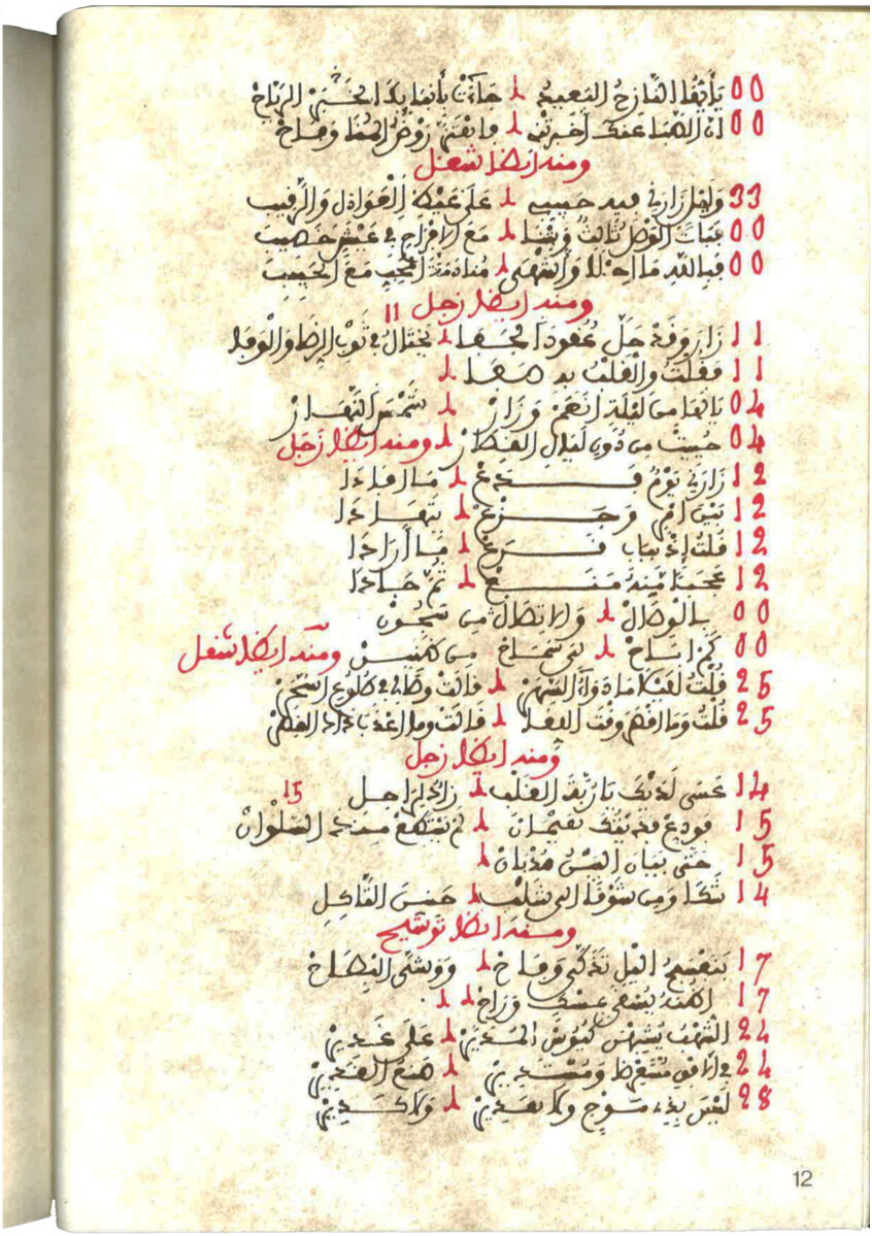

FIGURE 4.8 A page from the Raqīwāq manuscript facsimile edition
COURTESY JAM'IYYA HUWĀT AL-MŪSĪQĀ L-ANDALUSIYYA

figure 4.7 from ms. #3376 د at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Rabat (dated 23 Dhū l-Ḥijja 1331/23 November, 1913), and figure 4.8 from a facsimile edition of a *Kunnāsh* manuscript owned by ʿAbd al-Salām b. Ḥasan al-Raqīwāq (dated 25 Shawwāl, 1325/1 December, 1907). Note the rather looser hand, the more limited use of colour, and the generally less elaborate presentation in both. Such manuscripts often lack the introduction found in other exemplars. The Raqīwaq manuscript has musical indications (numbers on the margin indicating the turns through the rhythmic cycle for each line); other versions sometimes have marginalia indicating alternate texts to be sung in this place in the *nūba*, *fī waznihi madḥan* or *fī waznihi ayḍān*: texts to be sung to the same melody, sometimes as *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* (in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad).[23]

Hence, these manuscripts—all constructed according to the same general pattern and reproducing essentially the same texts—appear to have been produced with quite different social lives in mind. Some were created at least in part for teaching or study: Their less elaborate presentation suggests that they were mnemonic works used by teachers or leaders of ensembles, some with indications that would make that task a bit easier. Others, like D144, seem unlikely to have been carted about to rehearsals and so on, but instead were destined mainly to provide their owners with *Lesevergnügen* in the setting of a private library or social space. All of them represent the prestige and traditionalism inherent in the performance of *al-āla*, with the attendant ability to signify their owners' cultural capital, even those whose actual social lives were not particularly privileged. What would have varied, perhaps, was the degree or depth of that cultural capital.

The clearest evidence for the social value attaching to even these lower-quality manuscripts lies in their afterlives, that is, how they have come to be used once their immediate, effective use-value had been supplanted. If a manuscript can be said to have lived a social life by virtue of the uses for which it was created (reflected in its structure, but also in its form, style of execution and so on, as we have just argued), what happens when larger circumstances conspire to shift the social foundations upon which that use-value was based? Given the mutability of tradition in the face of social change,[24] what becomes of a work

23 This is obviously an indication of the copyist's or owner's knowledge of the larger Andalusian music tradition in Morocco, beyond the local version represented by the exemplar in hand. Concerning the *al-madīḥ al-nabawī* dimension of the Moroccan Andalusian music, see Carl Dávila, "Prophet-Piety in the Moroccan *Nūba* Tradition," in *In Praise of the Prophet: Forms of Piety as Reflected in Arabic Literature*, ed. Ines Weinrich (Baden-Baden: Ergon/Nomos Verlag, 2022), 219–246.

24 On this topic, see Dávila, *Andalusian Music of Morocco*, Chapter 6.

whose social value is bound up with its capacity for representing a prestigious musical tradition? In the case of *al-āla* and *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik*, the musical tradition continues to be performed, so that these anthologies do not simply lose all meaning in the larger cultural context. If anything, their prestige and sense of traditionalism are enhanced with time, as long as *al-āla* persists as a living tradition.

And yet, most of these manuscripts have landed in libraries and archives in various Moroccan institutions, but also in foreign countries.[25] D144 has been rendered in a scholarly print edition.[26] Manuscript # 3376 د actually contains two versions of the *Kunnāsh*, a fact that implies a somewhat complicated afterlife for these two exemplars: How did they come to be put together under one shelfmark at this particular library? The Raqīwāq manuscript has been published in a facsimile edition, and yet another manuscript, a late copy owned by the Spanish scholar Valderrama (dated 1350/1931 and based on a lost original), has also been published in facsimile edition and is now available in an animated version online.

In all these cases, these manuscripts (or anyway, images of them) now live very interesting afterlives outside or alongside their owners' libraries. Such works no longer serve only as tools for performers or as markers of personal prestige. Just as the prestige-value of *al-āla* has shifted over time as the audience for the music has expanded, so too has the cultural capital inherent in owning a songbook of *al-āla* been transformed by these and other social changes. It is evident that something has driven any number of these manuscripts out of their accustomed domains in private hands and into institutions where they function very differently and to some extent serve different social purposes. Thus the afterlife of the manuscript: The prestige-value of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* has not necessarily changed, but it now serves different functions from those in its heyday, so to speak.

There are really two value aspects here, operating together and yet distinct from one another (even if not always recognized as such). In one, *any* anthology of the *al-āla* texts has the potential to impart to its user the prestige and traditionalism of the musical genre to some degree, regardless of the qualities

25 There is a *Kunnāsh* manuscript at the Universiteitsbibliotheek in Leiden (ms. #Or. 14.100 Ar. 4150), an al-Jāmi'ī manuscript at the British Library in London (#Or. 13235), and at least eight *Kunnāsh* and al-Jāmi'ī manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. For a comprehensive list of manuscripts relating to the Moroccan *nūba* tradition, see Dávila, "Al-Ḥā'ik's Notebook, Part I."

26 See Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥā'ik, *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik*, ed. Malik Binnūna (Rabat: Akādimiyyat al-Mamlaka al-Maghribiyya, 1999).

of the work, as long as the owner also possesses sufficient embodied cultural capital to make ownership meaningful. Much depends, of course, upon the use to which it is put. A bookseller, whose interest may be entirely financial and whose connection to the tradition would be correspondingly weak, does not qualify. A musician, who needs a functional document to help remember *ṣanā'iʿ* he has already memorized, does. The other aspect is populated by those finer manuscripts whose production and acquisition required a greater investment of resources, and whose specific characteristics make them suitable primarily for leisure and/or scholarly activities (both evidence of high cultural capital). This latter aspect engages other social values beyond the prestige and traditionalism of *al-āla*, such as wealth or elevated social status more generally.

If value is always social and hence performative, as Graeber argues, the value-matrix that lies behind the manuscripts of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* may be said to engage with cultural capital in more than one way: There is the object with its raw economic value (perhaps appraisable mainly through the quality of the materials, the quality of the execution, the relative scarcity of exemplars, etc., though never really central to its social meaning), which makes it suitable for display to one's friends and guests; there is the performance, which it in theory facilitates (the social value of entertainment); there is the immersion in the tradition inherent in the ability to sing a song based upon a highbrow but incomplete rendering on the page (and to appreciate such a performance); there is the linguistic value which allows the text to "speak erudition" when recited or sung by an owner able to read it; and there is the performed tradition as a whole, which it is held to represent symbolically (bifurcated into the musical qualities, ritualization, and contextualization of the performance, on the one hand, and the literary dimension inherent in the repertoire of lyrics on the other).

But beyond these factors, several historical processes have shifted the social foundations of the value-matrices behind the tradition in general, and its literary dimension in particular, transforming the social lives of these manuscripts. They are not, however, easily sorted as causes and effects because they have operated parallel to and enabled one another.

The first of these is the expansion of the audience. We have already noted the music's shift from a more purely elite status in al-Andalus toward a broader social environment beginning in the earlier phases in North Africa. If the observations of Europeans like Alexis Chottin, a Protectorate official in Morocco in the early twentieth century, are to be believed, the Andalusian music had been enduring a prolonged process of decline for some centuries.[27] One may assume

27 Alexis Chottin, *Tableau de la musique marocaine* (Paris: Guenter, 1939), 98.

that such a view was shaped at least in part by the opinions of the music's masters of the era, yet efforts at both new composition (ʿAlāl al-Baṭla is said to have created *Nūbat al-Istihlāl* in the late 1600s) and preservation (three anthology projects—including al-Ḥāʾik's—between 1700 and the 1880s) cast considerable doubt on this narrative of decline and decay.[28] Certainly by the mid-twentieth century, the music was beginning to reach an ever-widening audience, thanks to the efforts of the government and private-sector *jamʿiyyāt*. And finally, the arrival of commercial recording and broadcast technologies further encouraged the growth of a substantial passive audience familiar with *al-āla* as part of the urban soundscape. The value-load of the literary domain underwent a corresponding shift, though not necessarily away from its erudite and prestigious roots.

Secondly, there were transformations of the national economy. A middle class, properly speaking, grew in Morocco in the 1950s and 1960s, coincident with independence.[29] It is no accident that the government's efforts at preserving the tradition followed this change that put more disposable income in the hands of people at the middle levels of the economy and made print editions of the *nūba* repertoire economically viable. This also gave music-lovers' associations an expanded membership base among people who could afford to spend the money.

Thirdly, there was an evolution of writing technologies. The evolution from handwritten manuscripts to lithography to mechanically printed books made *al-āla* songbooks cheaper and more widely available, simultaneously supporting the expansion of the audience while driving out manuscript works for nearly all practical purposes. High-quality handwritten manuscripts have almost ceased to be produced, except by or for particular people or situations (such as the Valderrama copy in 1931). Since the 1950s, one finds only lower-quality copies created by notables such as Muḥammad Dāwūd, the great historian of Tetouan, who added handwritten supplements to other documents for his own personal use. At the same time, the availability of inexpensive print anthologies in particular tended to dilute somewhat the aura of exclusiveness surrounding the tradition.

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28 For a discussion of the trope of decline and decay as it relates to writing about music in the Arabic context, see Ines Weinrich, "The *Inḥiṭāṭ* Paradigm in Arab Music History," in *Inḥiṭāṭ—The Decline Paradigm: Its Influence and Persistence in the Writing of Arab Cultural History*, edited by Syrinx von Hees (Würzburg: Ergon, 2017), 71–89.

29 Sawssan Boufous and Mohammed Khariss, "The Moroccan Middle Class from Yesterday to Today: Definition and Evolving," *Business and Economic Journal*, 6 no. 153 (2015), accessed October 11, 2023, www.omicsonline.org/open-access/the-moroccan-middle-class-from-yesterday-to-today-definition-and-evolving-2151--6219--1000153.php?aid=54645.

A fourth factor was the largely urban focus of Moroccan economic, social, and political power. Since *al-āla* is an urban, Arabic phenomenon almost completely alien to the rural, largely Amazigh environment, both the active and especially the passive audiences for the music have grown in proportion to the expansion of urban power, which has exerted important influence upon the development of the print anthologies and likewise on the lives of the *al-āla* manuscripts.

One effect of these developments has been to transform the use-value component for many old manuscripts, rendering them less important as reference works while generating afterlives for them as objects of study and cultural display in private libraries, archives and museums, and online. D144, a venerable manuscript held in the archive-library of its last owner, Muḥammad Dāwūd, is effectively useless today as a reference work, and likewise as a signifier of cultural capital. Few have any interest in it for those purposes. The community of aficionados whose interest at one time may have sustained its social life as a symbol of its owner's prestigious associations with the *al-āla* tradition has largely vanished and been replaced by the community of scholars studying the texts of the tradition. It serves today mainly as an artefact for historical or literary study.[30] We may make similar observations about the manuscripts on display at the Dar El Ala museum in Casablanca, or the al-Jāmiʿī manuscript at the Dār Ṣbīḥī library in Salé: These manuscripts "live" in glass cases, parked next to signs that offer details of their history, signifying the historicity of the tradition alongside its aesthetic and literary values. But they are rarely, if ever, actually handled. Still others, such as those in the Moroccan and European libraries, literally sit on shelves until they are sought out by scholars. And now, in the digital age, scanned and photographed images of these manuscripts are available for acquisition and use on digital storage media and online, so that the actual manuscript itself almost never moves. Indeed, the afterlives of such manuscripts are now shaped to a large extent *by their existence alone*, their potential to signify the tradition in absentia, so to speak, rather than their current use-value.

6 Concluding Thoughts: Value Flowing toward and Away from the Document

The social life of a manuscript both dwells within and is conditioned by the various aspects of its form, content, and uses. Its use-value emerges from these

30 The existence of Binnūna's print edition has certainly contributed to this.

formal characteristics, while at the same time it signals a social position on the part of its user. In many cases, that position is understood as not particularly consequential. A carpenter's handwritten notes for how to make a table are unlikely to be regarded as especially meaningful, unless the carpenter himself (or his table) is somehow socially significant, in which case the note may come to signify social value that flows *to* it from the significance of the carpenter or his table, and *away* from it to its current owner for the same reasons. In the same way, values like prestige and traditionalism are social significations that flow in two directions, toward the text and out from it. It is as if the object itself is a transceiver, "receiving" social value by virtue of its material qualities and associations, and "broadcasting" that value to the community on behalf of its owner/user.

In this way, value flows toward the *Kunnāsh* manuscripts from the social prestige of *al-āla* and the poetic tradition which they have been constructed to embody, marking them and elevating them as high Arabic literature, interestingly, even when the language of the text itself is sometimes less than formal. The texts of many of these songs are composed in a poetic colloquial register, usually identified as Andalusi colloquial (*al-ʿāmiyya al-andalusiyya*), but some also in the Moroccan *dārija*, as well. This "inward flow" of social signification has the power to elevate all the texts, regardless of their individual characteristics, to the level of highbrow art.

The other direction, *away* from the manuscript, depends upon this value that flows toward it, and upon the fact of ownership itself, but then broadcasts to the community that its owner/user possesses the cultural capital inherent in its connections to *al-āla* and the poetic tradition. There are degrees of this, naturally: A relatively inexpensive print anthology may "receive" social value to some degree, but it will not "broadcast as loudly" as an old handwritten manuscript of the same texts. Yet the signal remains and can be heard and understood by anyone conversant enough in Arab-Moroccan public culture.

This two-way, back-and-forth process of signification represents a fundamental characteristic of the social lives of the manuscripts in question. They both act within, and are acted upon by, the socio-cultural contexts through which they move or in which they rest. And in this, our discussion of the social life of *Kunnāsh al-Ḥā'ik* comes full circle: Just as the form, content, and function of the manuscript operate in mutually informing ways, so too do these manuscripts both absorb and project gravitas as representations, imperfect but prestigious embodiments of both the literary and performed traditions of the Andalusian music of Morocco.

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5

Seeing and Hearing the Book: A Moroccan Edition of the Qur'an

Anouk Cohen

1 Introduction[1]

In 2010, the Moroccan Minister of Habous and Islamic Affairs announced the creation of a "Moroccan Qur'an," which is now widely distributed in the kingdom's mosques. The singularity of the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*,[2] as it is still called in reference to King Mohammed VI, lies in its material properties. For example, it is illuminating to compare the sura of *al-Fātiḥa* (the Opening) and verse 19 of the sura *al-Naml* (the Ants) in the Moroccan Qur'an (figs. 5.1 and 5.3) and in the Saudi edition (figs. 5.2 and 5.4). At first glance, the content corresponding to God's word is identical. However, a discerning eye will note that the calligraphy (*khaṭṭ*), the illuminations (*tadhhīb*), the verse numbers, and the vocalization signs (*tashkīl*) vary. What publishers see as "details," the minister—a close advisor to the king—sees as "small elements that can generate huge controversy." These many insignificant distinctions for professionals are a major issue for him. What intentions do they reflect? This question goes to the heart of the reflection on a specifically Moroccan way of seeing, hearing, and acting on the Qur'an.

This question became especially pressing at a time when the myth of the unique commandership of believers[3] was being undermined by the growing influence of the (Islamist) Justice and Development Party, which laid claim to safeguarding Islam and its values, as opposed to the king descended from the Prophet Muhammad.[4] After the Casablanca attacks in 2003, seen as evidence

1 This paper is a translation of an article published in French (Cohen 2017).

2 *Muṣḥaf* ("volume") is the term used to avoid confusion between the revelation (*Qur'ān*) and its support.

3 The status of Commander of the Believers (*amīr al-mu'minīn*) emphasizes the divine election of the Sultan, the prophet's approval, testamentary support, and the people's adherence. It was also claimed by the Sultan of Oman and, since 2014, by the self-proclaimed caliph of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

4 See Malika Zeghal, *Les Islamistes marocains: le défi à la monarchie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005).

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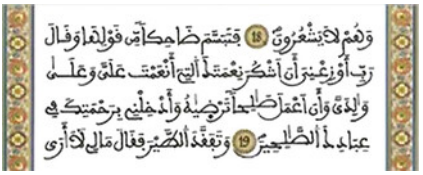

FIGURE 5.1
Verse 19 of the sura *al-Naml* (the Ants) in the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*
MOHAMMED VI FOUNDATION FOR HOLY QUR'AN PUBLISHING, MOHAMMEDIA, 2013: 388

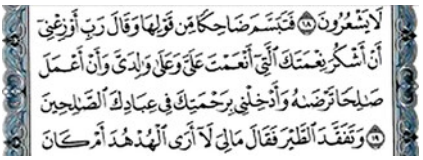

FIGURE 5.2
Verse 19 of Sura *al-Naml* (the Ants) in the Saudi edition of the Qur'an, by *muṣḥaf Al-Madīna*
KING FAHD COMPLEX FOR HOLY QUR'AN PRINTING, MEDINA, 2015: 378

of the tightening grip of the strict Islam promoted by Wahhabi Saudi Arabia, Mohammed VI implemented a far-reaching religious policy to define the orthodoxy and strengthen his monopoly as a religious leader. This fledgling program defended the "exclusivity of the Malekite Rite" (2003 royal speech)—an essential component of a reference system reactivated during times of crisis.[5] In this kingdom claiming the caliphate (the supreme position in Islam), the relationship between the faithful and the official orthodoxy and orthopraxis is central to the political legitimization process.[6]

As in the past, the authority of the divine monarch is established and strengthened by drawing on the religious imagination,[7] itself fuelled by myths, images, objects, and ceremonies featuring the "mystical body" of the supernatural and immortal king.[8] While the Moroccan Qur'an is well steeped in this body of symbols, its study calls for an approach that goes beyond representations. The crucial importance of the holy book's materiality and of the five senses it involves is conducive to a reconnection with the other, real or natural

5 See Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et islam politique au Maroc* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1999); Nabil Mouline, *Le Califat imaginaire d'Ahmad al-Mansûr: pouvoir et diplomatie au Maroc au XVI e siècle* (Paris, PUF, 2009).

6 Elaine Combs-Schilling, *Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality and Sacrifice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

7 Marc Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges, étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983 [1924]).

8 See Ernst Kantorowicz, *Les Deux Corps du roi: essai sur la théologie politique au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989). The book's title refers to a metaphor stating the duality of the king, considered to have two bodies: a natural and mortal one subject to infirmities, and a supernatural and immortal one that has no weaknesses and that embodies the entire kingdom.

body, thus expanding the reflection to an embodied anthropology of the construction of monarchical power in contemporary Morocco.[9]

In the daily practice of the faithful, the Qur'an goes well beyond its textual aspect. More than read, it is recited, listened to, integrated into vernacular exchanges, and contemplated on the ornate walls of mosques and on decorative paintings in houses. In Casablanca, beautiful copies of the Qur'an are often displayed in the living rooms of the domestic help's dwellings. It is a feature of interior decor for the faithful, calling the attention of visitors to the importance of God's word in their homes. A combination of many criteria—format, cover, layout, etc.—create an infinite number of objects that correspond to various uses, depending on whether one wants to keep the book close at hand, study it, or carry it around without damaging it. This is not to mention buyers' aesthetic tastes with regard to their Qur'an, which is not simply a Qur'an: It is "their" Qur'an. The relationship is tactile, intimate, and highly personalized.[10] Reading aloud and listening to or looking at the verses can touch the faithful and move them in the manner of a musical performance, poem, or painting.[11] The material forms of the Qur'an thus continually affect them, as they experience it in spiritual as well as practical, sensory, and emotional ways.

From illumination to calligraphy and psalmody, these ornaments are meant to exalt God's word, make it present, and establish a connection with the divine.[12] In Morocco, where the king seeks to mediate this relationship, the movements associated with these practices, the senses that they mobilize, and the sensations that they induce, are subject to increasing regulation at a time when the liberalization of salvation goods and the development of information and communication technologies are spreading many varied ways of uniting with the Word. On the basis of what "governmentality"—in Michel Foucault's sense of the word, that is, a specific way of exercising power based on the corporeal induction of an internalized discipline through material processes[13]—

9 Note the absence of work on these questions, apart from the mentioned research, which embraces a historical and anthropological approach to representations.

10 Cf. Anouk Cohen, "Le livre du Coran à Casablanca et à Rabat," *Archives des sciences sociales des religions* 150: 175–195; Anouk Cohen, "Le Coran et ses multiples formes (Casablanca, Maroc)," *Terrain* 59: 70–87.

11 Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, "Everyday Life, Qur'an," in Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 80–97.

12 Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

13 See Michel Foucault, "Pouvoir et corps," in *Dits et écrits: 1970–1975*, vol. 2, eds. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 2–5. Refusing to address power in terms of ideology, Foucault looks at the state from the perspective of its practices through the neologism of "governmentality"—a combination of the terms "government" and "rationality."

does the Palace[14] hope to concretely control and shape religious subjectivation? My attempt to answer this question led me, in line with other researchers, to study the tangible forms of the manifestation of Islam and their social uses.[15] More specifically, I have examined how the monarchy mobilizes the book's material specificities in an attempt to frame the relationship of the faithful to the Qur'an and to encourage its transmission according to a specifically Moroccan sensory approach. Thus, more generally, this study conducted between 2010 and 2017 examines how the personal and social relationship to God is "mediated" by the book, and how the materiality of this object is conceived to create a unique link to the divine, through and by the monarch.

The methodology involves analytically considering the development of this relationship by exploring its technical and practical dimensions[16] through a concrete question: How is a Moroccan Qur'an made? My approach, inspired by the "operational chain" approach and embedded in a broader reflection on the ways that the material dimensions of techniques and objects produce "systems of meaning and practice,"[17] delves into the book's genesis. Exploring social codicology as a method encouraged me to devote particular attention to social uses of manuscripts as related to politics and authority. The idea is to understand how the actors involved in its production (from its production to its distribution in mosques and schools) contribute to the object's development and definition. The study focuses on the relationships they maintain, the strategies

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The former refers to conduct meant to shape that of individuals, while the second suggests that controlling a person requires defining the person. The state therefore implements material measures to closely discipline citizens' bodies, time, and actions.

14 In the Moroccan political system, which is often called "neo-patrimonial" (a highly personalized type of domination geared towards maintaining and protecting existing elites), the term "Palace" (still called *Makhzen*) refers to the King's office, composed of advisers in charge of strategic ministries known as "regal" ones, including that of the Habous and of Islamic Affairs. Meanwhile, the government and the Parliament have limited power subject to oversight.

15 See Talal Asad, "Reading a Modern Classic: W.C. Smith's' *The Meaning and End of Religion*," *History of Religions* 40 (3): 205–222; Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Saba Mahmood, *Politique de la piété: le féminisme à l'épreuve du renouveau islamique* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009); Annelies Moors, "Popularizing Islam: Muslims and Materiality—Introduction," *Material Religion* 8: 272–279.

16 Bruno Latour suggests thinking about the development of political project policy like that of a building by focusing on its foundations, the construction materials used, and the movements made throughout the process. See Bruno Latour, *Changer de société, refaire de la sociologie*, trans. Nicolas Guilhot (Paris: La Découverte, 2006).

17 Pierre Lemonnier, "Mythiques chaînes opératoires," *Techniques & Culture* 43–44 (2004): 3.

they deploy, and the materials they use to respond to specific and conflicting objectives. The idea is to capture these discrepancies and failures by focusing the analysis on the production mechanisms of a localized and homogenized "make believe,"[18] fuelled in particular by discourses around the image of the calligraphic letter, the sounds emitted during recitation, and their properties.

2 Producing the Moroccan Qur'an

2.1 *Errors and Orthodoxy: The Example of the muṣḥaf muḥammadī*

In 2010, the creation of the Moroccan Qur'an went hand in hand with that of the Mohammed VI Foundation for Holy Qur'an Publishing, under the authority of the Minister of Islamic Affairs, who spoke for the Palace in this area. The foundation was granted "exclusive rights to record, print, publish, and distribute" the Qur'an (decree of its creation in 2010). The Foundation's opening followed controversies that appeared in the press over the circulation of holy books with "mistakes" (*taḥrīf*). According to an independent publisher in the Habous district, the centre for Arab books in Casablanca, "there are many errors in the Qur'ans we're selling. People outside of the field saw that the Qur'an was selling well and started scanning copies and sending the files to China. But they made mistakes while scanning."[19] They did not follow the commonly accepted page order and they cut out lines and left unfortunate pieces of dust on the scan glass that might be seen as diacritical signs.[20]

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18 "I understand "belief" not as the subject of belief (a dogma, a program, etc.), but as the investment of subjects in a proposition, that is, the *act* of stating it and holding it to be true [...]. Yet the capacity to believe appears to be receding everywhere in politics [...]. The difference and continuity between politics and religion is thus made clear. But the desire to 'make believe' driving the institution in both cases provides a response to a search for love and/or identity." (Michel de Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien: arts de faire*, vol. 1, Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 260.

19 Interviews cited in this article were conducted in French, Arabic, or a combination of the two languages. In the latter two cases, the translations are by the author.

20 The Arabic script "has twenty-eight letters, but actually only has fifteen characters [...]. To distinguish between consonants denoted by the same letter, we use single dots, double dots or triple dots placed on or under the letter [...]. Arabic only indicates the three long vowels with letters [...]. To indicate the three short vowels, it borrowed three Syriac signs that are either subscript or superscript to double the letters or mark a stop on one of them. The common expression 'diacritical signs' encompasses all of these points/signs." (Gérard Troupeau, website:http://classes.bnf.fr/ecriture/arret/lesecritures/arabe/02.htm, accessed February 19, 2017).

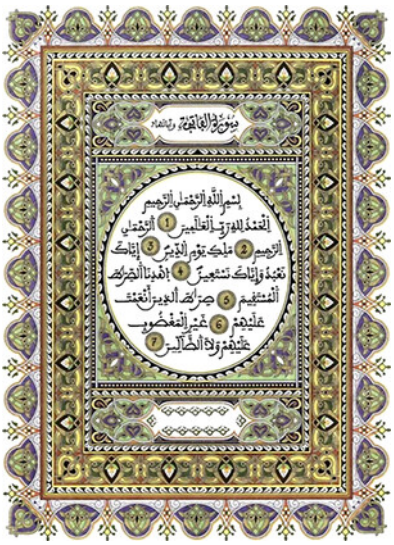

FIGURE 5.3
Sura *al-Fātiḥa* (the Opening) in the Moroccan edition of the Qur'an, Mohammed VI Foundation for Holy Qur'an Publishing, Mohammedia, 2013: 2.

Disgruntled users of the Qur'an did not hesitate to go to the delegation of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in their region with copies corrected in pencil. "They're asking us to respond," declared the director of the foundation, "and so His Majesty has pledged to distribute a certified Holy Qur'an to the mosques,", namely his copy, stamped with the royal seal and of guaranteed orthodoxy. Error appeared as a political argument justifying the creation of a Moroccan edition of the Qur'an.[21]

In principle, the Qur'an stamping process is strict. While the Bible is subject to copyright (or rather translator rights), the Qur'an does not fall under any official regulations. According to the protocol defined in the 1920s in Cairo by al-Azhar, the leading university of Islamic studies, each stage of production should be subject to control. However, this protocol is more or less strictly followed depending on the regulations in place in each country.[22] No regulation existed in Morocco before 2011, whereas in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, editions have been under 'ulama' (Islamic clerics) control for over half a century. According to the director of the foundation, this explains "the errors in the text

21 In Egypt, the concept of "noise pollution" was used as a pretext to standardize the call to prayer (*adhān*), which was at the heart of religious policy in the mid-2000s. See Iman Farag, "Querelle de minarets en Égypte. Le débat public sur l'appel à la prière," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 125 (2009): 47–66.

22 Michel Albin, "Printing of the Qur'an," in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 264–276.

itself: the letter that should be extended this way or that. It's very precise." This is why, in addition to the board of directors headed by the Minister of Islamic Affairs, the foundation consults with a "scientific body" composed of clerics.

While publishers flagged poorly designed books created by incompetent booksellers eager to quickly produce as many copies as possible, the foundation's director decried editions produced without oversight from institutional clerics, with poorly written and possibly heretic texts.[23] At this point, what qualifies as an "error" is debatable. The director explained: "It is necessary to question the members of the scientific body who are familiar with the rules of writing." The "error" would refer to a heterodox use, contrary to norms established by the clerics of the foundation. What are they, and what discussions did they spark, particularly with the calligrapher (*khaṭṭāt*), the illuminator, and the graphic designer?

3 The Search for Originals ... from the Palace

In 2006, the Minister of Islamic Affairs asked a famous Moroccan calligrapher to write the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* in accordance with the rules of the dominant recitation in Morocco (*Warsh*[24]) and "Moroccan-Andalusian" calligraphy

23 The conception of the revelation in Islam imposes specific constraints on the reproduction and dissemination of the holy book. The late adoption of the printing press in the Muslim world, nearly four centuries after its advent in the Christian world, illustrates this. This resistance mainly stemmed from clerical opposition: The fear was that the Qur'an might be altered by its technical reproduction and that standardization of the printed word might upset the knowledge transmission system at the basis of their authority (see Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print", Modern Asian Studies 27 (1), 1993: 229–251). In Qur'anic learning, the written word, combined with oral practices, is an aide-memoire enabling its correct incorporation. To date, virtually all the books of the Qur'an produced in the world have been written by hand, scanned, retouched, and printed after being checked and certified. This is how producers responded to the technological change and preserved the Qur'an's accuracy. This production method—which bears a resemblance to lithography—maintains the physical attributes of old manuscripts, such as the calligraphic style and vocalization marks that have supported Qur'anic reading and recitation. See Anouk Cohen, "Éditer la Révélation. Le Coran dans le Maroc contemporain", Genèses 105, 2016: 57–75.

24 *Warsh* is the name of one of the seven canonical readings (*qirā'a*, a term encompassing both the act of reading and reciting). The variations concern vocalization points, signals of verse pauses or ends, and pronunciation details, which account for the distinct ways of orally presenting the text. Today, with the exception of large areas of West and Central Africa, where *Warsh* recitation is widespread, the *Hafs* recitation is the most renowned.

(*maghribī*).[25] For months, the calligrapher copied the verses on paper plates according to the "Qur'an of Zwiten,"[26] considered by Royal Library experts to be the oldest lithographed copy in Morocco with numbered verses. It remains the original model most reproduced by scanning or handwriting.[27] It is a canonical book that differs from the standard edition, in line with the Egyptian copy developed at al-Azhar in 1924 in different styles of calligraphy (*naskhī*) and of recitation (*hafs*), often referred to as "Eastern" in Morocco.

The selection of the artist was no less significant than that of the copy: having become the "Palace calligrapher" during the reign of Hassan II (1961–1999), he learned *maghribī* by reproducing the writings inscribed in the kingdom's oldest mosques. Following in his father's footsteps, he wrote the decrees and deciphered the manuscripts of the royal and sultanic archives. This time-consuming work allowed him to deepen his knowledge of Moroccan-Andalusian calligraphy in accordance with the conventions adopted by the monarchy. It is thus to this calligrapher that Mohammed VI, like his father Hassan II, turned to copy "his Qur'an." Contrary to the *muṣḥaf ḥassanī*, which was to be offered to distinguished guests, the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* was placed under serial and industrial production. The calligrapher had to produce an original book for the new king: "The writing had to be even more beautiful, more refined," he explained to me.

Once the work was completed, the calligraphic tablets were given to two clerics chosen by the Palace and known for their command of calligraphy and recitation. One was a native of the Fès region who was around eighty years old and had "learned by heart the Qur'an in all its versions [that is, the seven Moroccan recitations]" following the traditional method of the *lawḥ* (a Qur'anic tablet that combines writing and recitation) used throughout the Islamic world, particularly in Morocco.[28] His father and grandfather, described

25 It was copied in the Kufic style, which is known for its great clarity and was used in the first Qur'anic manuscripts. *Maghribī* was developed in the tenth century to replace the *naskhī* script from the central territories of the caliphate. It is characterized by an angular and geometric style that differs from the flexible and rounded *naskhī* adopted for printing, typewriting, and computers. The latter is therefore better known.

26 This is an edition that was produced in 1929 by a famous *faqīh* (jurist) and calligrapher recognized for his writing and knowledge of the Qur'an. Until recently, the rights to it belonged to *Dar al-muṣḥaf al-sharīf*, in Cairo. See Abdulrazak Fawzi, "The Kingdom of the Book: The History of Printing as an Agency of Change in Morocco between 1865 and 1912" (PhD diss., University of Boston, 1990). Named Zwiten, this *faqīh* was a professor at al-Qarawiyyīn, a major university for Islamic studies in Fès.

27 Cohen, "Éditer la Révélation."

28 Dale Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth Century Notable* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

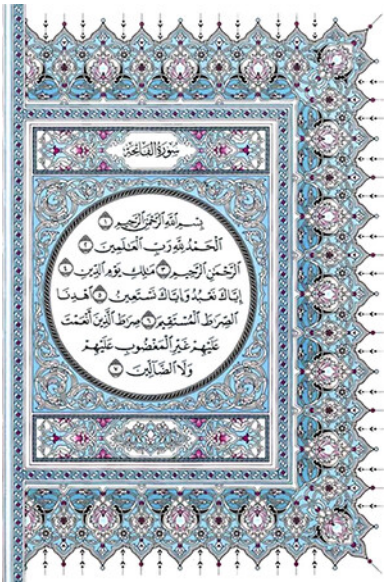
سورة الفاتحة
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ①
الحمد لله رب العالمين ②
الرحمن الرحيم ③ مالك يوم الدين ④
إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين ⑤ اهدنا
الصراط المستقيم ⑥ صراط الذين أنعمت
عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين ⑦

FIGURE 5.4
Sura *al-Fātiḥa* (The Opening) in the Saudi Arabian edition of the Qur'an, by *Mushaf al Madinah* KING FAHD'S COMPLEX FOR THE PRINTING OF THE HOLY QUR'AN, MEDINA, 2015: 1

as *shurafā'* (descendants of the Prophet), had memorized the Qur'an before him in its entirety. A former teacher at the Faculty of Letters in Rabat and author of famous works on Qur'anic recitations, he was a member of the renowned al-Azhar Auditing Committee. The latter was a former student of his who was around sixty years old and also from Fès, but who had only mastered the most common recitations. Less well known than his elder, he nevertheless had an established reputation thanks to his study of the uses of the *lawḥ* in the kingdom's Qur'anic schools (*madrasa*), commissioned by the Palace. Like his master, he was heir to, and one of the last witnesses of, the *qadīm* ("ancient" or "patrimonial") ways of transmitting the Qur'an according to recitation and writing methods specific to the country.

4 Forms, Norms, and Discords

Drawing on their experience and fame in Morocco and within the Palace, the two clerics were quick to flag the calligrapher's mistakes. "It is imprecise," they said, before proposing to copy a new Qur'an with the help of an additional cleric appointed by the minister according to the same criteria that had guided his selection of the first two, rooted in a local system of writing and recitation practices. However, because of the additional cleric's frequent visits to Saudi Arabia and his preachings, he was deemed a Wahhabi by his peers, who believed that

he was chosen in order to encourage him and his growing number of followers to adhere closer to Malekism. Finally, associating him with the foundation's scientific body despite his embrace of a doctrine that differed from that of the kingdom would burnish the regime's image as tolerant and open.

For several weeks, the calligrapher met with the clerics, bringing them tablets rewritten in accordance with their corrections, which mainly focused on the shape of the letters. "For example," said the eldest cleric, "*dhālika*—you cannot write it like that in the Qur'an [he traces the word on a sheet of paper (fig. 5.6)], you cannot leave any blanks. The line should not be so long, even if it does not change the meaning. There should be no excessive reading." For everything is pronounced in *maghribī* ("Moroccan-Andalusian") calligraphy. The length of the letter's line indicates the intensity of its vocalized sound, and the line itself is considered a "void" to be filled. This is why the "space" between the letters was scrupulously checked by the clerics, who defined each one's size, enabling expression of the artist's talent: "When you take the letter," says the calligrapher, "you transform it decoratively and write it in your own way. In Moroccan-Andalusian calligraphy, there are no [measurement] rules as there are in Eastern writing. Each calligrapher knows the shape of the letter, but when he wants to make it in the painting, he traces it according to the shape of the painting." The clerics also forbid forms deemed confusing to the reader: "For example, the tail of the *rā'* should not be so long and touch the next letter," the calligrapher explained. "I will write the word *al-ḥamdu li-l-llāh* here decoratively (fig. 5.7); and there (fig. 5.8), thinking of the Qur'an," he said. "In the first drawing, we see the form and beauty [...]. But," he concedes, "since the letters are tight, they are difficult to read. That is why," he continues, "in the second drawing, we leave the distance for the *lām*, and start writing the *hā'*. Each letter has its place."

These writing rules were the subject of long discussions between the clerics, who did not always agree on the norm that should be adopted: "One would say that the accent should be placed just above the letter and not next to it, even by a millimetre, while I thought it shouldn't," said a cleric. To decide, they compared tablets that one of them had collected years ago in the country's Qur'anic schools. When they failed to agree on the shape of a letter, the clerics picked the one that most frequently appeared in the tablets, considered to be the most trustworthy transmission system since they are based on a personal relationship between masters and students. In order to establish and set writing norms, they also set the size of the *kalam* ("pen")—a key and highly personalized tool in the art of calligraphy: "It could not be over a millimetre. This was a bit difficult: I was so used to drawing letters freestyle. In addition, I was using a reed kalam, so bringing it to a millimetre size was difficult. I ended up writing with a fountain pen, which doesn't deform," explained the calligrapher.

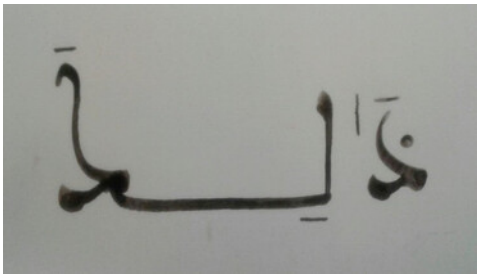

FIGURE 5.5
The word *dhālika* traced on paper

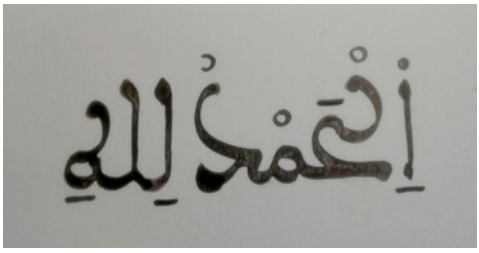

FIGURE 5.6
The word *al-ḥamdu li-l-llāh* written "decoratively" by a calligrapher

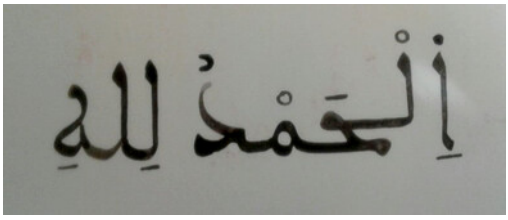

FIGURE 5.7
The word *al-ḥamdu li-l-llāh* written by a calligrapher "thinking of the Qur'an"

Meanwhile, the artist had a whole other idea of his task, and was concerned with reproducing the Qur'an in his "best handwriting." "In his soul," he said, "the calligrapher traces the letter with a decorative intention." He sought beauty and refused to integrate the clerics' corrections several times: "They said that it was an error and that more or less spaces needed to be placed between the letters. They said that my writing style was unclear and did not respect the Qur'an, but they are the ones who were not respecting it when they asked me to make my writing less beautiful!" He and clerics were defending two opposite writing styles: one style prioritized clarity, and the other, a refined line. The cleric claimed: "The calligrapher ultimately recognized that we were right," and followed the set rules.

Once the tablets were finished, the illuminator drew the vegetal compositions around the text. The clerics did not supervise this work because they considered it to be accessory, unlike the minister, who believed the structure of the contours and colours of the illuminations should "reflect the taste of Moroc-

cans," as did the foundation's director. The kingdom's ancient mosques have unique aesthetic features that the illuminator copied by imitating the strokes of his father, who had joined the Palace before him. A familiarity between the place of worship and the book was sought. These two prayer spaces thus shared a "known feel." The idea was for prayer in the mosque and "in" the book to elicit the same sensation: to simultaneously feel close to God and to the monarch. The materiality of the letter and of the illuminations gave the king a physical presence, and intrinsically reflected the Qur'an's and his sacredness.

After the illuminator finished the decorations on separate tablets, a graphic designer combined them with the text to create a "clean book without any stains," sometimes causing disagreements with the clerics, the calligrapher, and the illuminator. One cleric noted that a sign had been eliminated: "It was an accent, not a stain"; the calligrapher complained that a reformatted letter no longer complied with the aesthetic rules of *maghribī* calligraphy: "It was too rounded, like Western writing"; finally, the illuminator noted: "You cannot have this branch go over this one. Moroccan ornamentations draw on the laws of nature." When faced with a dilemma of this kind, the graphic designer always sided with the clerics, following the strict instructions of the Minister for Islamic Affairs.

These observations lead to three conclusions. First, the actors involved in the Book's production had different, and even contradictory, visions of what the Moroccan Qur'an should look like, not to mention the vision of the king himself. Second, the object considered to hold the revealed work was modulable according to changing rules, which were redefined here to convey an authentic Moroccan approach that would elicit a uniquely local way of relating to God. Finally, institutional clerics played a central role in this mediation. Wariness over their role was palpable, revealing the minister's effort to have them serve as guardians in the creation of new material and sensory norms around the Qur'an. The deference granted to their judgement bore testament to the king's desire for them to both legitimate his positions and bless his actions, and to prioritize the form of letters as intimately linked to the sounds to be made. The "right letter" was thus targeting the "right recitation," that is, the correct way of vocalizing the text.

5 Reciting the Qur'an in "Moroccan Style"

5.1 *The Meanings of Sound*

"The right recitation," or cantillation, the main goal of which is to regulate the exact restitution of the sacred texts in order to prevent dangerous deviations,

led to the establishment of the science of *tajwīd* as a branch of Qur'anic studies. *Tajwīd*, "the adornment of recitation"[29] focuses on the voice and its broadcasting, as well as the art of chanting according to phonetic rules and laws indicated by different colours in the *tajwīd Qur'an*, as this category of didactic books is called (fig. 5.10). Since Arabic consonants are inert, this science is key to processing the vowels in different, customized ways.

The explanation of one of the foundation's clerics is eloquent in this regard: "Muslims are concerned with pronouncing the holy Qur'an as closely as possible to THE way it was revealed to the prophet." This way reflects specific rules that conform with the *tajwīd* methods specific to canonical recitations. He continues: "There is moussaaaaa, mousséééé, moussi," he recites, while drawing a crescent that represents a scale of intensity ranging from the sound "a" to the sound "i"—it depends on the recitation. The recitations are not alternative versions of the text, but rather minor variations in its vocalization. Sometimes differences of vocalization lead to divergent interpretations. This is why clerics pay very close attention to the way each letter is vocalized. This calls for the greatest level of precision in forming letters and placing diacritical signs.

Concerns about interpretation also drive the regulation of voice stops, which differ between the Moroccan Qur'an and the standard edition. This variation is crucial since the transmission of the message depends on the way the text is paced. Stopping at the wrong place in a sentence could produce a heretical meaning. Thus, the delicate modalities of the sound declination of a single vowel or connecting line have cognitive properties.

6 The Collective Recitation of the *ḥizb*

However, the foundation's director does not see interpretation as the key issue in determining the "right" sound to make. What is important is the recitation of the *ḥizb*, which must respond to a collective movement: "Moroccans must be able to pray together without any problem during the *ḥizb*," he says. The *ḥizb* ("party"—in reference to the sixty sections of the Qur'an) refers to a collective recitation performed in the mosque twice a day, after the prayers of dawn and sunset (so that the Qur'an, composed of sixty *ḥizb*, is recited in its entirety every month). At other times of the day, worshippers silently listen to the imam's

29 Amnon Shiloah, "La voix et les techniques vocales chez les Arabes," Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie 4:1991, 91.

voice. Historically rooted in Morocco,[30] the recitation of the *ḥizb* is barely practiced in the Middle East, where rigorist Muslims call it *bidʿa* ("innovation"). The foundation's director laments that this conception is increasingly widespread in Morocco. Imams sometimes even refuse to recite the *ḥizb* in their mosque even though it is part of their training under a ministry programme. The stakes are high, with the ministry's website claiming that the *ḥizb* practice is inseparable from Moroccan identity.

This recitation lasts about twenty minutes and is led by the imam. "While he reads by heart [i.e. recites], explains a young practicing Muslim, we read the book." Kneeling in a circle around the imam, the faithful use the book so as not to make mistakes. "This is so that we don't forget anything," he adds. The book plays a central role in a ritual initially intended for rote learning of the Qurʾan according to a correct diction acquired through repeated and collective recitation. "Except that now," the director of the foundation argues, "the faithful no longer pray from the same book. Some recite in an Eastern style, and others in a Moroccan style. Some stop while others continue, then some kneel while others remain standing because they have not seen *al-sajadāt*—there is a disagreement." *Al-sajadāt* ("prostrations")—flagged in the text with a medallion—inform the worshipper when to bow down to the ground. Their number varies depending on the edition: eleven in the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*, versus fourteen in the standard edition. Thus, the material components of the book set the Qurʾan both in sound and in motion according to precise rules so as not to disturb the collective performance of the ritual. This is why, in a bid for "standardization," the foundation, its director explained, widely distributed the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* in mosques. The objective was for the faithful to pray from the same book focused on regulating vocal sounds, body movements, and meanings associated with prayer. Establishing standards of writing and ornamentation would mould a specifically Moroccan Qurʾanic intonation, sound, and movement.

7 Sounds in Circulation

To this end, the monarchy uses media outside of books—mainly radio and television. In addition to prayers broadcast at the usual times, programmes devoted to learning the recitation of the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* are broadcast

30 Anis Fariji, "Le recto tono dans la récitation collective du Coran dite "lecture du hizb": une image sonore d'un espace sacré étendu", Hespéris-Tamuda, L II (2), 2017: 179–200.

several times a week. It is therefore around the book that the policy of sound "standardization" has mainly centred, from its production to its marketing.

In order to stop the circulation of copies of the Qur'an that do not conform with its rules, the foundation annually produces (through the royal printing house) around a million copies of the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* to be distributed in mosques. In addition, it controls copies imported from the Middle East through the enactment of new regulations. Distributors are now required to submit a form specifying the recitation, calligraphic style, format, cover type, and colours of models imported from the Middle East, where the books are designed and/or printed. Prior to issuing this lengthy protocol, they provided Middle Eastern printers with the foundation's "roadmap" of applicable rules. "They didn't understand anything," says one distributor, "but they had to adapt. With what's going on over there right now, we're the only ones buying." Only Egyptian and Lebanese producers (both publishers and printers) leading organizations capable of funding the design of new models aligned with the new trade rules were able to continue to take advantage of Morocco's flourishing Qur'an market. Economic dynamics thus favoured—at least for a while—the policy of erasing recitations deemed unorthodox, and enabled the development of a Qur'an market aligned with the Palace's requirements at the regional level.

8 A Significant Disagreement: The Case of the *tajwīd Qur'an*

Due to pressure from the clerics, the foundation prohibited miniature Qur'ans (which were mostly used as talismans) and encased copies (generally offered at marriages and birth rites). These models are also prohibited in conservative countries such as Saudi Arabia. Editions with text in colours to highlight the names of God and recitation rules were also prohibited, even though they were popular among the faithful, who increasingly wanted the learn the Qur'an "by themselves." Shortly after their ban, endorsed by the minister, the intervention of a Moroccan publisher from the Habous neighbourhood created waves. "The ban on the *tajwīd* Qur'an is something I could not accept!" The Lebanese producer was incensed: "The *tajwīd* Qur'an was blocked for over six months. There were no more on the market. It was a scandal. Booksellers were selling it at high prices. So I asked the foundation to prove to me that this ban came from the king himself or from the government." Stonewalled by the foundation's director, the publisher took advantage of the inauguration of the 2013 Casablanca International Publishing and Book Fair to meet the head of government: "I sneaked into the crowd," he said, "and I offered him a *tajwīd* Qur'an. He thanked me,

so I asked him why this Qur'an could no longer be sold in Morocco. He said, "But that's impossible: there's a special note about this Qur'an!" I swore to him that the foundation had banned it. Then I sent him a file containing all my exchanges with the foundation, and within a week I obtained authorization to import the *tajwīd* Qur'an!" The head of government had apparently requested that the institution lift the ban. The director complied with the request from the minister, who faced the clerics' obstinate opposition.

This dispute highlights both the haste with which the new trade regulations were implemented—the head of government not having been informed of the measure on the eve of the book fair—and the difference of opinion within the regime between the minister and the head of government (also secretary of the Justice and Development Party) on the position to take towards the *tajwīd* Qur'an, or rather on how the Qur'an should be memorized and transmitted. While the king and his advisers only considered standards defined by institutional clerics as valid, from the head of government's perspective the Qur'an had to be learnable independently and directly, without an imposed state mediation. This episode also illustrates the monarch's concern with being seen as absolutist at a time when he had to demonstrate openness and flexibility towards the ruling Islamic party.

In addition to the highly collective and socialized dimension of the uses of the Qur'an, which is most emblematically expressed in the *ḥizb* ritual, where the use of sounds and movements is supposed to create a homogeneous Moroccan religious identity, another issue closely linked to the first is apparent: learning the Qur'an by heart.

9 Ways of Learning

9.1 *Moving the Lips in the Recitation of the Qur'an*

According to the traditional method still widespread in Morocco, once children have mastered the alphabet, they learn the Qur'an by using tracing paper to reproduce the verses written by their master. With their wooden tablet (figs. 5.11 and 5.12) held vertically, children repeat the text out loud after their teacher while copying it. More deeply rooted in Morocco than elsewhere in the Islamic world,[31] memorization (*ḥifẓ*) thus goes far beyond learning the text: It aims

31 Dale Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Education and its Social Reproduction," Comparative Studies in Society and History 20 (4), 1978: 485–516; Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

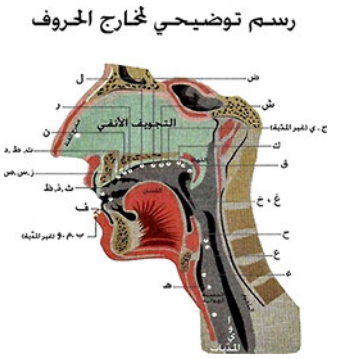

FIGURE 5.8
Drawing showing the articulation of letters at the end of a *tajwīd* Qur'an
DAR AL-MAARIFAH, DAMASCUS, 2003: 64

to transform the learner in the deepest sense of the term. The child must literally possess the Qur'an[32] and incorporate it,[33] as is implied by the expressions commonly used in Morocco: "[moving] his lips in silent recitation of the Qur'an"[34] or "carrying the Qur'an in his heart".[35] This true embodiment of the Word of God provides moral and ethical value to the pupil, and his physical body imbued with the sacredness of the Word is seen as the transforming agent of the mind.

In Morocco, as in other Muslim countries, rote learning of the Qur'an is based on mnemonic markers[36] similar to ones developed in ancient Greece and Rome to facilitate the memorization of texts, both sacred and not, through "places" and "images".[37] Here, intonation, rhythm,[38] and the visual association between the shape of the letters and the morphology of the animals[39] combine into synesthetic lessons supporting an exact and optimal incorporation of the Qur'an. This explains why the physical properties of the text, which shape the specific ways of seeing, hearing, and reciting it, are a major issue. It should

32 Eickelman, "Art of Memory."
33 Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).
34 Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power*, 48.
35 Corinne Fortier, "Le corps comme mémoire: du giron maternel à la ferule du maître coranique," *Journal des africanistes* 68 (1), 1998: 218.
36 Eickelman, "Art of Memory."
37 Frances A. Yates, *L'Art de la mémoire*, trans. Daniel Arasse (Paris: Gallimard, 1986 [1975]).
38 It is noteworthy that poetry is a mnemonic practice deeply rooted in the learning of the Qur'an. In Morocco, as elsewhere, it sets the rhythm considered fundamental to the recitation and comprehension of the text. See Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthopology* (New York: asic Books, 1983).
39 Romain Simenel, "Figuration, Prosody and Poetry: how Text comes to Mind in Southern Morocco", intervention au 114e congrès annuel de l'American Association Anthropology, Denver, 2015.

be noted in this regard that the "great reciters," called *ḥazzāb*, who know the Qur'an by heart and recite it, generally only use one edition. This is the method that teachers recommend to their students, who are encouraged to use the book as a mnemonic object. Many worshippers are particularly interested, for example, in graphic composition, and prefer that the pages end at the end of verses rather than in the middle.[40] During their study, the page is associated with an image (another meaning given to the word *rasm*, or "calligraphy") that is visually fixed in their memory to retain the suras. Everything on the page matters, say the reciters: the writing style, the layout, and the decorations.[41]

The medallions, rosettes, and sura titles do not just fulfil a decorative, symbolic, and spiritual function.[42] By marking the end of a verse or the beginning of a sura, they facilitate its memorization. Besides reminding practitioners of the order of the verses, medallions signal a physical action: the prostration required at the end of certain verses. From this perspective, the ornamentations, which have the "function of attributing mnemonic salience to variations" of the text,[43] engage believers' relationship with God in a more participative than contemplative way. As in Romanesque art in the Middle Ages, "the differentiated treatment and calculated distribution of these ornamental aspects mean that they both hierarchize what they affect and accompany (in the musical sense), guide and punctuate their ritual investment. [...] In this sense, the ornamental, in the absence of an explicitly discursive and symbolic meaning, has at least an (intensive and qualifying) expressive meaning that is experienced and even acted upon."[44]

Thus, the Qur'an is in itself a mnemonic "technology of memory" in Mary Carruthers' sense of the term,[45] that is, a visual grammar of images that serve as a mnemonic trigger for the text, particularly in the medieval European Bible. Carruthers also showed how a disciplined, trained, and educated memory transforms knowledge into experience, allowing a work to become insti-

40 Anouk Cohen, "Le Coran et ses multiples formes (Casablanca, Maroc)," Terrain 59 (2012): 70–87.

41 An article in progress examines the cognitive origins of the iconic writing of the holy book in the context of the study of the Qur'an by self-proclaimed clerics in Casablanca.

42 Martin Lings, *The Qur'anic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: World of Islam festival, 1976).

43 Carlo Severi, "L'univers des arts de la mémoire: anthropologie d'un artefact mental," Annales 2 (4), 2009: 476.

44 Jean-Claude Bonne et al., "Y a-t-il une lecture symbolique de l'ornement?", Perspective 1 (2), 2010, 29.

45 Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

FIGURE 5.9
Recitation of the Qur'an in a Moroccan school, Salé
© ANOUK COHEN & ANIS FARIJI, 2019

tutionalized in the language and imagination of individuals. Could it be this technology of memory that the Palace sought to model through the material reconfiguration of the Book? In other words, was it the way of incorporating the text and making it one's own that had to become Moroccan, standardized, and nationalized? Disciplining the senses, and defining and controlling ways of seeing and hearing the Qur'an, were in fact placed at the heart of a policy deployed in mosques and schools.

9.2 *Disciplining the Senses in Mosques …*

Every year since 2012, hundreds of thousands of copies of the Moroccan Qur'an have been placed in mosques to counter an increasingly common practice: donations of holy books to places of worship. The faithful who wish to "do *sadaqa*" ("almsgiving") offer tens, hundreds, and even thousands of them to "feel close to God."[46] The imam of the mosque to which they wish to donate typically indicates what edition should be purchased. However, the donors can also decide which model they would like to acquire and distribute. As a result, many versions abound, as the director of the foundation emphasized above. Until recently, the supply of equipment and liturgical objects to mosques was free, as was their construction. According to the 2006 census of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, benefactors have funded nearly 80% of mosques. Since the new decree passed in 2008, benefactors must now request permission before opening a mosque and secure approval for the hiring of the religious staff they are responsible for paying. Thus, the management of mosques, which used to be informal, is now at the heart of a "faith bureaucracy"[47] tasked with streamlining a system that used to be based on inherited interpersonal relationships. This management is similar to the control system implemented in Saudi Ara-

46 Anouk Cohen, "Le livre du Coran à Casablanca et à Rabat," Archives des sciences sociales des religions 150 (2010): 175–195.

47 Mohamed Tozy, "Des oulémas frondeurs à la bureaucratie du 'croire.' Les péripéties d'une restructuration annoncée du champ religieux au Maroc," in *La Bureaucratisation néolibérale*, ed. Béatrice Hibou (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), 129–154.

FIGURE 5.10
Students and their Qur'anic tablet in a Moroccan school, Rabat
© ANOUK COHEN & ANIS FARIJI, 2019

bia, which "imposes the Wahhabi habitus" daily.[48] In this country where baseline orthodoxy and orthopraxis are at the heart of the political legitimization process,[49] the practice of prayer—the foundation of Islam for individuals and groups, and of community cohesion—plays a central role in the development of the state religion. Morocco seems to be following the same path.

Regional delegations have indeed recently been carrying out regular checks, closely watching how the imam recites the Qur'an and correcting errors made by the faithful. The "Imam's Guide," recently produced by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, stipulates the norms for the call to prayer, which is to be proclaimed "the Moroccan way [...] in a natural tone and free of any foreign imitation." No restrictive law has been applied, but controllers remain vigilant: "If Qur'ans are not compliant, either because they are torn or because they use an Eastern recitation, the controllers notify the delegate, who retrieves the Qur'ans that we then replace ourselves with the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*. The goal is for the faithful to have a Qur'an to pray with," explains the manager of the mosque department. Substitution is the strategy for turning the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* into the dominant version. "We must gently correct without creating conflict," he adds.

The main objective of this "correction" is, as aforementioned, the collective recitation of the *ḥizb* to support the memorization of the Qur'an according to the correct recitation method. In both Rabat and Casablanca, Islamic literacy and instruction courses, delivered in mosques and attended by an increasing number of generally educated men and women, are another major goal.[50] Young people rarely participate in these courses, as they often prefer to read

48 Nabil Mouline, "Les pretentions hégémoniques du wahabbisme," in *Islams politiques: courants, doctrines et idéologies*, eds. Sabrina Mervin and Nabil Mouline (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2017), 67.

49 Nabil Mouline, *Les Clercs de l'islam: autorité religieuse et pouvoir politique en Arabie Saoudite* (*XVIIIe–XXIe siècles*) (Paris: PUF, 2011).

50 El Ayadi et al., *L'Islam au quotidien: enquête sur les pratiques religieuses au Maroc* (Casablanca: Prologues, 2006).

and listen to the Qur'an on their mobile phones,[51] as do many older worshippers. Currently available mobile phone applications provide users with several recitations and explanations of certain terms. Moreover, unlike those who learned the Qur'an at Qur'anic school, many young people of faith would rather buy a Qur'an with the Eastern recitation they have become familiar with because Egyptian radio and television channels dominate Moroccan airwaves. The Eastern model also uses the style of writing they are used to reading in newspapers, books, and textbooks.

But the director of the foundation, who espouses the ministry's policy, is not worried: "We learn the Qur'an in the mosque. It is not a problem that more and more young people listen to the Qur'an on television or radio, because generally when they go to mosque, the imam is reciting it in the Moroccan way." Not everyone agrees with this assessment, especially the foundation's clerics, who lament: "At Qur'an chanting contests held in Morocco and around the world, we began to notice that our young people recited a lot in the Eastern style." Faced with the decline of Moroccan recitation and of *maghribī* calligraphy, which the clerics believe would protect the Qur'anic text from any falsification introduced by new means of production in *naskhī* calligraphy (Eastern writing), the foundation sought to reach children as early as possible: in schools.

9.3 *... and Schools*

Since the mid-2000s, religious instruction has diversified and now includes Qur'anic schools, Islamic education classes taught by volunteer teachers in their apartments, literacy classes for adults in charities, kindergartens, etc. In these mostly private schools, the blackboard, notebook, and small books of the Qur'an (containing the shortest suras that children learn first) are increasingly replacing the wooden tablet. The direct and interpersonal student-teacher relationship is being replaced by cognitive mechanisms in which print plays a central role. Until recently, however, teachers in private schools (or semi-private schools when they are subsidized by the state) were completely free to use the teaching materials of their choice. Many taught from textbooks using Eastern calligraphy and recitation: "It's easier for the pupils," a teacher in an elementary school in Casablanca stated. These textbooks include pictures showing what movements to make during prayers, following the generally accepted Middle Eastern practice among worshippers of prostrating with their arms alongside their body rather than crossed at their chest, as is often seen in Morocco.

51 El Ayadi et al., *L'Islam au quotidien: enquête sur les pratiques religieuses au Maroc* (Casablanca: Prologues, 2006).

FIGURE 5.11
Page from a textbook showing the movements to make during prayer
DAR ATTAKAFA, CASABLANCA, 2003: 46

The Ministry's Department of "Traditional Education" has taken steps to counter these practices, which are considered to be violations of the norm.[52] The aforementioned roadmap states: "The only doctrine that must be followed for school textbooks is that of the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*." However, the State has not legislated in this area either, fearing a confrontation with human rights organizations. In order to ensure compliance with the new rules, the department's inspectors frequently visit schools to check both the teaching methods and learning materials used. However, many of the "houses of the Qurʾan" (*dār al-Qurʾan*), as their patrons commonly call them, are not monitored: "New ones are built every day," a departmental employee explains. Once again, economic levers are used to pressure them: Deviant schools stop receiving public subsidies.

In addition to private schools, state educational structures also receive special attention. A textbook for Islamic courses prepared by the Ministry of Education in consultation with the foundation includes excerpts from the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* alongside passages from the standard edition. Introduced in the elementary school curriculum in 2016, this new textbook aims to accustom the younger generation with the physical appearance of the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*

52 As part of the reform, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, which now consists of four departments—Islamic affairs, mosques, traditional education, and preaching—has seen its staff almost quadruple. See Tozy, "Des oulémas frondeurs."

without abruptly breaking with students' writing and recitation habits. According to the head of the department, the reform requires a smooth transition: "You can't impose Moroccan-Andalusian calligraphy on someone who doesn't even write well; most teachers write like Middle Easterners. So we try to get them used to it, so that the student will at least be able to read the Qur'an every time he goes to the mosque." These observations reinforce the idea that the Palace considers the materiality of the book (and the textbook) to have effective power over the training of religious subjects.

10 From Praxis to Ideology: The Listening Bias

Besides the book, members of the ministry attribute properties to sounds, establishing a close link between the way the Qur'an is recited and the influence of a theology and doctrine. The director of the foundation has eloquently expressed this: "Eastern recitation helps teach children to jettison Maleikism. For example, when we say to a child, 'Don't read it this way—stop here and not there,' we're gradually touching on something else: It's dogma without being dogma. That is why our goal is not to spread the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī*. It's something else: politics and extremism. Virtually all the houses of the Qur'an in Morocco conduct an Eastern recitation. They take in orphans, give them food, and then they teach them Wahhabi dogma. They are then sent to Saudi Arabia and return like bombs!" Thus, hearing is not neutral. It is an act linked to a specific ideology adopted by the faithful, as are its characteristic sounds.

The new management of mosques and schools shows the relationship that the institution has clearly established between praxis, doctrine, and extremism: extending the letter in a given spot, stopping at the right time, bowing in a specific way, etc. These physical and sensory movements are emphasized, and they are at the origin of the creation of a Moroccan edition of the holy book meant to discipline the application of the Qur'an. It is as if the State assumed that protest from Islamist worshippers first and foremost related to the ordinary use of an object central to their daily lives and to the imprinting in bodies of specific movements and senses. The State is seeking to shape these ways of moving and connecting to the word of God that the book's material components activate.[53]

53 To this end, the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* and its French and English translations are also distributed in Europe and West Africa.

11 Conclusion

The *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* is seen as a tool to standardize ways of seeing and hearing the Qur'an. The object is supposed to give rise to a shared sensory experience and produce a type of knowledge capable of concretely transforming religious biases according to strict orthodoxy. Through the development of a hegemonic "aesthetic formation,"[54] the monarch seeks to govern the sensory engagement of the faithful with the Qur'an, which is conceived here as an effective graphic, mnemonic, and cognitive system. Reading the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* is seen as a form of allegiance to the king, to such a point that rejecting "his Qur'an" would be tantamount to separating from Allah.

The idea behind the material reconfiguration of the book and the creation of a more sensory rather than intellectual relationship to the text is to reorient the visual and audible uses of the Qur'an so that they evolve within a defined, limited, and easily controllable field of practices.[55] At stake are the affirmation of the religious authority of the monarch as commander of the faithful and the creation of a religious subjectivity meant to play a unifying role. This involves both the development of certain sensory norms and the erasure or anaesthetization of other norms.[56] In reaction to the standardization of belief resulting from a deterritorialization of religious products, which is symptomatic of a separation between culture and religion,[57] the monarchy is currently working on (re-)connecting religious and cultural markers. At this stage of the analysis, one main question remains unanswered: Will this fledgling policy succeed in "making believers walk"?[58] This is a question to be pursued in a future study on the

54 According to Birgit Meyer, it refers to that which "captures very well the formative impact of a shared aesthetics through which subjects are shaped by tuning their senses, inducing experiences, molding their bodies, and making sense, and which materializes in things." Birgit Meyer, *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion and the Senses* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 7.

55 On this subject in the Jewish context, see the study conducted by Jeremy Stolow in the United States: Jeremy Stolow, *Orthodox by Design: Judiasm, Print Politics and the Artscroll Revolution* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2010).

56 Jojada Verrips, "Aisthesis and An-aesthesia," *Ethnologia Europea* 35 (2006): 27–33.

57 Olivier Roy, *La Sainte Ignorance: le temps de la religion sans culture* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2008).

58 Michel de Certeau, *La Fable mystique: XVIe–XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), 57–58. "All authority is based … on the reality it is supposed to declare. It is always to something real that believers 'walk' and are produced." The excerpt from De Certeau's chapter was quoted by Jean-Pierre Warnier in a presentation (December 2013) where he provided the following analysis: "Certeau offers to deconstruct the way in which the historical institution, teachers, publishers, etc. produce the reader as a believer of these events made real

concrete uses of the *muṣḥaf muḥammadī* by believers who are open to a globalized world of practices and probably more ingenious and incredulous than this policy might suggest.

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in the present by the scholarly accounts of them. This 'makes the reader walk.' The reader walks—not always, but most of the time. This is how history unfolds between science and fiction."

Iman Farag. "Querelle de minarets en Égypte. Le débat public sur l'appel à la prière." *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 125, 2009: 47–46.

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PART 3

Colonial Encounters: Collections, Displacement and Social Meaning

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6

Enchantment, Imagery, and Craftsmanship in the *Tilism-i ʿAjāʾib* (*The Talisman of Wonders*)

The Social Codicology of Illustrated Cosmological and Divinatory Urdu Lithographs in Nineteenth-Century South Asia

Nur Sobers-Khan

1 Introduction[1]

The original context of the social embeddedness of manuscripts and other textual artefacts is often neglected within the traditional study of Islamic codicology and philology. Many manuscript and rare book collections are now care-

1 I must acknowledge and thank a number of colleagues for their kind invitations to present my research on this corpus of texts and images at such a large range of different conferences, seminars, and workshops, each of which permitted the exploration of new and interesting dimensions of this material. Special thanks go to Olly Akkerman, who first invited to me engage with her exciting new intellectual framework and method of studying manuscripts, namely social codicology, in 2018. Alas, I was unable to attend her conference as a result of last-minute work circumstances, but her invitation spurred the research in this paper, which I then had the opportunity to develop and present at the following conferences, whose audiences I thank heartily for their advice and critiques along the way. The first of these groups are the attendees of the "Islam and Print in South Asia" workshop organised by the Two Centuries of Indian Print project, British Library, London, UK (28 September and 26 October, 2018). I also thank Priyanka Basu and Samia Khatun for their comments and questions. Many thanks go to the following colleagues who invited me to present in their workshops and seminars, which allowed me to develop my arguments and thinking: to Sohaira Siddiqui for her invitation to present a version of this research at the conference "Transformations and Continuities in Islamic Intellectual Thought" at Georgetown University, Doha, Qatar (17–18 March 2019) and to Asli Niyazioglu, Sajjad Rizvi, Mahmood Kooria, and Judith Pfeiffer for comments and feedback. I thank Nilufer Nahya for inviting me to present at the ADES Symposium, Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan (20–22 June 2019), Fozia Parveen for her invitation to present this material at the York Festival of Ideas/York Islamic Art Circle (4 June 2019) and Eleanor Sims for feedback at that seminar. I thank Eyad Abuali for his invitation to speak at the "Sufism and the Body" conference, University of Utrecht (12–13 September 2019) and the many useful comments and questions from Liana Saif, Cyrus Zargar, and Dzenita Karic. I thank Adrien Zakar for his kind invitation to discuss my work in the panel "Towards a History and Interpretations of the 'Circle' in the Scientific and Visual Cultures of the Middle East" at MESA (16 October 2020) and the very comprehensive feedback and questions from Karen Pinto and Matt Melvin-Koushki. I also wish to thank Joyoti Roy at CSMVS museum

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fully stored in hygienic and visually sanitized storage facilities, on metal shelves in grey conservation-grade boxes that belie little of their contents. Rarely do we have the opportunity to observe the manuscript in its original settings, with all of the attendant messiness of its social and devotional context and material surroundings. And when we do, as trained scholars the use of manuscripts "in the wild" may somehow strike us as improper or in need of reform. I recently watched a documentary about a family of Russian old believers who fled to the Siberian forest to live as hermits and evade persecution in the Stalin-era Soviet Union. Decades later, the sole surviving family member was filmed by the documentary-makers reciting her prayers in her abode in the midst of the wilderness using a beautifully illuminated liturgical manuscript, dirty with the grease of hands that had thumbed through its pages to recite prayers every day for generations. I remember thinking, "This is not the place for such a valuable manuscript, in the kitchen next to a wood stove in the forest," and then the thought that immediately followed on its heels was: No, this is the correct context for such a manuscript, its original one, in the home of a believer who uses it every day in her kitchen to recite her prayers and devotions, one of whose ancestors perhaps copied or made it, with the accumulated births and deaths of relatives recorded in the margins or front pages, a whole microcosm of religious and family life encoded in its pages, which grow thinner and dirtier with the handling and meaning-making of each successive generation. The kitchen of an old believer hermit is the socially embedded site for this liturgical manuscript, rather than a museum or a sterile facility where only the elites of the academic world of the Global North could access it to further their careers and impose their—quite often extraneous and other times misguided—interpretations on it. The appearance of this unexpected illuminated manuscript in a documentary about a hermit in Siberia raises questions of whose epistemologies and exercises in meaning are valued by the archives

in Mumbai for her invitation to take part in her speaker series (10 December 2020) and the insightful comments of Kavita Singh and Neha Vermani. I would also never have developed an interest in the topic of divination if not for conversations with Liana Saif and her Esoteric reading group at the Warburg Institute from its inception in 2013. Many thanks also to my colleagues at Habib University for allowing me to integrate lectures on divination and the occult sciences into the introduction to Islam course "Hikmah 1," when I had the pleasure of teaching there in 2019, allowing me to engage further with these topics. I also thank Samia Rahman of *Critical Muslim* for soliciting writing from me on topics of divination and Islamic occult knowledge systems that resulted in the essays "Dreaming: An Exploration of Oneiric Logic and Radical Ontology Creation" in *Critical Muslim: Narratives* 28 (October–December 2018): 128–137 and "Re-Claiming Manuscripts" in *Critical Muslim: Relics* 33 (Winter, 2020): 75–90, which form the basis for this current work.

and museums of the Global North, and why it is that only certain hegemonic forms of studying and using manuscripts are considered valid within the western academe. For that matter, we should problematize the conclusions that can be drawn and what can be "read" into a manuscript or other textual artefact, rather than the resonances of the worlds that the artefact inhabited before it entered the graveyard of the western archive or library.

The social context of manuscripts and lithographs that were used for divination deserves similar re-thinking. As someone who has worked in a large western library collection dealing with collections from South Asia and the Middle East, I see that these manuscripts and other works are entirely removed from a devotional or cultural context in which they are still considered tools for divination. They are also removed from a cultural context and epistemological framework in which they are used in order to access knowledge beyond the literal meaning of their text, the information they can provide on intellectual history, or conclusions about their materiality or visual qualities. That is to say, the study of these artefacts is limited to what can be derived from their textual contents; whereas, when they were used as divination texts or objects, reading their literal contents as a text was not always the reader's primary objective in opening them. Rather, the words, formulae, magic squares, recipes, or illustrations that they contain were not the objects of focus, but rather a means to an end: to enacting magic, to seeing the unseen, or foretelling the future. Deprived of their original meaning and purposes, divination manuscripts find themselves removed from their original socially embedded context and its attendant ways of knowing and creating meaning.

To re-capture some of the original epistemic texture of these works, their context, creation, and use, in an attempt to employ the social codicology methodology for the study of these artefacts, I will examine a set of treatises from nineteenth-century South Asia, which illustrates how our understanding of what a manuscript does and what the nineteenth-century creators and readers of the manuscript understood it to do differ wildly. This is due to the epistemic shifts that have occurred over time, in part due to the Enlightenment episteme of western colonial modernity, which we struggle so often to escape when studying pre-modern manuscripts and thought systems. Another ideological culprit that prevents scholars from contextualizing early modern manuscripts is the de-valuing of non-hegemonic intellectual traditions that refuse to conform to the Enlightenment episteme which we attempt to evade. This de-valuing and marginalization of non-western knowledge traditions is paradoxical, considering that we as scholars are generally interested in the emic narrative of a manuscript and its tradition and context. Studying the original social context of the manuscript and what it meant to its creators and users

(I do not say "readers" because not all uses of manuscripts, including divination manuscripts, involved literacy as we understand it, as parsing a text for the meaning that arises out of the joined letters and phrases) is one way perhaps to evade—or if not evade, at least momentarily have some respite from—the oppressively stubborn episteme that leads us to study the text as text, rather than as a magical object that renders the future visible or gives insight into unseen worlds and cosmological structures.

This paper will examine a corpus of nineteenth-century cosmological and divination treatises bearing titles that hint at both their use for magical practice and their genealogy within a longer tradition of socially situated manuscripts. This genre of texts, bearing titles such as the *Tilismat-i ʿAjāʾib* (*Wondrous Talismans*) and the *Tuhfah-yi Tilismat* (*Rare* or *Marvellous Talismans*) are heavily illustrated texts that defy our current scholarly understanding of the divisions and genres of pre-modern Islamic knowledge production while at the same time draw on and re-purpose a range of identifiable sources and visual programmes to formulate pathways for readers to create their own narrative of text and image. The treatise itself can be described as a pastiche, drawing in equal parts on a textual and visual lineage descending from Islamic cosmological and divinatory texts, illustrations, and practices while combining these historical texts with new technological methods of producing, altering, and reproducing images, juxtaposing and remediating them into new formulations—or possibilities—of meaning and practices of reading. I will argue that this genre of treatise also represents a challenge to notions of a colonial rupture in Islamic knowledge production, as the "disruptive" technologies that were introduced into nineteenth-century South Asia, such as lithography, in matter of fact allowed for the continuity of manuscript culture and the epistemic worlds encoded therein, as well as for the reformulation of these manuscript cultures into new forms of text, meaning, and genre in the form of mass-produced lithographs.

What are the ways that lithograph publishers remediate the text of cosmological manuscripts and their accompanying imagery, and what were the new ways of reading/using the manuscript-lithograph? Moreover, how do we situate these objects in their social context? To approach this question, some historical background is first necessary. The *Tilism-i ʿAjāʾib*/*Tuhfah-yi Tilismat* lithographed treatises and their genealogy within the constellation of manuscript texts and illustrations that gave rise to their formulation must first be established. Through exploring this genealogy, the entanglement and intervention of British colonial manuscript patronage in the circulation of courtly manuscript images becomes apparent, as does the role of itinerant South Asian craftsmen whose geographical dislocation was brought about by the social and

political destruction and rupture of 1857. This context is essential to understanding how the transformation of manuscript genres and illustrative programmes into lithograph production occurred. After exploring the historical context of colonialism and material basis for the transmission of manuscript production from a limited scribal practice to the burgeoning lithograph industry in the north of the Indian subcontinent, it is possible to argue that the lithographed treatises at hand represent remediated cosmological and divinatory objects that challenge our historiographical notions of the epistemic rupture of modernity. Indeed, we may argue that these lithographs represent an epistemic and visual remediation by which the texts and imagery of an enchanted worldview are repurposed and mass-produced, not losing their aura of wonder but acquiring new accretions and layers of meaning as they circulate. After explaining this argument, it then becomes possible to situate the treatise in its social context more accurately. The lithographed codex is demonstrated to be an object used not just to convey an enchanted cosmological vision, but an object that moves beyond reliance on the text altogether to give the reader access to the future and the unseen through pictorial divination techniques.

The set of materials that sparked these reflections on the nature of print and the shift in popular visual culture and the Urdu readership's relationship to texts and images of divination and cosmology is a corpus of treatises in the Vernacular Tract series housed in the British Library, London. These books were collected under the regulations of the 1867 Press and Registration of Books Act, a law that enabled colonial surveillance by legislating the systematic collection of all titles published in South Asian languages in British India and their deposit in the India Office Library and the Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts division of the British Museum. As these two collections were the founding materials for the British Library's Asia and Africa Collections, and especially the South Asia printed books collection, they provide a broad picture of publishing across a range of South Asian languages, among which are the nineteenth-century Urdu-language lithograph publications that we will examine here. While there are numerous titles in the Urdu collections that treat many forms of divinatory practices from within the Islamicate intellectual tradition, there emerges from these materials a distinct genre of illustrated text constructed from a mélange of earlier texts, from cosmological and imagined geographical treatises to methods for interpreting dreams, to questions of healing, working magic, and making talismans, amulets, and other apotropaic objects.

Although scholarship of the Islamicate occult sciences is experiencing something of a renaissance of renewed academic interest at the moment, for many years the practice of divination was marginalized in scholarly under-

standings of the development of premodern Islamic social and intellectual history. One of the most important and comprehensive studies of divinatory practice is Toufic Fahd's magisterial work *La Divination Arabe*, published in 1966 and considered to be the authoritative study of Islamic divination practices.[2] Although Fahd describes forty specific divination practices, I would argue that countless more probably existed at the level of popular practice that have not been documented in manuscripts or other forms of textual or material record. To give a sense of the range and variety of practices, among Fahd's scholarly investigations are included the sciences of: *taʿbīr al-aḥlām* or oneiromancy (dreams—the highest form of divination, and considered to be an element of prophecy); *ʿilm al-firāsa* or physiognomy (or ascertaining an individual's moral qualities and character from their outward appearance, also a prophetic quality); *faʿl al-Qurʾān* (or other text, such as the *divan* of Hafiz), or bibliomancy; *ʿilm al-nujūm*/*aḥkām al-nujūm* or astronomy/astrology; *ʿilm al-ḥurūf* or lettrism (divination through the letters of the alphabet); and many other forms of divination, such as predicting the future from throbbings in parts of the body, the flight of birds, intestines of sheep, cloud formations, from collections of painted images, and palmistry. Divination is today often viewed as a cultural practice, somehow divorced from the mainstream of Islamic religious belief and practice; however, this was certainly not the case historically, and arguably is not the case in the present. These many genres and forms of divinatory practice are represented in the Urdu lithographs in the Vernacular Tract collection, but more often than not these approaches to divination are combined in the form of a genre-bending pastiche of different texts and types of divination across what scholars would consider to be the subdivisions of the occult sciences.

2 The Spread of Print Culture in South Asia

Print culture in South Asia flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century with the widespread use of lithographic printing presses. The lithograph had been introduced to South Asia in the 1820s, and gained in popularity in the following decades,[3] as it allowed scribes and illustrators to write and draw directly onto a lithographic stone using chemicals from which the images and

2 Toufic Fahd, *La Divination Arabe: Etudes Religieuses, Sociologiques et Folkloriques sur le Milieu Natif de l'Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 1966).

3 Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 14; Graham Shaw, "Calcutta: Birthplace of the Indian Lithographed Book," *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, XXVII (1998), 89–112.

words could be reprinted thousands of times. This method suited the scribes writing in Perso-Arabic scripts in South Asia, and in many respects, initial lithographic production in Persian and Urdu drew very heavily on traditions of Islamic manuscript production on the Indian subcontinent. The products of lithographic printing, including chromolithographic posters intended for devotional purposes, became widely visible in the public sphere, where they transformed ritual practices.[4] While mass-produced illustrated Urdu-language lithographs have not received the same attention from Islamic art historians as courtly Persian manuscripts have enjoyed,[5] Urdu-language lithographs draw on many of the same texts and visual programs, calligraphic traditions, and scribal cultures as their Persian predecessors while also transforming these previous modes of representation. Urdu lithographic production, to use the words of Christopher Pinney, "exists in a relationship of both continuity and disjunction with earlier image practices in India,"[6] especially in relation to Persian illustrated manuscripts.

This article explores how the visual field of Urdu lithographs and print culture is deeply intertwined with Persianate manuscript production and British colonial patronage of the arts. The mass production of print allows the historian to reconstruct the practices of reading and using Urdu lithographs that rely on materiality to enact aspects of popular devotion, such as imagining the enchanted cosmos and using pictorial divination to predict the future. The re-ordering and mass dissemination of visual programs into new genres through practices of collage and pastiche gave new life and meaning to premodern Islamic cosmographical and talismanic iconography, problematising the notion of a 'rupture' with the Islamicate intellectual and devotional tradition of pre-modernity. Persianate visual tropes as well as the materiality of religious practices relating to divination and talisman-making were altered and also augmented by the shift in visual practice brought about by lithography.

Before approaching the cosmographic and divinatory lithographic texts, a word on magic—or devotional engagements with the supernatural—in the Islamic context is in order. Practices that today are considered to fall under the umbrella of "magic," such as the creation of apotropaic images or writ-

4 Pinney, *Photos of the Gods*, 16.

5 With some important exceptions, of course. Zahra Shah, Amanda Lanzillo, and Megan Robb have dedicated great scholarly attention to Perso-Arabic script lithographic production in South Asia, and Ulrich Marzolph has published extensively on illustrated Persian lithographs as subjects worthy of art historical enquiry.

6 Pinney, *Photos of the Gods*, 14.

ings, or divination through bibliomancy, oneiromancy or other means, were part and parcel of normal Muslim devotional practices and in many contexts, remain part of the social context of religious practice relating to writing and the use of codices, in particular. Travis Zadeh points out that many practices and beliefs that Western scholars of Islam consider to be outside of Muslim orthopraxy, such as the use of charms or the belief in jinn and supernatural elements, has, in Zadeh's words, "historically occupied a rather normative place in Islamic soteriology. The categorization of such religious practices and beliefs as manifestations of superstitious magic forms part of the broader epistemological foundations of Orientalism, which viewed the Orient in general and Islam in particular as decadent, effeminate, and irrational."[7] He points out that the intellectual history of Islamic studies in the Western academy finds its roots in Orientalism and the Enlightenment, and that the sociological category of "popular" Islam has often been deployed to reflect derivative folk traditions on the periphery of Islamic civilization in contrast to "normative" forms of Islam, which are determined by legalistic approaches that are defined by the male religious elite.[8] Gazing upon images of the Prophet's belongings or depictions of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina was a practice considered to confer blessings upon the viewer, along with the touching of saints' tombs, the tracing of venerated relics, and the rubbing or kissing of holy images and relics. These were all material aspects of premodern devotional practices. The ingesting of water in which the words of the Qurʾan or other writings have been dissolved was considered to carry a sacred valence and remains a widely accepted practice.[9]

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7 Travis Zadeh, "Magic, Marvel, and Miracle in Early Islamic Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. David J. Collins (Cambridge, CUP, 2015), 237.

8 Ibid., "An Ingestible Scripture: Quranic Erasure and the Limits of 'Popular' Religion'" in *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object*, eds. Benjamin J. Fleming and Richard D. Mann (New York: Routledge, 2014): 97–119.

9 Barry Flood, *Technologies de dévotion dans les arts de l'Islam, Pèlerins, reliques et copies* (Paris: Hachette, 2019), 146–157; Ibid., "Bodies and Becoming: Mimesis, Mediation, and the Ingestion of the Sacred in Christianity and Islam" in *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice*, ed. Sally M. Promey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014): 459–493; Alexandra Bain, "The *Enʿam-i Şerif*: Sacred text and images in a late Ottoman prayer book," in György Hazai, ed., *Archivum Ottomanicum* 19 (2001): 213–238; Alexandra Bain, "The late Ottoman *Enʿam-i Şerif*: Sacred Text and Images in an Islamic Prayer Book" (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 1999); Travis Zadeh, "Touching and Ingesting: Early Debates over the Material Qur'an," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129/3 (2009): 443–466; Zadeh, "Ingestible Scripture,"; Christiane Gruber, "The Prophet as a Sacred Spring: Late Ottoman Hilye Bottles," *in The Presence of the Prophet in Early Modern and Contemporary Islam, Vol. 1. The Prophet*

The role that manuscripts and sacred imagery have played historically in Muslim devotional practice has attracted scholarly attention. Richard McGregor and Alexandra Bain have studied the role that manuscripts played in the devotional practices of Muslim believers, with particular attention to the imagery that the manuscripts featured, such as the Prophet's footprint and his personal belongings, which allowed the reader or viewer to touch and thereby receive blessings through material contact with the image. Illuminated manuscripts with illustrations of this nature were largely confined to elite settings, such as a royal court or scholarly milieu. Other forms of devotional practice detailed in manuscripts, such as divination rituals or the making of talismans, were also restricted in their audience, by virtue of the circulation of the manuscript amongst a select group, either within a Sufi *tariqa*, a group of scholars, or a family lineage. With the advent of print, forms of devotion and the material imagery accompanying these practices would have circulated much more widely and reached a much larger audience. In the context of South Asia, not only did texts depicting cosmography, divination, and talisman-making translate their texts and images from a Persian manuscript tradition, but they also mixed the texts and images and adapted them into new genres and forms of devotional practice.[10]

Between Doctrine, Literature and Arts: Historical Legacies and Their Unfolding, eds. Denis Gril, Stefan Reichmuth, and Dilek Sarmis (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 535–583; Christiane Gruber, ""Go Wherever You Wish, for Verily You are Well-Protected": Seal Designs in Late Ottoman Amulet Scrolls and Prayer Books," in *Visions of Enchantment: Occultism, Spirituality, and Visual Culture*, eds. Daniel Zamani and Judith Nobel (London: Fulgur, 2019), 22–35; Iman Abdulfattah, "Relics of the Prophet and Practices of His Veneration in Medieval Cairo," *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 1/1 (2014): 75–104; Richard McGregor, "Repetition and Relics: Tracing the Lives of Muhammad's Sandal," in *Islam Through Objects*, ed. Anna Bigelow (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 49–64; Ibid., "Notes on the Literature of Sufi Commentaries," *Mamluk Studies Review* 17 (2013): 199–211; Ibid., "A Sufi Legacy in Tunis: Prayer and the Shadhiliya," *IJMES* 29/2 (May, 1997): 255–277; Richard McGregor, *Islam and the Devotional Object: Seeing Religion in Egypt and Syria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Sabiha Göloğlu, "Touching Mecca & Medina: The Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt and Devotional Practices," Khamseen: Islamic Art History Online, published 28 August 2020, accessed December 8, 2023, https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/khamseen/short-form-videos/2020/touching-mecca-medina-the-dalail-al-khayrat-and-devotional-practices/

10 Emma Flatt, "The Authorship and Significance of the Nujūm al-ʿulūm: A Sixteenth-Century Astrological Encyclopedia from Bijapur," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 131/2 (April–June 2011), 223–244; Yael Rice, "Cosmic Sympathies and Painting at Akbar's Court," in *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting*, ed. Molly Emma Aitken (Mumbai: Marg, 2016): 88–99.

3 Islamic Cosmological Manuscripts and Urdu Lithographic Production

Before examining the later Urdu lithograph production of cosmographical lithographs and related genres, some background is required to describe the manuscript tradition that was adapted by later Urdu lithograph artists in order to understand how this genre of manuscript came to be so prolifically reproduced and re-imagined in lithograph form. The manuscript in question is the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt wa-Gharāʾib al-Mawjūdāt* ("The Wonders of Creation and Oddities of Existence"), authored by the Ilkhanid-era intellectual, al-Qazwini (1203–1283 CE).[11] Although he was not the first author to write a cosmological treatise of this title, his illustrated version of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*, dated 1280 CE, shaped the Islamicate visual and spatial conceptualization of the cosmos for centuries.[12] The contents of the original *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* produced in 1280 CE depict the celestial and terrestrial realms. The first section describes the celestial realms and contains illustrations of the heavenly bodies and astronomical phenomena, the inhabitants of the celestial realm, such as angels, and time, accompanied by a discussion of different calendars and issues of chronology and temporality. The second section details the terrestrial realm and includes discussions of the four elements, meteors, and winds; the seven climates, with descriptions of the seas and rivers and explanations of the formations of mountains and wells; and the three kingdoms of nature: the mineral, vegetable, and animal. The first earthly creature to be discussed is the human being, then the other living beings according to the hierarchy of animals, birds, and then insects, followed by a final section on the "strange and peculiar" wonders, such as the tribe of Gog and Magog, and various odd forms, such as humans who do not possess necks, or who have outlandishly massive ears that they use as blankets, or humans with dog heads.[13] Often heavily illustrated, this and later illustrated copies of the text have provided rich source material for Islamic art historians.[14]

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11 For full discussions of al-Qazwini's work and the many afterlives of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*, see Persis Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image, & Cosmos in Medieval Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) and Stefano Carboni, *The Wonders of Creation and the Singularities of Painting: A Study of the Ilkhanid London Qazvīnī* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

12 An illustrated manuscript of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* produced for al-Qazwini himself in 1280 CE survives in the Staatsbibliothek in Munich (MSS cod. arab.464, accessible digitally: Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum http://www.bsbmuenchen.de).

13 For a full description of the contents of early illustrated *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscripts, see the work of Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image and Cosmos* and Carboni, *Wonders of Creation*.

14 Karin Rührdanz, "Illustrated Persian *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* Manuscripts and Their Function

The art-historical interpretation of the genre often centres on the spiritual and philosophical revelations that the aesthetic experience of viewing wondrous illustrations of God's creation is intended to induce in the reader. Persis Berlekamp, a leading scholar in the study of the cosmological illustrations in al-Qazwini's work, argues that the visual engagement with the striking imagery would arouse an aesthetic appreciation in the reader that would give rise to the awakening of the internal senses, thereby paving the way "for awe at God's divinely ordained cosmos."[15] Art historians have also focused on how the text and its illustrations embody the Neoplatonic emanationist doctrine of Ibn Sina, and how al-Qazwini shaped his text and its visual program within this interpretive paradigm.[16]

The emanationist doctrine gave form to the structure of the text through its hierarchy of beings. The creatures of the celestial realms such as angels who were closest to God were described and depicted first in the text with striking illustrations. Creations located further from God, such as the beings of the terrestrial realm, were described later on in the text and given less elaborate illustrations. Both the celestial and terrestrial beings were subdivided into hierarchies, and Berlekamp argues in her extensive research on the cosmological illustrations that emerged in al-Qazwini's work that the wonder-inducing purpose of the genre is evident most clearly in al-Qazwini's own manuscript, and that the author himself explains in the introduction to his text that "every atom of substance and accident is characterized by and has as its attribute the wonders and oddities that appear within it, by the wisdom, power, majesty and greatness of God the Exalted," and in addition to the wondrous elements of the world that can be seen with the eyes, he also includes the unseen realm (*al-ghayb*) as well. The illustrated manuscript genre of the "wonders of creation" has thus largely been understood by Islamic art historians as a tool for contemplating the complexity, variety, and magnificence of God's cosmos as well as the mystery of the unknowable and the unseeable. There are clear echoes of this conceptual framework in the introduction and contents of the *Tilismat-i ʿAjaʾib* and the corpus of Urdu lithographs examined here, which adapt and combine the topics of cosmology, divination, and magic.

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in Early Modern Times" in *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period*, ed. Andrew J. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 33–45; Karin Rührdanz, "Between Astrology and Anatomy: Updating Qazwini's Aja'ib al-Makhluqat in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Iran," *Ars Orientalis* 42 (2012): 56–66; Julie Badiee, "The Sarre Qazwini: An Early Aq Qoyunlu Manuscript?" *Ars Orientalis* 14 (1984): 91–113.

15 Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image and Cosmos*, 22.

16 Ibid. 16.

Along similar lines, the notion of the *ʿajīb* (wondrous), and the *ʿajība* (pl. *ajā'ib*, strange or wondrous things) seems to have remained remarkably consistent from al-Qazwini's thirteenth-century CE formulation into nineteenth-century Persianate and Urdu-language lithograph culture. Al-Qazwini defines *ʿajab* as "the sense of bewilderment a person feels because of his inability to understand the cause of a thing," and a *gharīb* was considered to be a subset of the *ʿajā'ib*, and is "any wondrous matter which occurs rarely and is contrary to what is commonly known, witnessed, and written about," and as examples of *gharā'ib* (pl. of *gharīb*), al-Qazwini cites "miracles, eclipses, earthquakes, the evil eye, the unique characteristics of unusual souls, asteroids, snowfall out of season, the births of animals with strange forms, such as conjoined twins," as well as "the stars, the human body, the bee."[17] Indeed, we encounter very similar subject matter and language in the writings not just of the later Urdu text that adapted this concept, the *Tilismat-i Aja'ib* ("Talismans of Wonder"), but in similar texts as well, which we shall discuss shortly, in which the authors put emphasis on the rarity of the material presented in their treatises, pointing to a continuity with the earlier genres of texts dealing with the notion of the *ʿajā'ib* and *gharā'ib*.

However, a brief proviso is necessary to temper the notion of the *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* genre as one that was written purely with the intention of evoking a sense of divine bewilderment in the reader. Syrinx von Hees argues that this idea of the peculiar and bizarre phenomena of the cosmos as evoking a sense of wonder in the reader is largely an invention of modern western scholarship. Orientalist scholars in the nineteenth century, their attention caught by the chapters on oddities in the *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* with their corresponding illustrations, focused on these sections of the works and solidified their fixation into a genre in their scholarship on al-Qazwini and later authors of cosmological works.[18] Despite von Hees' critique of the secondary scholarship, it can still be materially demonstrated through the extant manuscript evidence that this genre of cosmological writing, while it underwent variation over time, remained stable in its conceptual underpinning although the content of its texts and the notion of what constitutes a "wonder" may have shifted over time.

While al-Qazwini's thirteenth-century *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* focuses its descriptions on phenomena that were in no way crafted or touched by man, and were entirely natural, which is to say, divinely created, phenomena, contempo-

17 Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image and Cosmos*, 23, translation of al-Qazwini by Persis Berlekamp.

18 Syrinx von Hees, "The Astonishing: A Critique and Re-reading of the ʿAǧa'ib Literature," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 8 (July 2005): 101–120.

rary and even earlier cosmographical texts, such as that of al-Tusi, do consider man-made objects, such as talismans, automata, and man-made wonders of engineering such as the nilometer. Later texts, especially those in the Persian tradition of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*, began to include chapters and more material on architectural monuments, man-made talismans, and magic, or in other words, on artifice and phenomena shaped by humans. What originated as an account of the natural world and elements of the cosmos and celestial realms in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries had shifted by the later fourteenth to eighteenth centuries, when a proliferation of *ʿajāʾib* texts occurred amongst the scholarly classes of the Islamic world.[19] This demonstrates that improvisation and addition of new material to the text of cosmological writings is to some degree encoded in the genre its inherent flexibility. Rather than describing it as an unstable genre, it would be more appropriate to understand it as a genre that invites invention, remediation, and pastiche from its very inception. Al-Qazwini's work has demonstrated what has been called "intentional intertextual reworking"[20] from the very birth of the genre, a trend that will continue into nineteenth-century Urdu lithograph production of variations on this multiform text.

The nineteenth-century Urdu lithographs that adapt illustrations from the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* tradition seem to have their source in a very specific manuscript tradition. By the nineteenth century, a seventeetnth-century Bijapur courtly[21] *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscript,[22] on which the illustrations in the later lithograph reproductions seem to have been based, was housed in the Lahore *toshak-khana* (treasure house). Charles Raikes (1812–1885) was an East India Company servant who in 1853 was appointed to a position in Lahore.[23]

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19 See von Hees, "Astonishing," 23.

20 Travis Zadeh, "The Wiles of Creation: Philosophy, Fiction, and the *ʿAjāʾib* Tradition," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 13/1 (2010): 23. Travis Zadeh also very kindly gave me access to the draft introduction and conclusion of his study on the intersection of the *ʿAjaʾib* tradition with modernity in South Asia in his forthcoming monograph, *Wonders and Rarities: How A Book of Natural Curiosities Shaped the World*.

21 The Adilshahi dynasty ruled the Deccan Sultanate of Bijapur from 1490 to 1686 and were the patrons of a rich manuscript and artistic culture.

22 The manuscript referred to here is Or. 1621 in the British Library's collection, which was previously in the collection of Muhammad Adil Shah (1066/1656) of Bijapur. It appears to be a copy of an *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscript made for his grandfather, Ibrahim Adil Shah, in 954/1547. Many thanks to the anonymous peer reviewer of this article for correcting this information.

23 Katherine Prior, "Raikes, Charles (1812–1885), East India Company servant" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004: https://doig/10.1093/ref:odnb/23013.

While there, he commissioned a fully illustrated exact manuscript copy of the Bijapur manuscript which he sent to the Imperial Exhibition of Paris in 1855 in the India pavilion as an example of "Muhammadan" craftsmanship, art, and science. This again suggests that the depiction of Islamic South Asian knowledge traditions was grounded in an Orientalist notion of the fantastical, as indicated in the discussion above regarding the reception of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* tradition by Western scholars. From the Imperial Exhibition, it was sent to the India Office Library in London in 1865[24] and is now housed in the British Library. It does not seem that this manuscript circulated in South Asia after its initial creation. The manuscript from which it seems to have been copied, the Bijapuri *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*, remained in the Lahore *toshak-khana* until 1870, but also made its way to the collections of the British Library through the coercive methods of colonial collecting,[25] and it bears the inscription "H.M.E. bought this very valuable MS from the Lahore Toshakhana for 40 r[upees]." H.M.E. is Henry Miers Elliot (1808–1853), another British colonial official who was a scholar of Indian history and languages.[26] The British Museum purchased the manuscript from Elliot's son in 1878.

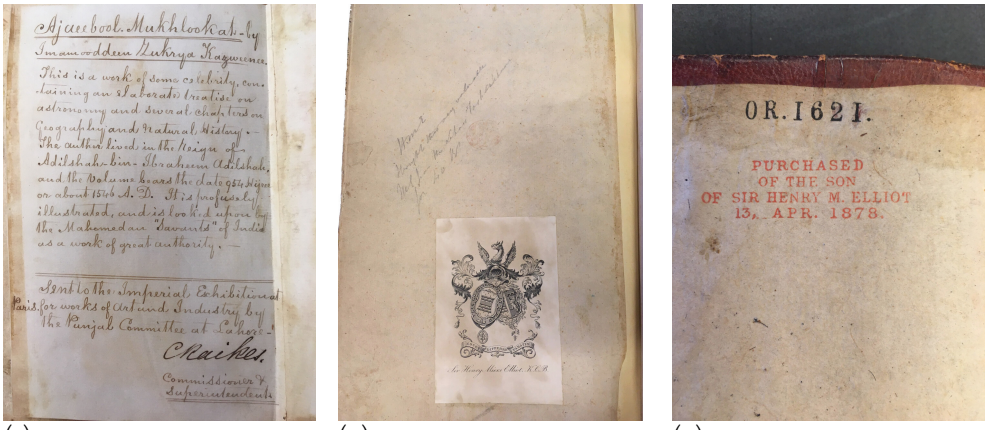
The cataloguing description for the 1854 *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscript commissioned by Charles Raikes provides the additional detail that the copying of the manuscript was completed under the supervision of Mufti Ala al-Din of Lahore by Fadl al-Din b. Muhammad Bakhsh Sahhaf of Lahore on the 21st of September, 1854.[27] More research is required to ascertain the identity and role of this artist-craftsman (whose *laqab* (nickname) of "Sahhaf," or bookbinder/maker of books also implies a family engagement with the manuscript trade), and how he and others who may have copied the original Bijapuri manuscript transmitted or reproduced their knowledge of the text and images for the Naval Kishore lithographic press roughly ten years later. Did they keep drafts of their copying work, or the pounces used to trace and transfer the illustrated images, from which they could, ostensibly, continue to make endless copies of the original manuscript? In fact, if one compares illustrations of Raikes' commission of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* produced in 1854, the Persian *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* produced in Lucknow 1866 on the Naval Kishore Press,

24 It is recorded as having been received by a Dr. Royle in July 1865.

25 There is no direct evidence that the text itself was coercively purchased. The British colonial presence was itself coercive, and so the collecting practices that colonial officials engaged in are by default undergirded by colonial violence.

26 Peter Penner, "Elliot, Sir Henry Miers (1808–1853), administrator in India and historian." See the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8663.

27 Ethé, *Persian Manuscripts in the India Office Collection*, Catalogue Entry no. 714.



(1) (2) (3)

FIGURE 6.1 Inscriptions in *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscripts from Lahore
(1) Inscription on the Aja'ib al-Makhluqat manuscript commissioned by Charles Raikes in Lahore in 1854 that was subsequently sent to the Imperial Exhibition in Paris in 1855. The inscription identifies an Aja'ib al-Makhluqat manuscript from the Adilshahi court as the source copied for his commission. (2) Inscription in the Adilshahi Aja'ib al-Makhluqat that was stored in the Lahore Treasury at the same time as Charles Raikes copy was made; the composition of the text and illustrations are similar, suggesting this was the 16th-century original on which the Raikes commission was based. (3) Further inscriptions in the Bijapuri manuscript establishing that it seems to have left Lahore in 1878, and so would presumably have still been in Lahore Treasury when the Raikes copy was made.

and the later Urdu translation of the 1866 lithograph produced at Lucknow in 1877, it becomes clear that many of the illustrations exist in mirror image to other versions of the same work. This would suggest that artists were either copying each other or copying from pounces that allowed them to reproduce the manuscript illustrations, suggesting a strong continuity between Persianate manuscript and lithograph production in South Asia mediated by British colonial patronage in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Although much about the copying process is unclear, it seems that there is a connection between a colonial official commissioning a copy of the Bijapur courtly *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* from the Lahore *toshak-khana*, and then the appearance of faithful lithograph replicas of this manuscript on the book market ten years later. It is also possible that in the intervening years, with the social and economic upheaval of the 1857 revolution, when the Indian soldiers of the East India Company revolted causing a widespread rebellion against the British, the artists who made their living creating or reproducing fine manuscripts had to turn their hand to new industries and thus offered their services to the burgeoning field of lithographic printing. A scholar of South Asian Persianate lithograph and print culture, Zahra Shah, has demonstrated in her

(1) (2) (3)

FIGURE 6.2 Images travelling from manuscript to lithograph
Astrological iconography depicting Jupiter (Mushtari) from (1) the *Aja'ib al-Makhluqat* produced at the 16th-century Adilshahi court in Bijapur, the *Aja'ib al-Makhluqat* commissioned by Charles Raikes in Lahore in 1854 bearing the inscription indicating that it was copied directly from the Bijapur manuscript, (3) the hand-painted lithograph of the *Aja'ib al-Makhluqat* printed in Lucknow in 1866, which appears to reproduce the composition and colour scheme of the Charles Raikes commission very closely.

research that the producers and readers of Persian lithographs were notably itinerant across the north of the Indian subcontinent, carrying their knowledge and skills with them as they travelled.[28] The work of the scholar Amanda Lanzillo, who examines the history of craftsmanship and Persian scribal culture in South Asia, has also shown that artists who produced manuscripts in the second half of the nineteenth century also worked for lithographic presses and that "the two forms of book production co-existed, and scribes and calligraphers sometimes moved fluidly between manuscript and lithographic workshops."[29] Furthermore, the extensive research of Ulrich Marzolph, who examines the history of Qajar lithographs and their illustrative programs, has demonstrated the continuity between manuscript and lithograph production after the introduction of lithography to Iran in the mid-nineteenth century. His

28 Zahra Shah, "'Bringing Spring to Sahbai's Rose Garden:' Persian Printing in North India after 1857," in *The Global Histories of Books: Methods and Practices*, eds. Elleke Boehmer, Rouven Kunstmann, Priyasha Mukhopadhyay, and Asha Rogers (Palgrave Macmillan: 2017), 193.

29 Amanda Lanzillo, "Translating the Scribe: Lithographic Print and Vernacularization in Colonial India, 1857–1915," *Comparative Critical Studies* 16/2–3 (2019): 284.

studies of the prolific lithograph illustrator Ali Qoli[30] suggest that this artist was trained in the traditions of manuscript painting before turning his hand to creating illustrations for lithographs. What is most remarkable about this process is the role of the Orientalist fascination with the Islamic *ʿajāʾib* or "wonders" genre of manuscript, which led Charles Raikes to commission a copy of it for the 1855 Imperial Exhibition, a process which seems to have enabled craftsmen and artists to copy the text and illustrations, reproduce, adapt, and re-arrange them in the flourishing Lucknow lithograph industry. This, in turn, led to the mass production and dissemination of a visual program of miniature painting that had previously only been accessible to an elite who had access to courtly or scholarly manuscript collections.

4 The *Talismans of Wonder* Lithographs

The images from the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscript commissioned by Raikes in Lahore, which were then reproduced in the 1866 lithograph produced in Lucknow, seem to have been copied and adapted into new genres in Urdu lithographs. The appearance of a full lithograph copy of the manuscript, with illustrations bearing near-identical composition and colour, was produced in Lucknow by the Naval Kishore Press in 1866. This suggests that the artisans who crafted the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscript commissioned by Raikes for the 1855 Imperial Exhibition were involved in reproducing it in lithograph form. This initial reproduction was faithful to the original in terms of its text, which was reproduced in Persian, and the positioning of the illustrations in the text, and also imitated the original composition, style, and use of colour in the manuscript. However, with the passing of decades and the flourishing of the lithographic press in the major urban centres of India, it would appear that these illustrations began to take on a new life. They were adapted by printers and illustrators of new genres to create a pastiche of texts and images from a range of cosmographical, divinatory, and occult traditions, based on other lithographs, which were in turn copied from other manuscripts, whose modes of circulation of reproduction have yet to be identified.

30 Ulrich Marzolph, "Mirza Ali-Qoli Xu'i: Master of Persian Lithograph Illustration," *AION* 57/1–2 (1997): 183–202; Marzolph, "Illustrated Persian Lithographic Editions of the Shahname," *Edebiyat* 13/2 (2003): 177–198. See also the recent publication "'Ajāyib al-makhlūqāt-i Qazvīnī dar taṣāvīr-i chāp-i sangī-i Mīrzā ʿAlīqulī Khūyī (Qazvini's Ajaib al-Makhluqat in Mirza Ali-quli Khui's lithograph illustrations)" by Urkīdah Turābī (Tihrān: Mu'assasah-i Farhangī-i Pizhūhishī-i Chāp va Nashr-i Naẓar, 1393 [2014 or 2015]).

The Urdu-language lithographic treatises that are most characteristic of this adaptation form a corpus of works all bearing the term *tilism* ("talisman") in their title. The *Tuhfah-yi Tilisimat* ("Strange or Rare Talisman" or "Gift of the Talisman"), the *Tilismat-i Aja'ib* (Talismans of Wonder) and the *Tilism-i Aja'ib* (Talisman of Wonder) were all published in the third quarter of the nineteenth century in Delhi and Lucknow. These treatises are Urdu-language lithographed codices drawing on and re-interpreting the texts and visual tropes of the Persianate cosmographical manuscript tradition. Each of the three *Tilism* texts presents a different textual pastiche of occult science sub-genres, combining instructions on the making of magical talismans with dream interpretation tables that allow the reader to divine the future by interpreting oneiric imagery, with other genres of divination and wondrous storytelling. The *Tilismat-i Aja'ib* is a lithograph printed in 1874 CE (1291 AH) by the publishing house Matba'-yi Gulshan-i Muhammadi. The creators of the work are ʿAli Bahadur and Haji Sheikh Rajab ʿAli. This treatise is a standalone title that was bound into a larger volume with other works in related genres,[31] dealing primarily with subject matter relating to divination and magic, such as the *Tuhfah-yi ʿAmilin*, (literally translated as the "Gift of the Magicians" or the "Wondrous Object of the Magicians") which deals with the drawing of magic squares and astrology and astronomy. These texts were printed in the same time period, around 1873–1874, on a range of different presses (including Naval Kishore and the Matba'-yi Haydar) across the large urban centres of the northern provinces of British India, suggesting that this subject matter was popular throughout this region. The *Tilism-i Aja'ib* was printed by the Naval Kishore press[32] and lacks a date. It was authored by Nadir Husayn, who also gives credit in his introduction to Lala Radha Lal for much of the content. It is distinguished in title from the work discussed above by the use of the singular (*tilism*) rather than plural (*tilismat*) of "talisman." The visual content, in particular the illustrations and layout, of all three treatises is strikingly similar; they each feature between thirty and one hundred fantastical images, accompanied by limited

31 The process of these treatises being bound into a larger volume occurred as part of the collection process by the British colonial government when it began to gather and document Indian publications under the 1867 Registration of Press and Books Act, which was fundamentally both a colonial legal deposit law and a method of government surveillance of South Asian intellectual and cultural output. The grouping and binding of texts into larger volumes by subject occurred during this collecting process.

32 For the definitive history of the Naval Kishore press, see Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007).

captions that do not situate the images in a narrative structure, storyline, or a connected mythical geography.

This bouquet of nineteenth-century Urdu lithographed treatises with the term *tilism* in their title are characterized by a specific repertoire of images, arranged on the page in a similar fashion, though not in the same order, a selection of which seem to have been drawn from the 1866 Naval Kishore lithograph that was based on the Raikes *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscript from Lahore. The *Tilismat-i Ajaʾib* in its introduction openly claims to have adopted images from the illustrations and text of the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* manuscript tradition. However, it is clear that the illustrators used a range of other sources as well, and their structure on the page may have been influenced by the genre described by Islamic art historians as a pictorial *falnamah*, and possibly—although this is purely speculative—from other forms of commercial print culture that may have been circulating at the time, such as illustrated European encyclopaedias, dictionaries, newspapers or even advertisements.

In the case of the "Tilism" lithographs, they structure the images on the page in a similar manner. The images are removed from their original text or narrative and situated in boxes, sometimes with a single large image on a page. More commonly, a page features two or more images, sometimes up to six images, of a range of wondrous creatures. Some images bear the names of common Persianate mythological creatures, such as the *ʾanqa, simurgh*, and the *rakh*, and many images also feature classical visual iconography taken from the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* genre, such as the angels Harut and Marut suspended upside down in the well of Babylon as a punishment for teaching humans magic, dog-headed people, dragons, and various types of hybrid snake creatures. There are also entirely new imaginative forms that seem to draw on the visual tropes of manuscript tradition but have been combined with innovative forms of visual practices by re-arranging the illustrations on the page in a new format and removing them from a geographical or cosmographical narrative structure. Each lithographed codex contains a wealth of imagery that defies easy classification, and the textual description accompanying the image is often superfluous, as it only provides a basic identification of the image that does not provide interpretation or meaning or situate the image in a narrative or structure, suggesting the emergence of a new visual pastiche of divinatory forms toward the end of the nineteenth century amongst lithograph printers in South Asia.

The re-mixing of the imagery from the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* into new layouts and visual schematics, removed from the narrative structure of a text, suggests not only the rise of new forms of print culture and visual culture, but also hints at new devotional and reading practices in spheres of Urdu readers in Luc-

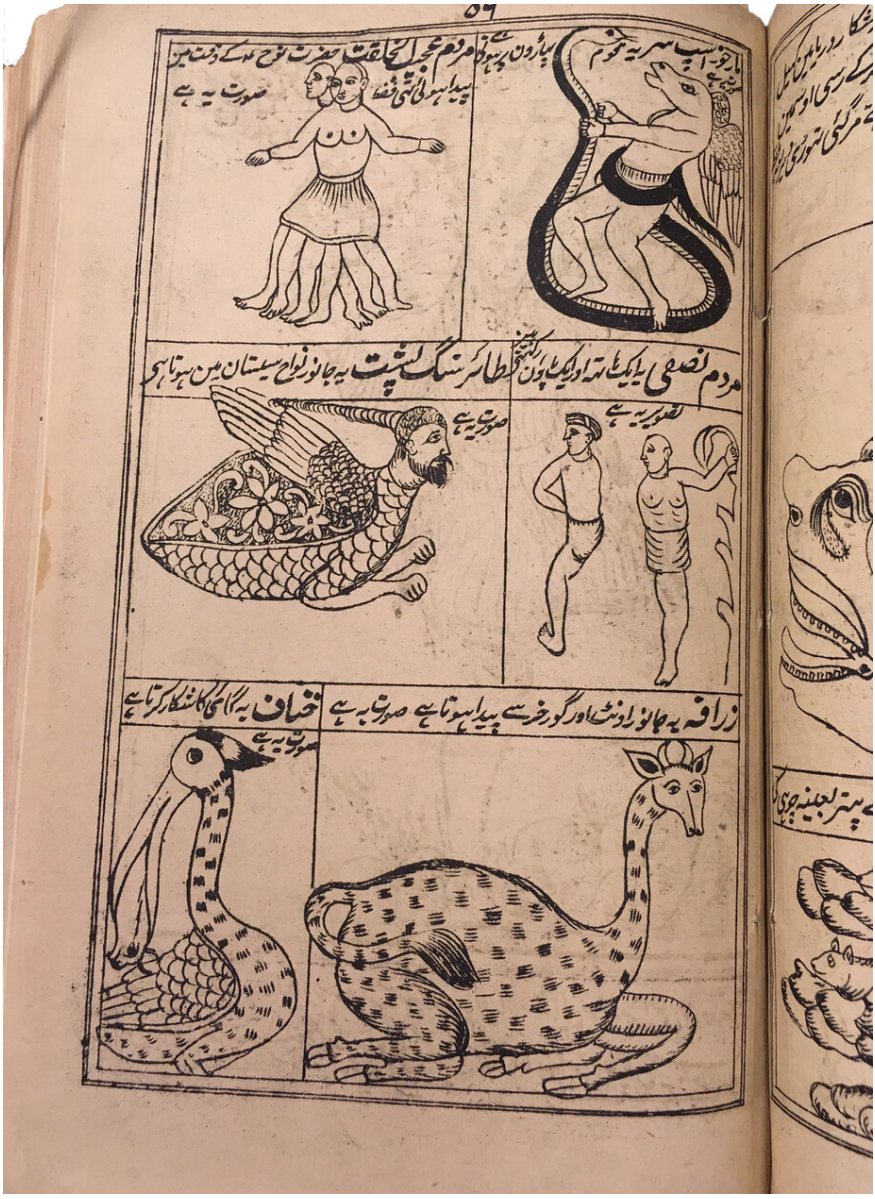


FIGURE 6.3 Adaptation of *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* illustrations to the Tilism-i Ajaʾib lithographs Page 59 of the *Tilismat-i Ajaʾib* lithograph, featuring a layout with images drawn from the visual repertoire of the *Ajaʾib al-Makhluqat* manuscript corpus reconfigured into a table with captions labelling each drawing, presented as a compendium of images and abstracted from a cosmographical or geographical narrative.

FIGURE 6.4 Another adaptation of *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt* illustrations to the *Tilism-i Aja'ib* lithographs
Page 38 of the *Tilismat-i Aja'ib*, in which a Persianate mythological creature, the Rakh, and a stylised fish appear in the same table of images as a very realistic moose or reindeer ('gazwan'—a deer or elk) and stylised fish that employs the same techniques for the illustration of water, the concentric spirals, as is employed in miniature paintings.

know and Delhi, where this genre of lithograph seems to have been popular. The creation of a visual pastiche and the practice of borrowing from earlier texts and weaving them into a new work certainly has strong precedents in Muslim intellectual and cultural practices in South Asia from the early modern period to the period at hand. However, the mass production of the lithograph and the absence of any need for a court atelier, or colonial patronage of artists, to print and circulate wondrous cosmographical images has implications for the relationship of readers to these texts and to the re-invention and proliferation of the supernatural beliefs and practices encoded in the *Tilism* corpus of lithographs. The spread of lithographic printing granted wide access to images that were previously the purview of the elite scholarly classes; this suggests that the introduction of printing to the public sphere in South Asia did not only bring about a disenchantment and a turn to reformism but conversely granted new life to occult practices and visual programs had limited circulation before the explosion of lithographic printing in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is possible to argue that Muslim modernity—or visual modernity at least—in South Asia is characterized by these images of the occult and the strange and wondrous that represent both a rupture with the past, in terms of their proliferation and remediation in a new lithographic format, and a continuity, in the sense that they adapt imagery extending back to a manuscript tradition that emerged in the Ilkhanid period.

While the three treatises examined here present similar illustrations and combinations of text, their prefaces differ somewhat in describing their contents and the authors' intentions. These prefaces shed light on how the creators of these lithographic artifacts framed and explained their creations to their readership. The *Tilismat-i Aja'ib* of the Gulshan-i Muhammadi press features the most detailed description of its contents, source texts, and the motivations of the authors for undertaking their practice of compiling and composing this newly formulated work. The preface opens with the offering of "unlimited thanks and endless praise to God the Provider, may his glory shine, as he is the worthy one who pronounces and brings into being the talisman [*tilism*][33] of the world [*jisne tilism-e jahanko lafz-kon*[34]], and arrays and embellishes [*murattab*

33 In John T. Platts's *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English*, a *tilism* is described as: "tilism, tilasm, or talism (prob. fr. a late usage of the Gr. τλεσμα), s.m. A talisman; enchantment, magic; a mystery; mystical devices or characters; an image (or other object) upon which such devices or characters are engraved or inscribed (contrived for the purpose of preserving from enchantment, or from a variety of evils, etc)." There is more scholarship out there on the original and significance of the word than just Platts, and the term is certainly from Greek.

34 The definition of *lafz* in Steingass' Persian dictionary and the *Farhang-e Asafiyyah* Urdu

aur arastah kar keh] the wonders [*ajaʿibat*] of the ever-shifting and deceptively entrancing world [*buqalamun dunya*]."[35] The authors' choice of words is elaborate and poetic in keeping with the typically poetic and flowery language of Urdu-language lithographs introducing the topics of divination, and it provides some insight into his conceptualization of the interconnections between God, the human world, the cosmos, magic and divination—namely, that the connection between the movement of the stars and planets, the cosmos, and the reader's practice of divination and magic are intimately tied together, and ultimately dependent on the power of the creator.

The author's own account of the talisman's interactions with this constellation of ideas and how the talisman can be used to bring imagined realities into being gives a sense of the role that these texts and illustrations played for their readership. The author's choice of words in the preface suggests that it is God who is the ultimate talisman-maker, and that the world is itself a talisman, or an enchanted image, that the creator has constructed, which hints at the mysteries and wonders of the figural images (*tilismat*, also referred to as *naqsh* in the text, meaning painting, engraving, or diagram) that the reader will encounter in the treatise. The author's choice of the unusual term *būqalamūn* to describe the human world refers to more than just the chameleon. The adjective describes any animal or object that changes colours and displays a shimmering, ever-shifting and entrancing polychromatic display. This word resonates within the linguistic heritage of Islamicate poetic culture across a range of lexicons from Arabic to Persian and Urdu, and the term in Persian is also applied to "a variety of objects or animals exhibiting changing colours, such as (silk) fabrics, the gemstone jasper, the chameleon, and the turkey."[36]

Būqalamūn was also used in Persian poetry as a metaphor for the enchanting and colourful display of spring that spread along the ground like a carpet as flowers and plants bloomed: the *farsh-e būqalamūn*, suggesting the transience of both spring and human life. In Arabic, the word refers to a type of silk cloth, which, as light plays on its surface, displays a range of different colours. The shifting and entrancing colours of the *buqalamun* cloth led to a further metaphor of "the unpredictable vicissitudes of times and changes of fortune, as an epithet for *ʿālam* (the world), *ayyām* (days, times), *dahr* (time, fate), *sepehr*

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dictionary is identical; however, *lafz-kon* as a word does not appear. The Arabic *lafẓ* refers to "pronouncing, articulating, uttering." So, a *lafz-kon* is the "utterer" or "articulator."

35 Bahadur ʿAli and Haji Sheikh Rajab ʿAli, *Tilismat-iʿ Ajāʾib* (Matbaʿ-yi Gulshan-ı Muhammadi, 1874), 4.

36 Hūšanḡ Aʿlam, "Būqalamūn," *Encyclopedia Iranica* Vol. IV, Fasc. 5, 551–553, (1989).

(the celestial sphere, heavens)," while the weaver of the unpredictable *būqalamūn* cloth, the *būqalamūnbāf*, became a term for "fickle Fortune."[37] In carefully selecting this poetic term with a depth and layering of meaning, the author of the preface calls to the reader's mind the many dimensions of the talismanic image, its relationship to the vicissitudes of the stars and the cosmos, the multivalent qualities of visual representation for divining the future, and the ways in which the talismans and divinatory imagery may be used to manipulate the fickle world and its ever changing fortunes and seasons. At the same time, the poetic term calls to mind deceptive and entrancing enchantments, which the book also promises to deliver in its chapters.

Because the *ʿajāʿibāt-e būqalamūn* signifies the ever-shifting and beautiful (but also dangerous) time-space vagaries of the wonders of the world, this term also draws a connection to the wondrous cosmological images that will be presented in the text. More than a direct logical equivalence, the terms used in the preface create a poetic cluster of meanings, a family of associated semiotic layers, imagery, and metaphor that hint at the interconnection between the images of creation, cosmology, enchantment, and divination. This constellation of resonances evokes the purpose and meaning—and dangers—of the talismanic images that the reader observes in the text. After this poetic introduction of ideas, the preface of the *Tilismat-i ʿAjāʾib* proceeds to lay out its contents in detail. Each chapter deals with a different aspect of both talismans and other wondrous occasions or sights. These include details of the instructions for how to use talismans as recounted in ancient books, remarkable spectacles and accounts taken from the *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, the memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1569–1627) followed by a segue into how to create "thousands of rupees" from the miracles (*karamat*) of martyrs, suggesting that there was a practical and financial dimension to the supernatural teachings found within the covers of the lithograph.

The fifth chapter deals with the strange things and wonders (*ʿajiba aur ghariba*), narratives (*naqliyat*), stories (*hikayat*) and tales of adventure and trickery (*charitra*), followed by a sixth chapter on riddles, tricks, puzzles, and other forms of artifice (*chistan, makr, paheli*). The seventh chapter is about the images of the terrestrial and oceanic (*barri aur bahri*) wonders that have been created in the world by God, which the author specifies have been selected from the historical work, the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*.[38] The authors of this work

37 Hūšanḡ Aʿlam, "ʾBūqalamūn," 551–553, see also Matt Saba, "Abbasid Lusterware and the Aesthetics of ʿAjab," *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World* 29 (2012): 187–212.

38 Bahadur ʿAli and Haji Sheikh Rajab ʿAli, *Tilismat-i ʿAjāʾib*, 5–6. In addition to the *ʿAjāʾib*

openly admit that they have drawn on earlier and more ancient sources and reformulated them in a new assemblage of texts and images for this chapter. Situating the image-heavy sections that draw on cosmography amidst a selection of works that elaborate a set of practices including miracle-working (possible fraudulent, possibly not), the creation of talismans based on wisdom from ancient books, followed by riddles and wondrous creatures, suggests that these mass-produced lithographic works were intended to evoke equal amounts of devotional practices and piety as they were supernatural-themed entertainment and collective meaning-making amongst an audience who perhaps read the works aloud together. The poetic introduction suggests a certain performativity and affect that would lend itself to being read aloud for the edification and entertainment of a group of friends, or in a domestic setting.

The question remains of how these illustrated lithographs were used, how they were read or interpreted, and what meaning these sets of images carried for their audiences. It is possible that the sets of cosmographic images juxtaposed together outside of a narrative framework operated as pictorial *falnama*s or tools for divination by imagery, as a form of bibliomancy. Bibliomancy, or divination by book, depended on paintings, symbols and images, and not necessarily on the written word as such in order to arrive at an augury, although some illustrations did feature written auguries as well. Audiences who were not literate in the sense of having the capacity to process written texts, could have taken part in the reading, the act of meaning-making and interpretation, of the lithograph—perhaps in a domestic setting, or in groups, as the monumental size of the illustrations of the manuscript copies dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would suggest—by interpreting the images and using them to divine the future.

This tradition of pictorial divination based on cosmological imagery existed in manuscript form and has been studied extensively in the Islamic context by the scholars Serpil Bağcı and Massumeh Farhad. The intersection between cosmological writing and divination is evident in one of the earliest Arabic-language divination texts, thought to have been written by Abū Maʿshar (d. 886 CE), the famous astronomer-astrologer and natural philosopher.[39] It is titled

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al-Makhlūqāt, the authors mention a further text, the Maʾlumat-i Fa-?, which I could not identify and which will require further attention and research.

39 Serpil Bağcı and Massumeh Farhad, "The Art of Bibliomancy and Falnama in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Serpil Bağcı and Massumeh Farhad, eds., *Falnama: The Book of* Omens (Thames & Hudson: London, 2009) 20–39; Liana Saif, "Abū Maʿshar al-

the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, or Book of Wonderment,[40] and an elaborately illustrated version of it was produced at the Jalayrid court during the reign of Sultan Ahmed Jalayir (1382–1410 CE). It is thought by scholars that the imagery featured in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* was also used for prognostication, although the images were not accompanied by written auguries.[41] The imagery featured in the manuscripts stemming from this tradition has almost certainly exercised an influence on the illustrations of the Urdu treatises examined here, although more research is necessary to understand the historical processes by which the images from this particular manuscript tradition reached Urdu lithograph illustrators.

In their extensive work on the illustrated *falnama*s produced at the Ottoman and Safavid courts, which draw on imagery of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* and the *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt*, Farhad and Bağcı have observed that, much like the Urdu lithograph texts, while the elaborate cosmological images were identified, they were not situated in a narrative, and they argue that such "wondrous" images were used as "divination tools."[42] The manuscript tradition of pictorial *falnama*s often contained a prolific number of illustrations, between twenty-nine to fifty-nine images, while the text drew on oral traditions of fortune telling and divination, as well as performance traditions such as storytelling. The pictorial *falnama* functioned as a tool for divination, as each image represented an omen which could predict and influence the future through the realm of the unseen. The imagery in the *falnama* served the role of symbols that allowed the augur to see into the unknown, indicated by the text of the *falnama*s manuscript ref-

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Balkhi," in *Astrology through History: Interpreting the Stars from Ancient Mesopotamia to the Present*, ed. William E. Burns (ABC-Clio, 2018).

40 The earliest illustrated copy of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* was produced at the Jalayrid court during the reign of Sultan Ahmed Jalayir (1382–1410 CE). This copy is in the Bodleian (Or 133) and has been studied by Stefano Carboni in his article "The 'Book of Surprises' (*Kitab al-bulhan*) of the Bodleian Library," *La Trobe Journal* (2013) Vol. 91: 22–34. It features an augury of the prophets (*fal-i anbiya*), a well-liked augury (*fal-i maqbul*), and an interpretation of twitching in different parts of the body as a means of predicting the future (*ikhtilaj*).

41 Bağcı and Farhad, "Art of Bibliomancy," 24.

42 Ibid. 23–24. Four compilations of monumental *falnama*s are known to scholars, a dispersed *falnama* made under Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576 CE), a bound *falnama*, now housed in the Topkapı Palace Library (sixteenth century), the Dresden *falnama*, which was collated in the seventeenth century, and the Ottoman-era Sultan Ahmet I *falnama* (r. 1603–1617), now housed in the Topkapı Palace Library. In terms of South Asian *falnama* manuscripts, there are two other *falnama*s in a smaller format. One of these is the Khalili *falnama*, which was made in the seventeenth-century Deccan and has been studied by the scholar of South Asian and Islamic art history, Rachel Parikh, in *The Khalili Falnamah* (London: Khalili Collection, 2022).

erence to their illustrations' "signs" [*nishan*],[43] emphasizing their role as images that point to something else, not to themselves.

The methods of consulting pictorial divination manuscripts have been reconstructed from historical accounts of their use. Early modern accounts suggest that the diviner or fortune-teller interprets an image that the person seeking the augury has randomly selected. The interpretation would take the form of improvised verses that formed an augury. Through research into the social context and use of the pictorial divination manuscript, Bağcı and Farhad have also identified accounts of women fortune tellers in the early modern Islamic context plying their trade outside of mosques.[44] There also exist further eyewitness accounts in the early modern period of divination by pictorial augury. Here, the person seeking an augury would select an image at random from a set of images (much like pulling a tarot card from a deck), and the diviner would improvise a response based on the symbolism in the image, creating a form of ephemeral performance literature linked to notions of the unseen and unknowable, the contours of which can only be vaguely augured through divination. The primacy of image over text in creating meaning in the pictorial *falnama* is further emphasized in the Dresden *falnama*, which refers to bibliomancy as *fal didan*, or "seeing an augury," rather than reading one. Farhad and Bağcı elaborate on the visual process of divination by image, describing the process of predicting the future through pictorial bibliomancy as bearing a similar function to "a talisman, a dream, or a planetary configuration," and argue that the experience of seeking an augury through illustrated bibliomancy is mediated by the visual, and deriving meaning of the unseen (*al-ghayb*) through first seeing with the eyes and then allowing the meaning to emerge, rather than reading a text for meaning.[45] The formulation of sets of wondrous images in the pictorial *falnama* manuscript tradition bears a distinct similarity to the nineteenth-century Urdu treatises that feature fabulous images without an accompanying narrative or written augury. In these cases, it is assumed that a poetic augury was to be improvised on the spot, creating a form of subaltern ephemeral literary production suitable for those who did not necessarily record—or perhaps were not able to record—their poetic production in writing. While we can only imagine the auguries that women or non-elite literary actors could have formulated while contemplating the images in these manuscripts, the echo of the futures they might have divined remains in the illustrated pages of the text.

43 Idem. 34.
44 Idem. 28.
45 Idem. 30.

5 Conclusion

The process by which Charles Raikes, a British East India Company official, commissioned a copy of a courtly cosmographical manuscript that was later reproduced in lithograph, and whose illustrations were subtracted from the textual narrative and pieced together to be then adapted into what appeared to be an Urdu-language pictorial divination lithograph, provides a glimpse into the process by which elite manuscript production and visual tropes were translated into popular visual culture through print technology and its accompanying material support, such as the circulation of pounces, traces, copies of manuscripts and lithographs, as well as the circulation of itinerant craftsmen who practiced these technologies that combined older methods, such as hand-painting, with new types of production, such as lithography. The imagery was adapted to entirely different purposes during its journey from elite to mass production. The hegemony of elite production and interpretation was turned on its head by the ephemeral practices of divination for which these images were perhaps being used by the time they found themselves re-arranged and re-interpreted in Urdu pictorial *falnama*s.

The shift from manuscript to lithograph production in the context of divination texts does not represent a journey of pure continuity or pure rupture, as it allows the preservation of elite Islamicate forms of intellectual production, as Zahra Shah has demonstrated in her research on Imam Bakhsh Sahbai,[46] sociality, the creation and re-formulation of the use of illustrated texts, and the possible emergence of new forms of sociality and devotional practices centred around books that seem to be aimed at a far larger audience than the manuscript culture from which they derive much of their inspiration and materials. The mass production of texts that remediated premodern Islamicate enchanted notions of the supernatural through the introduction of "colonial" printing technology certainly challenges our notion that print in the Indian subcontinent, within the context of Islamic intellectual discourse, largely served a program of sober, disenchanted, and rationalistic reformism. The work of SherAli Tareen has convincingly argued that even Islamic reformists were not removed from enchantment, and in fact that "enchanted" methods and means of argument, such as miracles, were central to reformist groups such as the Deobandis and Barelvis' competitions for reli-

46 Zahra Shah, "'Bringing Spring to Sahbai's Rose Garden:' Persian Printing in North India after 1857," in *The Global Histories of Books: Methods and Practices*, eds. Elleke Boehmer, Rouven Kunstmann, Priyasha Mukhopadhyay, and Asha Rogers (Palgrave Macmillan: 2017), 191–212.

gious legitimacy.[47] So, while the notion of disenchanted modernizing Islamic reformists is itself not an accurate one, it can nonetheless be argued that authors of a thoroughly enchanted Islamicate worldview, enmeshed in the supernatural and encouraging devotional practices anchored in belied in the unseen realm, in fact took advantage of the new technology of lithography to proliferate 'enchantment' more widely, while the genre underwent a process of remediation, a repurposing and re-configuring to give rise to new meanings and ways of reading.[48]

Furthermore, the role of colonial patronage of manuscript production and craftsmanship in South Asia confuses the trajectory of this form of lithograph production further, as it seems that the perpetuation of an "emic" narrative of an enchanted Islamicate cosmology grounded in supernatural beliefs and divinatory devotional practices may in fact be the result of the inordinate focus of British colonial officials on manuscripts that promoted a vision of South Asian Muslims as embodying a fantastical place in the Orientalist imaginary. Interestingly, it is this patronage, in addition to the introduction of lithograph technologies, that seem to have contributed to the wide dissemination of new illustrated pastiche genres of text that lie somewhere between cosmology and divination treatise. At the same time, this colonial intervention may have led to the mass production in print of the images stemming from cosmological manuscripts such as the *ʿAjā'ib al-Makhlūqāt*.

The exposure and circulation of these lithographed images to a larger reading (or viewing) public meant an expansion of the imaginary of what the cosmos was for the Muslim readership, and what the imagery could be used for—from talisman-making, to reciting improvised poetic auguries, based on pictorial divination, to wondrous story-telling based on fantastical imagery. In the social context of the collective reading circle in a domestic sphere, or the more public act of telling of fortunes outside of a shrine or a mosque, it is possible the lithographed Urdu divination and cosmographic texts created new forms of reading-together and social connectedness, new avenues of ephemeral poetic performance of auguries that transcended the limits of literacy and access to manuscript texts, as well as forming a connection between the readership/audience and the unseen, be it the *ghayb* of the future and nearly unattainable divine meaning, or the unseen celestial realms where angels and time dwell. The adaptation, remediation, and pastiche-ization of a cosmolog-

47 SherAli Tareen, "The Polemic of Shahjahanpur: Religion, Miracles, and History," *Islamic Studies* 51/1 (2012): 49–67.

48 David Roxburgh and Mary McWilliams, eds., *Technologies of the Image: Art in 19th-century Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

ical work such as the *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* and the adaptation of its imagery from manuscript to lithograph, in combination with a range of other genres of text and image drawing on the occult sciences of oneiromancy, talisman-making and other practices, represents to some degree the reformulation and wide dissemination of an enchanted worldview and set of devotional practices grounded in a wondrous cosmography, a poetic set of associations regarding the vicissitudes of time, fate, and the stars, and ephemeral improvisational auguries that challenge scholarly notions of how print technologies shaped Muslim modernity and religious practice in South Asia.

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7

The Library of an Eighteenth-Century Malay Bibliophile: Tengku Sayid Jafar, Panglima Besar of Selangor

Annabel Teh Gallop

1 Introduction[1]

Since the founding of the English and Dutch East India Companies, which enabled direct voyages to Southeast Asia, Malay[2] manuscripts have never been absent from the western academy. Specifically, Malay books and letters have been present in university libraries in Leiden, Oxford, and Cambridge since the first decades of the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, it has taken a very long time for the study of manuscripts from the Malay world to move beyond a narrow philological focus on individual texts and embrace the rich insights enabled by a codicological analysis of their material aspects, such as their paper, handwriting, inks and pigments, paratexts such as annotation, ownership statements, and decorative features, and bindings. Even more recent

1 This article began life as a paper entitled "The Library of an 18th–Century Selangor Bibliophile," presented at the ASEASUK conference, Horniman Museum, London, 2002, and was then developed as "Bindings and Bookmarks: The Library of an 18th–Century Selangor Bibliophile," presented at the conference organised by Olly Akkerman on *Social Codicology: The Multiple Lives of Texts in Muslim Societies*, Rabat, 2018. I would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of Sirtjo Koolhof, who provided me with copies of the unpublished papers relating to the Selangor collection at the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer, and with information on sources relating to this collection. At the Athenaeumbiblotheek, Sarah Zaunbrecher kindly helped me to access the collections on my two visits on 25 January 2002 and 19 Feb 2003. In 2022, Suzan Folkerts answered many questions and arranged for the digitisation of the complete Selangor collection; I am deeply beholden to her for her invaluable help.

2 The term "Malay" is used in this chapter in a range of different contexts. In its broadest sense, the "Malay world" refers to the wide cultural realm of island Southeast Asia united by the shared use of the Malay language. "Malay" can also designate the ethnic groups living in the peninsula and along the coastal reaches of Borneo/Kalimatan and Sumatra speaking Malay as a mother tongue; and in a narrow linguistic sense, "Malay" refers to the language itself. In this article, most Malay names and words of Arabic derivation are presented in their standard romanised form, but in tables of this paper, names and titles are presented according to the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (*IJMES*) system for the transliteration of Arabic.

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is the scholarly interest in the social worlds within which the manuscripts were commissioned, copied, decorated, read, shared, studied, discussed, and treasured—and the company these volumes kept on shelves or in chests. For manuscripts never existed in isolation; books were always part of collections, and it is the study of the formation of these libraries in the Malay archipelago which will help cast light on the intellectual and bibliographical networks within which the manuscripts came together.

Ironically, until recently clusters of manuscripts from maritime Southeast Asia most readily available for such a study of indigenous libraries were collections seized or impounded by colonial forces. Well-known examples include Javanese manuscripts from the court library of Yogyakarta, ransacked by British troops in 1812,[3] and Bugis and Makasar manuscripts seized from the palace of the Sultan of Bone in 1814,[4] both now held in the British Library, as well as collections which even if not actually taken in battle were acquired by the heavy hand of colonial power, such as the royal library of Banten[5] now housed in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta. More recently, digitisation programmes such as the Endangered Archives Programme and DREAMSEA have completely transformed understandings of the intellectual topography of Southeast Asia, revealing countless previously unknown collections still held in situ.[6] These include the royal library of Buton,[7] mostly still in the hands of descendants of court retainers, and theological libraries at Islamic boarding schools in Java and mosques in Sumatra.

All the collections cited above are located in present-day Indonesia, but this chapter will focus on what is the only known surviving early library from Malaysia, which was captured in Selangor, on the west coast of the Malay peninsula, by a Dutch naval expedition in 1784. To set the scene, a photograph by

3 P.B.R. Carey, ed. *The Archive of Yogyakarta. Volume I. Documents Relating to Politics and Internal Court Affairs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Annabel Teh Gallop, "The Javanese Manuscripts from Yogyakarta Digitisation Project," *SEALG Newsletter*, 2020, 52: 36–61, 2020.

4 Annabel Teh Gallop, "The Royal Library of Bone: Bugis and Makasar Manuscripts in the British Library," Asian and African Studies Blog, 6 January 2020, https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2020/01/the-royal-library-of-bone-bugis-and-makassar-manuscripts-in-the-british-library.html, accessed November 21,2023.

5 Annabel Teh Gallop and Ali Akbar, "The Art of the Qur'an in Banten: Calligraphy and Illumination," *Archipel*, 2006, 72: 141–143.

6 Cf. Annabel Teh Gallop, "Shifting Landscapes: Remapping the Writing Traditions of Islamic Southeast Asia through Digitisation," *Humaniora*, 2020, 32(2): 97–109.

7 A.C.S. Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton, Southeast Sulawesi, and the Literary Activities of Sultan Muhammad 'Aydarus (1824–1851)," *Journal of Islamic manuscripts*, 2019, 10: 44–83.

FIGURE 7.1 Selangor coastline at Pulau Lumut, south of Kuala Selangor, by Ian Teh, from *Confluence: A Malaysian Coastal Journey* (2014)
REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF IAN TEH

award-winning documentary photographer Ian Teh shows the muddy shallows at low tide of the Selangor coastline along the Straits of Melaka that considerably hampered the Dutch attack (fig. 7.1).

2 Selangor and the Dutch Attack of 1784

When the great Malay kingdom of Melaka fell to the Portuguese in 1511, the royal court fled southwards and eventually settled on the Johor river. From a series of new capitals at the southern tip of the Malay peninsula, the kingdom of Johor held sway over the islands of the Riau archipelago, sniping at the Portuguese, and coming in on the side of the victorious Dutch attack on Portuguese Melaka in 1641.

In 1699, the despotic Sultan Mahmud Syah—the last sultan of Johor of the Melaka line—was murdered by his nobles, and the chief minister, the Bendahara, ascended the throne as Sultan Abdul Jalil Syah. However, the Bendahara Sultan was challenged and eventually killed by Raja Kecil, a Minangkabau prince from Siak in east Sumatra, who claimed to be a posthumous son of Mahmud Syah. The throne of Johor was only recovered by Abdul Jalil Syah's son Sulaiman in 1722 with the help of Bugis warriors, who obtained as their reward

the position of Yang Dipertuan Muda or Viceroy of Johor. Thereafter, the Bugis were the entrenched power behind the Malay throne of the Johor-Riau empire, but Bugis–Siak animosity continued to play out along the Straits of Melaka throughout the eighteenth century.

The Bugis, who originated from the island of Sulawesi, were renowned seafarers and fighters who roamed and migrated over the archipelago. In some states they married into the Malay ruling families, while in others they acted as kingmakers. On the Malay peninsula, since the seventeenth century Bugis had settled on the sparsely-occupied coast of Selangor to the north of Melaka. In 1766, the Bugis ruler of Selangor, a prince from Riau named Raja Lumu, arranged to have himself elevated to the title of "sultan" by the prestigious neighbouring Malay kingdom of Perak. He reigned as Sultan Salahuddin of Selangor, and on his death in 1778 was succeeded by his son Sultan Ibrahim.

In 1783, a disagreement over the division of spoils of a captured English ship, the *Betsy*, led to the outbreak of hostilities between the Dutch in Melaka and the powerful Bugis Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau, Raja Haji. In 1784, Sultan Ibrahim of Selangor launched an attack on Melaka, knowing he could rely upon the support of his uncle Raja Haji. Melaka was thus besieged by the Bugis on two sides: by Selangor forces from the north, and by Raja Haji's Riau forces from the south, camped at Teluk Ketapang. The Bugis had the upper hand in the battle until the surprise arrival from Batavia of a fleet sent by the States General of the Netherlands, led by Admiral Jacob Pieter van Braam. An attack on Teluk Ketapang was launched by Van Braam's squadron, and after two weeks of bombardment, Raja Haji was killed on 18 June 1784.[8]

After the death of Raja Haji, Van Braam turned his attention to Selangor, assisted by reinforcements from Siak led by the Viceroy Raja Muhammad Ali[9]

8 On this episode in Dutch-Riau relations and Van Braam's expedition, see Reinout Vos, *Gentle Janus, Merchant Prince: the VOC and the Tightrope of Diplomacy in the Malay World, 1740–1800* (Leiden: KITLV, 1993), 154–163.

9 Raja Muhammad Ali of Siak was the son of Raja Alam, older son of Raja Kecil (d. 1746), and a Minangkabau woman from Rawas. During the reign of his father Raja Alam as ruler of Siak (1761–1765), Raja Muhammad Ali was appointed Yang Dipertuan Muda. He then ruled as Sultan Muhammad Ali Abdul Jalil Muazzam Syah of Siak (1765–1779), until he was ousted in 1779 by his cousin Raja Ismail, whereupon Raja Muhammad Ali was re-appointed Yang Dipertuan Muda (1779–1781) and continued as Yang Dipertua Tua on the accession of Sultan Yahya in 1781. He died in August or September 1791. He was married to Tengku Embung Besar, sister of Raja Ismail (Timothy P. Barnard, *Multiple Centres of Authority: Society and Environment in Siak and Eastern Sumatra, 1674–1827* (Leiden: KITLV, 2003), 140–143, 158; Donald J. Goudie, *Syair Perang Siak. A Court Poem Presenting the State Policy of a Minangkabau Malay Royal Family in Exile*, ed. and trans. Donald J. Goudie, with essays on the text by Phillip L. Thomas and Tenas Effendy (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1989), 39).

and his nephew Sayid Ali.[10] The fleet arrived off Selangor on 18 July, and was at first hampered by the shallow reaches of Kuala Selangor.[11] When troops finally succeeded in landing at dawn on 2 August 1784, the Dutch victory was no longer in doubt, and in accordance with tried-and-tested tactics of Malay warfare, Sultan Ibrahim and his court retreated to the interior.

On 9 August, a Dutch expedition set off upriver in pursuit, and a detailed account of this expedition has been furnished by Martinus Broersma, one of the soldiers involved.[12] The following day the Dutch came upon 400 auxiliary Selangor troops, who were "Acehnese from the coast of Sumatra" (*Atchunders van de kust van Sumatra*). When approached by an officer and Mr Kilian, the Malay interpreter, they agreed to switch sides to the Dutch: "then the treaty was made between us and the heads of those men, and by them, in the presence of their papas or priests, they took the oath on the Alquran, swearing to leave the cause of the Salangoreese, and to cleave to ours, and assist us as auxiliaries."[13] Further upriver, several skirmishes with the retreating Selangor forces occurred, after one of which the Dutch came across two large burning ships "which, we learned, were loaded with opium and the king's most precious goods, which were set on fire by them, so that they would not fall into our hands."[14] Having reached thirty-five miles upriver, the Dutch party returned downstream after ten days, and the following day "one of the Atchian princes, who had assisted us with people and vessels, was proclaimed and sworn king of Salangoor."[15] Since it was Raja Muhammad Ali of Siak who was installed

10 Sayid Ali was the son of Sayid Uthman and Tengku Embung Badariah, daughter of Raja Alam and sister of Raja Muhammad Ali. He later became Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin of Siak (r. 1791–1810). He died on 1 February 1821. See Barnard, *Multiple Centres*, 93; Goudie, *Syair Perang Siak*, 40.

11 For evocative photographs from the fort on top of the Selangor hill, showing the shallow estuary of the Selangor river with mangrove swamps, see Abdul Halim Nasir, *Kota-kota Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990), 156–158.

12 Martinus Sydses Broersma, who later died on 10 September 1784 on the voyage home on the ship *Juno*. See Martinus Sydses Broersma, "Relaas van het voorgevallene en verrigte, door 's Lands eskader, onder kommando van den kapitein-kommandant J.P. van Braam, bij de expeditie van Malakka, Selangoor en Riouw, in den jare 1784, in oost-Indië," http://members.home.nl/broersma/malakka.htm; accessed November 15, 2020.

13 *Als toen werd tusschen ons en de hoofden dier manschappen het verdrag gesloten, en door hen, in tegenwoordigheid hunner papa's of priesters, den eed op den Alkoran afgelegd, waarbij zij bezworen de zaak van de Salangorezen te verlaten, en de onze aan te kleven, en ons als hulptroepen bij te staan*. Broersma, "Relaas."

14 [*D*]*ie zoo wij vernamen, met amphioen en de kostbaarste goederen van de koning geladen waren, en door hen in brand gestoken, omdat zij ons niet in handen vallen zouden*. Broersma, "Relaas."

15 [*E*]*en der Atchiensche prinsen, die ons met volk en vaartuigen tot bijstand gekomen was, tot koning van Salangoor geproclameerd en beedigd*. Broersma, "Relaas."

by Van Braam as ruler of Selangor, this suggests that Broersma's identification of the Sumatran troops upriver as Acehnese may not be entirely reliable. The royal Selangor party, meanwhile, escaped and travelled onwards via the valley of Bernam to Pahang, where they took refuge at the court.

In the meantime, Van Braam constructed two Dutch forts in Selangor,[16] and on 26 August returned to Melaka, leaving Raja Muhammad Ali in command of Selangor. It soon became clear that rather than governing, Raja Muhammad Ali's main aim was simply to destroy Selangor as a rival trading base to Siak, and he himself soon left Selangor and arrived in Melaka on 19 September 1784 en route to Siak with ships fully laden with pillaged goods. Sayid Ali remained in Selangor, presiding over a regime of asset-stripping, until he too departed in April 1785, leaving his equally rapacious brother Sayid Abdul Rahman in control. Having ascertained that Selangor had been left barely guarded, just one year after the Dutch victory Sultan Ibrahim mobilised his forces and retraced his steps from Pahang, retaking Selangor by force in June 1785. However, the devastation wrought by Siak coupled with a continuing Dutch blockade severely curtailed Selangor's trade and forced up the prices of basic goods, leading Selangor to eventually sign a treaty with the Dutch in 1786.[17]

3 Tengku Sayid Jafar, Panglima Besar of Selangor

In 1786, the squadron arrived back in the Netherlands, and Van Braam (fig. 7.2) returned to his house in Harderwijk. There he became acquainted with Everard Scheidius[18] (fig. 7.3), who was professor of Oriental languages and librarian of the local university, the Gelderse Academie.

Van Braam showed Scheidius a collection of manuscripts he had brought back from Southeast Asia, and in 1791 presented this collection to the Gelderse Academie. A note in Scheidius's 1792 catalogue of Harderwijk manuscripts records the circumstances of acquisition:

> These manuscripts (which on 22 May 1791 the honourable Van Braam bestowed upon our Academy Library) came into his Excellency's hands in

16 M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, "The Forts at Kuala Selangor," *Malaya in history*, 1959, 5(2): 32–38.

17 See Barnard, *Mulitple Centres*, 146–147; Vos, *Gentle Janus*, 165.

18 1742–1794, professor of Oriental languages at Harderwijk. In 1793 he moved to Leiden but died soon thereafter, in 1794. Thus, his cataloguing and work on the Selangor collection in Harderwijk would have been completed between 1791 and 1793.

FIGURE 7.2
Jacob Pieter van Braam (1737–1803), engraving by Reinier Vinkeles, after Schmidt
RIJKSMUSEUM, RP-P-OB-62.729

the conquest of the city and fortress of Salangoor in the straits of Malaccia on the 2nd of Aug. 1784. They were in the house of a certain Mahomedan Chief Priest, who defended it in person to the last moment, and tried to set it on fire on his flight, but was prevented from doing so.[19]

19 *Deze Manuscripten (den 22 Meij 1791 door den Heer van Braam voor onze Akademie-Bibliotheek vereerd) zijn, in zijn H.Ed.Gestr. handen gekomen, bij de verovering van de stad en vesting Salangoor in straat Malaccia op den 2 Aug. 1784. Zij waren in het huis van zekeren Mahomedaanschen Hoofdpriester, die hetzelve, tot het laatste moment in persoon verdedigde, en bij zijne vlucht in brand trachtte te steken, dog daar in verhinderd werd.* Everard Scheidius, 1792 (ABD 95 B 13 KL).

FIGURE 7.3
Everard Scheidius (1742–1794), by L. Springer, 1794
SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA

This "Mahomedan Chief Priest" can be identified from the account of the battle of Selangor found in De Jonge's naval history,[20] which draws upon Van Braam's own journal:[21]

> The Arab priest, SAID JAPPAN, the chief counselor and confidant of the Salangorian King, there at first offered a brave opposition and fired violently at the approaching naval power; but as the troops and sailors successfully landed and approached from the side of the hill, seized the stone fortress, and began to bombard the enemy from it and from the hill, the priest lost heart; he left the batteries in haste, and set his house on fire, in order to reduce the city to ashes, if possible, but when that failed, sought

20 I am beholden to Sirtjo Koolhof for this invaluable reference (pers. comm., 16 May 2019).

21 J.C. de Jonge, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche zeewezen*, vol. 4. (2nd ed.) (Haarlem: Kruseman, 1861), 706, n. 1.

> refuge in flight. From this moment all opposition ceased, and the Dutch flag flew over all strongholds and batteries.[22]

Van Braam's "Said Jappan" was Sayid Jafar, the Panglima Besar or chief military commander of Selangor, who drew the attention of the Dutch for leading his troops to hold out in the battle much longer than any others.[23] He was indeed one of the closest associates of Sultan Ibrahim, and in the *Hikayat Johor* account of the exodus of the Selangor court in the wake of the Dutch victory, Sayid Jafar is listed in the royal entourage immediately after the Raja Muda, the heir apparent.[24] After capturing Selangor, Van Braam issued two proclamations in Malay urging residents of Selangor who had fled to the interior to return; the second proclamation, dated 15 August 1784, offers a reward for the capture of Selangor notables, listing Sayid Jafar alongside Sultan Ibrahim, the Raja Muda, and a Bugis noble, Arung Temujung.[25]

Sayid Jafar was the son of Sayid Syarif Hasan, an Arab originally from Riau,[26] and according to the *Hikayat Siak* his mother was Tengku Putih, who was the daughter of Raja Kecil, the first sultan of Siak, by an unoffocial wife or concubine (*gundik*).[27] At the time of the attack on Selangor, Sayid Jafar was married to Tengku Embung, daughter of Sultan Mahmud of Siak and also a granddaughter of Raja Kecil, by his royal Malay wife Tengku Kamariah of Johor.

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22 *De Arabische priester,* SAID JAPPAN, *de voornaamste raadsman en vertrouweling van den Salangoreschen Koning, bood aldaar in het eerst eenen dapperen tegenstand en vuurde geweldig op de naderende scheepsmagt; doch, toen de reeds gelande en zegevierende troepen en zeelieden van de zijde des bergs naderden, zich van het steenen fortje meester maakten en daaruit en van den berg den vijand begonnen te beschieten, ontzonk de moed aan den priester, die ijlings de batterijen verliet, zijn huis in brand stak, om daarmede, zoo mogelijk, 't geen echter mislukte, de stad in de asch te leggen, en zijn heil in de vlugt zocht. Van dit oogenblik af hield alle tegenstand op, en wapperde de Nederlandsche vlag van alle sterkten en batterijen*. De Jonge, *Geschiedenis*, 706.

23 Meilink-Roelofsz, "Forts," 35.

24 Ismail Hussein, "Hikayat Negeri Johor: A Nineteenth Century Bugis History Relating Events in Riau and Selangor," in *A History of Johore (1365–1941)*, R.O. Winstedt, with a final chapter by Khoo Kay Kim (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1992), 278–279.

25 Jan van der Putten, "Wanted." In *Lost Times and Untold Tales from the Malay World*, eds. Jan van der Putten and Mary Kilcline Cody (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 118–120.

26 Virginia Matheson Hooker and Barbara Watson Andaya, transl., *The Precious Gift* (*Tuhfat al-Nafis*) by Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982), 368.

27 Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, *Hikayat Siak*. Dirawikan oleh Tengku Said. Diselenggarakan oleh Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992), 135, 150.

Tengku Embung had previously been married to her cousin, Raja Muhammad Ali, son of Raja Alam, another son of Raja Kecil by a Minangkabau wife.[28] Raja Ali Haji, the Bugis author of the Johor-Riau chronicle *Tuhfat al-nafis*, reported that according to the *Hikayat Siak* the main reason for the Siak forces joining in Van Braam's attack on Selangor was not so much to support the Dutch but because of Raja Muhammad Ali's personal desire for revenge on Sayid Jafar for his marriage to Tengku Embung.[29]

Following the defeat of Selangor—and the thwarting of his attempt to burn down his house and contents—Sayid Jafar accompanied Sultan Ibrahim into exile in Pahang. He was also active in the campaign to retake Selangor the following year, and thereafter continued in his role as a senior minister to Sultan Ibrahim. In 1791, Sayid Jafar was sent by Sultan Ibrahim with a delegation of nobles to Melaka to mediate on behalf of Sultan Mahmud Syah of Johor.[30]

There are also two Malay letters from Sayid Jafar to Francis Light held in the Light Letters collection at SOAS. In one letter dated 22 Jumadilawal [1208] (26 December 1793),[31] "Tuan Sayyidi Jafar" apologises for his late reply as he has

28 It is recounted in the *Tuhfat al-nafis* and the *Hikayat Siak* that in around 1781, during a fit of (perhaps hereditary) madness, Raja Muhammad Ali had beat Tengku Embung so badly that "blood spurted like a [slaughtered] goat" (*maka melacurlah darah seperti seekor kambing*) from a gash in her forehead, and her brother the sultan, Raja Ismail, was summoned in alarm. Despite Tengku Embung protesting (in an extraordinary resonance with contemporary accounts of domestic abuse) that she had merely fainted and knocked her head on some window bars, Raja Muhammad Ali was locked up until the episode of madness had passed (Barnard, *Multiple Centres*, 140–142; Hooker and Andaya, *Precious Gift*, 165; Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-nafis*. Karangan Raja Ali Haji, dikaji dan diperkenalkan oleh Virginia Matheson Hooker (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1998), 240). Although not specified in the Malay sources, it may be surmised that the divorce of Tengku Embung and Raja Muhammad Ali was then effected, after which the marriage with Sayid Jafar took place.

29 *Hikayat Siak*: "And the reason why Yamtuan Muhammad Ali wanted to attack Selangor was because Sayyid Jaafar married Tengku Embung, so it is said." *Dan Yamtuan Muhammad Ali, sebab hendak melanggar Selangor, oleh Sayyid Jaafar beristerikan Tengku Embung, demikianlah kisahnya*. Muhammad Yusoff, *Hikayat Siak*, 188).

30 Hooker and Andaya, *Precious Gift*, 377.

31 SOAS, MS 40320/4, f. 44, Abdur-Rahman Mohamed Amin, "Surat Tuan Sayyid Ja'far Selangor kepada Francis Light (MS 40320/4, f. 44) berkaitan penghantaran kici (22 Jamadil Awal, Isnin)," *Koleksi surat-surat Francis Light*, 29 October 2018. https://suratlight.blogspot.com/2018/10/surat-tuan-sayyid-jafar-selangor-kepada.html, accessed November 21, 2023. The letter is simply dated Monday 22 Jumadilawal, but is annotated on the reverse "*Toonkoo Sayad Jaffar 31 Dec. 1793*," confirming the Hijra year of 1208 for the letter. Conversion of the date with Ian Proudfoot's AHAD programme gives Thursday, 26 December 1793, suggest-

been extremely ill but is now a bit better, and urges Light to send a boat (*kici*) to Selangor this month. The other letter, dated Tuesday 10 *Dhū l-Qaʿda* with no indication of year,[32] reflects the close business relationships that many Malay nobles had forged with Light over his two decades in the region as a country trader. In this letter Sayid Jafar is styled "Tengku Panglima Besar" in Selangor, and on the envelope he is named as "Tengku Sayid Jafar Panglima Besar Selangor." He refers to a boat (*pencalang*) evidently headed for, or recently arrived in, Penang, under the command of Ismail, son of the *Tuan* Imam, and lists the cargo and its value. This all belongs to his wife, who has just died,[33] and Sayid Jafar grants Light immediate power of attorney (*kita wakilkan mutlak*), requesting him to commandeer the boat and all its contents including armaments from Ismail on the very day that he receives this letter, and informing Light that he too will set sail for Penang in this month of *Dhū l-Qaʿda*.

Sayid Jafar's seal (fig. 7.4), which is impressed on the two letters to Francis Light, has the quintessentially Malay shape of an eight-petalled circle with a decorative border. The inscription reads: *al-wāthiq bi-llāh al-mudabbir al-Sayyid Jaʿfar b. Ḥasan al-Munaffir Bā ʿAlawī*, 'He who trusts in God, the Administrator [of all worldly affairs], Sayid Jafar, son of Hasan al-Munaffir Bā Alawī',[34] his family name of al-Munaffir and his Bā ʿAlawī clan name reflecting his Hadhrami antecedents, as shared by most of the *sayyid*s in the Malay world.

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ing a further adjustment of a few days may be needed to accord with the given weekday. (With many thanks to Abdur-Rahman Mohamed Amin for information about the date of receipt on the verso of the letter.)

32 SOAS, MS 40320/3, f. 38 (Abdur-Rahman Mohamed Amin, "Surat Tengku Panglima Besar Selangor kepada Francis Light (MS40320/3 folio 38) memaklumkan barang dagangan yang dihantar," *Koleksi surat-surat Francis Light*, November 16, 2015, https://suratlight.blogspot.com/2015/11/surat-tengku-panglima-besar-selangor.html, accessed November 21, 2023). In both letters, Light is addressed as Governor, thus placing the letters between 1786, when Penang was settled by the British, and Light's death in 1794. Of 42 letters from Sultan Ibrahim of Selangor to Francis Light held in the "Light Letters" collection, the majority of dated letters were written between 1786 to 1788, but about a third of the letters were undated (Abdur-Rahman Mohamed Amin, "Warkah Sultan Ibrahim 1785–1794: cerminan politik dan ekonomi Selangor pada hujung abad ke-18," *Melayu: Jurnal Antarabangsa Dunia Melayu*, 2019, 12(2): 185).

33 It is possible that this refers to Tengku Embung.

34 This is an improved reading on that found in Annabel Teh Gallop, *Malay Seals from the Islamic World of Southeast Asia: Content, Form, Context, Catalogue* (Singapore: NUS Press in association with the British Library, 2019), 445, cat. 1312, #339.

FIGURE 7.4
The seal of Sayid Jafar, inscribed: *al-wāthiq billāh al-mudabbir al-Sayyid Jaʿfar b. Ḥasan al-Munaffir Bā ʿAlawī*, from a letter to Francis Light. SOAS, MS 40320/3, f. 38

4 The Selangor Library over the Centuries

The Selangor collection was presented to the Gelderse Academie of Harderwijk by Van Braam on 22 May 1791. The collection was accompanied by a "Catalogue made in the Indies on the order of Mr van Braam" (*Catalogus op order van den Hr van Braam in Indiën gemaakt*) listing 28 (unnumbered) items with very brief descriptions.[35] There is no indication of who was responsible for identifying the items—perhaps Mr Kilian, the Malay translator, was involved—but there is an intriguing suggestion that Van Braam may have known some Arabic. As a fifteen-year old midshipman, he was held captive for a year in Morocco in 1752, and there is a reference to a catalogue of sixteen books in Arabic in one of his later ship's journals.[36] At the very least, the existence of this list suggests a degree of intellectual interest and engagement with the collection by Van Braam himself.

Within a year of the arrival of the Selangor library at the Gelderse Academie, the complete collection had been described by Everard Scheidius in the handwritten catalogue of Harderwijk manuscripts, *Catalogus bibliothecæ secundum*

35 See table 7.2. I am most grateful to Suzan Folkerts for identifying this list.

36 "*Gedurende zijn gevangenschap leerde hij mogelijk Arabisch; in een van de latere scheepsjournalen, bevindt zich in ieder geval een catalogus met zestien boeken in die taal.*" (Otto van der Meij and Jacob Pieter van Braam, *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* (04/07/2018), http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1780--1830/lemmata/data/Braam, accessed November 21, 2023).

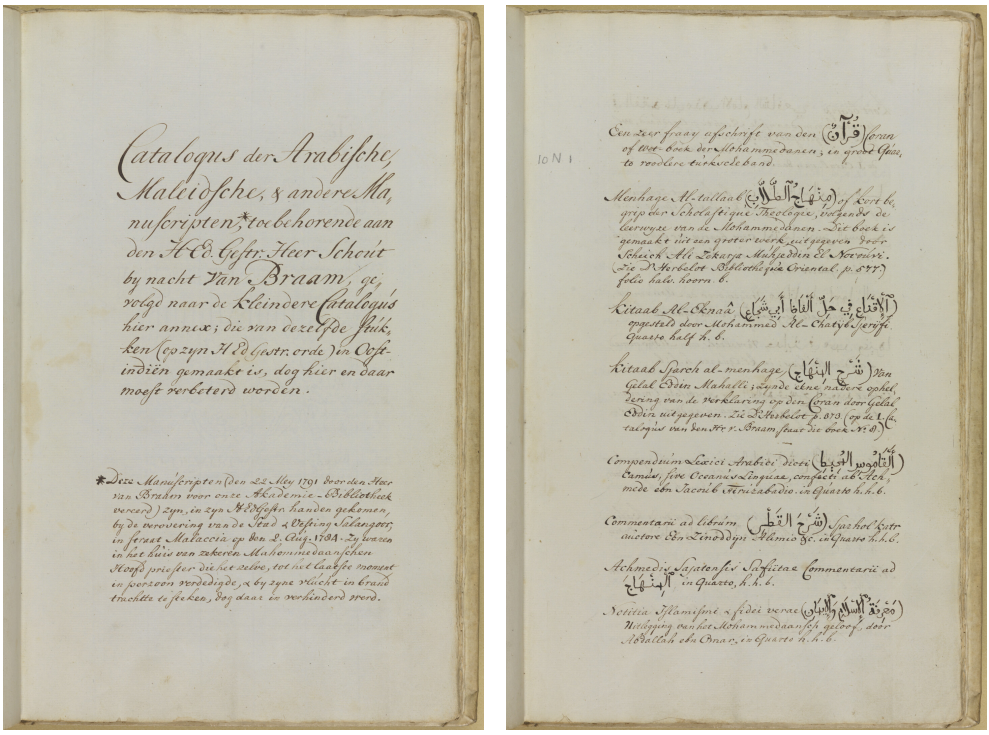


FIGURE 7.5 Scheidius' catalogue of the Harderwijk manuscript collection of 1792, with the Introduction to the Selangor collection and a note on its origins, followed by the first page of the listing with titles in Arabic. DAB 95 B 13 KL

ordinem pluteorum; confectus anno 1792 (95 B 13 KL). Although the main body of the catalogue is in Latin, the Selangor collection is listed in Dutch with titles in Arabic script on five pages at the very end of the volume (fig. 7.5), followed by a page containing a copy of Van Braam's own catalogue mentioned above. Scheidius lists thirty (unnumbered) items, comprising twenty-eight volumes followed by a collection of loose leaves in Arabic and another collection of booklets and papers in an unknown script which, with the help of William Marsden, was identified as Bugis. Only three of the manuscripts still have their original bindings today, for Scheidius appears to have organised the rebinding of twenty-four of the volumes in standard half-vellum bindings with marbled paper boards, and these are identified as such in his catalogue with the note *h.h.b.*, elaborated in the first instances as *halv. hoorn b.* or *half h.b.* On these volumes the titles are written on the spine in Arabic script in gold ink, and a comparison with the Arabic-script elements in the catalogue confirms that Scheidius himself inscribed the titles on the bindings (fig. 7.6).

FIGURE 7.6 Typical half-vellum bindings of the Selangor volumes in the Harderwijk collection, with Arabic titles written in gold ink by Scheidius. DAB 10 M 1 KL and 10 M 3 KL

In 1793, Scheidius left Harderwijk to take up a new post at Leiden, but, already in poor health, he died soon after in 1794. In 1818, the Gelderse Academie was closed down, and the Harderwijk library was then transferred to the Athenaeumbibliotheek of Deventer, where it is now held.[37] The descriptions of the Selangor manuscripts in Scheidius's 1792 manuscript catalogue first appeared in print, with only very minor changes, in 1832 in the *Catalogus Bibliothecae publicae Daventriensis*[38] where the collection was given the overall accession number 1834, but without numbers for the individual parts. The same descrip-

37 J.C. Bedaux et al., *Stads- of Athenaeum-bibliotheek Deventer 1560–1985* (Deventer: Stads- of Athenaeumbibliotheek, 1985), 66.

38 *Catalogus Bibliothecae publicae Daventriensis* (Deventriae: J. de Lange, 1832), 251–254.

tions again appeared verbatim in the catalogue of the Athenaeumbibliotheek by van Slee,[39] and here the items are numbered from 1 to 30. In the meantime, a more detailed description of this collection, identifying constituent works within the volumes, had appeared in the *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium* by De Goeje,[40] where the system of numbering the individual manuscripts with roman numerals as 1834.I to 1834.XXX was established.

It was only in the twentieth century that the Selangor collection was inspected by specialists of the Malay world. In the early 1950s, the Malay manuscripts were described in an unpublished five-page typed handlist by Voorhoeve, "De Maleise handschriften van de Athenaeum-bibliotheek te Deventer."[41] Voorhoeve added information as necessary to supplement De Goeje.[42] The Arabic works from Deventer were all included in Voorhoeve's *Handlist of Arabic manuscripts*[43] (along with their De Goeje CCO numbers), with a concordance of the shelfmarks and inventory numbers.[44] The Malay components of the manuscripts were described by Teuku Iskandar,[45] drawing mainly on Voorhove's unpublished handlist but adding some new information including codicological details. The Bugis manuscripts are described in an unpublished handlist by A.A. Cense and R.A. Kern (n.d.), undated but probably compiled ca. 1950s[?], and one Bugis manuscript is included in Kern's *Aanvulling*.[46]

The Selangor library thus consists of thirty manuscripts, numbered in the older published catalogues as 1834.I–XXX, but at present each identified in the Athenaeumbibliotheek by a shelfmark within the ranges 10 N 1–2 KL, 10 M 1–18 KL, 10 O 1–8 KL and 10 P 1–2 KL, which is essential for retrieval. The final two manuscripts, 1834.XXIX–XXX (shelfmark 10 O 8 KL), in fact comprise forty-

39 J.C. van Slee, *Catalogus der handschriften berustende op de Athenaeum-bibliotheek te Deventer* (Deventer: Deventer Boek- en Steendrukkerij, 1892), 76–79.

40 M.J. de Goeje, *Catalogus codicum orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae*, vol. v (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1873), 298–303.

41 P. Voorhoeve, *De Maleise handschriften van de Athenaeum-bibliotheek te Deventer* (Collection of photocopies, Leiden University Library, 1952).

42 De Goeje, *Catalogus*.

43 P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands*. (2nd enlarged ed.) (The Hague: Leiden University Press, 1980).

44 Voorhoeve, *Handlist*, 615.

45 Teuku Iskandar, *Catalogue of Malay, Minangkabau and South Sumatran Manuscripts in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Documentatiebureau Islam-Christendom, 1999), 936–943.

46 R.A. Kern, *Aanvulling op de catalogus van de Boegineesche, tot den I La Galigo-cyclus behoorende handschriften der Leidsche Universiteitsbibliotheek alsmede van die in andere Europeesche bibliotheken* (Leiden, 1999).

four separate items, ranging from single-leaf documents and letters to small leaflets and more substantial volumes, in Arabic, Malay, and Bugis.[47] Thus in total, the Selangor collection comprises twenty-eight volumes and forty-four further items, making a total of seventy-two items. In table 7.1 below all the manuscripts are listed with inventory numbers and shelfmarks, but for ease of reference, each item has also been assigned a single running number, from 1 to 72, which will be used within this article.

As is evident from the long history of handlists and catalogues outlined above, the Selangor collection at the Athenaeumbibliotheek in Deventer is certainly not unknown or undiscovered, but scholarly interest has largely been confined to identifying the languages and contents of the individual manuscripts. The following discussion will attempt to explore the broader social codicological context of the library, starting with a thematic consideration of the contents, to see what these can reveal about the kind of books which were of interest to a Selangor audience in the eighteenth century, and what languages were associated with which types of knowledge. Next, material features will be considered alongside a collation of dates, names, and toponyms found within the manuscripts, to try to gain a clearer picture of when and where the various books were created. An attempt will then be made to "read" the non-textual artistic and graphical elements of the manuscripts, with special attention paid to the two important Qur'an manuscripts in the library.

5 The Texts: What Was Read in Eighteenth-Century Selangor

The Selangor collection can be characterised as a small theological library, primarily comprising texts in Arabic, with fairly narrowly focussed rather than wide-ranging interests. At the heart of the library, both symbolically and physically, are two fine large Qur'an manuscripts (1, 28), while the other manuscripts fall into several distinct categories.

The main topic of interest in the library is Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), with works on the interpretation and application of Islamic law according to the Shafiʿi school accounting for some of the largest and most substantial volumes in the collection. Yaḥyā al-Nawawī's *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn* is the subject of a commentary (4), an abridgment by Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, *Fatḥ al-wahhāb* (2), and a gloss by Aḥmad al-Sunbatī (7). Another core text of Shafiʿi law, *al-Taqrib fī l-fiqh*

47 This subcollection was originally numbered 1–46, but included two items (40 and 46) which are not part of the Selangor collection, and now have the shelfmark 10 O 17 KL.

by Abū Shujā is found (9) along with its well-known commentary *al-Iqnāʿ* by al-Shirbīnī (3). Also in the library is a work on inheritance law by al-Shinshawrī (11) and a schematic diagram for the division of inheritances (37), as well as other short texts on *fiqh* (18). Malay texts on *fiqh* include *Bidāyat al-mubtadī* (12), which focuses on the application of *fiqh* in daily life and prescriptions such as ritual purity.

As an Islamic library formed in a non-Arabophone region, it is hardly surprising to find that the study of the Arabic language is another key concern in the collection. There are several works on Arabic grammar, including standard texts such as *al-Ājurrūmiyya*, *al-ʿAwāmil* (14, 59) and *al-Kāfiya* (15, 16), with their commentaries and glosses, as well as a copy of an abdridged version of a famous Arabic dictionary, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* by al-Fīrūzābādī (5).

The importance of devotional poetic works on the Prophet Muḥammad is reflected in the fact that there are three copies of *Mawlid sharaf al-anām* (10, 13, 17), one with an interlinear translation in Makasar in Arabic script (10) and another with interlinear translation in Malay (13). This anonymous hagiographical work on the Prophet appears to be most popular in the Indian Ocean littoral, particularly in Southeast Asia.[48] There are also three copies of *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt* by al-Jazūlī (20, 25, 27), the latter two of which contain schematic drawings of the tombs of the Prophet and his companions Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (fig. 7.7). This work, much-loved across the whole Islamic world, appears to have been especially close to the heart of Bugis warriors. Raja Ali Haji recounts in the *Tuḥfat al-nafīs* that during (his grandfather) Raja Haji's seige of Melaka, every evening at his encampment at Teluk Ketapang he never failed to remember the word of God, or to read the *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt*, "Indications of virtues":

> He constantly recited devotional texts from the Koran and unceasingly read the holy work, *Indications of virtues*, which was never out of his hand. Nor did he fail to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) every Thursday night, just as if he were not living under difficulties.[49]

48 All 22 manucript copies in the Netherlands listed in Voorhoeve, *Handlist*, 207–208) are from Indonesia.

49 Hooker and Andaya, *Precious Gift*, 174; Malay text: *Maka di dalam hal itu tiada juga mensia-siakan wiridnya dan tiadalah ia berhenti membaca selawat Dala'il al-khayrat dan tiadalah lepas daripada tangannya di dalam hal itu. Maka pada malam Jumaat tiada juga ia berhenti maulud al-Nabi Muhammad sallallahu alaihi wasallam sebagaimana orang yang tiada di dalam kesusahan demikianlah adanya* (Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-nafis*, 256).

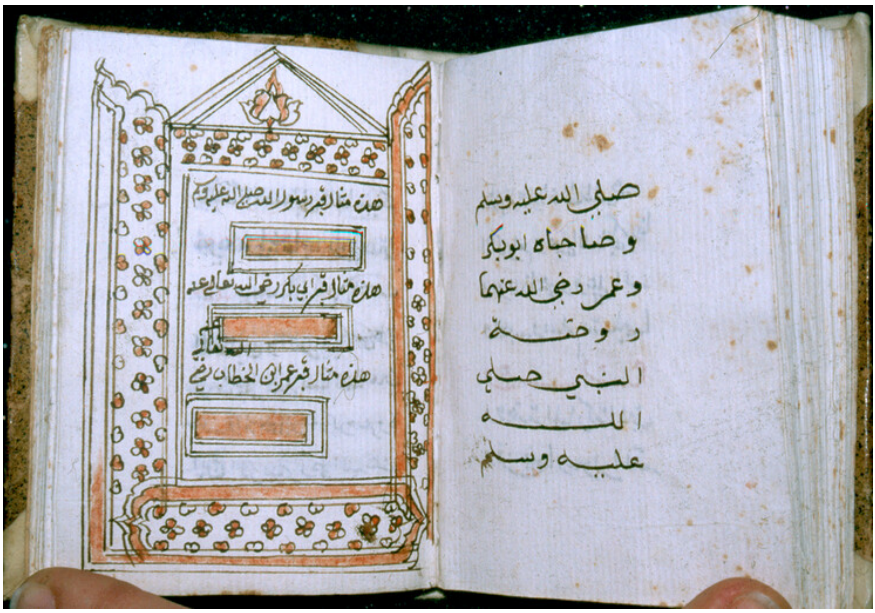


FIGURE 7.7 *Dalā'il al-khayrāt*, from the Selangor library (27). DAB 10 O 7 KL

When the final attack was launched, and even as Dutch soldiers were approaching Raja Haji's stockade

> he himself tried to draw profit from reading *Indications of virtues*[50]

and at the moment just before he was fatally shot:

> Yang Dipertuan Muda Raja Haji rose up, and drew his dagger, holding *Indications of virtue* in his other hand.[51]

Although Raja Haji's own copy of *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* has never been found, it is poignant to think that the exactly contemporary copies in the Selangor collection doubtless give a good indication of what it must have looked like.

A small range of theological texts includes works on *'aqīda* (faith) (18), hadith (prophetic traditions) (25, 47), mysticism (23), and Sufism, including

50 Hooker and Andaya, *Precious Gift*, 174; Malay text: *Maka adalah Raja Haji itu istighlal ia dengan membaca Dalail al-khayrat* (Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-nafis*, 256).

51 Hooker and Andaya, *Precious Gift*, 175; Malay text: *Maka Yang Dipertuan Muda pun bangkit mengunus badiknya sebelah tangan memegang Dalail al-khayrat* (Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-nafis*, 256).

a Shattariyya *silsilah* or spiritual genealogy (26), the pilgrimage (12, 26, 60), question-and-answer tracts on faith (24), and part of an eschatological work by Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī, *Akhbar al-akhira* (57). Two Malay *syair* (poems with four-line stanzas, each with the same end rhyme) both concern mystical knowledge (58, 67). There are no fewer than four short works on the *shahāda* (creed) (8, 12, 18, 24), the first of which is contained in a volume starting with *Maʿrifat al-islām wa-l-imān*. Braginsky studied a theological treatise from the collection of François Valentijn (1666–1727) entitled *al-Kitāb al-musamma al-kabīr* [*fī*] *Maʿrifat al-islām*, containing seven texts, the first two of which were *Bāb maʿrifat al-islām wa-al-imān* and a treatise on the *shahāda*.[52] In the Valentijn manuscript, the work on the *shahāda* appears to derive from *Kitāb uṣūl taḥqīq*, composed by the second half of the seventeenth century by a certain Ibrahīm b. Muḥammad.

Another emphasis of the collection is on prayers and supplications (30, 34, 35, 41, 48, 49), often co-existing with texts on divination (19, 50, 66, 71) and amulets (31, 36, 40, 61), some in Malay and Bugis as well as in Arabic. There are also works on the diagnosis of disease through the magic powers of the letters of the Arabic alphabet (21) and other medical matters (63), and treatises on sexual intercourse in Malay (46) and Bugis (70).

The letters and documents are mostly in Malay (42–44, 51–54, 56), with some fragments in Bugis (29). Apart from the epistolary materials, perhaps the only manuscript in the whole collection that stands outside the Islamicate cloak encompassing all the other items is a fifty-page fragment of the Bugis creation myth *La Galigo* (68) (fig. 7.8). In its complete form, *La Galigo* has been termed the longest epic in the world, and the Selangor manuscript is the earliest dateable copy of a part of this work.[53]

The great majority of manuscripts in this Malay collection thus comprise works in Arabic familiar from libraries throughout the Islamic world, followed by smaller numbers of texts in Malay and Bugis, with minor elements in Makasar and Javanese. The Malay texts are generally on mystical aspects of Islam, as well as catechisms on the faith and treatises on the daily obligations of Islamic law, and Malay is notably also the epistolary language. Bugis is used to a smaller

52 V.I. Braginsky, "Newly Found" Manuscripts Which Were Never Lost: Three Francois Valentijn Manuscripts in the Collection of Muzium Seni Asia (MS UM 81.163), *Indonesia and the Malay world*, 2010, 38(112): 436–443.

53 S. Koolhof, "The "La Galigo": A Bugis Encyclopedia and its Growth," in *Encompassing knowledge: Indigenous Encyclopedias from Ninth-Century Java to Twentieth-Century Riau*, eds T. Day and W. Derks. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 1999, 155 (3): 380, fn. 12.

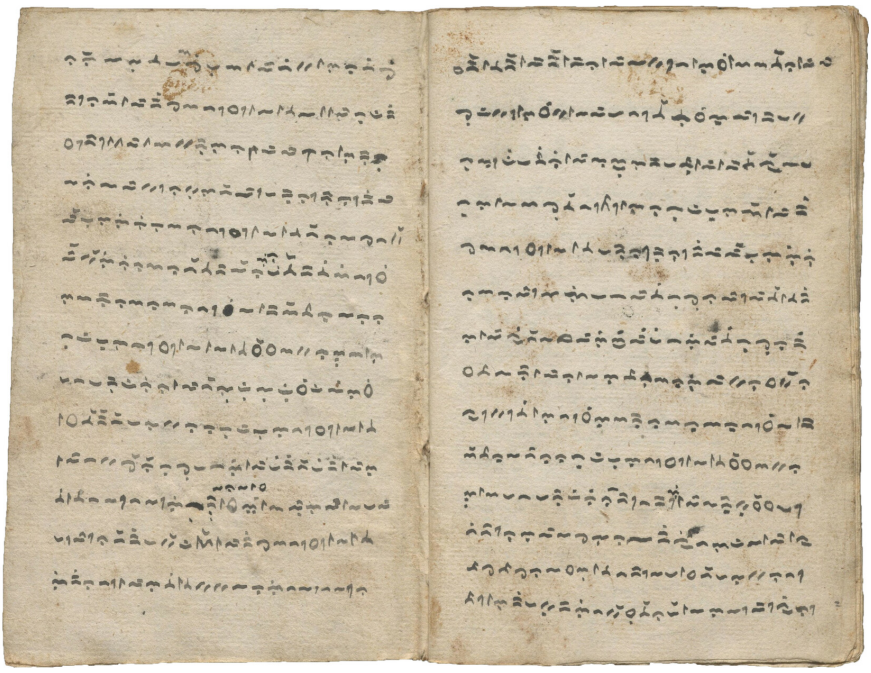


FIGURE 7.8 The earliest dateable manuscript of part of the *La Galigo* epic in Bugis (68). DAB 10 O 8 (41) KL

extent for a wide range of religious matters ranging from information on ritual ablutions to different prayers to be performed for specific purposes, and for divination. Many of the texts in indigenous languages are presented in the form of interlinear translations from the Arabic (8, 10, 13, 25, 26), but there are also vernacular compositions (12, 57, 58, 67, 68). The manuscripts in Malay are mostly written, as usual, in Jawi script—the extended form of the Arabic alphabet used for writing the Malay language—and the Bugis ones in the Bugis/Makasar script of Indic origin, but the Selangor library also contains examples of texts in Malay and even Arabic in Bugis script (35, 70, 72), and Bugis and Makasar in Arabic/Jawi script (45).

Overall, the profile of the Selangor collection accords well with the picture of other libraries from Islamic Southeast Asia that is emerging from a study of digitised collections, constructed around a core of canonical texts in a "supraethnic, or sacral, language," namely Arabic, while "non-functional" texts, positioned closer to the periphery of the model, tend to be written in the language of particular ethnic groups.[54] In the Selangor library, the only three

54 V.I. Braginsky, *The System of Classical Malay Literature* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993), 14.

literary items are in Bugis (68) and Malay (58, 67), and an interesting comparison can be made with the recently digitised library of the *pesantren* or madrasa at Langitan in East Java.[55] Of the 133 manuscripts, all are in Arabic save for two, one of which is the sole literary work, a copy of *Cerito Ambiya*, tales of the prophets, in Javanese.[56]

6 Materials and Paratexts: Colophons, Seals, Owners, and Scribes

It can be estimated that 90% of surviving manuscripts from the Malay world date from the nineteenth century. All the manuscripts in the Selangor library pre-date 1784, which in itself makes them relatively early and hence significant, as noted in the case of the *La Galigo* fragment above. In addition to two letters dated 1780 and 1781, eight of the manuscript volumes in the library bear dates of copying ranging from the early seventeenth century to the second half of the eighteenth century.[57]

The oldest dated manuscript in the collection (16), copied in Shaʿbān 1011 (January–February 1603), is a copy of a grammatical work by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, *al-Fawāʾid al-Wāfiya fī ḥall mushkilāt al-Kāfiya*, a commentary on Ibn al-Ḥājib's *Kāfiyat ḍawī al-adab fī ʿilm kalām al-ʿarab* (fig. 7.9a). From personal inspection, the small sloping hand is unfamiliar from Southeast Asian manuscripts, and the burnished laid paper with uneven texture does not appear to be European. An octagonal ownership seal is impressed four times on the final page facing the colophon. It is inscribed *rājī lutf al-ḥayy Muḥammad b. Shāban*, "desiring the favour of God, Muḥammad, son of Shāban,"[58] finely engraved in a sweeping *nastaʿlīq* hand against a swirling ground of arabesques, and is certainly not of local manufacture (fig. 7.9b). All these features suggest that this manuscript was not copied in Southeast Asia, but was brought to Selangor from elsewhere in the Islamic world, perhaps from India.

This is not unusual, as many manuscript collections in Indonesia and Malaysia contain some Islamic manuscripts from outside the region, sometimes copied by Malay scribes during long stays in the Hijaz. One manuscript which makes explicit the connection between Southeast Asia and the Arabian penin-

55 Endangered Archives Progamme EAP061/1.

56 Gallop, "Shifting Landscapes", 101.

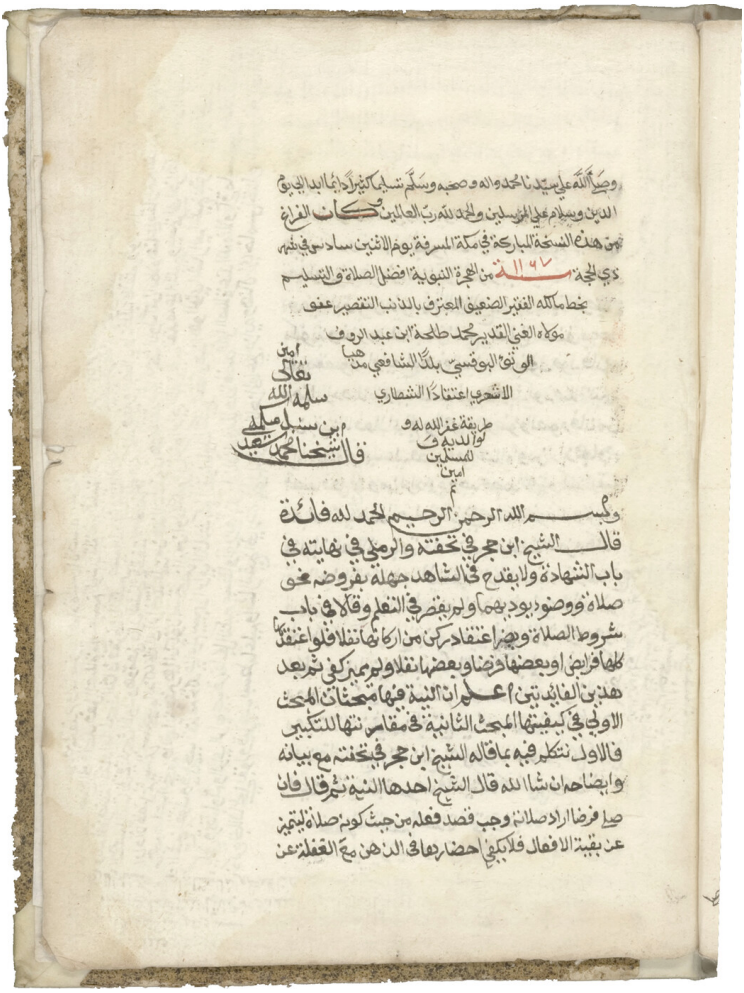
57 The dated manuscripts are: 1603 (16), 1619/20 (7), 1679 (18), 1682/3 (3), 1688 (15), 1711 (11), 1754 (4), 1759/60 (21).

58 Gallop, *Malay Seals*, 446, cat. 1316 #1634.

FIGURES 7.9A–B
The oldest dated manuscript in the library: *al-Fawā'id al-Wāfiya fī ḥall mushkilāt al-Kāfiya* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, on Arabic grammar, dated Shaʿban 1011 (January–February 1603) (16). DAB 10 M 14 KL, images 439–440, with a detail of the top seal impression on the left-hand page

sula is a commentary on the *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn* (4), which was copied in Mecca in *Dhūl-ḥijja* 1167 (September–October 1754) by a Bugis scribe named Muḥammad Ṭalḥat b. ʿAbd al-Raʿūf with the *nisba* al-Būqisī (Figures 7.10A–B).

Another seventeenth-century copy of a different commentary on *al-Kāfiya* held in the collection (15), *al-Wāfiya fī sharḥ al-Kāfiya* by Rukn al-Dīn al-Astarābādī, dated Shawwāl 1099 (July–August 1688), is certainly copied in the Malay world, as is evident from the more upright hand and the double decorated headpiece across the two initial pages (fig. 7.11). This manuscript bears an ownership note in the name of *ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn ʿAbd al-Shukūr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Batāwī* (i.e. from Batavia in Java), and the volume opens with a *basmala* prayer



FIGURES 7.10A–B Commentary on *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn* by Yaḥyā al-Nawawī, a standard textbook of Shafiʿi law, copied in Mecca in *Dhū l-ḥijja* 1167 (September–October 1754) by Muḥammad Ṭalḥat b. ʿAbd al-Raʿūf al-Watuq al-Būqisī, al-Shāfiʿī, al-Ashaʿrī, al-Shaṭṭārī. DAB 10 M 2 KL, image 904, with a detail of his ex libris signature on the title page, image 12

FIGURE 7.11 *al-Wāfiya fī sharḥ al-Kāfiya* by Rukn al-Dīn al-Astarābādī, a commentary on Arabic grammar, dated early Shawwal 1099 (July–August 1688) (15). DAB 10 M 13 KL, images 13–14

recited on the authorisation of al-Sayyid Ḥusayn b. Shaykh Bā ʿAlawī.[59] Two small oval seal impressions are found in this manuscript: At the beginning of the volume is one in the name of Ḥusayn,[60] and on a page in the middle in the name of Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn.[61] Like the seal of Muḥammad b. Shāban described above, neither of these seals is of Malay manufacture, but it should also be recalled that there is a long tradition of Malay sojourners in the Middle East having seals made there.[62]

59 With many thanks to A. Peacock for reading and translating these lines (pers. comm., 26.11.2020). This may refer to the Sayid Husain bin Syaikh who according to the *Tuhfat al-nafis* married Tengku Hitam, daughter of Daing Chellak, second Bugis Yang Dipertuan Muda of Riau, and Tengku Mandak, daughter of the Bendahara Sultan of Johor.

60 Gallop, *Malay Seals*, 446, cat. 1314, #1632.

61 Gallop, *Malay Seals*, 446, cat. 1315, #1633.

62 Cf. Gallop, *Malay Seals*, 37.

A number of manuscripts show links to Aceh, one being a collection of seven short theological texts (18) which includes colophons for each item. The first colophon gives the name of the copyist as *Encik Mualim*, "Mr Scholar," and is dated Rabiulakhir 1090 (May–June 1679). The colophon of the penultimate work, partly in Malay, identifies the writer more precisely as *Encik Mualim peranakan Minangkabau*, "of Minangkabau descent," and is dated 29 Rajab 1090 (5 September 1679) *fī zamān Sultan Zakiatuddin Inayat Syah berdaulat ẓill Allāh fī al-ʿālam*, "in the time of Sulṭān [*sic*] Zakiyya al-Dīn Ināyat Shāh, the sovereign, the shadow of God on earth," referring to the second queen of Aceh who reigned from 1675 to 1688. One of the grammatical texts (6), a gloss by Yāsīn al-Ḥimsī on *Mujīb al-nidā ilā sharḥ Qaṭr al-nadā* by ʿAbd Allāh al-Fākihī, bears two owners' names on the first page: ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Jāwī[63] al-Ashī, and Ḥajjī Muḥammad b. Ḥajjī Aḥmad Jāwī.

The Selangor library thus evinces wide-ranging temporal and geographic reaches. At least one of the manuscripts was already nearly two centuries old when seized by the Dutch in 1784 (16), and a considerable number of others were around a hundred years old (3, 7, 15, 18). Some of the manuscripts had travelled to Selangor from across the Indian Ocean (4, 16), while at least three volumes have links to Aceh (1, 6, 18), and one had been in the hands of a scholar from Batavia (15). Numerous others are either written in Bugis or contain notes in Bugis/Makasar, and thus could originate from any part of the south Sulawesi diaspora across the Malay world, most likely from Riau or Selangor itself.

The interconnected worlds of Selangor, Riau, Banjar and Palembang are vividly reflected in the small selection of epistles, with personal titles used within ranging from the Malay (*Encik, Tuan*), Bugis (*Daing*) and Arab (*Sayyid*) to Javanese titles of nobility (*Pangeran*) associated with Banjar or Palembang. Notably, the only occurrence of the toponym Selangor in the form *Selau'r* is in a letter addressed to *Tuan Sayid Hasan*, perhaps the father of Sayid Jafar himself (53).

63 *Via autem Javae eum ad nostram patriam pervenisse, jam hinc patet quod in primo folio legimus, ut videtur manu ipsius librarii, Abdo-'c-Camad al-Djawi eum emisse. Alterum ejus exemplar mihi non innotuit*. De Goeje, *Catalogus*, 293, no. 2743, "It (i.e., the manuscript) came to our country (i.e., the Netherlands) through Java, which is obvious from the note one can read on the first folio, added as it seems by the librarian himself, saying that Abdo-'c-Camad al-Djawi purchased it. I do not know of any other copy." (With many thanks to my colleague Peter Toth for this translation, November 16, 2020). De Goeje has misunderstood the *nisba* "al-Jāwī" to refer specifically to the island of Java, whereas it was a standard appellation used in the broader Islamic world to refer to all Muslims from Southeast Asia.

7 Reading without Words: Artistic Elements in the Manuscripts

It is often quite easy to identify the regional origin of a decorated Qurʾan manuscript from Southeast Asia, due to the highly conformist and conventionalised nature of the art form, but this is a much more difficult task in non-Qurʾanic manuscripts, where artistic tastes are given freer rein. In the Selangor collection, all that can be said about certain decorated elements—such as the double headpiece noted above in a grammatical work (15), another in a copy of the *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt* (20), and a monochrome foliate tailpiece around the colophon at the end of a collection of prayers, copied by a scribe named ʿAbd al-Ghanī on Tuesday 29 Rajab (no year) (24)—is that they are undoubtedly the work of Southeast Asian hands.

Occasionally, stronger hints of regional connections can be gleaned. A single leaf with a fragment of a letter in Bugis (29) contains several foliate flourishes around sketches of the most common heading (*kepala surat*) found on letters in the Malay world, *Qawluh al-ḥaqq*, "His word is the Truth." One of these is exceptionally fine, with *Qawluh al-ḥaqq* set in a beautiful border of a foliate scroll reserved in white against a black ground (fig. 7.12). This recalls a number of "letter heading" seals, often inscribed with *Qawluh al-ḥaqq* or other popular *kepala surat*, which are strongly associated with Bugis milieux.[64] Quite apart from the notes in Bugis script found on this sheet of paper, the contextual function of the ornamental elements alone suggests Bugis artistry.

Some of the most unusual artistic elements in the Selangor library are found in one manuscript (2). This is the largest non-Qurʾanic volume in the library, described by Scheidius as being in folio format, with each leaf formed by folding a single sheet of European-made paper once, to give four pages. It contains two important manuals of Shafiʿi law and a primer on logic, as well as countless interleaved notes and paratexts, including various medicinal recipes in Malay.[65] At the start of the first work, *Fatḥ al-wahhāb bi-sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭullāb* by Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, an abridgement of *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn* by Yahyā al-Nawawī, an impressive roundel contains the title and name of the author inscribed in reserved white on a ground of red and black: *al-awwal min kitāb*

64 Gallop, *Malay Seals*, 18.

65 At the beginning: *Ini ubat terlalu besar sangat faedahnya*, "this is a very efficacious medicine," using *pala* (nutmeg), *bunga lawang* (star anise) and opium, pounded together while holding the breath and saying a prayer. Another recipe bound in is: *Bab ini ubat gigi sudah bergoncang*, "Medication for a wobbly tooth," which ends *tatkala kita bubuh ubat kita pinta kepada sayyidnā ʿAbd al-Qadir Jilānī*, "when we apply the medication we should appeal to our lord Abd al-Qadir Jilānī" (2).

FIGURE 7.12 Detail of the letter heading *Qawluh al-ḥaqq* set within a round foliate scroll border (29). DAB 10 O 8 (1) KL

Fatḥ al-wahhāb ʿalā sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭullāb tāʿlīq sayyidnā wa-mawlanā Shaykh mashāyikh al-islām Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī al-Nawāwī raḍī Allāh ʿanhu (fig. 7.13). Inscribed panels inscribed in reserved white against a black ground are certainly a feature of Sulawesi-style Qur'ans, but are also encountered in Aceh,[66] perhaps through Bugis influence. The volume also contains three decorative elements marking of the start of new chapters (*bāb*). In two instances the word *bāb* is embellished, once giving it a bird's beak, and in the third example a decorated roundel—reminiscent of division markers in Qur'an manuscripts—is placed alongside the start of a new *bāb*.

More unusual are three discoveries encountered loose between the pages of the volume. The first is a thin piece of paper which is clearly a template for a binding flap and fore-edge cover (fig. 7.14). The shape is unremarkable, being typical of full leather Islamic bindings with an "envelope" flap, such as those found on three manuscripts in this collection. What is of interest, though, are the patterns drawn in black ink on this template, which are typically Malay foliate and floral meander patterns, while the fore-edge strip has a plaited motif characteristic of Acehnese illumination. Full leather Islamic bindings from

66 Cf. Annabel Teh Gallop, "An Acehnese Style of Manuscript Illumination," *Archipel*, 2004, 68: 230.

FIGURE 7.13 *Fatḥ al-wahhāb bi-sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭullāb*, an abridgement by Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī of *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn* (2). DAB 10 N 2 KL, images 55–56

FIGURE 7.14 Template for a binding flap and foredge cover, found in (2). DAB 10 N 2 KL, image 586

Southeast Asia generally have a standard pan-Islamic pattern of adornment, with stamped frame bands, corner pieces, central almond-shaped medallions, and sometimes smaller foliate or floral motifs,[67] but painted decoration on bindings is almost never seen.

Two further illuminated elements are particularly intriguing. These are two small paper triangles, each made from a wide rectangular piece of paper exactly twice as wide as it is high, of which the two top corners have been turned down and folded, giving an isosceles triangle with a right-angled apex open along its long hypotenuse base. On one of these (A) the two corners are simply folded (fig. 7.15), but on the other (B) the two vertical edges have been glued together (fig. 7.16). Both items are beautifully illuminated with delicate foliate meander patterns, though A is coloured on one side only with monochrome decoration on the reverse, while B is coloured on both sides. B was found between the pages of the volume, but A was encountered slid snuggly around the corner of a page, leaving no doubt as to its purpose: as a bookmark. While in some Javanese palmleaf manuscripts a thin strip of palm may be knotted through the end-hole of a leaf as a place-indicator, almost no other paper bookmarks have ever been encountered before in manuscripts from the Malay world. A clue about provenance is that triangular corner pieces are a quintessential feature of Acehnese illumination, but they are hardly encountered as decorative elements in any other part of Islamic Southeast Asia.[68] Thus, although no colophons have been encountered in this volume, or any other paratexts indicating place of production, these decorative features combine to point strongly to Aceh as a likely home of this manuscript.

8 A Qur'an from Aceh: Reading the Hands

Aceh links are also evident in one of the two Qur'an manuscripts in the Selangor library (1). This is a complete and well-thumbed manuscript in one volume, which still retains its original full leather Islamic binding with flap, decorated with stamped medallions, corner pieces, and framebands. The text is written in black ink in a vigorous, confident hand, with red pause (*waqf*) marks, and with fifteen lines per page. Each page is set in a series of ruled text frames, in the following colours, from inside to out: red-black-yellow-red-black. Verse markers are black circles filled with yellow; *sura* headings are in red and are set in

67 Cf. M. Plomp, "Traditional Bookbindings from Indonesia. Materials and decorations," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 1993, 149(3): 571–592.

68 Gallop, "Achehnese Style," 204, 240.

FIGURE 7.15 Triangular bookmark A, found in (2), showing front and back. DAB 10 N 2 KL, image 253

FIGURE 7.16 Triangular bookmark B, found in (2), showing front and back. DAB 10 N 2 KL, image 220

rectangular frames. The first line of each *juz'* or thirtieth part of the Qur'an is written in red ink, but unusually, there is only one marginal *juz'* ornament in the whole volume, in an impressive sunburst design, at the start of *juz' 10*, in *Sūrat al-Anfāl* (Q 8:41). There are three pairs of double illuminated frames, at the beginning with the *Sūrat al- Fātiḥa* on the right-hand page and the beginning of *Sūrat al-Baqara* on the left (fig. 7.17); in the middle at the beginning the 16th *juz'* in *Sūrat al-Kahf* (Q 18:75); and at the end, enclosing *Sūrat al-Falaq* on the right-hand page and *Sūrat al-Nās* on the left.

Having noted above that the regional origin of an illuminated Southeast Asian Qur'an is often easily ascertained from the illuminated frames, unusually, this is not the case in this manuscript. Instead, it is the presence of a pair of illuminated frames at the textual midpoint of the Qur'an, at the start of *juz'* 16, which is a definite indication of Acehnese origin, for in no other region in Southeast Asia is this point of the Qur'an enhanced by decoration. Further confirmation of an Acehnese provenance is found in the binding. While the outer and inner covers are leather, the binding boards are made of plaited palm, and

FIGURE 7.17 Opening illuminated frames of the Aceh Qur'an (1). DAB 10 N 1 KL, images 17–18

between these and the outer leather cover are stuffed old paper scraps of letters and notes in Malay and Arabic. Some of these fragments bear the embossed outline of the decorative cartouches, indicating that the manuscript was bound before the leather covers were stamped with decorative devices. One of the fragments reads: *Syah Alam daulat Tuanku ampun beribu2 ampun … / pecel hadrat yang maha mulia Penghulu Kerkun Raja … / barang maklum kiranya ke bawah tapak duli hadrat … / yang maha mulia akan sembah …* ("King of the World, begging a thousand pardons of Your Majesty … / the supplicant to Your Majesty's presence is the Chief Royal Writer … / begging to inform beneath the soles of the exalted presence … / Your Majesty about the petition …"). The title *Kerkun* and the address for the ruler, *Syah Alam* (from the Persian *Shāh ʿĀlam*), are both strongly associated with Aceh.

Through codicological features, this manuscript in Deventer can be linked with four other Acehnese Qur'ans: two in Aceh, in the Museum Aceh (07–357) and in the Yayasan Ali Hasjmy,[69] and two in Europe, in Rotterdam at the Wereld-

69 Oman Fathurahman and Munawar Holil, *Katalog naskah Ali Hasjmy Aceh/ Catalogue*

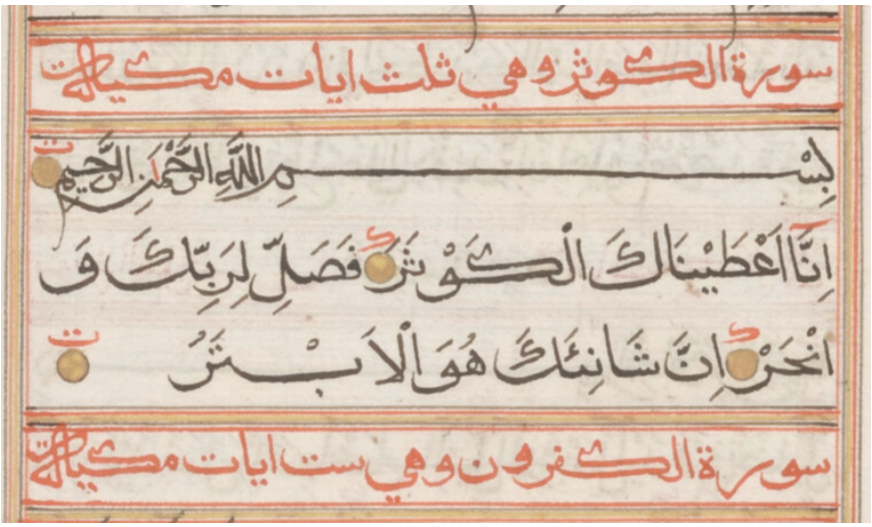


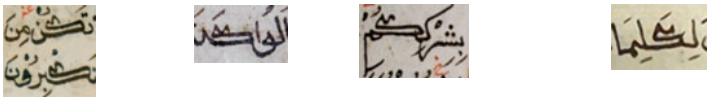
FIGURE 7.18 Detail from the Aceh Qur'an (1) showing the kink in the top arm of *kāf* in the words *kawshar* and *kafirūn*. DAB 10 N 1 KL, image 197

museum (WMR 2597) and in Vienna at the Weltmuseum Wien (18090).[70] All five Qur'ans are most clearly linked by the same distinctive hand, which can be seen most clearly in a comparison of certain letters, notably *kāf* in its *sayfi* form with a kink to its top "sword" stroke (figs. 7.18–19). Four of the five manuscripts also share identical pause markings in a tiny red hand; the Vienna manuscript, which is unfinished, does not have pause marks.

A similarly umbilical link between the marginal ornaments in all five manuscripts can be posited, even though there is only one such medallion in the Deventer Qur'an (figs. 7.20–7.21). The base structure of this ornament is always a series of concentric circles drawn in black ink with a compass-type aid, with three or four thick coloured bands alternating with thin reserved white borders. In the middle, the label of the particular textual division, whether *juz'* or parts thereof—*niṣf* or *ḥizb* (half), *rubuʿ* (quarter) and *thumun* (eighth)—or the letter *ʿayn* indicating *rukuʿ* or thematic partitions, is inscribed in floriated script reserved in white against a coloured ground, usually black or red, but sometimes blue or green. Delicate "petals" emanate from the perimeter of the

of Aceh manuscripts: Ali Hasjmy Collection (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2007), 9, no. 232/Q/02/YPAH/2005, also reproduced on front cover.

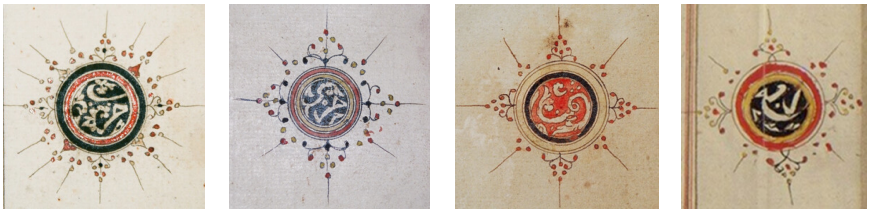
70 With thanks to Reinhard Blumauer of the Weltmuseum Wien for kindly providing photographs of this manuscript.



Museum Negeri Aceh 07–357	Yayasan Ali Hasjmy Aceh	Wereldmuseum Rotterdam WMR 2597	Weltmuseum Wien 18090

FIGURE 7.19 The same kink in the top arm of *kāf* in four other Aceh Qur'ans

FIGURE 7.20 Marginal *juz'* marker and text frames of red-black-yellow-red-black ink in the Aceh Qur'an (1). DAB 10 N 1 KL, image 197



Museum Negeri Aceh 07–357	Yayasan Ali Hasjmy Aceh	Wereldmuseum Rotterdam WMR 2597	Weltmuseum Wien 18090

FIGURE 7.21 Similar marginal ornaments in four other Aceh Qur'ans

circle, with floral buds interspersed with clusters of small dots, and from the apex of each darts a thin ray, conveying the impression of a floral sunburst. The "petals" are located at the four cardinal and midle points, and sometimes also in between.

Another distinctive feature which links all five Qur'ans is the text frames of red-black-yellow-red-black ink. It is sometimes in the smallest decorative features that regional artistic schools are found to be the most conservative, with all examples conforming to certain set patterns. In Aceh, the text frames in Qur'an manuscripts are almost invariably in one of two formations: red-black-red-black, or, less commonly, red-red-black, but in this group of Qur'ans an extra yellow line has been incorporated into the red-black-red-black colour scheme.

Acehnese Qur'an manuscripts almost never contain colophons with details of the name of the scribe or the place and date of copying, and so often the date of acquisition is the only firm clue to the dating of a particular manuscript. The Rotterdam Qur'an was said to have been captured in January 1877 during the Dutch attack on Lamnga in Aceh, and was donated to the museum in 1885 by one Wijnmalen.[71] This is the only one of the five Qur'ans in this group with a toponymical inscription, found at the top of the second page: *inilah Qur'an yang diwakafkan pada bandarsah Lam Badar*, "this is the Qur'an charitably endowed to the religious school of Lam Badar." The Qur'an now in Vienna is from the collection of František Czurda, a Czech doctor in the service of the Dutch army, and was also acquired at the battle of Lamnga in 1877 from the mosque school of Lambadak.[72] Czurda reported that the mosque and school (*bandarsah* in Malay or *meunasah* in Acehnese, from Arabic *madrasah*) at Lambada (its present-day designation) was a centre for "the training of priests" and home to a very valuable library (*sehr werthvolle Bibliothek zu Grunde*) containing many mathematical, medical and historical works (*sich in der Bibliothek dieser Moschee viele mathematische, arzneiwissenschaftliche und geschichtliche Werke befanden*), all of which was destroyed by fire in the Dutch attack, save for the few items he managed to salvage later.[73] While the Deventer Qur'an can be

71 This may possibly be Henri André Wijnmalen (7 April 1839–?), who was assigned to the 2nd battalion, and actively involved in the military operations on the "Noord-Oosterlinie" in Aceh in January 1877; with thanks to John Klein Nagervoort for this identification, and also for locating the toponyms Lamnga and Lambada.

72 F.A.J. Czurda, *Catalog mit Erklärungen der Etnografischen Privatsammlung des Dr F.A.J. Czurda in Postelberg* (*Böhmen*) (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1883), 169. I thank Mirjam Shatanawi for the references to Czurda.

73 Czurda, *Catalog*, 169–170; Philipp Hesser, "Scrapbook No. 49: Franz Czurda und die Geschichte einer Sammlung" (Mag. Phil. thesis, University of Vienna, 2011), 49–50.

firmly dated to before 1784, since we have posited that all five manuscripts are by the same hand, this implies that the two manuscripts captured at Lambada may have been over a century old when they were seized in 1877. Thus just as in the case of the Selangor library, which contained several relatively old manuscripts when it was captured, it appears that libraries in the Malay world may yet confound long-held negative preconceptions about the ability of books to survive long in tropical climes.

9 A Monumental Selangor Qur'an

The larger of the two Qur'an manuscripts in the Selangor library (28) is described in Scheidius's listing as: *Een overheerlijk schoon geschreven Arabische Alcoran in groot folio formaat. 11 Deelen*, ("An extremely beautifully written Arabic Qur'an, in large folio format. 11 volumes"). This Qur'an is indeed enormous, with each folio measuring 43.5 × 26.5 cm, of Dutch paper, watermarked "C & I Honig." The first volume (10 P 1 KL), with chapters 1–17 (*Sūrat al-Fātiḥa–Sūrat al-Isrā'*), is unbound, with quires out of order, some in a different hand, while the second volume (10 P 2 KL), containing chapters 18–114 (*Sūrat al-Kahf–Sūrat al-Nās*), is bound and textually complete.

Apart from a few notable exceptions from Banten, it is quite rare to encounter multi-volume Qur'an manuscripts from Southeast Asia. Only two other such Qur'ans planned in two volumes are known to the present writer: Rijkmuseum Volkenkunde in Leiden, 3600–453, comprising the second volume only, containing *Sūrat al-Kahf–Sūrat al-Nās*, from Bone, dated 1281 (1864/5 AD), and the second volume of a Qur'an offered for sale at Christie's in London in 2012, illuminated in a Sulawesi floral style, also containing *Sūrat al-Kahf–Sūrat al-Nās*.[74] Thus, the two-volume format might be seen as an indication of a Bugis scribal setting.

The completed portions of this Qur'an—comprising the whole of the second volume, and the first part of the first volume up to the middle of *Sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7:146)—in fact constitute one of the most remarkable and impressive Southeast Asian Qur'an manuscripts known. There are eleven lines per page, written in a monumental hand in black ink with a thick-nibbed pen, set within a series of six ruled frames (from inside to out) of red-black-black-thick

74 Christie's, "Art of the Islamic and Indian World," 4 October 2012, lot 285. https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/books-manuscripts/a-half-quran-probably-sulawesi-indonesia-l-5604082-details.aspx?from=salesummery&intObjectID=5604082; accessed November 21, 2023.

FIGURE 7.22 Opening pages of the Selangor Qur'an manuscript (28), with *Surat al-Fatihah* on the right-hand page and the beginning of *Sūrat al-Baqara* on the left-hand page, with wide margins originally designed to be filled with decorated frames. DAB 10 P 1 KL, images 19–20

yellow-black-black ink. Verses are marked with black circles coloured in yellow. *Sūra* headings are in red, often with decorative knotted *tā' marbūṭa*, set in rectangular frames of the same composition as the text frames, while above each framed *sūra* heading is another blank panel. The start of each *juz'* is indicated in a number of graphic ways: the end of the line of the last *juz'* is marked with an elaborate composite roundel created of between five or as many as eleven small intersecting circles similar to verse markers; the first line of the text of the new *juz'* is written in green ink; and a polychrome sunburst ornament coloured in red, green, yellow and black in placed in the margin. Smaller polychrome marginal medallions also mark parts of each *juz'*—*niṣf* (half), *rubuʿ* (quarter) and *thumn* (eighth)—as well as *ʿayn* for *ruku'*; all are inscribed with the appropriate label in white reserved against a black ground.

Even within this portion of the Qur'an, there are still parts which are clearly unfinished. The first and last double pages of text have very small text blocks measuring 11×8 cm, surrounded by very wide margins, which were clearly planned to have been filled with illuminated frames (fig. 7.22), and only nine

pages in the first volume have variant *qira'āt* readings inscribed in red and blue ink in the margin in intersecting diagonal lines (fig. 7.23). Most of the Qur'anic text has clearly been carefully checked and verified, because in several places corrections have been added in a tiny hand along the vertical outer edge of the page, while within the frames the erroneous text has successfully been erased and the correct version written on top (fig. 7.24). It was evidently planned that when the book was bound, the corrections written along the outer edges of the pages would be neatly trimmed off, and would thus no longer be visible.

The second part of the first volume (10 P 1 KL) is made up of a copy of the Qur'anic text in a completely different idiom: still using the same size of paper and 11 lines per page, it is written in a much more hurried hand, and with no decorative elements such as text frames or marginal ornaments. Even the verse markers are simply hand-drawn red loops around black dots, rather than the neat mechanically-drawn circles found in the first part and which are usually an omnipresent feature of most Southeast Asian Qur'ans. Nor does the text dovetail precisely: although the second part does start in the middle of the verse (Q 7:146) where the first part ends, it continues until the end of *juz'* 15 (Q 18:75), and is then followed by a number of quires containing earlier parts of the text (from Q 2:64–6:106).

While the incomplete nature of this manuscript could suggest an interruption of the production process due to the Dutch attack on Selangor in 1784, the first volume is in fact textually complete, and there are even additional quires covering (and hence duplicating) the earlier portions of the Qur'an. Another interpretation might be that this Qur'an was "completed" in Selangor by adding folios from a different manuscript, perhaps after the cessation of an overly ambitious (and expensive) earlier commission.

At present, the second volume, 10 P 2 KL, is the only manuscript in the Selangor library to have a full (rather than half) Harderwijk vellum binding, with the title inscribed in gold ink on the spine by Scheidius: *al-Qu'rān al-maktūb li-Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh*. The first volume, 10 P 1 KL, comprises a set of loose quires. In Scheidius's 1792 Harderwijk catalogue, the 30 items in the Selangor library are quite carefully and logically arranged, with a Qur'an at the top of the list, followed by the largest volumes in folio and large quarto sizes, and then moving down the list to smaller sizes. The three last items on his list are the Qur'an "in two volumes," a collection of loose sheets in Arabic (script), and a collection of pieces of paper and booklets in Bugis. In Van Braam's catalogue, too, the *Groot examplar van den Alcoran*, ("large copy of the Qur'an") is placed last on the list. The placement last on both lists—after a methodical listing of the codices in descending order of size—suggests that this Qur'an was most

FIGURE 7.23 Pages from the first volume of the monumental Selangor Qur'an manuscript (28), with variant readings in the margins. DAB 10 P 1 KL

FIGURE 7.24 Two pages from the second volume of the Selangor Qur'an (28), showing the beginning of *Surat al-Mū'minūn* (Q 23), with corrections made to the third and fourth verses according to the wording written in tiny letters vertically along the outer edge of the page. DAB 10 P 2 KL

likely delivered by Van Braam to Scheidius in an unfinished state, probably in loose quires. At a certain stage—perhaps after the compilation of the 1792 catalogue, but before he left for Leiden in 1793—Scheidius arranged for the binding of the second volume, textually complete and copied in a single hand.

10 So Whose library Was It, Anyway?

In the early 1950s, Petrus Voorhoeve visited Deventer to inspect the Selangor collection and typed up his notes on the Malay manuscripts as *De Maleise handschriften van de Athenaeum-bibliotheek te Deventer*,[75] prefaced by some rather sceptical comments:

> They all belong to the collection listed in the 1832 catalogue under no. 1834, which was seized in 1784 by J.P. van Braam at the capture of Selangore, at the home of a Mohammedan chief priest, or so says Scheidius. Perhaps Van Braam's papers, which were donated to the State Archives by the descendants, contain more information about this. One of the Malay letters in the 1834 collection is indeed addressed to someone at Selangore. It is strange, however, that most of the manuscripts in the collections look so unused, while the majority are written on European paper. It looks more like the collection of a European who had manuscripts copied for himself than a library of a Muslim theologian. Possibly the pious man kept a bookshop, and it was more his trading stock than his precious own little library that he defended with fire and sword, according to the story of Scheidius.[76]

75 Voorhoeve, *De Maleise handschriften*.

76 *"Ze behoren alle tot de collectie, in de catalogus van 1832 vermeld onder no. 1834, welke in 1784 is buitgemaakt door J.P. van Braam bij de inname van Selangore, ten huize van een Mohammedaansen hoofdpriester, althans zo zegt Scheidius. Wellicht is in de papieren van Van Braam, die door de nakomelingen aan het Rijksarchief zijn geschonken, hierover nog iets meer te vinden. Een van de Maleise brieven in het pak 1834 in inderdaad aan iemand te Selangore geaddresseerd. Vreemd doet het echter aan dat de meeste handschriften uit de collecties er zo ongebruikt uitzien, terwijl het merendeel op Europees papier geschreven is. Het lijkt meer op de collectie van een Europeaan, die handschriften voor zich liet afschrijven, dan op een bibliotheek van een moslims godgeleerde. Mogelijk hield de vrome man er een boekhandeltje op na en was het meer zijn handelsvoorraad dan zijn dierbare eigen boekerijtje dat hij, naar verluid van het verhaal van Scheidius, te vuur en te zwaard verdedigde."* Voorhoeve, *De Maleise handschriften*, 1.

In 1958, Voorhoeve received a letter from M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz informing him that the Van Braam papers in the Algemeen Rijksarchief[77] contained some original Malay letters. Presumably following a visit to the Rijksarchief to inspect the papers, Voorhoeve jotted down on this letter a quote from a volume (no. 59) of Van Braam's journal: "A large packet of Malay writings and books taken by Lt. Serrurier and Mr. Kilian from a vessel. It concerns Acehnese vessels."[78] And so while preparing for another visit to Deventer, on 29 April 1986, Voorhoeve wrote to the curator at the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Ina Kok:

> My notes also contain a letter from Mrs. Meilink Roelofsz about Van Braam's collection in the National Archives. As a result, I went to The Hague to look and found a note by Van Braam about Malay manuscripts "from an (Acehnese) vessel." Might two collections of manuscripts have been seized, one ashore and one from a ship? Or do the Deventer manuscripts come from the ship and Van Braam later told Scheidius in a somewhat romanticized way about what he remembered? So far, my research has not been able to establish this.[79]

Following his subsequent visit to Deventer on 6 May 1986, Voorhoeve substantially revised his first impression of over thirty years earlier, but could not shake off his suspicion of an Acehnese origin for part of the collection, as he reported to Ms Kok on 21 May 1986:

> My comment in the description of the Malay MSS. that the collection looks more like that of a European Orientalist than that of a "Mahomedan Chief Priest" is certainly incorrect. The manuscripts are so different in nature that I now think that the Van Braam collection consists of two

77 Now the Nationaal Archief (NA), Van Braam papers, 1.10.11.02.

78 *"Een grosspak Maleysche geschriften en boeken door Lt. Serrurier en de heer Kilian uit een vaartuig geligt.'t Gaat over Atjehse vaartuigen."* NA 1.10.11.02, 59, "Particuliere aanteeekeningen" van Van Braam, 11 July–20 August 1784; with thanks to S. Koolhof for assistance in reading Voorhoeve's note.

79 *"Bij mijn aantekeningen ligt ook een brief van mevrouw Meilink Roelofs over de collectie van Braam in het Algemeen Rijksarchief. Naar aanleiding daarvan ben ik toen in Den Haag gaan kijken en vond een aantekening van Van Braam over Maleise handschriften 'uit een (Atjehs) vaartuig geligt.' Zouden er twee collecties handschriften buitgemaakt zijn, een aan de wal en een uit een schip? Of komen de Deventer handschriften uit het schip en heeft Van Braam later aan Scheidius de oorsprong uit zijn herinnering wat geromantiseerd verteld? Zover ben ik met mijn onderzoek nooit gekomen."* P. Voorhoeve, Letter from P. Voorhoeve to Mevrouw Kok, Barchem, 29 April 1986.

> parts: a library of a literate Muslim scholar, seized on shore, in which are carefully preserved manuscripts partly written in Arabic, and a stack of small books and letters, taken by Van Braam's subordinates from an Acehnese prahu, which possibly came from Borneo, because some letters originated there. In two Arabic manuscripts: (10 M 14 and one of which I did not mark the number) I saw an owner's seal, which I could not decipher, but which someone with better eyes and more practice than I could read. Maybe that would show the name of the learned library owner.[80]

The question which thus needs careful consideration is whether the Malay library now held in the Deventer Athenaeumbibliotheek consists solely of the library of Tengku Sayid Jafar, seized during the capture of Kuala Selangor by Van Braam's forces in 1784, or comprises two separate parts, namely the collection of Tengku Sayid Jafar and the "large packet of Malay writings and books taken by Lt. Serrurier and Mr. Kilian" from an (Acehnese) vessel. If the latter scenario is correct, it is most likely that this "large packet" constitutes the 44 items in the Deventer Athenaeumbibliotheek now gathered together under the shelfmark 10 O 8 KL (1–45), previously listed under the old inventory numbers 1834.XXIX–XXX, especially since Van Braam's original catalogue only listed 28 items. However, regarding the supposedly "Acehnese" origin of the vessel, if the vessel mentioned in Van Braam's journal can be identified as the ship in the Selangor river carrying "Acehnese from the coast of Sumatra" which was entered by Kilian and an officer as described in Broersma's account above, since Broersma also descibed Raja Muhammad Ali of Siak as "Atchian" or Acehnese, his use of this geo-ethnic term was clearly unreliable. What is clear is that this vessel was part of the retreating Selangor fleet, and was encountered up the Selangor river, not at sea. Moreover, compared to the clear Acehnese origin of certain items from Tengku Sayid Jafar's library (1, 18) there is no evidence of links to Aceh in any part of 10 O 8 KL; conversely, there is almost no discernible

80 *"Mijn opmerking in de beschrijving van de Maleise hss. dat de collectie meer lijkt op die van een Europese orientalist dan van een 'Mahomedaanscehn* [*sic*] *Hoofdpriester' is zeker onjuist. De handschriften zijn zo verschillend van aard, dat ik nu denk dat de collectie Van Braam uit twee delen bestaat: een aan de wal buitgemaakte bibliotheek van een geletterde moslimse wetgeleerde, waarin zorgvuldig bewaarde, ten dele oude in Arabië geschreven handschriften, en een stapeltje kleine boekjes en brieven, door Van Braams ondergeschikten uit een Atjehse prauw gehaald, die mogelijk van Borneo kwam, want enkele brieven zijn van daar afkomstig. In twee Arabische handschrifte:* (*10 M 14 en een waarvan ik het nummer niet aantekende*) *zag ik een eigenaarsstempel, dat ik niet ontcijferen kon, maar dat door iemand met betere ogen en meer oefening dan ik wel te lezen is. Dat zou misschien de naam van de geleerde bibliotheekbezitter kunnen zijn*." Voorhoeve, Letter to Mevrouw Kok.

difference in content or form between 10 O 8 KL and the Selangor manuscripts in the main part of the collection, with notes in Bugis found throughout. Thus, even if the manuscripts in 10 O 8 did not form part of Tengku Sayid Jafar's library—and the possibility remains open that they did, for as noted above one letter in this collection (53) is addressed to *Tuan Sayid Hasan* in *Selau'r*, perhaps Sayid Jafar's father—the collection almost certainly originates from Selangor rather than Aceh or Borneo, as surmised by Voorhoeve.

In view of Petrus Voorhoeve's great expertise not only in Indonesian manuscripts in various languages but also in Arabic,[81] the fact that he appeared so perplexed by the variegated nature of the Selangor collection should probably best be interpreted as a reflection of how, until recently, almost no thought was given to how libraries were compiled in the Malay world, or to the social lives of books and their peregrinations. Voorhoeve was particularly dubious about how the strong Acehnese contingent within the collection could be reconciled with a Selangor origin. But while in the late eighteenth century Selangor could still be characterised as a frontier state which had only just evolved into a sultanate in the previous generation, Aceh had been a centre of Islamic scholarship for centuries, and it is entirely plausible that books could be sourced, or even commissioned, from Aceh for a patron in Selangor. Relations between Selangor and Aceh around this time were very close: During the Dutch blockade of Selangor in 1785, the Acehnese had sent help, and in 1788 Selangor returned the favour when Aceh declared war on Pedir. Raja Nala, the Yang Dipertuan Muda, was sent with sixteen ships to support the sultan of Aceh, but died there and was buried in Aceh.[82] In short, there are no strong grounds for questioning the Selangor origins of the whole of the Deventer collection.

Despite the diverse nature of the Selangor library, the contents demonstrate certain preoccupations, with a particular emphasis on jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, and devotional poetry, alongside, as in all parts of the Malay world, a strong interest in divination and supplications for particular purposes. Some volumes certainly came from considerable distances, while others are more evidently local products. Interestingly, the only manuscript in the collection that we can firmly assign to production within Selangor itself is the great, unfinished Qur'an, conceived on what was perhaps a more grandiose bibliographical scale than had previously been seen in the region.

81 Cf. A. Teeuw and E. Uhlenbeck, "In memoriam Dr. Petrus Voorhoeve 22 December 1899–9 February 1996," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 1997, 153 (3): 311–317.

82 Hooker and Andaya, *Precious Gift*, 379.

Sayid Jafar was a statesman in the innermost circles of power in Selangor, as well as a distinguished military commander of notable valour. By virtue of his Hadrami Bā ʿAlawī lineage, he was accorded the respect and high status enjoyed by all *sayyids* in the Malay world,[83] but from his maternal, Minangkabau side he also bore the royal title of *Tengku* (Prince) befitting a grandson of Raja Kecil, first sultan of Siak. Even within aristocratic Siak circles, Sayid Jafar was clearly of high enough status to enter into marriage with Tengku Embung, who was from the most prestigious line of Raja Kecil's descendants, through his wife Tengku Mandak, daughter of the Bendahara Sultan of Johor.[84] In the Malay chronicles—whether the Bugis-slanted *Tuḥfat al-nafis*, or the Malay *Hikayat Johor*, or the Minangkabau *Hikayat Siak*—Sayid Jafar is just one of a large cast of high-born court personalities, so many of whom were *sayyid*s that this august bloodline in itself did not necessarily imply superior ethical or moral qualities.[85] So it is of particular interest that to the Dutch, even in the heat of the battle, Sayid Jafar's foremost appellation was that of "Arab priest" and "Mahomedan Chief Priest," perhaps reflecting the religious and intellectual reputation he enjoyed at that time, which has not otherwise been preserved in Malay sources.

Mulaika Hijjas recently asked provocatively, "Where are all the Malay royal libraries?" In contrast to the well-documented British attacks on the palace libraries of Yogyakarta, Bone and Palembang, the devastating impact on local manuscript culture of the Dutch war on Aceh and a similar American military campaign in Mindanao, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries none of the royal courts of the Malay peninsula suffered colonial armed incursions, and yet there are no significant royal Malay libraries which are known to survive today. Instead, throughout the 1960s and in subsequent decades, a steady trickle of literary manuscripts appear to have made their way from royal Malay households into the library of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, seemingly bearing witness to the gradual dismantling of court libraries due to social changes from within, rather than owing to brute force from without.[86]

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83 Cf. R.O. Winstedt, "The Hadramaut Saiyids of Perak and Siak," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Sept. 1918, (79): 49–54.

84 Goudie, *Syair Perang Siak*, 42.

85 In a Dutch report on Selangor immediately after the conquest, Sayid Ali was said to be an opium addict, and his brother Sayid Abdul Rahman a gambling addict. See Barnard, *Multiple Centres*, 146.

86 Mulaika Hijjas, 2020, "Where Are All the Malay Royal Libraries?" https://www.malayheritage.gov.sg/en/publication/essays/where-are-all-the-malay-royal-libraries. 2020, accessed November 21, 2023.

This foregrounds the conundrum of the terrible beauty of plundered collections, which can be likened to zoological specimens preserved in formaldehyde, whereby the deliberate killing of a living organism offers a unique opportunity for scientific analysis and insights which could not have been gained from a less invasive study of specimens which have died a natural death and thence slowly decayed. Thus collections of war booty manuscripts such as that captured by Van Braam in Selangor in 1784 offer a vivid snapshot of a manuscript culture at a certain moment in time, while undoubtedly bearing the heavy burden of the intellectual damage wrought by the uprooting of texts from their natural environment. In the case of literary compositions, in some cases the impact was fatal, as when unique texts were removed from circulation, thus extinguishing any possible chance for further influence or propagation, but this danger may not be so marked in the case of religious texts which often abound in multiple copies. Tengku Sayid Jafar's manuscripts are uniquely precious in constituting the only pre-modern library known to have survived from the Malay peninsula, and in offering a glimpse of the books that were copied, read, shared, and valued in Selangor in the eighteenth century.

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
1	1834.I	10 N 1 KL	Qur'an, from Aceh. Three pairs of illuminated double frames in red, yellow, green and black; text frames of red-black-thick yellow-red-black; verse markers are black circles coloured in yellow; *sūra* headings in red ink, set in ruled frames; first line of each *juz'* written in red ink; just one marginal *juz'* and one *thumn* ornament, with a few other unfinished circles. 30 × 20.5 cm; 268 ff.; European paper, watermarked with floriated shield; full leather binding with flap, with stamped ornaments and frame bands and traces of yellow pigment, and plaited palm inner boards stuffed with many old documents, one of which indicates a provenance in Aceh.	Arabic	V 277; BF 59
2	1834.II	10 N 2 KL	Two manuals of Shafi'i law and a primer on logic, at the beginning some notes on hadith. *Fatḥ al-wahhāb bi-sharḥ Minhāj al-ṭullāb*, an abridgement by Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī of *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn*; the rhymed *Safwat al-zubad* by al-Ramlī; *al-Muṭṭala'* by al-Anṣārī, a commentary on *al-Īsāghūjī* by Aṭir al-Dīn al-Abharī. 30.5 × 22 cm; 268 ff.; fine white European paper, various watermarks: crowned shield with 'A B' below, 'A L', 'G P', picador with 'A G C'; 19 lines per page, sometimes varying; some decorated chapter (*bāb*)	Arabic	G 2756; V 443, 226, 407, 138

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
			headings, and illuminated roundel with title; half vellum binding. Many tipped in and loose notes within the volume, including two illuminated triangular bookmarks, and a template for a decorated binding spine and flap.		
3	1834.III	10 M 1 KL	*al-Iqnāʿ fī ḥall alfāẓ Abī Shujāʿ* by Muḥammad al-Shirbīnī, a commentary on *al-Taqrīb fī l-fiqh* by Abū Shujā, a legal handbook. Dated at the end 15 Rabīʿ II, 1093 (23 April 1682), with owner's name ḤajjīAḥmad. 501 ff.; European paper; 25 lines per page, in light brown ink; half vellum binding.	Arabic	G 2756; V 368
4	1834.IV	10 M 2 KL	Commentary on *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn* by Yaḥyā al-Nawawī, a standard textbook of Shafiʿi law. Dated *Dhū l-ḥijja* 1167 (September–October 1754) in Mecca, by the scribe Muḥammad Ṭalḥat b. ʿAbd al-Raʿūf al-Watuq al-Būqisī, i.e. the Bugis (whose signature also appears on the title page), al-Shāfiʿī, al-Ashaʿrī, al-Shaṭṭārī. Ca. 500 ff.; European paper; 21 lines per page, very neat small hand in black and red ink; half vellum binding.	Arabic	G 2757; V 225
5	1834.V	10 M 3 KL	Abridgement of *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, an Arabic dictionary by Muḥammad al-Fīrūzābādī. More than 400 ff.; European paper; 21 lines per page; half vellum binding.	Arabic	G 2745; V 262
6	1834.VI	10 M 4 KL	Gloss by Yāsīn al-Ḥimsī on *Mujīb al-nidā ilā sharḥ Qaṭr al-nadā* by ʿAbd Allāh al-Fākihī, on Arabic grammar. Ca. 460 ff.; European paper; 23 lines per page; half vellum binding. Owners' names on first page ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Jāwī al-Ashī, and Ḥajjī Muḥammad ibn Ḥajjī Aḥmad Jāwī.	Arabic	G 2743; V 271; VM; BF 57
7	1834.VII	10 M 5 KL	Gloss by Aḥmad al-Sunbāṭī on *Minhāj al-ṭalibīn* and al-Maḥallī's commentary. On law. Dated 1029 (1619/20). 180 ff.; 31 lines per page; densely written in black ink with red rubrication; half vellum binding. Title page has an inscription naming Ḥasan b. Rahmad b. Abī Bakr b. ʿAqīl, and further notes with (erased) names including Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr … Bā ʿAlawī, dated 1086 (1675/6).	Arabic	G 2758; V 225
8	1834.VIII	10 M 6 KL	*Maʿrifat al-islām wal-īmān*, a theological work, and a treatise on the *shahāda*, both with interlinear Malay translation. 23.5×15.5 cm; 22 ff.; thin wove paper, pages much soiled; varying number of lines per page; half vellum binding, but evidence of older binding inside.	Arabic, Malay	G 2763; V 195, 323; I 936
9	1834.IX	10 M 7 KL	*al-Taqrīb fī l-fiqh* by Abū Shujā, on law; *khuṭba*, a sermon. 21.5×16 cm; 38 ff.; European laid paper; 17 lines per page, in a small, neat hand; half vellum binding. At the beginning a prayer on drinking *zamzam* water (*inilah dibaca tatkala sudah minum air zamzam*).	Arabic, Malay	G 2755; V 368, 163; I 936

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
10	1834.X	10 M 8 KL	*Mawlid sharaf al-anām*, anonymous devotional work on the Prophet Muḥammad, with interlinear translation in Makasar in Jawi script; at the end some prayers and hadith. 19.8×15.5 cm; 76 ff.; European paper; 5 lines per page; half vellum binding.	Arabic, Makasar	G 2768; V 208; I 937
11	1834.XI	10 M 9 KL	*al-Fawā'id al-Shinshawriyya* by ʿAbd Allāh al-Shinshawrī, a commentary on the law of inheritance. Dated 2 *Jumāda al-awwal* 1123 (18 June 1711), owner and copyist Ibn ʿAbd Allāh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qadīrī. 21×16 cm; 41 ff.; European paper; 21 lines per page; half vellum binding.	Arabic	G 2760; V 187
12	1834.XII	10 M 10 KL	Prayers (*duʿā'*); *Rukun haji*, a treatise on the pilgrimage; *Fardu syahadat*, a treatise on the *shahāda*; *Bidāyat al-mubtadī bi-faḍl Allāh al-muhdī*, a legal work (*fiqh*), ends abruptly. 19.7×15.5 cm; 67 ff.; European paper; 13 lines per page; half vellum binding.	Arabic, Malay	G 2772; V 67: I 937
13	1834.XIII	10 M 11 KL	*Mawlid sharaf al-anām*, with some interlinear Malay translations. 20×15.5 cm; 37 ff.; European paper, watermarked 'A S', 'A N'; 11 lines per page; pages badly soiled; half vellum binding.	Arabic, Malay	G 2770; V 208; I 937
14	1834.XIV	10 M 12 KL	A collection of works on Arabic grammar: *al-Taṣrīf al-ʿIzzī* by ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Zanjānī (ff. 3^{v}–18^{r}); *al-Muqaddima al-Ajurrūmiyya* by Ibn Ajurrūm; *Kitāb al-ʿAwāmil al-miʾa* by ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī; followed by a commentary (ff. 41^{v}–61^{v}); *Muqadimma fī ʿilm al-ʿarabiyya* (*mutammima*) *li-masāʾil al-Jurrūmiyya* by Muḥammad al-Ruʿainī (ff. 62^{v}–103^{r}); *Mukhtaṣar fī ʿilm al-naḥw*, anon., incomplete at end (ff. 103^{v}–128^{v}). 128 ff.; Javanese paper (*dluwang*); varying number of lines per page; half vellum binding.	Arabic	G 2744; V 375, 236, 30, 31, 237, 229
15	1834.XV	10 M 13 KL	*al-Wāfiya fī sharḥ al-Kāfiya* by Rukn al-Dīn al-Astarābādī, a commentary on Arabic grammar. Dated early Shawwāl 1099 (July–August 1688). 22.5×13.5 cm; 154 ff.; decorated double headpiece in red, yellow, green and black with inscription panel: *wa-bihi nastaʿīn hādhā kitāb naḥw*; text partly in double-ruled red text frames, 21 lines per page; half vellum binding. On the flyleaf a prayer for al-Sayyid Ḥusayn b. Shaykh Bā ʿAlawī; on the title page an ownership inscription of ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. ʿAbd al-Shukūr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Batāwī, and a small oval seal including the name *Ḥusayn* (cat. 1314, #1632); in the middle of the volume is a different seal impression with the name *Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn* (cat. 1315, #1633)	Arabic	G 2741; V 146; Gallop, "Malay Seals," 446

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
16	1834.XVI	10 M 14 KL	*al-Fawā'id al-Wāfiya fī ḥall mushkilāt al-Kāfiya* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, on Arabic grammar. Dated Shaʿbān 1011 (January–February 1603). 19×11.5 cm; 214 ff.; burnished paper; 21 lines per page, in double-ruled red text frames; half vellum binding. On the last page are four impressions of an octagonal seal in the name of *Muḥammad b. Shāban* (cat. 1316, #1634).	Arabic	G 2742; V 147; Gallop, "Malay Seals," 446
17	1834.XVII	10 M 15 KL	*Mawlid sharaf al-anām*, with notes in Bugis on first and last pages. 35 ff.; 9 lines per page; half vellum binding, very soiled first and last pages.	Arabic, Bugis	G 2769; V 207
18	1834.XVIII	10 M 16 KL	Seven short theological texts: i) *Uṣūl al-Ṣafārī*, answers to theological questions by Ibrāhīm al-Ṣaffār (ff. 1–13^{v}), colophon on f. 13^{v} is dated Rabīʿ al-Thānī 1090 (May–June 1679) and names the copyist as *Encik Muʿallim* (*m-ʿ-l-m*, in Malay *Mualim* or *Malim*); ii) *Kitāb fī ʿaqīda ahl al-sunna*, anon., dated 1090 (ff. 14^{v}–23^{v}); iii) *Qawāʿid al-fawāʾid fīmā lā budda min al-ʿaqāʾid*, anon., dated 1090 (ff. 24^{v}–32^{r}); iv) *al-Risāla al-mukhtaṣara fī bidāyat al-ʿaqīda al-sunniyya*, anon., dated 1090 (ff. 32^{v}–37^{r}); v) a short treatise on the *shahāda* (ff. 37^{v}–44^{v}); vi) anon. commentary on *Bayān al-taṣdīq*, on the fundamental tenets of the faith (ff. 45^{v}–105^{r}), colophon on f. 105^{r} is partly in Malay, also copied by *Encik Mualim peranakan Minangkabau*, and dated 29 Rajab 1090 (5 September 1679) in the reign of the second queen of Aceh, *Sultan Zakiatuddin Inayat Syah berdaulat ẓill Allāh fī l-ʿālam*; (vii) anon. explanatory notes on *al-Sittūn masʾala fī l-fiqh* of Abū al-ʿAbbas al-Zāhid, ends abruptly. 20.5×12 cm; 124 ff., wormholed paper; half vellum binding. Initials on first and last page: *J.P.v.B.*	Arabic	G 2762; V 453, 19, 272, 309, 453, 48, 342
19	1834.XIX	10 M 17 KL	*Kutika lima*, a divination table; prayers (*duʿāʾ*); a text in Bugis. At the end is a Malay recipe for sexual prowess (*ilmu tikam*), and a note about a debt from *Panglima* to *Towkay*. 20×13 cm; 16 ff.; European paper; half vellum binding.	Arabic, Malay, Bugis	G 2771; V 67; I 938
20	1834.XX	10 M 18 KL	*Dalāʾil al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār* by Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī; devotional work. 19×14 cm; 72 ff.; European paper; 11 lines per page; decorated single headpiece and esoteric table at start of text, in yellow and black; on the last pages are notes in Bugis and Malay, and esoteric formulae in Arabic letters and drawings.	Arabic, Bugis, Malay	G 2765; V 56
21	1834.XXI	10 O 1 KL	*Kitāb al-ḥarf fī maʿrifat al-marīḍ*, on the diagnosis of disease through the magic virtues of the letters of the alphabet, dated 1173 (1759/60) (ff. 2^{v}–29^{v}); *Kitāb fī maʿrifat ḥāl al-marīḍ* (ff. 29^{v}–35^{r}); *Dhikr ḥujub al-kawākib al-sabʿa*	Arabic	G 2751; V 109, 194, 60

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
			al-dā'ira fī l-ayyām al-sabʿa (ff. 35ʳ–42ʳ). 42 ff.; European paper; 15 lines per page; one loose piece of paper with notes.		
22	1834.XXII	10 O 2 KL	One line in Bugis; prayers (*duʿā'*) in Arabic and Malay. 17.5×11 cm; 15 ff.; European paper, watermarked; 11 lines per page; half vellum binding.	Arabic, Malay, Bugis	G 2773; V 67; I 938
23	1834.XXIII	10 O 3 KL	A collection of tracts in Malay: *Martabat tujuh*; *Beberapa patah kata segala arif yang beroleh marifat yang sempurna*; *Bermula tajalli Allah taala*; *Risalah pada menyatakan kenyataan amal pada syariat dan tarikat dan hakikat dan marifat*; treatise on the letters of the name *Muḥammad*; *Ḥiṣn al-qārī'*, treatise on *tajwīd*; *Syarah khatim*. 16.3×12.5 cm; 15 ff.; European paper; varying number of lines per page; half vellum binding.	Malay, Arabic	G 2764; I 938
24	1834.XXIV	10 O 4 KL	Questions and answers on Islam and faith in Malay; *Jalan mengenal Ḥaqq taʿālā*; sayings of Abū Bakr, in Arabic with Malay explanations; on the elements of the *shahāda*; prayers (*duʿā'*); Malay vocabulary with equivalents in an unidentified language, eg. *kapala—tal* (ta-l); *leher—kalta* (*ka-l-t-a'*); *bahu—warram* (wa-rra-m). 16×10.5 cm; 40 ff.; European paper, watermarked; varying number of lines per page; decorated black ink tailpiece around colophon, dated Selasa 28 Rajab (no year), scribe named as ʿAbd al-Ghanī; original beige cardboard binding with flap, perhaps made of *dluwang*.	Arabic, Malay	G 2775; V 67; I 939
25	1834. XXV	10 O 5 KL	*Munabbihāt ʿalā al-istiʿdād li-yawm al-maʿād*, attributed to Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, on hadith; *Dalā'il al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār* by al-Jazūlī, with drawings of the three tombs in red and black. 15.5×11 cm; 95 ff.; European paper; varying number of lines per page, some with interlinear Malay translation; half vellum binding.	Arabic, Malay	G 2766; V 233, 56; I 940
26	1834.XXVI	10 O 6 KL	*Manāsik al-ḥajj*, in Javanese; *Nashr al-maḥāsin al-ʿaliyya fī faḍl al-mashāyikh ūlī al-maqāmāt al-ʿaliyya* by ʿAbd Allāh al-Yāfiʿī, a short abstract with Malay interlinear translation (ff. 38ʳ–40ʳ); *Silsilah Shaṭṭāriyyah*, VM: similar to that found in Rinkes; no. 26: Najmuddin of Karang; no. 27: Mas Imam Nur Muhammad of Karang; no. 28: Muhammad Rajuddin *di Rum negerinya di Cindai*[*?*] *nama kampungnya* (also the owner of this MS); a collection of Arabic words and phrases with Javanese translation, and Arabic proverbs (ff. 48ᵛ–57ᵛ). Owner named as Muḥammad Rāja al-Dīn *fī buldat rūm jāwī*. 13.5×10.5 cm; 62 ff.; European paper, watermarked; 4–7 lines per page; original plain dark brown pasted paper binding with flap.	Arabic, Malay, Javanese	G 2761; V 250, 417; VM; I 940; BF 16

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
27	1834.XXVII	10 O 7 KL	*Dalā'il al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār* by al-Jazūlī; incomplete. 41 ff.; European paper, with many blank pages, very small; 7 lines per page; with drawings of the three tombs in orange and black.	Arabic	G 2767; V 56; BF 16
28	1834.XXVIII	10 P 1 KL	Qur'an; vol. 1 of a two-volume Qur'an, containing *S. al-Fātiḥa–S. al-Isrā'* (Q 1–17); incomplete, and with some repetitions of content in two different hands. 43.5 × 26.5 cm; Dutch paper, watermarked "C & I Honig"; 11 lines per page. The first half, up till the middle of S. al-A'rāf (Q 1–7), by scribe A, is complete, in black ink in a very large hand, written with a wide nib; text frames of *b-y-b-b-r*; *aya* markers of black circles coloured in yellow; *sūra* headings in red ink; first line of each *juz'* written in green ink; illuminated marginal ornaments for *juz'*, *rubu'*, *thumn* and *'ayn*; some marginal *qira'āt* annotations. Initial pages with small text block (11 × 8 cm) and wide margins. The second half is incomplete, alternately in hands A and B, with no text frames or ornaments. This volume is unbound and in loose quires.	Arabic	V 277
		10 P 2 KL	Qur'an; vol. 2 of a two-volume Qur'an, containing *S. al-Kahf–S. al-Nās* (Q 18–114). 43.5 × 26.5 cm; Dutch paper, watermarked "C & I Honig"; 11 lines per page, in black ink in a very large hand (by scribe A), written with a wide nib; text frames of *b-y-b-b-r*; *aya* markers of black circles coloured in yellow; *sūra* headings in red ink; first line of each *juz'* written in green ink; illuminated marginal ornaments for *juz'*, *rubu'*, *thumn* and *'ayn*; only one page (end of Q 49, *S. al-Hujurāt*) with marginal *qira'āt* annotations. Initial and final pages with small text block (11 × 8 cm) and wide margins. Full vellum binding.	Arabic	V 277
29–72	1834.XXIX, XXX		[*A collection of 46 items described in detail below.*]	Arabic, Malay, Bugis	G 2776; I 941–942
29	1	10 O 8 (1) KL	Opening line of a letter from We Kede[?] to Puanna Opu, on a sheet of paper with various sketches of the letter heading *Qawluh al-ḥaqq*, with one fine example in a decorated roundel with foliate motifs. 1 f., European paper.	Bugis, Arabic	CK
30	2	10 O 8 (2) KL	Prayers (*du'ā'*), in Malay in Bugis script. 1 f., European paper.	Malay, Bugis	CK
31	3	10 O 8 (3) KL	An amulet (*jima' paremma*) used to send or keep someone asleep. 1 f., European paper.	Bugis, Arabic	CK
32	4	10 O 8 (4) KL	*Niat* formula in Arabic, with Malay interlinear translation. 1 f.; European paper (watermark icon visible), 4 lines.	Arabic, Malay	

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
33	5	10 O 8 (5) KL	Mystical diagram in the form of a square made out of the magical word *budūḥ*, with the names of the four caliphs, four archangels, and Maʿrūf al-Karkhī at each corner. 1 f., 35×22 cm; Dutch paper, watermarked "Sebille van Ketel & Wassen Bergh."	Arabic	Gallop 2013: 193; BF 17
34	6	10 O 8 (6) KL	Prayers (*duʿā'*) for different occasions. 1 long thin f., European paper.	Bugis	CK
35	7	10 O 8 (7) KL	Prayers (*duʿā'*) and *obatas* in Malay in Bugis script, medicinal formulae: *inila*(*h*) *uba*(*t*) … 1 f., European paper.	Malay, Bugis	CK
36	8	10 O 8 (8) KL	First words to address a woman with whom one is in love. 1 f., European? paper; 6 lines of text in Bugis script.	Bugis	CK
37	9	10 O 8 (9) KL	Schematic pyramidal table for the division of inheritances. 1 f., European paper; in red, blue, and black ink.	Arabic	V 446
38	10	10 O 8 (10) KL	Prayers linked to rice cultivation, with formulae to protect against various pests, eg. pigs, worms, birds, etc. 1 f. of European paper, made up of two sheets of paper stuck together vertically; 29 lines of text in Bugis script.	Bugis	
39	11	10 O 8 (11) KL	Prayers (*duʿā'*) to be uttered during ablutions. 3 ff., European paper; stab-sewn binding. 8 lines of text on f. 1^{v} only, in black and red ink. *Yā kabīkaj* invocation on back cover.	Bugis	CK
40	12	10 O 8 (12) KL	A large amulet (*azimat*), in the form of a mystical drawing in red and black, with Malay text invoking iron (*besi*). 1 f., European paper.	Malay, Arabic	
41	13	10 O 8 (13) KL	Prayers (*duʿā'*), and appeals to the Beautiful Names of God, with Latin squares of the Names *laṭīf* and *shadīd*. 1 f., European paper.	Arabic	V (67)
42	14	10 O 8 (14) KL	Letter from Kak Cicah in Palembang to *paduka adinda* Tuan Sayid Husain Bani Yahya, reporting the death of Kak Wan, mother of Sulaiman, and discussing debts. Names mentioned: Zainah, Sayid Uthman, Syarifah Fatimah, Nyai Emas, Sayid Ahmad. 1 f., European paper; written densely on one side only.	Malay	I 941
43	15	10 O 8 (15) KL	Letter from *paduka bonda* Nyai Dimas of Banjar to her son *paduka anakda* Daing Salipu, as his *saudara* Pangiran Arya and Pangiran Hasan are asking for repayment of a debt of 300 *rial*; heading *Yā Qāḍī al-ḥājat*. 28×21 cm; 1 f., European paper.	Malay	
44	16	10 O 8 (16) KL	Note of a debt by Daing Syalipu to Dua Labu and Tuan Sayid Hamzah of 430 *rial*, dated Monday 4 Zulkaidah 1195 (22 October 1781). 1 f., European paper; 9 lines of text.	Malay	
45	17	10 O 8 (17) KL	Text on ritual ablutions, with first line in Malay, next four lines in Bugis in Jawi script. Verso: 6 lines in Bugis in Jawi script, and two lines in Arabic, with sketches of intersecting circles. 1 f.; European paper.	Malay, Bugis	

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
46	18	10 O 8 (18) KL	A treatise on sexual intercourse. 1 f., European paper.	Malay, Arabic	
47	19	10 O 8 (19) KL	Note on hadith, densely written on one side in a tiny, neat hand. 1 f., European paper.	Arabic	
48	20	10 O 8 (20) KL	Prayers (*duʿāʾ*), with instructions for morning (*pagi*) or evening (*petang*). 1 f., European paper.	Arabic, Malay	V (67)
49	21	10 O 8 (21) KL	Prayers (*duʿāʾ*), one, *duʿāʾ al-ḥājat* labelled *daripada ʿAbd Allāh anak Ufī kata2*. 1 f., European paper.	Arabic, Malay	V (67)
50	22	10 O 8 (22) KL	A detailed table of divination for the building of houses (*pada menyatakan orang berbuat rumah*), with decorative direction points. 1 f., European paper.	Malay	
51	23	10 O 8 (23) KL	Letter from *paduka bunda* Nyai Dimas in Banjar to her son *paduka anakda* Daing Salipu, pleading with him to return to Banjar; heading *Yā Qāḍī al-ḥājat*. With a red wax seal (Gallop 2019: 524, cat. 1545). 1 f., European paper; 11 lines.	Malay	
52	24	10 O 8 (24) KL	Letter from Encik Bujang to *ke bawah kaus* Datuk, regarding a financial transaction with Encik Dewa of Palembang; Encik Bujang and Encik Minih send greetings to Encik Juara and his wife; heading *Qawluh al-haqq wa-ṣadīqū*. 1 f., European paper; 19 × 27.5 cm.	Malay	
53	25	10 O 8 (25) KL	Letter from Encik Baqi to *kakanda* Tuan Sayid Hasan at Selauʿr [i.e. Selangor]; heading *Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*; address written on the verso. 1 f., European paper; traces of three wax seals to fasten the letter closed; 21.2 × 14 cm.	Malay	
54	26	10 O 8 (26) KL	Letter from *kakanda* Encik Angki to *adinda* Encik Jamadin and *anakda* Encik Nuh and *adinda* Encik Semaun, urging them to pay their debts, with many details of the debts to be paid; heading *Qawluh al-haqq*. 1 f., European paper; written on both sides.	Malay	
55	27	10 O 8 (27) KL	Fragment of a text, with dense marginal annotations. 1 f., European paper.	Arabic	
56	28	10 O 8 (28) KL	Letter from Temenggung to Tuanku Sayid Husain at Riau, asking for help about a fugitive debtor named Si Yusup, dated 11 Syawal 1194 (10 October 1780). 1 f.; European paper; 17 × 20 cm; 13 lines, in brown ink.	Malay	
57	29	10 O 8 (29) KL	*Akhbār al-ākhira*, by Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī, incomplete, beginning only. 8 ff., European paper; neatly written in black and red ink, 15 lines per page.	Malay	
58	30	10 O 8 (30) KL	*Syair lā ilāha illā Allāh*. ff. 1^{v}–6^{r}: starts: *Bismillah ini surat sunat / diceritakan nabi kepada sekalian umat / siang dan malam hendaklah hingat / supaya tatab dunia akhirat*; ends: *tamatnya surah hari Jumaat / menyatakan doa*	Malay	

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
			supaya selamat / dikurnia Allah rahim rahmat / hingga sampai hari akhirat. 71 verses; ff. 6ᵛ–7ʳ: repeated inscriptions of the *shahāda*; f. 7ᵛ: a note on a sale of tobacco (*tembakau*) between Encik Nurit and Encik Daw Hamad. 10 ff., European paper; stab-sewn binding.		
59	31	10 O 8 (31) KL	Commentary on *al-ʿAwāmil*, on grammar; incomplete. 12 ff., European paper; sewn binding.	Arabic	V 31
60	32	10 O 8 (32) KL	ff. 1ᵛ–6ᵛ: *Rukun haji dan umrah*, notes on pilgrimage; ff. 7ʳ–8ᵛ: prayers. Densely and neatly written with calligraphically enhanced *Allahumma*. 8 ff., European paper; 26 lines per page.	Malay, Arabic	
61	33	10 O 8 (33) KL	Amulets (*jimat*) and prayers (*duʿāʾ*), with magical formulae and drawings. 6 ff., European paper.	Javanese, Arabic	
62	34	10 O 8 (34) KL	Prayers (*duʿāʾ*). 8 ff., European paper.	Arabic	V (67)
63	35	10 O 8 (35) KL	*Ilmu ubat*, on medicine, including for invulnerability; with prayers. 7 ff., European paper; stab-sewn binding.	Malay, Arabic	
64	36	10 O 8 (36) KL	f. 1ʳ: *10 faidah sembahyang*; with a 3×3 magic square, the sides composed of *Qawluh al-ḥaqq wa-lahu al-mulk*; f. 2ʳ: *al-Ḥayākil al-sabʿa*; 8 ff.; European paper; in black and red ink.	Arabic, Malay	V 111
65	37	10 O 8 (37) KL	First text oriented upside down. F. 4ʳ: *Rukun 13*, with verses from the Qurʾan. 12 ff., Javanese paper (*dluwang*), with brush/beater strokes.	Arabic, Malay	
66	38	10 O 8 (38) KL	Divination and amulets: ff. 1ᵛ–2ʳ: amulets; ff. 2ᵛ–10ʳ: auspicious times for journeys (*ketika orang berjalan*), and amulets against sickness, ending with an amulet for fishing. 10 ff., European paper; 17 lines per page; stitched binding.	Malay, Arabic	
67	39	10 O 8 (39) KL	*Syair*, beginning: *Bahrul hak terlalu dalam / itulah asal membahagikan ragam / ragam itu dengan tipunya / terlalu manis dengan merdunya*. 15.5×10 cm; 10 ff., European paper; 12–17 lines per page.	Malay	
	40	10 O 17 KL	[Chinese printed book, not part of the Selangor collection, see no. 46 below.]	Chinese	
68	41	10 O 8 (41) KL	Fragment of the *La Galigo* epic. 50 ff., European paper; 14 lines per page.	Bugis	CK; Kern, *Aanvulling*, 82–84.
69	42	10 O 8 (42) KL	Prayers and supplications (*duʿāʾ*) and a Qurʾan fragment. 23 ff., European paper; stitched binding.	Arabic	

TABLE 7.1 The Selangor collection in the Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer (*cont.*)

Ref.	Inv. no.	Shelf-mark	Title / description	Language	Cat. & bibliog.
70	43	10 O 8 (43) KL	A large volume, with the following contents: Prayers and supplications (*du'ā'*), some referred to by certain names, to ensure power over others, especially in the sexual sphere, written in a mixture of Arabic, Malay, Bugis, and Makasar, and sometimes with Arabic and Malay in Bugis/Makasar script (Arabic script only on pp. 105–108 and inside back cover). Mystical influences can be seen in the reference to the composition of man from the elements of water, fire, earth, and air. The marriage of 'Alī and Fāṭima is upheld as the ideal relationship between man and woman, and there are references to the Prophet's sexual intercourse with his wives Khadīja, Umm Salima, Maimūna, and 'Ā'isha. Notes on various sexual matters including bodily excretions (*wadi, wadu, mani, manikang*) and the components of the body that come from the father and the mother. Notes on ritual ablutions (*junu', satinja*). Points to be observed in ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*). Verses from Q 36: 1–10, 17–26. The best months of the year for constructing houses. The means of winning a woman's heart. Introductory formulas for various *ṣalāt*. On the inside covers: Q 36: 1–7; charms to win a woman; best days for planting; outside back cover: divination chart. 56 ff. (numbered pp. 1–108, with paper front and back covers); European paper.	Bugis, Makasar, Arabic, Malay	CK
71	44	10 O 8 (44) KL	Prayers and supplications (*du'ā'*) and notes on divination: treatment for sick buffaloes; using the *bintang arua* (eight stars) to see if wishes will come true; interpreting the meaning of knots (*pasu*) in the wood of boats; *kutika*. 6 ff.; European paper; stab-sewn binding.	Bugis	CK
72	45	10 O 8 (45) KL	Notes in Malay in Bugis script, with various formulae for use on different occasions. 45 ff. of double-thickness Chinese paper, folded along the outer edge, with ready-printed vertical red ink guidelines, with a Chinese maker's seal on the folds; darker brown paper covers, with stab-sewn binding.	Malay, Bugis	CK
	46	In: 10 O 17 KL	[Letter of presentation of no. 40 by G. van Hasselt to Scheidius in 1788; not part of Selangor collection.]	Dutch	

Key to headings in the table: **Ref.** = reference number used in the present article, running from 1 to 72; **Inv. no.** = inventory number used in earlier catalogues; **Shelfmark** = current Athenaeumbibliotheek reference for the manuscript; **Cat. & bibliog.** = catalogue and bibliographical references, with the following abbreviations: BF = Boers and Folkerts, *Handschriften uit Harderwijk*; CK = Cense and Kern, Aantekeningen; G = De Goeje, *Catalogus*; I = Iskandar, *Catalogue*; V = Voorhoeve, Handlist; VM = Voorhoeve, *De Maleise handschriften*. These letters are followed by page numbers, except for G, which is followed by the item number

Van Braam's own catalogue of the Selangor collection entitled *Catalogus op order van den Hr van Braam in Indiën gemaakt* ("Catalogue made in the Indies on the order of Mr van Braam") (fig. 7.25), is found following Scheidius's catalogue, at the back of the manuscript *Catalogus bibliothecæ secundum ordinem pluteorum; confectus anno 1792* (95 B 13 KL). It is difficult to link up the items in Van Braam's catalogue with those in Scheidius's. Although both lists of twenty-eight items begin and end with a Qur'an manuscript, the descriptions of most other items cannot be reconciled except in a few cases; for example alongside (4) Scheidius's notes: "in the 1st catalogue of Mr v. Braam, this is book No. 8" (*"op de l. Catalogus van den Hr. v. Braam, staat dit boek No. 8"*), and for (9) he writes, "NB this is No. 3 in the 1st catal. of Mr v. Br." (*"NB. Dit is No. 3 op de l. Catal. van den Hr v, Br."*) Possible identifications are included in the "Ref." column.

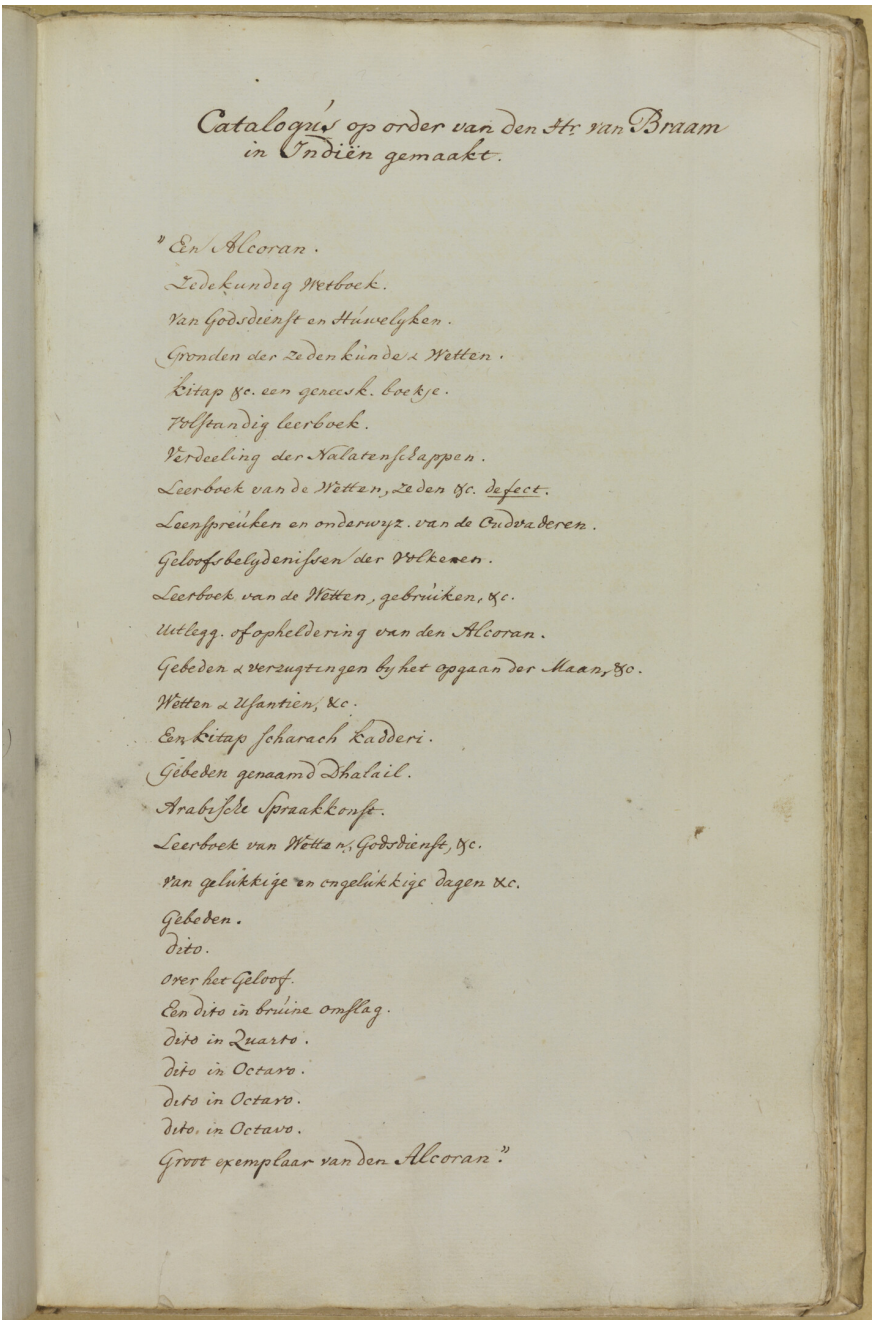
TABLE 7.2 Van Braam's own catalogue of the Selangor collection

Ref.	***Description in Dutch***	**English translation**
1	*Een Alcoran.*	A Qur'an.
2?	*Zedekundig wetboek.*	Moral code.
9	*Van Godsdienst en Huwelyken.*	On religion and marriage.
3?	*Gronden der zedenkunde & Wetten.*	Sources of moral codes & laws.
21?	*Kitap &c. een geneesck. boekje.*	*Kitāb* etc. a medical booklet.
	Volstandig leerboek.	Full textbook.
11	*Verdeeling der Nalatenschappen.*	Rules for the division of inheritance.
4	*Leerboek van de Wetten, zeden &c.* ***defect.***	Textbook on laws, morals etc. **defective.**
	Leenspreuken en onderwyz. van de Oudvaderen.	Borrowed sayings and teachings of the great Fathers.
26?	*Geloofsbelijdenissen der Volkenen.*	Local creeds.
	Leerboek van de Wetten, gebruiken, &c.	Textbook on laws, customs, etc.
	Uitlegg. of opheldering van den Alcoran.	Explanation or clarification of the Qur'an.
	Gebeden & verzugtingen by het opgaan der Maan, &c.	Prayers & admonitions for the rising of the moon, etc.
	Wetten & Usantien[87] [*sic*], *&c.*	Laws & customs, etc.
	Een kitap scharach kadderi.	A *kitāb sharḥ Qadri*[*?*]

87 Suzan Folkerts suggested that an expected term here would be *gebruiken* or *gewoonten*, "customs, habits" (pers. comm., 14.12.2022).

TABLE 7.2 Van Braam's own catalogue of the Selangor collection (*cont.*)

Ref.	*Description in Dutch*	English translation
20?	*Gebeden genaamd Dhalail.*	Prayers called *Dala'il.*
15?	*Arabische spraakkonst.*	Arabic grammar.
	Leerboek van Wetten, Godsdienst, &c.	Textbook on laws, religion, etc.
19	*Van gelukkige en ongelukkige dagen &c.*	On lucky and unlucky days, etc.
	Gebeden.	Prayers.
	dito.	ditto.
24	*Over het geloof.*	On faith.
	Een dito in bruine omslag.	A ditto in a brown cover.
	dito in Quarto.	ditto in Quarto.
	dito in Octavo.	ditto in Octavo.
	dito in Octavo.	ditto in Octavo.
	dito in Octavo.	ditto in Octavo.
28	*Groot examplar van den Alcoran.*	Large copy of the Qur'an



Catalogus op order van den Hr. van Braam
in Indien gemaakt.

" Een Alcoran.
Zedekundig Wetboek.
Van Godsdienst en Huwelyken.
Gronden der Zedenkunde & Wetten.
Kitap &c. een geneesk. boekje.
Volstandig leerboek.
Verdeeling der Valatenschappen.
Leerboek van de Wetten, Zeden &c. defect.
Leenspreuken en onderwyz. van de Cudvaderen.
Geloofsbelydenissen der Volkeren.
Leerboek van de Wetten, gebruiken, &c.
Uitlegg. of opheldering van den Alcoran.
Gebeden & verzugtingen by het opgaan der Maan, &c.
Wetten & Usantien, &c.
Een Kitap scharach Kadderi.
Gebeden genaamd Dhalail.
Arabische Spraakkonst.
Leerboek van Wetten, Godsdienst, &c.
Van gelukkige en ongelukkige dagen &c.
Gebeden.
dito.
over het Geloof.
Een dito in bruine omslag.
dito in Quarto.
dito in Octavo.
dito in Octavo.
dito. in Octavo.
Groot exemplaar van den Alcoran."

FIGURE 7.25 A copy of Van Braam's own listing of the Selangor collection. DAB 95 B 13 KL

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8

A Library Lost: The al-Baʿṭūrī Library in Jerba, Tunisia

Paul M. Love Jr.

In this photo essay, I use the story of a private manuscript library belonging to the al-Baʿṭūrī family in Jerba, Tunisia to reflect on my foray into the world of social codicology and the historical anthropology of rumour surrounding manuscript collections on the island.[1] In some cases, stories about manuscripts in Jerba often have little to do with manuscripts. Instead, they convey information about the people associated with them. In other cases, rumours and stories about manuscripts contain information that is anachronistic, contradictory, or even blatantly untrue. Drawing inspiration from Luise White's work on vampire narratives in colonial East Africa,[2] I maintain that the rumours about manuscripts and libraries need not contain information that is true in order to convey important information about people and manuscripts in Jerba.

1 Funding for the pilot project "Conserving Endangered Archives in Jerba: the al-Basi Family Library Project" (2017–2018) that led to this chapter was provided by the Endangered Archives Programme, administered by the British Library and funded by the Arcadia Foundation, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. I would like to thank the organizers of the Social Codicology workshop in Rabat for the opportunity to contribute to the volume. I would like also to thank Werner Schwartz for sharing the photocopy of the manuscript of the *Kitāb Ibn Sallām* below, as well as colleagues at the Al Akhawayn University Faculty Brown Bag series for their feedback on the project. An earlier version of this piece was shared with the undergraduate students enrolled in the Al Akhawayn University Honours Seminar in Spring 2018. I would like to thank them for their critiques, suggestions, and other helpful feedback. Additional and sincere thanks to Said El Barouni, Farhat Djaabiri, Farid El Cadi, and the other interviewees referenced here anonymously for their willingness to share stories about the al-Baʿṭūrī library with me during fieldwork in Jerba and Tunis in 2017–2018. Finally, I thank the volume's editor, Olly Akkerman, and the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and comments. Those I was able to incorporate no doubt strengthened my contribution to the volume. All shortcomings or errors are mine alone.

2 Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). The present chapter represents a case study of a more complete methodological engagement with White's work and the study of unverifiable or untrue accounts of the past, provided in Paul M. Love Jr., "Manuscripts Are like Vampires: Libraries and Their Uncertain Histories on the Island of Jerba, Tunisia," *History Compass*, September 2020, https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12626.

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Through the images that follow, I explore different moments in the recent history of the al-Baʿṭūrī family library. I use the library's history to think through the relationship between manuscript collections and accounts of their histories. I conclude by reflecting on how the rumours surrounding the history of this library communicate as much about social dynamics in Jerba as they do about manuscripts there. In doing so, I connect the al-Baʿṭurī library and its story to this volume's theme of social codicology.

The manuscript pictured here was originally held in a library belonging to the al-Baʿṭūrī family on the island of Jerba in Tunisia. The al-Baʿṭūrīs have a long history in Northern Africa and came to Jerba from the nearby Nafusa Mountains of what is today northwestern Libya. The family name originated as "al-Bughṭūrī," with the main difference between the two names in writing being a dot over the Arabic letter *ʿayn*.[3] The manuscript library associated with them likely crystalized as a family collection in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[4] Like many families in Jerba's past, the al-Baʿṭūrīs were Ibadi Muslims. Their manuscript library held texts by both Ibadi and non-Ibadi authors, with many of the manuscripts being written in the hands of the al-Baʿṭūrīs themselves. By far the most famous text is the one pictured here, known as the *Kitāb badʾ al-islām wa-sharāʿiʿ al-dīn* or simply the *Kitāb Ibn Sallām*, after its attributed author Ibn Sallām al-Ibāḍī (d. third/ninth century). Arguably the oldest historical text written by an autochthonous North African Muslim, the text had long been thought lost until a copy was found by the Jerban historian, Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb (d. 1991) in the al-Baʿṭūrī library.[5]

3 Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb, *Tārīkh jazīrat Jarba wa-madārisihā al-ʿilmiyya*, ed. Farhat Djaabiri, 2nd ed. (Tunis: Cérès Editions, 2006), 155–156. Vermondo Brugnatelli has explained the transformation of the name based on phonetic grounds: "Nowadays, the family name has slightly changed, from *Baġṭūrī* to *Baᶜṭūr*(*ī*), as a consequence of a phonetic shift that also affects some other words in Jerbi, e.g. *ɬeeṛnuq* 'crane (bird)' vs. Tunisian Arabic *ɣarnuɡ*. This phenomenon is quite frequent in the Berber language of Ghadames (Libya) and takes place only sporadically in Jerba." The quotation comes from a forthcoming article tentatively titled "Samples of Ibāḍī Manuscripts Described by Ennami in James Bynon's Legacy" (to be published in articles adapted from interventions at a workshop entitled "Ibadi Manuscripts in European Collections," held in Paris from 17–18 June 2022).

4 My edited and annotated list of the books held in the al-Baʿṭūrī library appears in Paul M. Love, Jr., "A Library in Fragments: An Inventory of the al-Baʿṭūrī Family and Library in Djerba, Tunisia" in Steven Judd and Robert Haug (eds.), *Islam on the Margins: Studies in Memory of Michael Bonner* (Leiden: Brill, 2023): 321–340.

5 On this book and what is known of Ibn Sallām's biography, see Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Nāṣir Bābāʿammī, ed., *Muʿjam aʿlām al-ibāḍiyya* (*Dictionnaire des hommes illustres de l'Ibadisme, les hommes du Maghreb*), vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2000), 350. While a couple other copies have since been found in Libya, the al-Baʿṭūrī manuscript is the oldest known copy.

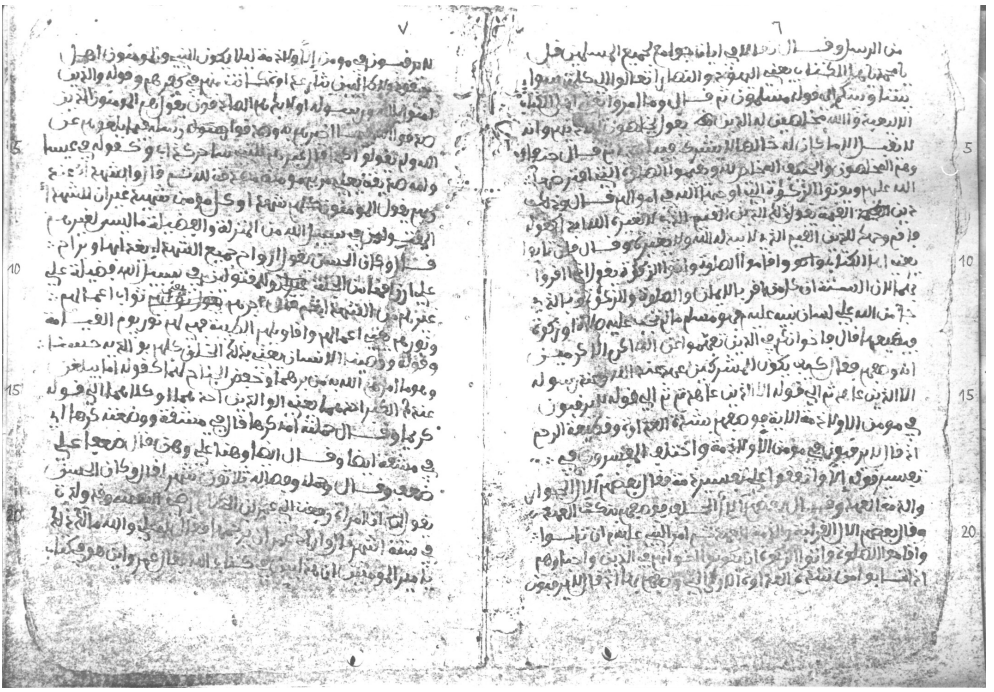

FIGURE 8.1 This image comes from a photocopy of a manuscript copy of Kitāb badʾ al-islām wa-sharāʾiʿ al-dīn, also known as the Kitāb Ibn Sallām. The original manuscript was held in the al-Baʿṭūrī library, where it was discovered in the second half of the twentieth century by Tunisian historian Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb. The text was edited collaboratively by Werner Schwartz in the 1980s, and it was from this photocopy that Schwartz edited the text. The photocopy was given to him by the late Libyan historian and Ibadi shaykh, ʿAlī Yaḥyā Muʿammar in the year 1979
IMAGE GRACIOUSLY PROVIDED TO AUTHOR BY WERNER SCHWARTZ

The image seen here is a photocopy of that manuscript, provided to me by Dr. Werner Schwartz. Schwartz worked together with Shaykh Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb, who had borrowed the original manuscript from the al-Baʿṭūrī library and used it to edit and to publish this text in the 1980s.[6] The fact that the authors were willing to use a single manuscript copy for their edition speaks to the precious nature of its contents and the importance of the library where it originated. Moreover, the *Kitāb Ibn Sallām* was one of a handful of unusual Ibadi texts in the library, including the sixth/twelfth-century biographical work known as the *Siyar mashāyikh Jabal Nafūsa*.[7]

6 Ibn Sallām al-Ibāḍī, *Kitāb fīhi badʾ al-islām wa-sharāʾiʿ al-dīn*, ed. Werner Schwartz and Sālim b. Yaʿqūb (Beirut: Dār al-ṣāḍir, 1986).

7 On this work attributed to Maqrīn b. Muḥammad al-Bughṭūrī (d. sixth/twelfth century), see

FIGURE 8.2 A photograph of team members (from left: author, an anonymous team member, and Laroussi Ben Tardayet) from EAP0993 "Conserving Endangered Archives in Jerba; The al-Bāsī Family Library Project," a project funded by Arcadia and administered by the British Library as part of the Endangered Archives Programme. The project generated interest in manuscripts on the island over the course of the summer 2017, as we began collecting data on manuscript collections in Jerba, Tunisia
PHOTOGRAPH: ALI BOUJDIDI, 2017

Given the widely recognized significance of these manuscripts and others in the collection, it came as quite a shock to the island when contents of the-Baʿṭūrī manuscript library went up in flames in the second half of the twentieth century.

As part of an Endangered Archives Programme Pilot Project grant, funded by Arcadia and administered by the British Library, my Jerban colleague Dr. Ali Boujdidi and I gathered information and stories in Jerba about family manuscript collections like the al-Baʿṭūrī library over the course of the summer of 2017.

The core of our pilot project was the digitization of a library belonging to the El Bessi (al-Bāsī) family, comprising some 200 titles and dozens of family documents (see fig. 8.2).[8] Alongside this digitization project, we also began

Martin H. Custers, *Al-Ibāḍiyya: A Bibliography* (*Vol. 2: Ibāḍīs of the Maghrib*), 2nd edition, vol. 2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2016), 134–135. A published edition of the work, based on a manuscript in the hand of Shaykh Sālim's son Maḥmūd b. Sālim b. Yaʿqūb, was published online as: Muqrīn b. Muḥammad al-Bughṭūrī, *Siyar mashāyikh nafūsa*, ed. Tawfīq ʿIyād al-Shuqrūnī (Tawalt, 2009).

8 Ali Boujdidi and Paul M. Love, Jr., "Preserving Endangered Archives in Jerba, Tunisia: The

planning for its expansion in the future. We gathered stories and information about manuscripts in Jerba with the aim of compiling them and establishing relationships with the owners for future library digitization and conservation projects. The method of gathering stories was informal and haphazard since we initially intended only to gather information on the existence of collections.

The notes from those conversations accrued over time, and it was in this context that I began collecting accounts of different collections and became aware of the large number of rumours and secrets surrounding different collections. People would often visit us at the research centre to share stories and information about manuscripts. These stories were conveyed to me as part of a research team that belonged to a wide network of people in Jerba interested in the island's history, culture, and family politics. The stories were all related in Arabic and my ability to understand these stories—when necessary, relying on the clarifications of friends and colleagues—allowed me access to them. As part of this team, I heard these stories together with others as they were related by friends or colleagues visiting the centre. In most cases, they were not relayed clandestinely. Quite the opposite, the person relating a story might even restart their account to ensure that anyone who entered the room later could follow the narrative. In some cases, however, the person telling the story would caution against circulating it, especially if it implicated a person or family with whom they did not have good relationship. Regardless of the circumstances, we never recorded audio or video versions of these accounts. My position as a researcher was complemented by my familiarity with Jerba, gained through frequent trips to the island for both research and visits to my extended family.

As for the stories themselves, often they included accounts of collections that still existed but whose owners kept them secret for various reasons. In other cases, stories were about collections that had been intentionally destroyed by their owners or by others. The methods for doing so ranged from throwing them in an old well due to the manuscripts' magical properties to dramatic book burnings in public or private.[9]

The story of the al-Baʿṭūrī library fell into the latter category. A variety of stories surround the history of this collection, but almost all end in the destruction

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al-Basi Family Manuscript Library," *Manuscript Studies: A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 215–219. On the project results and for full digital facsimiles of the entire collection, see "Conserving Endangered Family Manuscript Libraries on the Island of Jerba, Tunisia (EAP993)": https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP993, accessed October 26, 2023.

9 For details and methodological approaches to these stories, see Love, "Manuscripts Are like Vampires."

of the al-Baʿṭūrī library in an intentionally lit fire. I had heard versions of this story several years before while working in Jerba, but I began to systematically collect different accounts of it in the summers of 2017 and 2018.

The results proved unexpected.

The aggregated story of the fire that consumed the al-Baʿṭūrī library that I assembled merges local history in Jerba with the national history of Tunisia. During the fieldwork with the Endangered Archives project, we encountered many different versions of the story of this fire. The core narrative that emerged from these stories and subsequent efforts by my colleagues in Jerba to track down members of the family for details goes something like this: Sometime around the year 1980, a member of the family, whom I will call "Aḥmad," was teaching mathematics at a school in the southern Tunisian town of Gafsa. He was there in January 1980, when

> [on] January 26 … a band of guerrillas seized police and military installations in the southern phosphate mining centre of Gafsa, hoping to spark a general uprising [against the government of Habib Bourghiba] … At least thirty-seven people (the official estimate), but quite probably many more, died in the battle to regain control of the city. Tunisia accused [Libyan president] Muammar Gaddafi … of training and equipping the attackers.[10]

Subsequently known as the "Affaire de Gafsa" or the "Événements de Gafsa," these events marked a defining moment in Tunisian-Libyan relations in the twentieth century. It was major news in national papers and featured in several cover stories from the Tunisian periodical *Le Phare* pictured here. Yet it also gestured to a more complicated past in the Tunisian national narrative, since it had been organized by militant supporters of Bourghiba's old political adversary, the Jerban Salah ben Yusuf, who had been assassinated in 1961.[11]

Aḥmad, whose residence was in the same neighbourhood, was in the middle of the week-long firefight by the Tunisian army to regain control. Although he emerged from the events without any physical injury, the trauma of the event stayed with him. Ultimately unable to cope with it, he returned to his family home in Jerba to live with his father. It was there that sometime between 1980 and 2005, he entered the room where the family's manuscript library was stored and set the manuscripts on fire.

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10 Kenneth J. Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 169.

11 Perkins, *History of Modern Tunisia*, 170.

FIGURE 8.3 The cover story of Le Phare ("The Beacon") magazine from February 1980. The story on what became known as "Les événements de Gafsa" described the attempted coup of the Tunisian government led by Habib Bourghiba. There was an unexpected connection between the history of the al-Baʿṭūrī library and this tense moment in modern Tunisian history. A further unexpected event was my purchase of this magazine on the street in downtown Tunis in the summer of 2017 from a vendor who had served in the unit of the military sent from the capital down to Gafsa as reinforcements for the Tunisian army in the very attack described here
PHOTO BY AUTHOR OF COPY IN HIS COLLECTION: COVER OF LE PHARE, N. 5, 3–9 FEBRUARY 1980

FIGURE 8.4 These two charred manuscript fragments hang today on the wall in the reading room of the Association pour la sauvegarde de l'île de Djerba (ASIDJ) in Houmet Souk, Jerba. The caption above them suggests that they came originally from the al-Ba'ṭūrī collection. The story of how they arrived there proved one of the most perplexing accounts of the library's destruction I encountered.
PHOTO BY AUTHOR, 2015

In and of itself, the story is remarkable. Additionally, the imprecise date range along with several other details points to the nature of rumours and contradictory historical account of manuscript culture in Jerba.

The two charred fragments in this image, if its caption is to be believed, are some of the few remains from the fire that consumed the al-Ba'ṭūrī library.[12] I took this photograph years before I began compiling versions of the story, which is why I was surprised to hear an account of the fire in which the per-

12 Shortly before submitting the final version of this essay, I learned from my colleague 'Ali Boujdidi that the al-Ba'ṭūrī family still possess a handful of burned fragments and three statements of loan for manuscripts borrowed in the 1970s. The contents of those statements with the full inventory of the al-Ba'ṭūrī collection can be found in Love, "A Library in Fragments."

son telling me the story claimed to have brought these very folios to the place where they now hang on the wall. Indeed, the two most remarkable and authoritative accounts of the library's destruction came to me from two men who both claim to have seen the charred remains of the al-Baʿṭūrī library with their own eyes.

One was Dr. Ferhat Djaabiri (Farḥāt al-Jaʿbīrī), a retired professor of history and an influential member of the Jerban Ibadi community. In an interview in August 2018 in Tunis, he told me that he had personally known Aḥmad's father since the 1980s when he was writing his PhD thesis on the history of the Ibadi community in Jerba. Djaabiri had used many manuscripts for his research, and he had wanted to access the al-Baʿṭūrī collection for use in his thesis. When he spoke over the phone with the father, he was told the manuscripts had been lost in a fire. When Djaabiri expressed disbelief, the owner invited him to the family home where Djaabiri saw with his own eyes the burned shelves and a single charred manuscript fragment remaining. He emphasized to me that he remembered this well, since it was just before his thesis defence in 1986.[13]

I had been told to talk to Djaabiri by another eyewitness and the owner of another prominent manuscript collection in Jerba, Said El Barouni (Saʿīd al-Bārūnī). In an earlier interview with him, I heard an account that added another layer of complication to the story. El Barouni had told me in March 2017 that he recalled that the fire had taken place sometime in the 1990s—although he was the first to make the connection with events in Gafsa and specifically mentioned the events that had taken place around 1980.

When I had the chance to interview him in August 2018, he said that he had finally been able to narrow down the date to a specific week. He told me that he remembered the event well because he had heard over the phone that the fire was taking place. He went in his car, accompanied by a group of French volunteers who had come to Jerba to help restore the al-Bāsī mosque (the same mosque where the manuscript library that was the object of our pilot project had been held for two centuries). As they approached the house, they saw charred fragments of manuscripts being whisked up in the wind. More remarkably, he told me that he and his French guests even collected these fragments as souvenirs. He concluded by noting that he had taken two of those fragments to the local cultural association, the Association pour la sauvegarde de l'île de Djerba (ASSIDJ), where they now hang in a frame on the wall—just as they

13 Personal interview with Farhat Djaabiri by author, August 18, 2018 at Association Djerba Ettawasol (Tunis, Tunisia).

appear in the photo above.[14] The most curious detail of the story, however, came when he told me how he had been able to narrow the date of the event down to a single week. To do so, he had looked for an article in the local newspaper that announced the restoration project of the al-Bāsī mosque. The only problem was that the week of the newspaper issue was 4–14 July 2005—over two and a half decades after the events in Gafsa and more than three and a half decades since Djaabiri claimed to have seen the remains of the same burnt library.[15]

Presented with astonishingly different stories, the most logical next step was for me to approach the family for confirmation of the details. This seemed especially important since both the son and the father are still alive. Saʿīd al-Bārūnī contacted the latter, who told him that he did not wish to discuss painful memories and would only confirm that the library had been destroyed.

While the desire to keep family history private was completely understandable and something I wished to respect, the unfortunate result of the family's decision not to confirm or deny the dates or details of the library's destruction was the generation of additional rumours. An especially prominent story I began to hear was that perhaps the family was hiding the manuscripts and that the fire had never occurred. The wild variation in the purported dates of the events did not help dissuade people sceptical of the library's destruction. This included an additional member of the family, who spoke to another colleague of mine and expressed doubt by emphasizing that he had never *seen* the burned bookshelf or any other evidence that the fire had taken place.[16] Indeed, even my colleague expressed doubts when he asked me rhetorically:

> Am I supposed to believe that the *entire* collection just went up in flames? If so—*show me*. *Where* was the library? *Where* are the charred remains of the books? *Nothing* remains? You want me to believe that?

14 Personal interview with Saʿīd al-Bārūnī by author, August 14, 2018, at El Barounia Library (Houmet Souk, Jerba, Tunisia).

15 "Nashāṭ al-jamʿiyya," *Al-Jazīra* Newspaper, July 2005.

16 A high-profile version of a comparable phenomenon was the alleged destruction of manuscripts in Timbuktu in 2012. In a widely publicized response, head of the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project Shamil Jeppie had to offer a corrective to this rumour, which had circulated internationally. Shamil Jeppie, "An Update from the Timbuktu Manuscripts Project," published on *Jadaliyya Reports* (31 January 2013), https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/27940, accessed October 27, 2023. I thank Olly Akkerman for drawing my attention to this comparison.

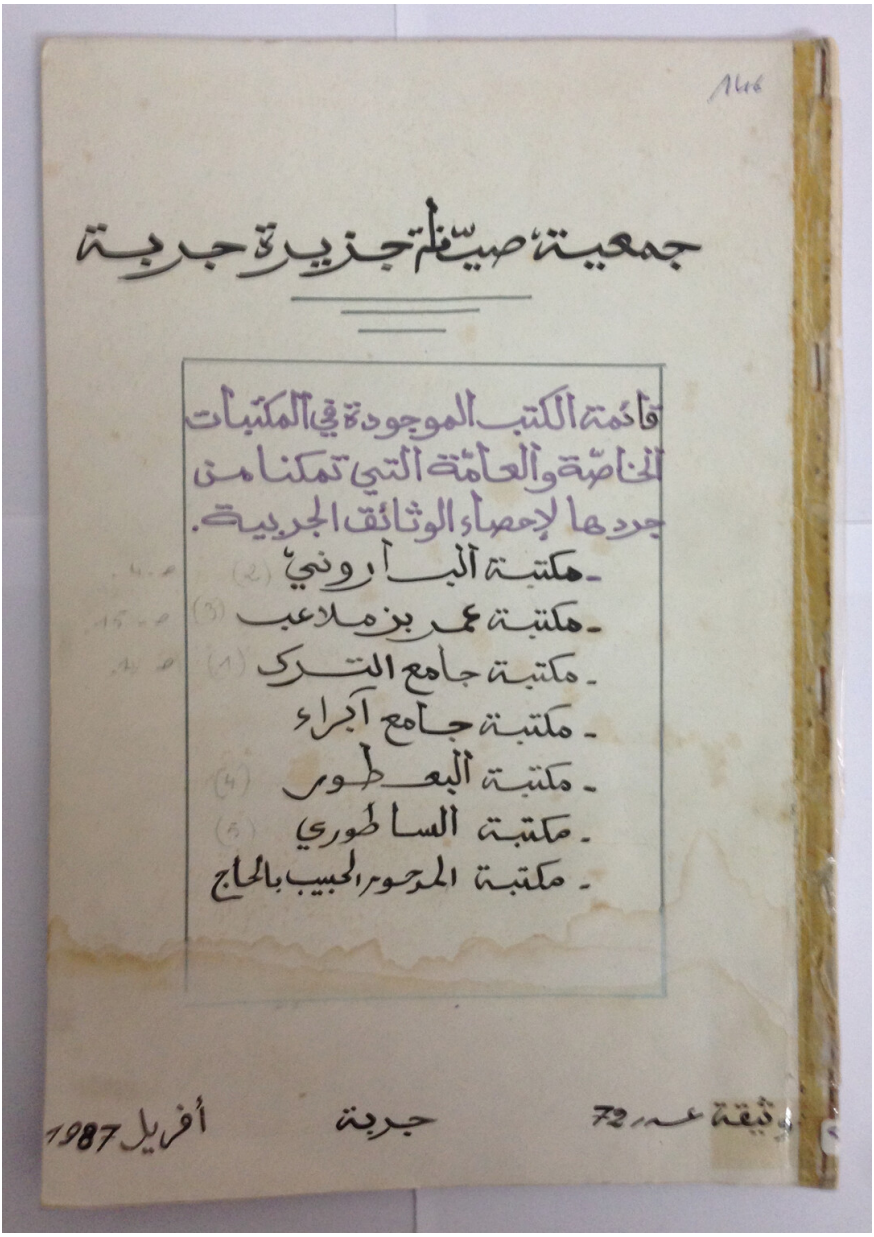

FIGURE 8.5 This little booklet was released in April 1987 as a result of an island-wide survey of private manuscript and book collections in Jerba. The third item from the bottom appears as "Maktabat al-Baʿṭūr" (The Baʿṭūrī Library) and the contents represent the most detailed description of the library's content prior to its destruction sometime around the date of the booklet's publication
PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR, 2015

Without confirmation from the family, I was left with virtually no details about the fire that I could be certain about. This did not, however, mean that no evidence survived for the existence of the library other than a couple of charred remains on the wall of the local cultural association.

The final chapter to this story comes from one of the most important pieces of evidence for the history of the al-Baʿṭurī collection: an inventory of the collection's contents in the typewritten booklet pictured here, which is held in the same Association pour la sauveguarde de l'île de Djerba (ASSIDJ).[17]

Alongside manuscript notes in different libraries that were owned by the al-Baʿṭūrī family, this document offers material evidence for the library's history. Unfortunately, it adds an additional layer of complication to the account of the library's destruction in the early 1980s. The ASSIDJ carried out a survey of manuscript libraries on the island, including the al-Baʿṭūrī collection (third from the bottom on the cover page here). The survey resulted in this document, dated April 1987—seven years after the events in Gafsa and two years after Djaabiri's visit to the burned library.

In an interview in July 2017 with the former president of the ASSIDJ, Farid El Cadi, I listened to his account of the visit to the library.[18] He described it as being in complete disorder, which concurs with another account of a visit to the library published by the Libyan historian Amr Khalifa Ennami in 1970.[19] In both cases, however, the accounts describe a library very much unburnt.

1 Rumours, Manuscripts, and History

In *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*, Luise White writes that people who relate stories of vampirism in early twentieth-century East Africa

> do not speak the truth, with a concept of the accurate description of what they saw, to say what they mean they construct and repeat stories that carry the values and meanings that most forcibly get their points across.[20]

17 *Qāʾimat al-kutub al-mawjūda fī l-maktabāt al-khāṣṣa wa-l-ʿāmma* (Hūmat al-sūq: Jamʿiyyat ṣiyānat jazīrat Jarba, 1987).

18 Personal interview by author, July 27, 2017, with Farid El Cadi at his home in Houmet Souk, Jerba.

19 Amr Khalifah Ennami, "A Description of New Ibadi Manuscripts from North Africa," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 15, no. 1 (1970): 64.

20 White, *Speaking with Vampires*, 73.

In a similar manner, the rumours and accounts surrounding the history of the al-Baʿṭūrī library and its destruction in the second half of the twentieth century need not be true to convey meanings. In the examples above, those who related stories to me of their own understanding of the library's history offered contradictory accounts in terms of chronology and other details. Even so, people did not necessarily lie intentionally, and the contradictions do not translate to the conclusion that all the information they related was false. Instead, elements of these accounts sought to communicate ideas, concepts, and information surrounding the culture and meaning of manuscripts in Jerban society from the perspective of the storyteller.

In the short and less complete versions of the story I encountered at the beginning of the conservation project in 2017, those who related the story did so with full admission that they did not know the details but that the account of the destruction of the library by fire was well-known. The details offered—that a cigarette started the fire, that the person who did it was insane—were not as crucial as the reality that the library was gone. It was simply a regrettable loss of the material cultural heritage of the island. But these tantalizing details led me to investigate further, which in turn led to interviews like the two that I have described above.

In these two interviews, the interviewees' recollections carried weight because each claimed to have seen the library shortly after the fire. In addition, however, both of these interviewees' accounts carry authority for other reasons. Djaabiri made sure to note at several points that he recalled the events because of their connection with his thesis. His experience of working with manuscripts on the island, his explicit references to the delicacy of issues relating to manuscripts in Jerba, and his position as a professor of history and prominent member of the Ibadi community all lend credibility to his account.

El Barouni, as the owner of the largest and by far the best-known library on the island, has now assumed an importance place as a guardian of manuscripts. Moreover, like Djaabiri, his account emphasizes his connections to the al-Baʿṭūrī family. He was able to drive over to their house during the events themselves and to call them to request an interview for me. His account also highlights his role in preserving the last material traces of the library, in that he carried the charred folios to the local cultural association.

A final and important factor in these accounts also deserves consideration. These conversations took place in a setting where our project team had *created* a space for discussing the importance of manuscripts. By valorising and seeking out stories about manuscripts, both formal interviews and our project team's informal conversations with people in Jerba no doubt contributed to

the creation of additional versions of the story of the al-Baʿṭūrī collection. During the course of the project, we aimed to foster a sense of the importance of manuscripts in Jerba in order to garner the support of the local population for the preservation of manuscript libraries. In doing so, however, we also likely played a part in encouraging the production of new versions of their histories.

What emerges from the story related in this essay is the way the al-Baʿṭurī library and its history merge the social with the codicological and the philological with the fantastical. This essay has thus offered an example of that "tension inherent in the encounter between what people do with texts … and how the social informs the philological and vice versa," which Olly Akkerman has termed "social codicology."[21] The al-Baʿṭūrī library—perhaps especially because of its destruction and fragmentation—exemplifies how "manuscripts are *commodities* that are subject to consumption … agency, veneration, looting, travel, exchange, demise, termites, [and] human violence" and that "have multiple *modi videndi* that we need to engage with, decipher, observe, deconstruct, read, and … participate in if we want to understand how texts work and why these social lives matter."[22] For the al-Baʿṭūrī library, what becomes clear is that the social lives of these manuscripts merit as much attention as the objects themselves (especially since most of them no longer exist).[23] Our team's possible role in the circulation of rumours about the collection's history is also an important example of why social codicologists must be attentive to "questions of positionality, reflexivity, ethics, and gender."[24]

Evidence of the existence of the al-Baʿṭūrī library, some indications of its content, and pieces of the story of its destruction remain. Alongside these historical traces, however, there is a rich body of social history, of stories and rumours surrounding it and other libraries on Jerba. Just as the manuscripts themselves reveal much about the island's past, these contradictory accounts and unverifiable histories communicate the perspectives of Jerbans themselves on why manuscripts are worth telling stories about.

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21 Olly Akkerman, "The Bohra Manuscript Treasury as a Sacred Site of Philology: A Study in Social Codicology," *Philological Encounters* 4 (2019): 199.

22 Akkerman, "Bohra Manuscript Treasury," 199.

23 For an example of combining this social history with material history, see Paul M. Love, Jr., "Provenance in the Aggregate: The Social Life of an Arabic Manuscript Collection in Naples," *Manuscript Studies: A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies* 3:2 (2018): 334–356.

24 Akkerman, "Bohra Manuscript Treasury," 198.

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PART 4

Scribal Cosmologies: Etiquettes of Writing and Preserving

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Etiquette of Manuscripts: Legal Discourses on Writing and Preserving Texts in the Malabar Coast

Mahmood Kooria

1 Introduction

When I was growing up in a Muslim neighbourhood in Malabar in southwestern India, I was encouraged to treat books with veneration. The religious notion of inviolability which surrounded the Holy Qur'an was sustained for anything written in Arabic script. As children, we were asked to watch out for any pieces of paper written in Arabic which had been left lying on the ground or on the roadside. There was an underlying notion that they contained names of God or of the Prophet and therefore deserved respect. Our heads retained such veneration in the early morning as we ran through the gentle rains of the monsoon or in the early rays of the rising sun to and from the *madrasa* with our *muṣḥaf* and textbooks. In or around the puddles of muddy water or on or beside the dusty roads, we stopped in our tracks when our eyes caught sight of something written in Arabic. We picked it up and took special care of it. We kept it safe inside our *muṣḥaf* until we carried it with us back home. It remained inside the *muṣḥaf* with other similar pieces until perhaps they fell out on one of our morning sprints for someone else to find.[1]

Such naivety grew more sophisticated when I moved from the village to a residential school-cum-college elsewhere in the district. There we were taught to keep our books in order. In our classroom, the upper shelf of the single bookcase for forty students was reserved for our *muṣḥafs*. The next shelf down was for the thick hadith texts, such as the tabloid-like *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ* printed

1 During the proofreading stage of this article, Salih Cholakkalakath of New York University brought to my attention an article by J. Sadan, which mentions similar sacred practices among various historical and contemporary Muslim communities from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. Many devout followers strove to preserve pieces of paper containing Arabic script, whether from the Qur'an or periodicals, found on the ground. See J. Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions: Customs Concerning the Disposal of Worn-Out Sacred Books in the Middle Ages, According to an Ottoman Source," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 43 (1986): 44–45.

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in north India or the Qur'an-like *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn*. Somewhere on the next two or three shelves, some of us managed to reserve a tiny space for our textbooks for the coming year. They were the privileged few. The rest kept their books in a narrow compartment in their desks. Whether in the bookcase or in the desk, whether privileged or deprived, we had to observe some loose rules for keeping books in order: the *tafsīr* (Qur'an exegesis) at the top, below it a small hadith-text that did not require any shelf-space, then texts of *fiqh* (law), then *ʿaqīda* (theology), then *manṭiq* (logic). Below these we placed extra-religious texts, such as history, literature, language, and science; from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* to Sunbul Nigar's *Urdu shāʿirī/nathr kā tanqīdī muṭālaʿa*. This "order of books" was always to be followed, and academic and religious reprobation would be the consequence of delinquency. I remember one teacher instructing us that the usefulness of knowledge (*manfaʿat al-ʿilm*) depends on three kinds of etiquette (*adab*, pl. *ādāb*): a respect for books, a respect for teachers, and a respect for the place of learning.

This religio-academic approach to books was rooted in a longer tradition of etiquette ascribed to the texts of the Islamic tradition. Long before printed texts became common, such rules and codes circulated across the scholarly spheres about manuscripts. The disciplines in our neighbourhood in Malappuram were part of a larger historical continuum. I would eventually realise that it was a Muslim majority district in southwest India, which in turn was strongly connected to the larger socio-cultural world of the Indian Ocean, through which many such norms and notions were exchanged across centuries. Even the spread of Islam in southwest India, as elsewhere across the Indian Ocean rim, was facilitated by the enduring mobility of people, travelling along maritime routes for trade and scholarship. So many aspects of modern literary culture, scripts, manuscripts, and books, can be traced back to a triangle of Arab-Afro-Asian interactions in which scholars, jurists, mystics, and authors exchanged their understanding of the physical and metaphysical world. This chapter explores the roots and routes of such discourses in Malabar as well as in the wider Indian Ocean littoral by focussing on the book culture there from the sixteenth century onwards.

As a first stepping-stone, I take the text *Ajwibat al ʿajība* by Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī (henceforth *Ajwiba*; see fig. 9.1 and 9.3–9.6) compiled on the Malabar coast. The text discusses legal issues for the everyday lives of ordinary Muslims living in the cosmopolitan world of this oceanic region. The author belonged to the Shāfiʿi school of Islamic law, a school widely followed across the Indian Ocean, from Cape Town in South Africa to the southern Philippines. From the *Ajwiba* we gain significant insights into book-related practices of its time and earlier.

I shall examine how jurists in Malabar exchanged ideas with their counterparts in the Middle East on the scribal and bibliophilic praxis of their time with reference to a deeper handwritten book culture. Their exchanges across borders of time and place are engrained in the Shāfiʿi scholarly world, where books are perceived not only as a source of information but also as sacred objects and communal responsibility. They represent as such a collective heritage requiring an individual and a corporate accountability to respect and preserve them. Of course, similar social codicological notions can be located in many or most common practices of Muslims in Asia or Africa. But I shall argue that the discourses in this text from the sixteenth century reveal an informed process of meaning-making among the scholars of Malabar, Maʿbar, Zabīd, Mecca, and Cairo. All of them applied a metaphysical quality to the words, folios, and codices, not just as a *Volksweisheit* but as part of a long-lasting, transregional, intellectual, religious, and sacred disposition.

2 Locating the Malabari Scriptoriums

In the maritime towns of Malabar, such as Calicut and Ponnāni, there was a rich scribal culture with several language communities conversing with one another. This was the result of the widespread movement of people exchanging commodities and ideas across the highway of the Indian Ocean. Calicut welcomed people from "China, Jawa, Ceylon, the Maldives, Yaman and Persia" as well as Abyssinia, Somalia, Iraq, Egypt, and many other parts of the Indian subcontinent, and its "harbour was one of the largest in the world," according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, writing in the mid-fourteenth century after staying there.[2] It was also the seat of the local Hindu kings, the Zamorins, who rose to prominence in the thirteenth century and whose authority continued until the eighteenth century, if not later. Ponnāni was their second capital with its own harbour and a cosmopolitan share of maritime trade and culture. Both places recorded their histories through a rich writing culture that prevailed across the Malabar coast. Many travellers, diplomats, and officials who visited the region wrote in detail about the extensive scriptoriums and scribal activity there.

Quoting the foreign accounts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Sebastian Prange has recently noted that the local rulers and officials had made "a very deliberate and highly organized effort […] to collect and preserve the

2 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥla: Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār fī gharāʾib al-amṣār wa-ʿajāʾib al-asfār*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-ʿUryān and Muṣṭafā al-Qaṣṣāṣ (Beirut: Dār Ihyāʾ al-ʿUlūm, 1987), 575.

records and chronicles of their kingdoms" and that the travellers and officials were impressed with "the astounding diligence with which royal officials recorded the affairs."[3] For example, Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese chronicler and scribe (*escrivão de feitor*) in the service of *Estado da Índia*, wrote in the early sixteenth century: "The king of Calicut continually keeps a multitude of writers in his palace who sit in a corner far from him; they write upon a raised platform, everything connected with the King's Exchequer and with justice and governance of the realm."[4] A century later, the French traveller François Pyrard de Laval made a similar comment about the palace: "Hard by there is a block of buildings allotted to the secretary and clerk to the king, for keeping all the registers. The order and system is [*sic*] most admirable herein, and I have ofttimes wondered to see the great number of men with no other duty or work all day but writing and registering."[5]

These travellers also noted (with some misrepresentation) the writing materials in use, such as palm leaves and iron styli. Barbosa observed that "they write on long and stiff palm leaves, with an iron style without ink; they make their letters in incised strokes, like ours, and the straight lines as we do."[6] De Laval wrongly makes this a generalisation for the whole of Malabar: "The king hath the like writers in all towns, ports, harbours, and frontier passages of his kingdom, who render account to those of the palace, all being well organised and in obedience one to another, each having his proper superior. *Throughout the whole Malabar coast there is the same manner of writing and the same ordering thereof*."[7] The royal scribal office might have followed the same pattern, but the documents from the region during, before, and after his travel also demonstrate a wide variety of writing materials and methods used by different linguistic, occupational, and religious communities. There was a significant division in the materials used in the region for writing Malayalam and Arabic, for example, before the nineteenth century. The Malayalam texts were almost exclusively written on palm leaf, while the Arabic texts were entirely on paper.[8] They rarely

3 Sebastian Prange, "The Pagan King Replies: An Indian Perspective on the Portuguese Arrival in India," *Itinerario* 41, no. 1 (2017): 153.

4 Mansel Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1921), vol. 2: 18.

5 François Pyrard de Laval, *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas and Brazil*, trans. Albert Gray and H.C.P. Bell (London: Hakluyt Society, 1887), vol. 1: 413.

6 Dames, *Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. 2: 18.

7 De Laval, *Voyage*, 414. Emphasis is mine.

8 This conforms with the observation of Theodore G.Th. Pigeaud in the Southeast Asian context that "palmleaf manuscripts with Arabic script are practically non-existent." Theodore G.Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java: Catalogue Raisonné of Javanese Manuscripts in the Library*

exchanged the materials and both scripts intersected only in such rare documents as royal endowments, which were recorded on copper and silver plates and stones.

The diverse scriptoriums in Malabar thus produced texts and documents in a number of languages: Malayalam, Tamil, Sanskrit, Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Persian, and many European languages, including hybrid dialects such as Maṇipravāḷam (Malayalam and Sanskrit), Garshūni Malayalam (Malayalam written in Syriac script) and Arabic-Malayalam (Malayalam written in Arabic script). Although most of these rich resources are lost, hundreds of manuscripts from these languages and dialects have survived in Asian, European, and American libraries.[9] Here I concentrate on the Islamic materials in Arabic and Arabic-Malayalam to show how the Muslim community perceived and conceptualised the contemporary and correct book culture.

Since the thirteenth century, a vibrant and cosmopolitan Islamic community thrived along the Malabar coast and we find occasional references to their scribal practices from the following centuries onward. For example, we have a letter written by a few Muslim leaders from Calicut to the court of a Rasulid sultan in Yemen on February 15, 1393 (on Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 2, 795) requesting permission to read his name in the Friday sermon.[10] The request was granted along with due favours, and the local judge formalised the relationship by bestowing a robe on the sultan. This successful epistolary exchange is evidence for the function of scribes in that world. From the same century and from the same region, we also know of a Shāfiʿi juridical text, the *Qayd al-jāmiʿ* by Faqīh Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Mahfanī, whom Ibn Baṭṭūṭa may have actually met.[11] A fully fledged book culture had possibly developed there by the fifteenth century, when we

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of the University of Leiden and Other Public Collections in the Netherlands, Vol. 1: *Synopsis of Javanese Literature 900–1900 AD* (Lugduni Batavorum: Bibliotheca Universitatis, 1967), 26.

9 For a brief overview of such sources, see Mahmood Kooria, "Introduction," in *Malabar in the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism in a Maritime Historical Region*, ed. Mahmood Kooria and Michael N. Pearson (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), xv–xxvii.

10 The letter is available at ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya*, eds. Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAsal and J.W. Redhouse, *The Pearl-Strings; A History of the Resuliyy Dynasty of Yemen* (Leiden and London: Brill, 1907–1918), vol. v, 245; it has been analysed in detail by Elizabeth Lambourn, "India from Aden: Khutba and Muslim Urban Networks in Late Thirteenth-Century India," in Kenneth Hall, ed., *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1000–1800* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 55–97.

11 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 574; cf. Mahmood Kooria, *Islamic Law in Circulation: Shāfiʿī Texts across the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 96–97.

have concrete references to many scholarly works produced by members of the community. These works deal with various Islamic themes, including mysticism, law, ethics, and panegyrics. But we have to imagine what the private workplace of a scholar or a copyist of the time looked like because the texts reveal hardly anything about the ways in which books were produced or circulated in the region. Moreover, the manuscripts we have mostly come from much later, and they often bear no colophons.

This absence of *original* textual evidence contrasts with the survival of some small manuscript collections found in situ across the coastal belt, from the northern region of Mangalore to Cape Comorin in the south. These places have been identified as the extreme points of Malabar, though some Arab geographers stretched the northern boundary to Konkan and Gujarat, and British colonial officers limited it to Ponnāni in the south and Kannur in the north. All the major collections I have been fortunate enough to consult in the last decade are situated in the old centres of maritime commerce and culture: Ponnāni, Tānūr, Calicut, Bukhara, Cāliyam, and Māṭṭūl. These collections have hardly been identified as such, or even been surveyed, catalogued, or studied systematically. A decade ago, Jan Just Witkam observed that the textual idiosyncrasies from "this remote corner of the Islamic world, which, however, has a long-standing Islamic tradition, are not or nearly not bibliographically known, let alone described."[12] His observation still remains true. Some of these collections are part of the traditional mosque-college system, where students were required to copy and study some of these texts. Others, such as the one in Cāliyam, was a *kutubkhāna* purpose-built by a local scholar, Aḥmad Kōya Shāliyātī (d. 1954).[13] He is said to have employed scribes to copy manuscripts for his library at an interesting time, when the production of printed texts was at full swing among local Muslims.

Without any proper analysis of the Malabar scriptoriums, it is too early to say anything concrete about the nature of the manuscripts, the choice of paper, or varieties of script, illumination, binding, etc. Even so, without going into detail, three preliminary observations can be made. First, among the enormous num-

12 Jan Just Witkam, "Some Arabic Textbooks from Kerala," in *Books and Bibliophiles. Studies in honour of Paul Auchterlonie in the Bio-Bibliography of the Muslim World*, ed. Robert Gleave (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 169.

13 Some of these collections have been digitalised, often by three institutions (Mappila Heritage Library, Ma'din Academy, and British Library) through the constant initiatives of three individuals: Sayyid Ashraf, Ophira Gamliel, and the late Agatti Ustad. However, the digital collections are yet to be made accessible to a wider audience. One potential step towards this end is the digitisation project under the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme.

FIGURE 9.1 Opening page of the *Ajwibat al ʿAjība*, a collection of *fatwa*s by Shāfiʿī jurists from the Middle East and South Asia, compiled by Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī (d. in or after 1583). Ponnāni MS. 1203 [2598]

ber of manuscripts surviving from the region, only very rarely do we find a complete colophon giving the dates of composition and copying and identifying authors and copyists by name and place. While more recent manuscripts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries do provide skeletal information (the name of the copyist preceded by the phrase *bi-yad* "by the hand of," and occasionally a date as well), the general absence of colophons is different compared to manuscripts from the broader Islamic world. Secondly, in the region a unique scribal style of Arabic script was in general use for all kinds of Arabic and Arabic-Malayalam books, from the Qur'an and law to poems and fictional narratives. *Ponnāni lipi* (Ponnāni script) was popularised in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by printing presses which had made lithographs from handwritten manuscripts.[14] Scribal styles in different manuscripts illustrate its development: fig. 9.1 and 9.3 show prototypes of the Ponnāni script, which can be seen in fig. 9.7. Third, once lithographs were producing an enormous amount of "printed manuscripts" from the region,[15] scriptoriums were

14 On this, see Kakkad Abdulla Moulavi, *al-Basīṭ fī al-khaṭṭ wa al-imlāʾ athavā Arabi eḻuttu: samagra paṭhanam* (Kakkad: Dirasa Publications, 2005), 220–229; Kakkad Abdulla Moulavi, *Arabic Script Variations of Malabar* (Tenhipalam: Department of Arabic, University of Calicut & New Delhi: National Mission for Manuscripts, 2012), 19–20.

15 For the identification of these texts as "printed manuscripts" and preliminary observations of the modern scribal practices among local Muslims, albeit some misreading, see Witkam, "Some Arabic Textbooks from Kerala," 141–170.

active in and around the printing centres of Ponnāni and Tirūraṅṅāṭi, and the preparatory craftsmanship tasks for printing were allotted by gender: Women were usually occupied at home copying manuscripts for publishers while men performed the actual printing.[16] Before this lithographic boom in the region, copying manuscripts was mainly a male occupation and restricted to a small circle of people in and around the mosque-colleges where only male students could lodge. The juridical discussions on book culture at the core of this chapter flourished in such settings.

3 The Text and the Author

Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī, the compiler of the *Ajwiba*, hailed from the port of Ponnāni. Not surprisingly, therefore, his text is intertwined with its immediate socio-cultural context and with the wider religious norms and etiquettes for writing and preserving manuscripts. Ponnāni was the second capital of the Zamorins and an important residence for Muslims on the Malabar Coast. Its main congregational mosque, Valiya Jumuʿat Paḷḷi (see fig. 9.2), had attracted thousands of students to study Islamic disciplines to an advanced level for centuries. As a pre-eminent mosque-college for Islamic education, it was known as "the Mecca of South India" and "Little Mecca." It was a hub of Islamic textual production and preservation and as such a natural centre for an advanced level of teaching and research. In the age of manuscripts, it produced thousands of them, and once the printing press had become popular in the late-nineteenth century, the town printed even more booklets and books for over a century. There are still hundreds of libraries of various sizes, congregational and *serambi* mosques, and a few Islamic educational institutions.

The scholarly leaders of educational activities in Ponnāni were members of the Makhdūm family. They had migrated there from Cochin on the Malabar Coast, but were originally from the Coromandel Coast in Southeast India. It was Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn Senior (1467–1522) who had established the mosque-college after his return from a long journey in the Middle East for education and pilgrimage. He was the author of several works on mysticism, ethics, and law, as well as a poem opposing Portuguese incursions in the region. The Portuguese had attacked Ponnāni several times since it was the base for the Kuñ-ñāli Marakkārs, Muslim admirals of the Hindu Zamorins who fought the Por-

16 Muhammed Suhail Hidaya, "The Qur'an Customized: Piety, Mobility and Trajactories of the Ponnani Mushaf" (paper presented at Little Meccas: the 7th Muhammad Alagil Chair in Arabia-Asia Studies Conference, National University of Singapore, 01 December 2022).

FIGURE 9.2
Valiya Jumuʿat Paḷḷi, the main congregational mosque in Ponnāni, a major centre of Islamic learning in the region since the sixteenth century
SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

tuguese in the Indian Ocean. Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn was the instigator of resistance to the Portuguese attacks on the Malabari people and their businesses.[17]

His legacy of scholarship, leadership, and activism was continued by his grandson Zayn al-Dīn Jr., the compiler of the *Ajwiba*. There is little solid historical information about his life and career, although elaborate details are given in many later hagiographical works.[18] He may have written many works in various fields of Islam, primarily in law and history. His most important work in law is the *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, an auto-commentary on his *Qurrat al-ʿayn*, but he is best known among historians for his chronicles on the Portuguese onslaughts, which provide detailed, accurate descriptions of the region and its communities in the sixteenth century.

The *Ajwiba*, with its idiosyncratic comments on social, cultural, political, juridical, and religious histories of Malabar in particular and the Indian subcontinent in general, has not been as well studied by historians.[19] The collection of *fatwa*s (nonbinding legal opinions) in it differs from most other such collections. These tend to establish an individual jurist's authority and record the answers he (hardly ever she) has given to questions on different topics raised by different people from different regions.[20] The jurists or their students would classify the questions and answers into different sections of legal categories and then compile them into a book.[21] While the questions derive from differ-

17 Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī Sr., *Tahrid ahlil iman ala jihadi abadati sulban*, trans. K.M. Muhammad (Calicut: Other Books, 2012).

18 For a reflective take on his biography, see Kooria, *Islamic Law in Circulation*, 229–239.

19 Mahmood Kooria, "A Sixteenth-Century Fatwa Collection: Islamic Law in 'Periphery'," *World Legal History Blog*, June 18, 2016 https://networks.h-net.org/node/16794/blog/world-legal-history-blog/130851/sixteenth-century-fatwa-collection-islamic-law- accessed October 30, 2023.

20 Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī, *al-Ajwibat al-ʿajība ʿan al-asʾilat al-gharība*, Ponnāni MS. 1203 [also numbered 2598].

21 On this process and pattern, see Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David

ent sources, the answers are attributed to a single jurist. The *Ajwiba* reverses this pattern: All its questions are raised by a single source, and the answers come from various authorities. Zayn al-Dīn Jr. poses the questions to jurists from Mecca, Cairo, the Ḥaḍramawt, and the Coromandel Coast.[22] All of these jurists belonged to the Shāfiʿī school and used early authoritative texts for their answers. Often the same question was asked to many jurists simultaneously, which resulted in complementary and frequently contradictory opinions on the same issues. Many questions in the text concern legal complications Zayn al-Dīn Jr. had to deal with in his homeland, where Muslims were a minority and lived under the authority of a Hindu kingdom (the Zamorins). His questions naturally raised issues which were not found in the usual Middle-East-centric Islamic legal texts of his period. The text also helps us to understand how Muslim communities in such a place as Malabar, far away from the Islamic heartlands, were seeking ways to solve recurring religious and legal predicaments which could not be resolved with the help of the existing Arabo-Persian-centric interpretations of Islam.

The *Ajwiba* has survived in at least three manuscripts and has been printed several times in Malabar. The manuscript I consulted for this chapter is from the mosque-college library of Ponnāni (MS. 1203 [also numbered 2598], fig. 9.1 and 9.8). I cross-checked with two other uncatalogued manuscripts, one of which is now kept at the Islahul Uloom Arabic College in Tānūr (fig. 9.3 and 9.4) and the other at Mithqāl Paḷḷi in Calicut (fig. 9.5 and 9.6). Both copies end with a statement that the text with answers from ten imams has been completed before 977 Hijri Era (=1569 CE), and they list the names of all ten scholars. This statement must be from the compiler himself. The printed edition (fig. 9.7) also has the same statement at the end. Following the general patterns of Malabar manuscripts, the Ponnāni manuscript has no colophon, and therefore it is difficult to know by whom, when, and where exactly it was copied. The other two copies were written in the nineteenth century, and they do contain partial colophons. The Tānūr copy appears in a multitext-manuscript, and its colophon says its copying (*kitāba*) was completed after the night prayer (*ʿishāʾ*) on Thursday,

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S. Powers, "Muftis, Fatwas, and Islamic Legal Interpretation," in *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and their Fatwas*, eds. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 10, *passim*.

22 The respondent jurists were Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1566); Wajīh al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ziyād al-Zabīdī (d. 1568); ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar Bā Makhruma (d. 1565); ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿIzz al-Dīn Zamzamī (d. 1568), Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ramlī (d. 1596), Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb al-Sharbīnī (d. 1570), Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʾūf, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā al-Wāʿiẓ (see the footnote 23 on these two figures), ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz

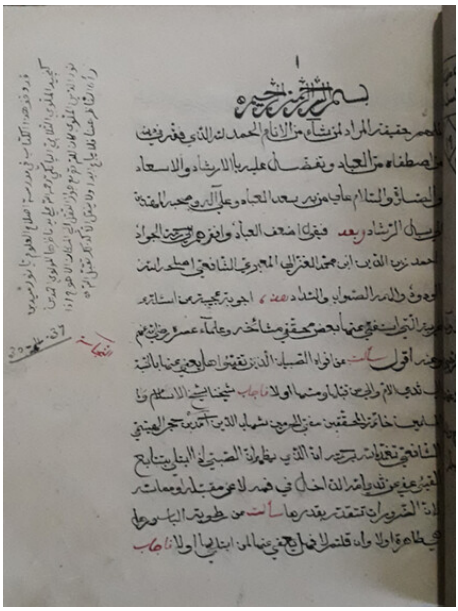

FIGURE 9.3
Opening page of an *Ajwiba* manuscript in a multi-text manuscript kept at the Islahul Uloom Arabic College, Tānūr, uncatalogued

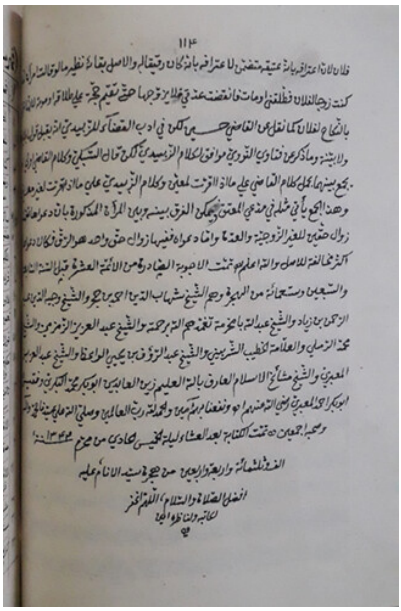

FIGURE 9.4
Closing page of the *Ajwiba* manuscript with a partial colophon in a multi-text manuscript, Islahul Uloom Arabic College, Tānūr, uncatalogued

Muharram 1[1], 1344 HE (July 30, 1925), but no name of the copyist is given.[23] The colophon for the Calicut manuscript is better: Imbicci Muḥammad b. al-Qāḍī Muḥammad al-Kālikūtī al-ʿUmānī copied it on Saturday, Jamād al-Ākhir 3, 1347 HE (November 17, 1928).[24] The Ponnāni manuscript could be older than this, but it contains mistakes (even in the names of an answering jurist whom the compiler possibly knew in person), so it cannot be an original autograph.[25]

In the text, we have a set of questions and answers related to bibliographical practices, and there the author builds up his narrative mainly based on the ear-

al-Maʿbarī, Zayn al-ʿAbidīn b. Abī Bakr Muḥammad al-Bakrī, and Abu Bakr Aḥmad al-Maʿbarī. Some of these jurists have also been mentioned in his *Fatḥ al-muʿīn* such as Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī and Wajīh al-Dīn al-Zabīdī.

23 Malaybārī, *al-Ajwibat al-ʿajība ʿan al-asʾilat al-gharība*, multitext manuscript, Islahul Uloom Arabic College in Tānūr, uncatalogued. The date is given is as "al-ḥādī min Muḥarram," and the *al-ḥādī* must be referring to *al-ḥādī ʿashar* (eleven).

24 Malaybārī, *al-Ajwibat al-ʿajība ʿan al-asʾilat al-gharība*, Mithqāl Paḷḷi, Calicut, unpaginated.

25 See footnote number 24.

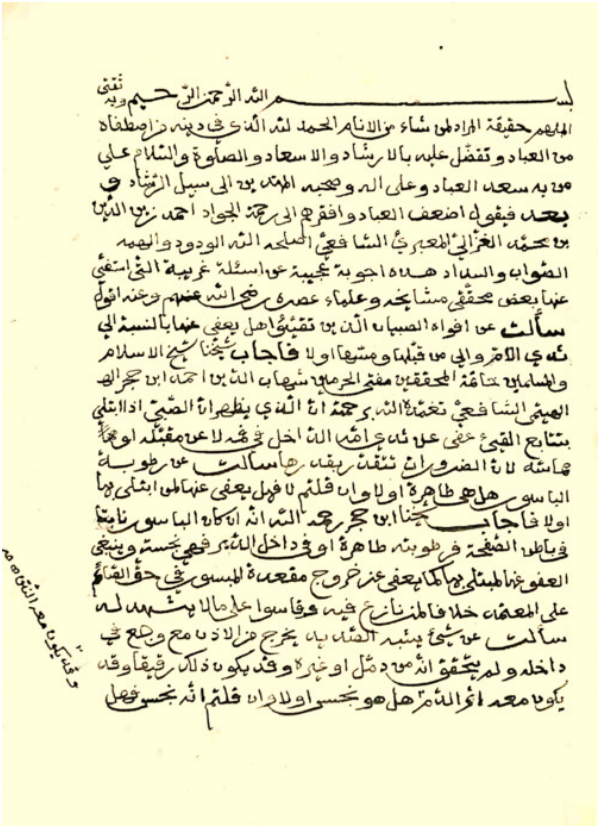

FIGURE 9.5
Opening page of an *Ajwiba* manuscript at the Mithqāl Paḷḷi, Calicut, uncatalogued

lier authors from Arabia. Even so, we see elsewhere that he moves away from the discourses with his own arguments, furthering the legalistic discursive tradition. The text provides an opportunity to explore the history of scribal and textual culture in the region and an insight into the conversations taking place across the wider Indian Ocean littoral. It elucidates how manuscripts were produced, preserved, and circulated through discussions about rules for writing, illuminating, classifying, shelving, loaning, erasing, correcting, discarding, and objectifying. My further discussion of these aspects of this text will involve supplementing the *Ajwiba* with a few extra texts, some written by the author, such as the *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, and a few others, either from this region or the wider Islamic world.

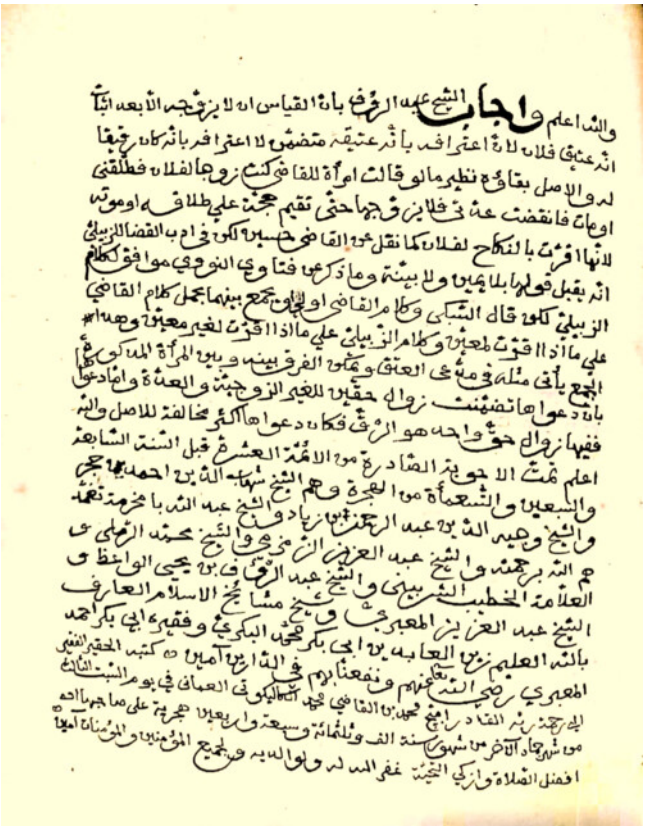

FIGURE 9.6
Closing page of the *Ajwiba* manuscript at the Mithqāl Paḷḷi, Calicut, with a clear colophon, uncatalogued

4 Writing Etiquette

Early in its discussions of different legal issues, the *Ajwiba* addresses the question of respect for books instead of the usual carelessness. Its main concern is any written material, whether books or manuscripts. Diverse terms are used. Most are derived from the Arabic root *k-t-b* (e.g. *kitāba*, the writing process; *kitāb* and *maktūb*, the result of that process), but very rarely it uses terms now used particularly for manuscripts (e.g. *n-s-kh*, "copy"; or *kh-ṭ-ṭ*, "letter"). It was certainly written in the manuscript age, because printing technology had not yet gained popularity. Manuscripts were at the forefront of their minds, even though they used generic terms for any written material.

The initial codicological discussion is part of a section on ritual purity. It is linked to the rules of purity for approaching the Qur'an, touching or copying it, thus interconnecting this with general rules for textual praxis. Regarding the production of manuscripts, the *Ajwiba* has two main concerns: writing

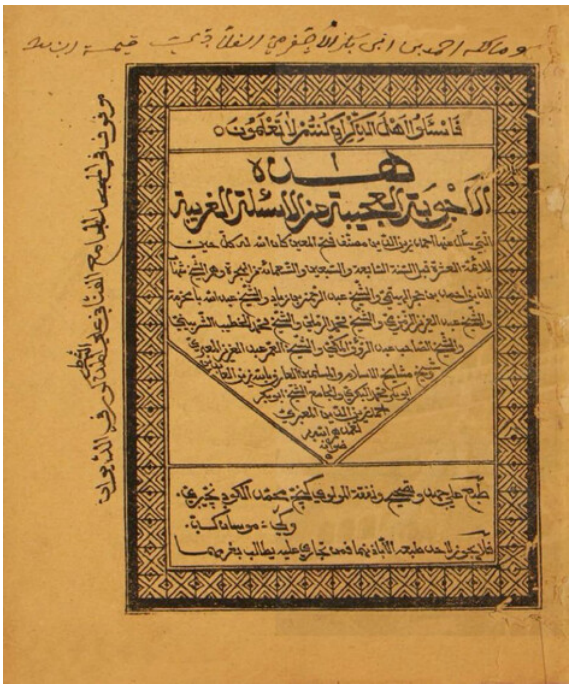

FIGURE 9.7
The cover page of a lithographed edition of the *Ajwiba*. It uses the local style of Arabic script known as *Ponnāni lipi*, which was developed in Ponnāni and used widely in the lithographed texts of Arabic and Arabic-Malayalam. The upper margin contains the price and the name of the owner, who endowed it to the Valiya Jumuʿat Paḷḷi in Ponnāni as noted in the right margin

and illumination. On writing it raises the question on whether the Qurʾan can be written with human saliva; that must have been done in local talismanic and funerary rituals when certain verses from the Qurʾan were written on the corpse, the shroud, or funerary objects. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʾūf says it is permissible,[26] based on indirect evidence (*mafhūm*, "gist") from the *Majmūʿ* of Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 1277). There is a prohibition against copying the Qurʾan with inexcusable impure things, from which it may be concluded that it is not

26 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fols. [2ᵛ–3ʳ]. It is interesting that this manuscript does not include him, or anyone with the name ʿAbd al-Raʾūf, among "the ten imams" who gave answers in the text, see fol. 64ʳ. Instead, it names one ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yaḥyā al-Wāʿiẓ, who is not mentioned in the Tanur and Calicut manuscripts. Those mention ʿAbd al-Raʾūf b. Yaḥyā al-Wāʿiẓ, who must have been ʿAbd al-Raʾūf b. Yaḥyā al-Wāʿiẓ al-Zamzamī (d. 1576), a student of Ibn Ḥajar and a compiler of his fatwas. These manuscripts must be correct, and his name must have been copied or written incorrectly in the Ponnāni manuscript. The only other potential candidate is ʿAbd al-Raʾūf b. Tāj al-ʿĀrifīn al-Haddādī al-Munāwī (d. 1622), a Shāfiʿī jurist from Cairo, a prolific author and a student of certain scholars connected to the compiler of the *Ajwiba*, such as Shams al-Dīn al-Ramlī. For his biography, see Muhammad Amīn b. Faḍl Allāh al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar fī aʿyān al-qarn al-ḥādī ʿashar* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Wahabiyya, 1867), vol. 2, 412–416.

prohibited to write with excusable impure things. Saliva is therefore an appropriate medium for writing. On the basis of analogical reasoning, he identifies the practice as *karāha*, a reprehensible act but one that is not prohibited. It is reprehensible because saliva becomes contaminated when it is separated from the mouth.

In his *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, Zayn al-Dīn Jr. also has an interesting discussion on writing the Qurʾan, particularly on the use of non-Arabic script. "It is forbidden [...] to write the Qurʾān in the non-Arabic script (*al-ʿajamiyya*)," he writes.[27] This ruling is part of a larger debate between the Shāfiʿī and the Ḥanafī schools on copying the Qurʾan and translating it into different languages. The Ḥanafī jurists allowed it as long as it was a *tarjama musāwiya*, an equivalent translation (i.e. word-for-word) and was accompanied by the Arabic original, even though al-Shāfiʿī (d. 820), the founder of the school, and his followers asserted that scripture was untranslatable.[28] This ruling was not applied to non-Qurʾanic texts. In fact, al-Shāfiʿī asserted the necessity of translating books from other languages, especially if they belonged to enemies during a war.[29] In an aside in the *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, in a chapter on funeral rites, Zayn al-Dīn Jr. says that it is prohibited to write on the *kafan* (the plain cloth used to wrap the corpse) anything from the Qurʾan or any name for God unless it is written with saliva, for that writing does not remain visible for long.[30]

The *Ajwiba* also briefly discusses writing the title of a manuscript in the text.[31] This question arose from using the Qurʾan and other books as carriers or platforms for valuable objects (see below). The answering jurist is Wajīh al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ziyād al-Zabīdī (d. 1568), a Shāfiʿī jurist from Yemen and a *mufti* there and in the Hijaz. He cites the *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn fī faḍl al-sharafayn: sharaf al-ʿilm al-jaliyy wa l-nasab al-nabawī* ("Pearls of Two Strings on the Merits of the Two Dignities: The Dignity of Illuminating Knowledge and of the Prophetic Lineage"; = *Jawāhir*). This was written by Nūr al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Samhūdī (1440–1506), a noted Egyptian jurist, historian, theologian, traditionist, and prolific author, who migrated to Medina in 1485 and settled there until his death.[32] What Zabīdī does not realise is that Samhūdī has taken the whole passage from *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ wa al-mutakallim fī adab al-ʿālim wa*

27 Aḥmad Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn bi sharḥ Qurrat al-ʿayn*, ed. Bassām ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī (Limassol: al-Jaffān wa al-Jābī & Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005), 64.

28 A.L. Tibawi, "Is the Qurʾan Translatable?" *The Muslim World* 52, no. 1 (1962), 4–16.

29 Al-Shāfiʿī, *Umm*, ed. Rifʿat Fawzī ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (Mansura: Dār al-Wafāʾ, 2001), 5: 647.

30 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 216.

31 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 3^{v}.

32 This manuscript has been edited and published, although there is a slight variation in the last part of the published title: ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allah al-Ḥasanī al-Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn fī*

l-mutaʿallim ("Reminder to the Listener and Student on the Etiquette of the Teacher and Student"; = *Tadhkira*) of the well-known Mamluk jurist Badr al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Jamāʿa (1241–1333), who was the Shāfiʿī chief judge of Egypt on three occasions, and of Damascus twice.[33] I shall discuss the details of the passage later, but in the *Ajwiba* we have an indirect citation from Ibn Jamāʿa: "it is required to write the title of the text from the bottom of the last pages. The heads of the letters of this title should be towards the cover page on the side of *basmala*.[34] This would be useful to identify the text, and to facilitate taking it from among several texts."

That this passage is cited in the *Ajwiba* shows that Arabic texts were normally written on paper and not palm leaf, which is presupposed by the question and the response. Shared concepts and familiarity between the questioner and the respondent were important for a meaningful exchange of legal ideas in general and especially for fatwas. The answer in this citation presupposes the same writing material and that there were many manuscripts and libraries in Malabar. That Zabīdī had close juridical contacts with the region can be seen from his two separate collections of fatwas, one specifically titled *al-Ajwibat al-Malaybāriyya* ("Malabari Answers").[35]

The discussion subtly links writing a sacred text with ritual purity and the use of an unusual writing. The ideal concept of writing for jurists was a sacralised activity, while some of them recognised that other styles of writing were practised by ordinary people. Without any immediate access to paper and ink when circumstances required them, they would write scriptural texts on cloth with saliva as an instant, cheap substitute. Local jurists questioned the legality of the practice, lest it be considered ritually impure, but after a Meccan jurist permitted it, they allowed it, provided proper ink was not used. In Islam, the notion of ritual purity has often dominated the tradition of writing. Olly

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faḍl al-sharafayn: sharaf al-ʿilm al-jaliyy wa al-nasab al-ʿalī, ed. Mūsā Bunāy al-ʿAlīlī (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat al-ʿĀnī, 1984).

33 Badr al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ wa l-mutakallim fī adab al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim*, ed. Muḥammad b. Mahdī al-ʿAjamī (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 2012). Thanks to the peer reviewer, I learnt that Franz Rosenthal has translated the portions of Ibn Jamāʿa relevant here. I have maintained my translation here primarily because Rosenthal's main text is not Ibn Jamāʿa's own work but a later comparable text, *Muʿīd fī adab al-mufīd wa-l-mustafīd* by ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ b. Mūsā al-ʿAlmawī (d. 1573). Franz Rosenthal, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947), 8–18.

34 For the cover page, the term used in the critical editions of the *Jawāhir* and *Tadhkira* is *ghāshiyya*. Instead, the *Ajwiba* manuscript (fol. 3ᵇ) uses the term *ḥāshiyya* (marginalia).

35 Wajīh al-Dīn Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad, *Fatāwā al-Zabīdiyya*, Ponnāni MS. 494; on the *Ajwibat al-Malaybāriyya*, see his self-reference in fol. 2ᵛ.

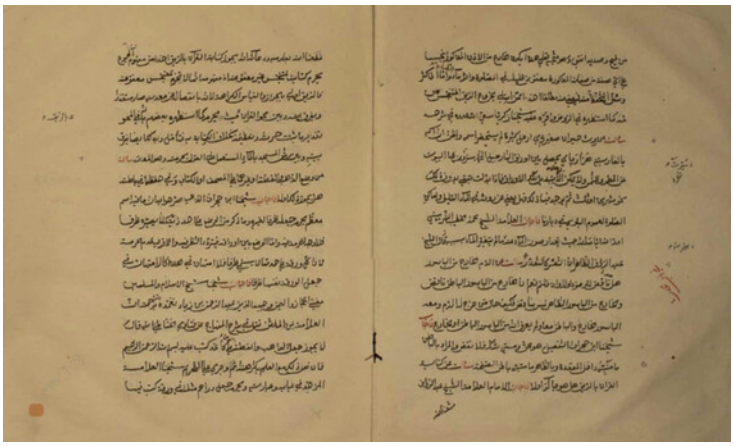

FIGURE 9.8 Two pages from the *Ajwiba* (Ponnāni MS. 1203 [2598]) with a question and two answers related to the contemporary book culture.

Akkerman has recently explored this theme in detail in the context of the Alawi Bohra philological tradition in Gujarat in western India. She demonstrates how copyists applied themselves to being pure in body, spirit, dress, place, and time when preparing to copy and the act of copying manuscripts was considered sacred and accessible to a select few in a defined place.[36] While the Shāfiʿī discourse does not restrict ordinary people from access to writing or to what is written, it requires everyone to maintain purity in body and mind and also in their choice of writing material. The stipulations on adding a title to a manuscript are a further sophistication of this ideal, and they ensure that the texts in one's own collection or in a public library can be easily identified.

5 Ornamentation

Manuscripts of the Qur'an and other texts could be ornamented by using precious metals and other material, and this was another codicological praxis that Zayn al-Dīn Jr. includes in the *Ajwiba*. His gendered perspective on the ownership and ornamentation of the texts separates the rules for men and for women concerning the precious metals. This discussion occurs in answering a question about the entanglements of the Qur'an with gold and silver, provoking an

36 Olly Akkerman, *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books: Arabic Manuscripts among the Alawi Bohras of South Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 93, 199–206, 331–333, *passim*.

answer from three different scholars.[37] The detailed answer is from Zabīdī with a long passage from *Jawāhir* and *Tadhkira*. Zayn al-Dīn says elsewhere that men can ornament their personal *muṣḥaf* with silver, but not with gold. Quoting Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1567), a noted Egyptian Shāfiʿī jurist who migrated to Mecca and lived there until his death, he writes that the silver ornamentation, such as ornamenting the cover with silver, is allowed to receive blessings (*tabarruk*). Women can ornament their personal *muṣḥaf* with gold, but men should not use gold. Ornamentation with silver (for men) and gold (for women) can demonstrate an honour (*ikrām*) attributed to the Qurʾan.[38]

It is recommended (*ḥasan*) that even men should write the Qurʾan with gold, but they should not ornament other manuscripts, not even with silver.[39] This is an interesting set of rulings. Women may use gold and silver to write and ornament a Qurʾan manuscript, but for this, men may use only silver. However, men may use gold to write the text of the Qurʾan, but not to ornament it or its pouch. Such a gender difference between writing (*katb*) and ornamentation (*taḥliya*) applies only to Qurʾan manuscripts. For other manuscripts, gold and silver are unconditionally proscribed for men; probably that applied to women too, but the text is not specific.

Immediately after this discussion, Zayn al-Dīn says that the overlaying or plating with gold is "absolutely and unconditionally forbidden" (*wa-l-tamwīh ḥarām qaṭʿ muṭlaq*). It is not clear whether he is referring to the general practice of covering metals or materials with gold or silver, or coating the manuscript folios or cover boards with golden or silver leaves. From the qualifications of *qaṭʿ muṭlaq*, it appears always to be forbidden, in manuscripts and elsewhere. He writes further, "if anybody obtains anything from it by exposing it to the fire, it is forbidden to sustain it."[40] That there is an element of deceit embodied in the camouflage of the ornamentation seems to be the problem leading to this outright prohibition.

The discussion shows that there was a nuanced understanding of manuscript ornamentation among Malabari jurists. It is intriguing that the rulings on the use of gold and silver in Islamic law on the basis of gender spills over to cultural ideals in general book culture. It is not immediately obvious why men

37 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 3^{r}–4^{v}.

38 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 234.

39 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 234. This Shāfiʿī prohibition on the use of gold in the manuscripts may have been an influential reason for the remarkable absence of gold in the illuminated manuscripts from Aceh, while it is used all over the Islamic world, from the Ottoman and Mughal to the Safavid realms. I am thankful to Annabel Teh Gallop for this comment.

40 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 234.

should be able to use gold to write the Qurʾan but not anywhere else. In practice, not everyone in the region seems to have followed this ruling strictly, at least concerning general manuscripts. In the nearby Tānūr mosque-college library there are a few manuscripts with gold in its opening folios. One example is the multi-volume *Fatāwā ʿĀlamgīriyya*, a Ḥanafī text of Islamic law commissioned by the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707). Its provenance is not clear, but it seems to have been produced in northern India and brought to Malabar, where it has remained as part of the mosque library. It might be an anomaly in view of the general lack of ornamented manuscripts in the Malabar region. If so, it demonstrates that local scholars were prepared to accommodate texts written against their codicological norms. After the European expansion in the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century there had been an increase in the circulation of gold and silver in the Asian markets. People had been encouraged to melt down European coins and to reuse the bullion for everyday treasures. This supply of excessive bullion precipitated some economic, cultural, and political commotion in South and West Asia, so these legal discussions about codicological practice may well slightly reflect these tensions. Through their subtle rulings, the Arab and Indian jurists tried to discourage the overuse of gold, which was seen as deceitful camouflage after it had begun to become easier to acquire along the Indian Ocean rim by the late-sixteenth century.

6 Shelving Manuscripts

While as a child I was being taught how to keep my schoolbooks in a proper order, I did not think that several years later I would be reading similar instructions in the *Ajwiba*, which gives fairly detailed suggestions for arranging and shelving manuscripts according to their disciplines. The responses of Zabīdī about gold and silver ornamentation on Qurʾan manuscripts and manuscripts that contain verses from the Qurʾan are followed by specific recommendations about how to arrange books. This is what motivates him to cite in detail Samhūdī's *Jawāhir*, and thus indirectly also Ibn Jamāʿa's *Tadhkira*. Both texts have a long chapter on the etiquette for different manuscripts.

"The etiquette (*adab*) should be maintained in placing the books with attention to their disciplines, dignity, authors, and their greatness," says Ibn Jamāʿa as quoted by Zabīdī in the name of Samhūdī.[41] Because manuscripts retain the

41 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 3ᵛ. For the original, see Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 380–381.

aura of their disciplines and of their authors, their proper location in a library depends on this aura. Accordingly, "the most honourable ones should be at the very top of everything, then the ones after that in rank, and so on and so forth." Determining the status of a manuscript depends more on its discipline than its authorship, except for the Qurʾan, which always occupies pride of place. Similar sacred texts, such as the Bible, are not taken into account. They are recognised by Islam as composed by revelation, but the Qurʾan states that there are interpolations in the contents.

There are several discussions in Shāfiʿī texts giving a legal basis for the etiquette of conserving Qurʾan manuscripts. These include the rules about copying, carrying, touching folios or margins, turning pages, erasing words, burning, washing, and destroying.[42] In the Malabar context itself, Zayn al-Dīn Jr. provides a summary of these discussions in the *Fatḥ al-muʿīn* when discussing what is prohibited without ablution.[43] This proscription derives from the Qurʾan itself (chapter 56, verse 79) where touching it without being ritually pure is discouraged. Its prime location among other manuscripts was confirmed by Samhūdī, as quoted in the *Ajwiba*: "if there is the Holy *Muṣḥaf*, it should be kept on top of everything."[44] He also recommends keeping the Qurʾan in a case (*kharīṭa*, a case made of leather or a similar material) that has a strap on a nail or to keep it on a brad (*watid* or *watad*) on a clean, pure wall in the façade of the room (*ṣadr al-majlis*).

Next come "the exclusive hadith texts, such as *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*." By "exclusive hadith texts," Ibn Jamāʿa and those who cite him mean texts compiling only hadiths without explanations or interpretations. These compilations represent a sacred corpus of direct sayings and deeds of the Prophet, without any interpolations of compilers or scholars. For such works, authorship is not a concern; Ibn Jamāʿa cites Muslim (b. al-Ḥajjāj, d. 875) specifically and not Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 870), whose *Ṣaḥīḥ* is the most respected hadith text among most Muslims. The underlying principle for naming or not naming a specific hadith text relies on a wider conception that the line of transmission of their contents must be derived directly from the Prophet Muḥammad. The compilers of the hadith commanded respect themselves, but that depended on the topics they dealt with and the methods they employed to collect the words and deeds of the Prophet. All such works immediately follow the Qurʾan

42 In a Shāfiʿī perspective, an elaborate discussion is Ibn Qāsim al-ʿAbbādī and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Sharwānī, *Ḥawāshī Sharwānī wa-l-ʿAbbādī ʿalā Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj bi-sharḥ al-Minhāj*, ed. Anas al-Shāmī (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2016), 1: 271–288.

43 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 63–64.

44 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 3^{v}; Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 380.

in their importance as a source of Islamic law, and thus they occupy the second position on the shelf.

After the Qurʾan and the hadith texts come texts with some exegesis of the Qurʾan and the hadith. This specific category of exegesis, *tafsīr*, is used differently in the *Ajwiba* manuscript from the critical edition of Samhūdī's *Jawāhir* I checked. The *Ajwiba* says that it is the *tafsīr* of the Qurʾan, while the printed *Jawāhir* says it is the *tafsīr* of the hadith.[45] However, the printed editions of the *Ajwiba* and *Tadhkira* reconcile this difference by linking both texts. They state that the *tafsīr* of the Qurʾan should take priority over the *tafsīr* of the hadith (*thumma tafsīr al-Qurʾān thumma tafsīr al-ḥadīth*).[46] Such a mismatch between a manuscript and a printed edition can be explained as a scribal error on the part of the copyist. Alternatively, we could take each manuscript or edition as a product of its own time embodying individual preferences.

Ibn Jamāʿa then identifies a range of other disciplines in order of priority: "theology (*uṣūl al-dīn*), then legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), then substantive law ([*furūʿ al-*]*fiqh*), then grammar (*naḥw*: inflections and declensions), then morphology (*taṣrīf*: conjugation of verbs), then poems of the Arabs, then metrics (*ʿarūḍ*)." In this hierarchical order there are some disciplines not mentioned which catch our attention. It is noteworthy that some major fields, such as mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), ethics (*akhlāq*), philosophy, and logic are omitted, despite the fact that these were important areas of Islamic study. His selective choice of disciplines would not have been accidental but correspond to the dominant curricula of the institutions of his time. For these subjects they would have had larger collections of books, but smaller ones for topics deemed peripheral.

A finer distinction is then made by Ibn Jamāʿa (and therefore Samhūdī and Zabīdī in the *Ajwiba*): "If two texts are from the same discipline, at the top should be the one with the most [verses from the] Qurʾan or hadith. If they are equal [in the Qurʾan verses or hadith], the [priority should be given] to the author's distinction. If they are also equal, then the oldest one written and the one used the most by the scholars and the pious people. If that is also equal, then the more valid one (*aṣaḥḥ*)." Such subdivisions illustrate a general pattern in Islamic tradition of prioritising scripture above an author's distinction, age, and popularity. This last criterion is the most subjective one, and hardly constitutes a good basis for judging validity. It may be based on the number of mistakes in a specific copy of a manuscript, on personal assessments of valid and invalid conclusions, or on the general opinion of the scholarly community.

45 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 3ᵛ; Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 380.

46 Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī, *al-Ajwibat al-ʿajība ʿan al-asʾilat al-gharība* 1908 (n.p: Matbaʿat Muʿīn al-Islam, 1930/1349H), 5; Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ*, 128.

Whatever the subject matter of a manuscript may be, the *Ajwiba* has four brief suggestions on how to store them. As before, these have been taken over from Samhūdī's *Jawāhir* and Ibn Jamāʿa's *Tadhkira*.[47] The name of every text should be written on the front edge as described earlier in order to be able to identify it among other manuscripts. In the case of a manuscript set down on the ground or on or under a wooden shelf (*takht* is used in the printed editions of the *Ajwiba* and *Tadhkira*, but *taht* in the *Ajwiba* manuscript and in the critical edition of the *Jawāhir*), the front side with the *basmala* and the opening pages should face upwards. A manuscript may suffer damage if other folios are placed inside it or by placing it on its envelope flaps.[48] Large codices and tomes should not be placed on smaller ones lest they overbalance. This is followed by further precautions to avoid the damage or destruction of manuscripts.

7 "Preservation through Destruction"

Islamic book culture includes various ways of producing and preserving manuscripts as well as for appropriately and legitimately discarding them.[49] The legal texts are concerned with folios and manuscripts in which a name for God or words from the Qurʾan or the hadiths are written. Any such written material would be contaminated if discarded as trash and must always be treated with respect. Similar notions existed in Jewish communities in the Middle East, who archived documents containing the divine name in a special storeroom in synagogues known as a *geniza*. Discovering them now provides scholars with an abundant source of historical documents. Islamic jurists gave suggestions about ways to avoid the burden of preserving such materials indefinitely while cautioning against destroying manuscripts unnecessarily and inappropriately. The *Ajwiba* touches on these subjects (tearing, erasing, washing, swallowing, drinking, and burning) when dealing in general with the preservation or protection of everyday objects used by the people.

In the *Ajwiba*, Zayn al-Dīn Jr. forbids any tearing of "the manuscript with no purpose." He also proscribes eating written materials (e.g., parts of Qurʾan)

47 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, 5; Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ*, 129; Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 381.

48 Here, the printed edition of the *Ajwiba* uses the phrase *waḍʿ al-waraqa* (placing the folios), while its manuscript uses the phrase *waḍʿ al-waraqat al-radda* (placing the folios on the envelop flap). *Jawāhir*'s critical edition mentions only *waḍʿ al-radda* (placing on the envelope flap).

49 See the chapter of Olly Akkerman in this volume in the context of Gujarat; for the wider context, see Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Tradition".

even though drinking any ink that has been erased when copying the Qurʾan would be allowed. This was an element of the talismanic and medical traditions which existed throughout the Islamic world. The people would write verses from the Qurʾan, hadith, or prayer books on pieces of paper with easily removable ink, put what they had written into a cup of water until it was dissolved, and then drink the solution. They would also write on selected pottery, wood, or stone, then wash off what they had written and drink the mixture of ink and water. Despite the prohibition on swallowing paper, we should note that this talismanic praxis has persisted among some Malabar Muslims and their coreligionists in many other parts of Asia and Africa, who swallow paper snippets on which quotations from the Qurʾan, a prayer, or a talismanic code had been written.[50]

Elsewhere, Zayn al-Dīn Jr. discusses the burning and washing of manuscripts which causes damage or destruction: "it is reprehensible (*yukrah*) to burn something written on it, except for such purpose as precaution (*ṣiyāna*)." This means that written material may be burned in order to prevent it being disrespected by letting it fall on the ground or discarded as trash.[51] This ruling occurs when discussing Qurʾan manuscripts, so it most likely refers primarily to folios on which Qurʾanic verses are written. But this statement may apply generally to any written text quoting sacred verses or mentioning a divine name. He implies that burning is not reprehensible if done in order to protect sacredness, but, instead of burning, he adds: "it is better to wash it off."[52] This brief discussion is in the *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*; it does not appear in the *Ajwiba* but was anticipated in the larger commentarial corpus of the Shāfiʿī school.[53] His teacher in Mecca, who may have been Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, expresses similar opinions in his *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj* and adds that burning any manuscripts is proscribed because "it wastes the wealth."[54]

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50 For a comparison, see two recent ethnographic accounts: Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 293–295; Hannah Nieber, "Drinking the Written Qurʾan: Healing with Kombe in Zanzibar Town" (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2019). Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-like Practices": 45 references the Egyptian Shāfiʿī jurist al-Zarkashi (1344–1392), who recounts the story of a pious man who swallowed a piece of paper bearing the *basmala* (the name of God) that he discovered lying on the ground, and God rewarded him by granting him greater wisdom.

51 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 64.

52 Washing ink off the paper must have been a difficult task, but certain inks and papers made this possible. In contrast, it was easy to wash text off from parchment, but I have not come across any significant use of parchment as a writing surface in the region.

53 ʿAbbādī and Sharwānī, *Ḥawāshī*, 1: 287–288.

54 ʿAbbādī and Sharwānī, *Ḥawāshī*, 1: 287.

Erasing with saliva may also destroy a document. In the *Ajwiba*, this point is raised when questioning if it was correct to use saliva instead of ink to quote the Qurʾan, as mentioned earlier. The respondent, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf, says that writing with saliva is different from erasing with it. He allows writing, but proscribes erasing: "It is prohibited as some jurists have expounded, because in the erasure there is a process of contaminating something that has already been established as honoured and sacred, in contrast to writing with it; think!"[55] Such a prohibition on the small-scale destruction of a text specifically concerns verses from the Qurʾan regarded as sacred. It does not necessarily apply to non-religious texts. Although the ruling for using saliva is not specific, it will have applied to correcting minor mistakes or disfiguration when writing anything.

There are other ways of discarding unwanted sacred books, especially the Qurʾan, but no others are mentioned. As far as I know, ritually burying a sacred text is not practised in Malabar communities, but there are reports that the Alawi Bohras of Gujarat bury manuscripts in a graveyard or throw them into lakes or unused wells.[56] Malabar Muslims would also regularly discard unwanted sacred texts into unused wells until recently, but now that more and more open-wells have been replaced by bore-wells, they use rivers instead. That the *Ajwiba* and its forerunners do not discuss these methods indicates that they were uncommon in the region in that period.

8 Circulation

Through the centuries manuscripts travelled in the Islamic world, from micro-networks, small households and scriptoriums, through wider networks to far-away regions and even across continents. Many scholars have studied various dimensions of such textual mobility, and I have explored elsewhere the transoceanic circulations of texts with a focus on Shāfiʿī legal works.[57] In the

55 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 3ʳ.

56 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 221. This is likely connected to the views held by some Shāfiʿī jurists, who regarded burial as a sacrilege, as "holy books must not be disgraced by contact with the earth." Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-like Practices": 39, 53.

57 Kooria, *Islamic Law in Circulation*; cf. Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*; Fallou Ngom, *Muslims Beyond the Arab World: The Odyssey of ʿAjamī and Muridiyya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Judith Pfeiffer, *Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon, *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Net-*

texts with which we are concerned here, the jurists concern themselves with the laws and etiquette of transferring manuscripts on the micro-level, such as borrowing, lending, buying, selling, endowing, and inheriting them.

Ibn Jamāʿa, out of eleven rules on manuscripts or books at large, has three prescriptions for buying, borrowing, and leasing. In the *Ajwiba*, only a few portions from the second and third directives have been quoted. The first directive concerns possession of manuscripts as a requirement for studying a discipline. "It is obligatory on a student in every possible manner to access the necessary books by purchasing them. If [he is] not [able to purchase, he may] hire (*ijāra*) or borrow (*ʿāriya*) them." He adds further that he "should not borrow (*lā yastaʿīr*) a book if he is able to purchase or hire it."[58] The second directive is detailed, and it specifically talks about the etiquette of borrowing books. "It is meritorious (*yustaḥabb*) to lend books to others, if there is no harm to borrower or lender. It is reprehensible to lend them [the books] for a group (*qawm*). The former is the better, for it provides assistance for knowledge along with the virtues and merits of unconditional gratuitous loan." He goes on to explain nuances of lending books with historical anecdotes, and says, "It is required of the borrower to thank the lender and reward him well. He is not to keep [the book] with him for long unnecessarily, but he should return it as soon as his need is over. He should not withhold it when the owner requests or spares it. It is not allowed to write on it without the permission of the owner, to write marginalia or anything on the blank spaces in its preliminary or concluding material unless he knows the owner is content, as a *muḥaddith* would write on a part he had heard or written. He should not blacken it, lend it to others, or deposit it except for the extreme urgency allowed in law. He also should not copy anything from it without the permission of its owner."[59] Following this long list of procedure for a borrowed or lent manuscript, some trivial exceptions to these rules in the case of the manuscript being endowed to imprecise beneficiaries are provided.

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works and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth Century Western Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Judith Pfeiffer and Manfred Kropp, eds. *Theoretical Approaches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2007); Scott Reese, ed. *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

58 Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ*, 126; Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 377–378.

59 Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ*, 126–127; Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 378–379 has dropped a few phrases in the passage, such as the one on the *muhaddith* in the following passage.

None of these discussions appear in the *Ajwiba*. But Zayn al-Dīn Jr. discusses related issues in his *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, and he echoes Ibn Jamāʿa's opinion on the gratuitous loan of books. He does not refer to him or to Samhūdī but instead refers to his contemporaries, scholars such as Ibn Qāsim al-ʿAbbādī (d. in or after 1584) and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī. At the end of a chapter on gratuitous loan, he writes: "Important: ʿAbbādī and others have opined on a borrowed book in which one finds a mistake that he should not rectify it, except in the case of the *muṣḥaf* [whose rectification] is obligatory. Our teacher [Ibn Ḥajar] has said: 'what appears [to me] is nothing should be rectified in someone else's property except in the *muṣḥaf*, unless one assumes the owner would be content.'" This differentiation between the manuscripts of the Qurʾan and other manuscripts is important, and it is intriguing that Ibn Jamāʿa and Samhūdī do not mention this despite a detailed discussion on the topic. Amplifying this aspect of the discussion, Zayn al-Dīn writes: "It is obligatory to rectify the *muṣḥaf*, but only if it does not damage its script (*khaṭṭ*) because of its fragility. [Similarly,] it is obligatory to rectify the endowed [manuscript] if one is certain about the mistake."[60]

Endowment, as discussed by Zayn al-Dīn, was an important way of transferring ownership. A manuscript was considered to be a very valuable commodity in the premodern world, and many public institutions, such as colleges, universities, mosques, and libraries, benefited from such endowments. In the *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, Zayn al-Dīn encourages this tradition. He says that endowing manuscripts of the Qurʾan and religious texts in the name of deceased people would benefit them in the hereafter.[61] At the end of a chapter on endowment, he writes that the administrator of endowments is obliged to facilitate any legitimate application to copy an endowed manuscript within the limits of the rights of an applicant and administrator's duties.[62] This provision is slightly elaborated by Ibn Jamāʿa, who allows copying or correcting a manuscript if it is an endowment to unfixed beneficiaries, yet says it is better to ask the permission of the administrator. Furthermore, someone who copies with the permission of the owner or administrator should not insert empty pages into the codex or place the inkpot and inked pen above the folios.[63] Even so, Zayn al-Dīn asserts that the borrower or the applicant is not to be held responsible for any damage caused to the manuscript during careful and legitimate use. "For example, if a jurist borrows a book endowed for the Muslims, then [he is not responsible] if

60 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 388.
61 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 417, 430 and 431.
62 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 417.
63 Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ*, 127; Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 379.

it is damaged in his hand without any misuse, because he is included among the beneficiaries of the endowment."[64]

9 Objectification

Of central concern in the *Ajwiba* is the utilisation of manuscripts for all sorts of purposes: carriers, holders, cases, cushions, pillows, air coolers, balancers, etc. The text proscribes any such practice as showing disrespect or allowing damage to a manuscript. The precise question Zayn al-Dīn poses is whether it is appropriate to place precious metals on the *muṣḥaf* or on a manuscript. From three contemporary jurists he receives completely different responses with different justifications.

The question posed was, "I asked about placing gold and silver or other things on the *muṣḥaf* or books or about keeping them inside [the books]. Is this permitted or not?" The first answer is from Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, who says that the previous jurists have explicated the prohibition of making the *muṣḥaf* or anything that contains the divine names a container (*ẓarf*). "What is mentioned [in the question] is about placing [on or inside], neither of which makes it a container, and therefore there is no place for prohibiting this."[65] He speculates on placing things in between the folios, which calls for a meticulous judgement. "The most apparent view is that there is no prohibition, because each page (*waraqa*) independently cannot be identified as a carrier, and therefore it is not improper treatment (*imtihān*), compared to the mistreatment in making the paper itself a carrier."

The ensuing answers from the jurists Zabīdī and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar Bā Makhruma (d. 1565) take a completely different approach. Quoting the *Fatāwā* of al-Ḥanāṭī, as cited by Ibn Mulaqqin (d. 1401) in his commentary on the *Minhaj al-ṭālibīn* of Nawawī, Zabīdī writes: "It is not permitted to put gold, silver, and the like on the paper (*kāghad*) of the books that contain *bi-smi llāhi l-raḥmāni l-raḥīm*. If someone does so, being aware of its reprehension, he has sinned. In his *ʿUbāb*, our teacher the erudite al-Muzjad has also held the same view of its prohibition. His exact statement is this: 'It is prohibited to place dirhams on pages of books that contain [verses from] the Qurʾan.'"[66] Similarly, Bā Makhruma says: "Certainly placing gold, silver, and similar things on the holy *muṣḥaf* and the [manuscripts of] religious knowledge is prohibited, because it

64 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 386.

65 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 3r.

66 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fols. 3r–v.

certainly degrades and denigrates its honour. The same goes with placing those inside them."[67] From this discussion centred on the Qurʾan, it is evident that the same rules also apply for other texts. Bā Makhruma refers to the religious knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-sharʿī*) while Zabīdī and others whom he cites generalises for any text that contains the *basmala*.

Zayn al-Dīn ignores the historical context of these juridical opinions in a related substantive legal discussion in the *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*.[68] The *Ajwiba* was compiled "before 977 H[E]" (1569 C[E]), while the *Fatḥ* was completed on Friday Ramadan 24, 982 (= January 17, 1575).[69] In this process, he ignores the opinion of his teacher Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, and takes the opinions of other jurists for a conclusive statement: "It is forbidden to give the immature people access to the like of the *muṣḥaf*, even if it has only some verses; to write it [the Qurʾan] in non-Arabic script (*ʿajamiyya*); to place things such as a dirham on the manuscript[s] (*maktūba*) of [the Qurʾān] and religious knowledge (*ʿilm sharʿī*). The same goes with keeping it [the dirham] in between the pages, *pace* our teacher."[70] These contradictory views between Meccan and Malabari jurists on keeping the silver coins inside the books are worthy of note, and it is left for the readers to follow whichever opinion they prefer in their daily practices and veneration of manuscripts.

Besides discussing the utilisation of manuscripts as containers for precious metals, the legal texts also deal with other uses for manuscripts. In the *Ajwiba*, the discussion is part of Zabīdī's previous answer, and he cites Samhūdī and thus Ibn Jamāʿa. They all proscribe using manuscripts in which to deposit odd papers, documents, and pamphlets, or as a pillow (*mikhadda*), press (*mikbas*), armrest (*muttakaʾ*), bolster (*masnad/misnad*), fan (*mirwaha*), swat to kill bedbugs (*miqtalat al-baqq*) and other insects: "especially killing a bug while it is on a page is a serious [offence]."[71] Besides these interdictions deriving from Ibn Jamāʿa via Samhūdī, Zabīdī cites another noted contemporary jurist, Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad al-Bakrī al-Ṭanbadāwī (d. 1541), from Zabīd. He says that it is not

67 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 4[r].

68 On the juridical practice of "stripping of" contextual inferences from the fatwa texts to include in the substantive legal texts, see Brinkley Messick, *Sharīʿa Scripts: A Historical Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Wael Hallaq, "From Fatwās to Furūʿ: Growth and Change in Islamic Substantive Law," *Islamic Law and Society* 1, no. 1 (1994): 29–65.

69 Both dates are given by the author at the end of the original texts, Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 64[a]; Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 673.

70 Malaybārī, *Fatḥ al-muʿīn*, 64.

71 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fols. 3[v]–4[r]; Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ*, 129; Samhūdī, *Jawāhir al-ʿiqdayn*, 381.

allowed to use religious texts (*kutub al-shara*ʿ) as bookrests while reading other texts, "because it shows disrespect for knowledge (*ʿilm*)."[72] Zabīdī adds that "it is forbidden to place new footwear on it or inside it, because it shows a sort of disrespect."[73] These two admonitions are against disrespecting books or knowledge in general, whereas the rationale is based on the damage to manuscripts that these practices would cause.[74]

10 Conclusion

In the *Ajwiba*, the Malabari jurist Zayn al-Dīn Jr. sought answers from Yemeni, Egyptian, and Hijazi contemporaries on the juridical implications of different practices of writing, owning, and preserving books. The answers he received give significant insights into the bookcraft of people of letters and law in the Islamic world of his time. In their discussions, various socio-cultural and religious norms are intertwined with the perception and etiquette and of writing and reading which was rooted in preceding, deeper discourses across several centuries widespread across the lands of Islam. Scholars from a broad intellectual spectrum sought to make meanings of themselves, their religion, and their scriptural and associated texts. They ascribed a metaphysical aura to written materials and to the very act of writing, accumulated from thought processes about intellectual, religious, and sacred spheres with a distinguished genealogy. Their discussions lead us to five main conclusions.

First, a close examination of these discussions reveals a theoretical basis in their approach to the codicological tradition of Malabari Muslims, and possibly of Muslim communities at large across the Indian Ocean. It shows diverse ways in which a religious and legal framework was applied to the pious way Muslims lived with manuscripts while maintaining attention to their sacred

72 Among his contemporaries, Ṭanbadāwī was considered as "the sun among stars," notes a historian of his time. His fatwas were also collected into a single book and was circulated widely among the Zabīdi scholars, but he is most reputed for taking a positive stand on drinking coffee while many ruled that it was forbidden. See, ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh al-ʿAydarūs, *Tārīkh al-nūr al-sāfir ʿan akhbār al-qarn al-ʿāshir*, eds. Aḥmad Ḥālū, Maḥmūd al-Arnāʾūt and Akram al-Būshī (Beirut: Dar Sader Publishers, 2001), 306–310.

73 Malaybārī, *Ajwibat al-ʿajība*, fol. 4ʳ. The qualification of footwear specifically with "new" indicates that new footwear can be clean as it is unused, in contrast to the used ones. Either way, he rules with prohibition.

74 In this spirit, Ibn Jamāʿa also adds that "one should not fold margins or corners of the pages." Ibn Jamāʿa, *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ*, 129.

and sacralised status. Books are seen as omnipresent in people's routines, whether they are sleeping, eating, or drinking, and are to be protected, preserved, shelved, and even discarded with veneration. By identifying problems that arise in everyday events of life, and in death, many procedures for writing and ornamenting are identified as acceptable or not. Like most theories, the substance of these laws aims for an ideal in the world of books while recognising the existence of current practices. These deserve further investigation into collections still deposited across the coastal townships of Malabar. For now, we must make do with an impression of society's intellectual and legalistic approach to codicology from the prescribed ideal way of handling manuscripts. In practice, things may be different.

Second, we have observed in the sources we discussed above significant undercurrents in the discourses on appropriate social uses of the manuscripts, which cover place, time, and theme. Jurists from Malabar and the Indian subcontinent raise similar concerns, as also Egyptian, Yemeni, and Hijazi scholars share a common lexicon for codicological subjects. Their transregional exchanges illuminate the ways in which the ideas of a shared book culture circulated across the Indian Ocean littoral from the highlands of Zabīd in Yemen and the holy cities in the Hijaz to the coastal belt of Malabar on the Indian subcontinent. Temporally, our sources can be seen from the perspective of a *longue durée*, in which a chain of jurists, stretching from the sixteenth century back to the thirteenth (from Zayn al-Dīn to Zabīdī, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Samhūdī, Ibn Jamāʿa, and Nawawī) interconnect through a cord of related ideas. The fact that the codicological elaborations of Ibn Jamāʿa from the thirteenth century remained relevant across diverse regions until the sixteenth century demonstrates that people continued to observe techniques and tactics in handling manuscripts to sustain sacred notions which underpinned their codicological tradition. The discussions illustrate a consistent emphasis on the theme of respect. Within particular sets of concerns, these scholars demonstrate this theme in connection with the production of manuscripts, their intellectual order of importance and physical positions for storage on the basis of their disciplines, scriptural content, authorship, and scholarly reputation. The very act of letting a citation make its passage between scholars from different centuries shows a consensual yet evolving concept of an acceptable and unacceptable approach to manuscripts. Small changes within the citations may not be inadvertent errors of copyists or later typesetters but broader developments to make new sense of the tradition according to the contextual preferences of jurists, authors, citers, copyists, and editors.

Third, despite the length, breadth, and depth of these codicological discourses, they are all intriguingly limited to a Shāfiʿī codicological world. The

informed yet selective citations rooted in an exclusive textual corpus of Shāfiʿīsm was not accidental or a natural selection by the participant jurists. One simple fact to keep in mind is that the compiler raised all these questions to his contemporaries in Shāfiʿī regions of influence, such as the Coromandel Coast, Yemen, the Hijaz, and Egypt. He did not consider raising the same questions to his counterparts elsewhere on the Indian subcontinent, especially in the realm of the Mughals, who predominantly followed the Ḥanafī school of Islamic law. This intentional selection of respondents shows that there was a shared sacred notion of books circulating among Muslims on the rim of the Indian Ocean, and that Shāfiʿīsm itself began to be predominant there. Today Muslims from Cape Town in South Africa to Maguindanao in the Philippines are known as followers of that school, but the spread of Shāfiʿīsm occurred mainly in the sixteenth century due to many internal changes in the school and external ones on the littoral. The codicological discussions and scholarly strategies in our sources are one dimension of the evidence for this transition. By spreading specific notions of Islamic textuality, legal authority and spirituality, the school gradually found favour among the Muslims there, as well as many other elements associated with that school. Many Shāfiʿī jurists relied on the *Ajwiba* and the *Fatḥ*, and many Shāfiʿītexts mentioned them in their curricula or the texts they produced, leading to an enriched Shāfiʿī cosmopolis across the Indian Ocean. That Shāfiʿī cosmopolis benefited from the production and dissemination of such texts so that the school's jurists and texts remained prominent in their discourses. In turn, respondents traced their authority back even further to other Shāfiʿī authors, including the eponymous founder of the school.[75]

Fourth, the work of collecting juridical opinions from various places and people shows that the compiler of the *Ajwiba* was conforming to a local book culture by posing his questions as he did. In Ponnāni and Calicut, a dynamic scribal and manuscript culture thrived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when rulers, scholars, traders, and travellers produced a significant number of documents. In a cosmopolitan world of many scripts, languages, and dialects, the Islamic *umma* maintained its own book culture, with its own books, depositories, scripts, and procedures commensurate with others.[76] The fatwa collection itself was a response to the vibrant literati in the region in the sixteenth century. The questions in the *Ajwiba* addressed specific codicological concerns, and the respondents provided detailed answers, and the compiler

75 For example, see Rosenthal, *Technique and Approach*, 9.

76 Mahmood Kooria, "Textual Circulations and Citation Regimes: A Commentary as a Library in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 14 (2023): 110–140.

included contradictory and complementary answers for producing and preserving books. All this demonstrates the nuances of a fully-fledged local book culture that was able to fit with the broader praxis of Islamic codicology in its specialised terminology.

Fifth, the compiler Zayn al-Dīn Jr. repeated his questions and the responses in his own preferred style in his substantive law book *Fatḥ*. To do this, he stripped away the contextual inferences in the *Ajwiba* and formulated the outcomes as direct statements of universal rules. The legal statements in the *Fatḥ* are different with relation to utilising manuscripts for as containers or using precious metals for the ornamentation of writing in the *muṣḥaf* and other manuscripts. He gave priority to the opinions that he thought were most appropriate rather than the ones advocated by the prominent jurists in the school, including those of his own teacher, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī. His was a substantive text which became popular across the Indian Ocean littoral, from Southeast Africa to Southeast Asia, where it became a significant part of the Shāfiʿī curricula. Throughout this broad area, its suggestions on manuscript culture culled from the *Ajwiba* influenced codicological practices all along the littoral.

While there are many differences between printed books and manuscripts, most of the suggested rules apply also to printed books. The discussions are not to be taken as applying only to manuscripts, just because codices happened to be the mode in which texts were produced and circulated in their age. It is obvious that they should refer to any written materials. That is why this discourse composed several centuries earlier continues to hold sway in Malabar in the twenty-first century, notwithstanding several remarkable changes in the languages, technologies, and modes of knowledge transmission in the communities there. The suggestions in the *Ajwiba* and the *Fatḥ* as well as in the *Jawāhir* and *Tadhkira* still influence procedures for the production, consumption, and circulation of knowledge.

Children growing up in the region, as I did, are often still introduced to a respect for writing and caring for their books, unaware of how long that tradition has lasted and how far it has spread, and of the concept of a longue durée.

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10

Writing and Preserving Islamic Legal Documents: Bukharan Fatwas inside a Central Asian *Jung* Manuscript in Qum

Zahir Bhalloo and Sayyid Sadiq Husayni Ishkawari

1 Introduction: Bukharan Fatwas as Written Artefacts

Written artefacts which record the legal opinion or fatwa (Ar. *fatwā*, pl. *fatāwā*) of an Islamic jurist or *muftī* have a long tradition in the Islamic world.[1] The earliest extant fatwa documents that have come to light so far are recorded on papyrus from the ninth–tenth centuries and on paper from the eleventh–twelfth centuries.[2] These early fatwas are in Arabic. In the eastern Islamic lands, among non-Arabic speaking peoples, fatwas were also written in Persian. At least eleven fatwas written in Persian on paper in medieval Islamic Khurāsān, from the region of present-day Afghanistan, are known.[3] Though undated, based on their script, it is likely they are from the twelfth–thirteenth centuries. This study will focus on a more recent example of fatwa writing in Persian from nineteenth-century Bukhara in present day Uzbekistan. The three Bukharan fatwas examined here were found glued along with other fatwas and legal documents inside a manuscript in Qum, Iran, in 2007. Their long-distance displacement from Bukhara to Qum and their preservation inside a manuscript

1 The authors would like to warmly thank the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), Universität Hamburg and its Cluster of Excellence "Understanding Written Artefacts" for providing a stimulating intellectual home for writing this essay. We would also like to acknowledge the help at various stages of Aygerim Serikovna (Gylym Ordasy, The Museum of Rare Books, Almaty, Kazakhastan), Saidakbar Mukhammadaminov, Said Gaziev, Ahmad Azizi, Dilshat Amr, and Olly Akkerman.

2 See Werner Diem, *Ein arabisches Rechtsgutachten zum Eherecht aus dem 11.–12. Jahrhundert: aus der Heidelberger Papyrussammlung*, *Schriften der Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung 17* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 7–57.

3 Two are in the "Afghan Geniza" collection of the National Library of Israel (NLI), Jerusalem, see Ms. Heb.8333.153 and Ms. Heb.8333.193. Ms. Heb.8333.153 is edited in Zahir Bhalloo, "New Light on Persian Fatwā Writing from Medieval Islamic Khurāsān," Islamic Law Blog, October 10, 2024, https://islamiclaw.blog/2024/10/10/new-light-on-persian-fatwa-writing-from-medieval-islamic-khurasan/. Nine from Fīrūzkūh are edited in Mīrzā Khwāja Muḥammad and Nabī Sāqī, eds., Barg-hā-yī az yak faṣl yā asnād-i tārīkhī-yi ghūr (Kābul: Instishārāt-i Saʿīd, 1388 sh./2009), 55–67, see docs.20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26-1, 26-2, 27.

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as infixes will be discussed in the second part of this paper. In the first part, however, the aim will be to understand the production and movements of these fatwas locally in Bukhara itself. What physical traces did different social actors in Bukhara such as the scribe, questioner/litigant, jurist (*muftī*), and the local ruler (*amīr*) leave on such documents as they passed through their hands?

2 Three Bukharan Fatwas

The first Bukharan fatwa (doc.130) is written on a piece of horizontal paper in landscape format measuring 41 cm in length and 26.7 cm in width. It records a legal opinion issued in favour of the defendant on the inadmissibility of the testimony of witnesses brought by the claimant in a retaliation (*qiṣās*) lawsuit (see fig. 10.1).[4] There are three vertical fold lines visible at regular intervals of 10 cm. This suggests that the document was at some stage preserved by being folded into a strip. This folding, however, resulted in some tears along the fold lines, and there are signs of repair carried out by gluing in small bits of paper. The left- and right-hand edge of the sheet also appear to be trimmed. It is not clear if the folding and trimming occurred before, during, or after the sheet was preserved inside the manuscript (see below). On unfolding the sheet, the eye of the reader is drawn to three main elements: a complex monogram (A), marginal text on the right-hand corner (F), and four round black ink seal impressions (1–4) at the bottom of the sheet.

Each of these elements and their spatial organisation was deliberate. The monogram-like text (A) is the Perso-Arabic introductory clause that opened such fatwa documents: *tayyamunan li-dhikrihi l-aʿlā mā qawlu aʾimmat al-islām raḍī allāhu taʿālā ʿanhum dar īn masʾala ki* ("Seeking good omen by remembering His sublime name, what is the opinion of the scholars of Islam, may God the Exalted be pleased with them, concerning this question/case").[5] The mono-

4 For an edition of this document, see Muḥammad ʿAlī Bāqirzāda, ed., *Asnād-i muftīyān-i bukhārā* (*uzbakistān*) *bar asās-i asnād-i kitāb-khāna-yi shakhsī-yi sayyid ṣādiq ḥusaynī ishkawarī, qum-īrān* (Qum: Majmaʿ-i Dhakhāʾir-i Islāmī, 1391 sh./2012), 76–78: [AM]. *Qiṣāṣ* is retaliatory punishment applied in cases of killing and of wounding which do not prove fatal. See Joseph Schacht, "Ḳiṣāṣ" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 11 November 2022 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573--3912_islam_SIM_4400.

5 The use of an Arabic *mā qawlu* question clause in the address to scholars is known in different variants from the earliest Arabic and Persian fatwa documents. See Jean-Michel Mouton, Dominique Sourdel, and Janine Sourdel-Thomine, *Mariage et séparation à Damas au moyen age. Un corpus de 62 documents juridiques inédits entre 337/948 et 698/1299* (Paris:

FIGURE 10.1 Doc.130, 41×26.7 cm. A fatwa from nineteenth-century Bukhara on the inadmissibility of testimony by the claimant's witnesses in a retaliation (*qiṣās*) lawsuit with the seal impressions of four *muftī*s
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gram was clearly the work of a professional scribe, and it is likely that each scribe active in Bukhara who wrote such fatwa documents had a specific way of executing this formula on the sheet (compare the same element in fatwa 2 and 3, fig. 10.2, 10.3). It was thus possible to distinguish from the way the formula was executed on the sheet which scribe had written the document. The introductory formula thus functioned as a personal monogram or *ṭughrā* (Ar. *ṭughrā*ʾ) with an authenticating function.[6] Moreover, it announced immediately the document's legal typology as a fatwa and not, for example, a deed of sale or a judicial decision. The introductory formula marks the beginning of the

L'académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2013), 160–162, 187–190, facsimiles 294, 304 and Ms. Heb.8333.153.

6 In Persianate documentary culture, the usage of the *ṭughrā*ʾ was expanded in scope beyond recording the name of the ruler or issuing official. This is already visible in fourteenth-century Il-Khanid Mongol decrees where registration remarks are written as stylized *ṭughrā*s based on pious formulae. See for example Urkunde XXII, Abbildung 85 in Gottfried Hermann, *Persische Urkunden des Mongolenzeit. Documenta Iranica et Islamica* 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004).

main text. This main text presents the circumstances of a case and ends with a negative question to the *muftī* asking if the circumstances presented were in accordance with the *sharīʿa* or not. The negative question starts with the clause "according to the *sharīʿa* is such and such" (*bi-sharīʿat* …) and finishes with the clause "in accordance with its stipulations or not?" (… *bi-sharāiṭihi yā nay*?). These clauses *bi-sharīʿat* (B) and *bi-shāriṭihi yā nay* (C) were also written by the scribe in a distinctive manner, thus helping the reader immediately identify where the negative question was in the document.

The clause immediately after the negative question is the imperative Arabic formula *bayyinū tuʾjarū* (clarify and be rewarded) (D). The sense here is a recompense from God, though we know that Central Asian *muftī*s were also paid for their answer. In this fatwa, there is an additional line of text (E) relating to the circumstances of the case directly after the *bayyinū tuʾjarū* clause below the negative question. The scribe had to add this later as an additional clarification after he had written the negative question. What appears to be a large block of marginal text (F) are in fact seven separate citations drawn from two classic texts of Ḥanafī jurispudence: *Muḥīṭ al-Burḥānī*, a well-known work by Burḥān al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad b. al-Ṣadr al-Shahīd al-Bukhārī b. al-Māzah (d. ca. 1174) and *Mukhtār al-Fatāwā* (also known as *Mukhtārāt al-Nawāzil*) by Burhān al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr b. ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Farghānī al-Marghīnānī (d. 1197).

These seven citations are the evidence upon which the decision of the *muftī* was based. The citations support without exception the claim of the defendant. In other words, the drafting of this fatwa for the needs of the defendant was a premeditated socio-juridical act. Ken'ichi Isogai, drawing on a different set of fatwas from Samarqand, argues that the role of the *muftī* was, thus, to offer their "clients" (claimant or defendant) the best possible fatwa in support of their claim based on Ḥanafī sources of jurisprudence. This would maximize their chances of obtaining a favourable judgement (*ḥukm*) from the *qāḍī*. Such practice was not without its consequences, and in the lawsuit he examines, for example, the conflicting fatwas of both sides ultimately resulted in a reconciliation between the parties.[7]

What is difficult to determine is whether the main text and citations are the work of a single individual such as a professional scribe or the *muftī* him-

7 Ken'ichi Isogai, "Seven Fatwa Documents from Early 20th Century Samarqand: The Function of the Muftī in the Judicial Proceedings Adopted at Central Asian Islamic Court," *Annals of Japan Association of Middle East Studies* (*AJAMES*) 27, no. 1 (2011): 259–282. K. Isogai, unfortunately, includes no images of these documents in his study. Compare this with how conflicting

self or of both working together based on a rough draft. The citations end by mentioning which work *Muḥīṭ al-Burḥānī* or *Mukhtār al-Fatāwā* they are from. The Arabic clause *min nafsihi* (from the work itself) is added after mentioning the text in question. In an important recent study, Jürgen Paul discusses in detail the significance of such citation practices.[8] The citations were meant to link the present fatwa directly to the classical works of Ḥanafī jurisprudence, thus giving authority to the fatwa.[9] In the first two citations, the folio numbers of the works are also cited (*muḥīṭ al-burhānī min nafsihi waraqa 497, muḥīṭ al-burhānī min nafsihi waraqa 278*). This citation of folio numbers is surprising. It is possible that these numbers refer to folios in a manuscript copy of the *Muḥīṭ* which were consulted by the scribe/*muftī* that wrote the fatwa. In theory, therefore, these references could be consulted again. They might have thus functioned as a means of authenticating the transmission of the cited text as it was recorded in the fatwa document. As our document is sealed by four separate *muftī*s (1–4) (see below), however, it is difficult to say which *muftī*'s copy of *Muḥīṭ* these folio numbers refer to. Presumably the folio numbers applied to the copy of the *Muḥīṭ* of the *muftī* in whose office the fatwa was drafted.[10] This does not explain, however, why only some of the citations referring to *Muḥīṭ* have folio numbers and none of the citations referring to *Mukhtār al-Fatāwā* mention folio numbers. Either, the mention of a few

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legal rulings issued by Shi'i jurists in a land dispute in Qajar Iran led to reconciliation, see Zahir Bhalloo, *Islamic Law in Early Modern Iran: Sharia Court Practice in the Sixteenth to Twentieth Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 175–222. On continuities and discontinuities in the "mechanics" of fatwa issuance in Central Asia before and after the Russian conquest from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, see chapter 5, "Fatwas for Muslims, Opinions for Russians" in Paolo Sartori, *Visions of Justice: Sharia and Cultural Change in Russian Central Asia*, *Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 8 Uralic and Central Asian Studies, vol. 24* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 250–305.

8 Jürgen Paul, "Mufti Notebooks: Two *ǧung* Manuscripts from Late Nineteenth-Century Bukhara" in *Personal Manuscripts: Copying, Drafting, Taking Notes, Studies in Manuscript Cultures 30*, eds. David Durand-Guédy and Jürgen Paul, 372–380 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023).

9 In some cases, such citations could refer to post-canonical Ḥanafī compilations, such as the late seventeenth-century *al-Fatawā al-'ālamgīriyya*, which quotes classical Ḥanafī works. See Paul, "Mufti Notebooks," 377–378.

10 The use of round black seal impressions by judicial authorities to authenticate Islamic legal documents in the Persianate world can be traced at least as far back as the fifteenth century, if not earlier. See the boundary agreement between the villages Khut, Shinhar, and Halizur owned by the Tativ monastery dated 803/1400 in Akop Davidovich Papazian, *Persidskie dokumenty Matenadarana: II Kupchie (14–16 vv.)* (Erevan: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Armianskoi SSR, 1968), 55–57, 251–253, 413–416, 513–514.

folio numbers was sufficient for authentication purposes, or alternatively the folio numbers were perhaps only used as an aide-memoire for less well-known citations.

At the bottom of the fatwa document are four circular shaped black ink seal impressions with the following diameters: (1) 5.2 cm; (2) 4.7 cm; (3) 6 cm and (4) 4.5 cm.[11] The seal with the largest diameter probably belonged to the most important and high-ranking Bukharan *muftī*. The inscription on the seal of each *muftī* uses a distinctive formula. This formula is usually based on a combination of Arabic proverbs such as *man ṣabara ẓafara* ("he who is patient is victorious") and pious invocations such as *allāhu yahdī man yashā' ilā ṣirāt al-mustaqīm* ("God guides whom he wants onto the straight path"), followed by the name of the *muftī* and the date the seal was made. From the dates on the four seals, it is possible to work out that the fatwa was made after 1244/1828–1829. There can also be no doubt regarding the Bukharan provenance of the document, as the inscription on the second seal suggests it belonged to the military *muftī* of Bukhara (*muftī-yi 'askar-i shahr-i bukhārā*).

Three of the seal impressions (1–3) have the note in Persian *bāshad, wallāhu a'lam* ("it is, and God knows best") or *bāshad* in short written above the seal. This note was probably written by the respective *muftī* himself in his own hand. It is clear from other examples that the *bāshad* note was written by the *muftī* after he had affixed his seal on the sheet, as in some cases the note is visible in places above the seal impression or in the blank space left when the seal was not properly affixed. The *bāshad* note was intended as a reply (*jawāb*) to the negative question that ends the presentation of the facts of the case. Not all seals had a *bāshad* note. For instance, seal 4 in this case does not have one. Analyzed from the perspective of rhetoric and logic, *bāshad* was not a constative statement (*khabar*) that can be true or false, but a performative construction (*inshā'*) with the sense of an imperative order from a position of superiority or compulsion: *bāyad bāshad* or *bāyad bi-shawad* ("it must be").[12] The use of *bāshad* in this way emphasizes the performative act of the issuance of the fatwa by the *muftī*. This does not, however, affect its juridical non-binding legal character as an opinion on the case.

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11 On the use of ink as a sealing medium in the Islamic world and the method of applying seal impressions onto documents, see Annabel Teh Gallop and Venetia Porter, *Lating Impressions: Seals from the Islamic World* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, 2012), 101.

12 See for example Fareed Hameed al-Hindawi et al., "The Speech Act Theory in English and Arabic," *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics* 4 (2014): 27–37.

FIGURE 10.2 Doc.134, 40.3×25 cm. A fatwa from nineteenth century Bukhara in a case of murder (*qatl*) with the seal impressions of ten *muftī*s
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The survival of a second fatwa (doc.134, see fig. 10.2) which is sealed by the same *muftī*s as the first fatwa suggests that there was a particular order in which the *muftī*s of Bukhara affixed their seals onto fatwas. The second fatwa measures 40.3 cm in length and 25 cm in width. It relates to a case of murder (*qatl*).[13] It is also folded in the same manner as the first fatwa, leaving three horizontal fold lines. It is not clear if the second fatwa, however, belongs to the same case as described in the first fatwa. It is sealed by ten separate *muftī*s. The seal impressions of *muftī*s 1,2, 3, and 4 from the first fatwa retain their same positions on the second fatwa. The seal impressions of *muftī*s 1, 2, and 3 cluster around the first and second horizontal fold line, while *muftī* 4 affixes his seal near the third horizontal fold line. The reason for this identical sealing practice in the two fatwas might be because they were produced at the same time and in the same place where these four *muftī*s had gathered. The four *muftī*s thus retained their respective positions on both documents. The remaining *muftī*s sealed the second fatwa after it was presented to them by the scribe or questioner/litigant at a later stage, perhaps in a mosque, madrasa, house, or even in the bazaar.

The process of producing a Bukharan fatwa thus clearly involved the movement and exchange of the document between multiple actors: scribes, ques-

13 AM: 59–61.

tioners/litigants, and *muftī*s. Ultimately, however, the document was destined to be presented to a judge or *qāḍī*. The more *muftī*s that a questioner/litigant succeeded in obtaining in support of his claim, the better his chances were of obtaining a favourable decision from the *qāḍī* based on the fatwa. It was thus essential to leave enough blank space at the bottom of the sheet for the seal impressions of *muftī*s. Before some fatwas arrived in the hands of the *qāḍī*, however, they could also be presented to the local ruler (*amīr*) of Bukhara.

A good example of this is a third fatwa (doc.104, see fig. 10.3) in which a claimant asks a *muftī* for his opinion on the validity of his claim in a case involving the restitution of water rights.[14] The main reason for soliciting the fatwa was to compel the defendant to appear before a *qāḍī*. This was not a fatwa relating to a theoretical problem raised by the lawsuit like the previous two fatwas. In this case, the fatwa is also arranged differently. The sheet of paper used measures 25.9 cm in length and 21.9 cm in width. Unlike the previous two fatwas, the layout is more vertical in shape. The sheet does not appear to have been folded at regular intervals like the previous two fatwas. Its monogram introductory clause is spatially arranged towards the bottom of the document after the claim for restitution or claim protocol (*maḥḍar*) is described. The *muftī* who has sealed the fatwa and has written a short *bāshad* note above it, however, is Muḥammad ʿĀlim Khwāja, the same *muftī* whose seal impression also appears in the previous two fatwas (*muftī* no. 1). The scribe of the third fatwa also included a citation from Ḥanafī juristic sources relating to the claim in the right-hand margins, which is cut off. This probably occurred when the document was removed from the manuscript. Some text is also missing from the top of the sheet. We know from similar claims of restitution that such documents usually begin with an address to the *amīr* of Bukhara as follows: *ḥaḍrat-i amīr sallamahu l-lāh taʿāla* (the noble *amīr*, may God the Exalted bless him) written at the top center of the sheet.[15]

The verso of the claim (see fig. 10.4) has a decree by the *amīr* of Bukhara, Amīr Naṣr-Allāh b. Amīr Ḥaydar, (1242–1277/1827–1860) dated 1247/1832. The decree is written on the top left-hand corner of the sheet. It summons the defendant before a *qāḍī* (fig. 10.4). The decree is sealed using the *amīr*'s round seal with the inscription *al-ḥukm bi l-ʿadl 1247*.[16] This suggests that the docu-

14 AM: 37–39.

15 AM: 106.

16 This round seal was used in some cases as an alternative to the *amīr*'s personal round seal or teardrop-shaped seal. For examples of decrees sealed with the latter two seals, see doc. 52 in Assom Urunbaev, Galiba Dzhuraeva, and Sanjar Gulomov, *Katalog sredneaziatskikh zhalovannykh gramot iz fonda Instituta vostokovedeniia im. Abu Raikhana Beruni Akademii*

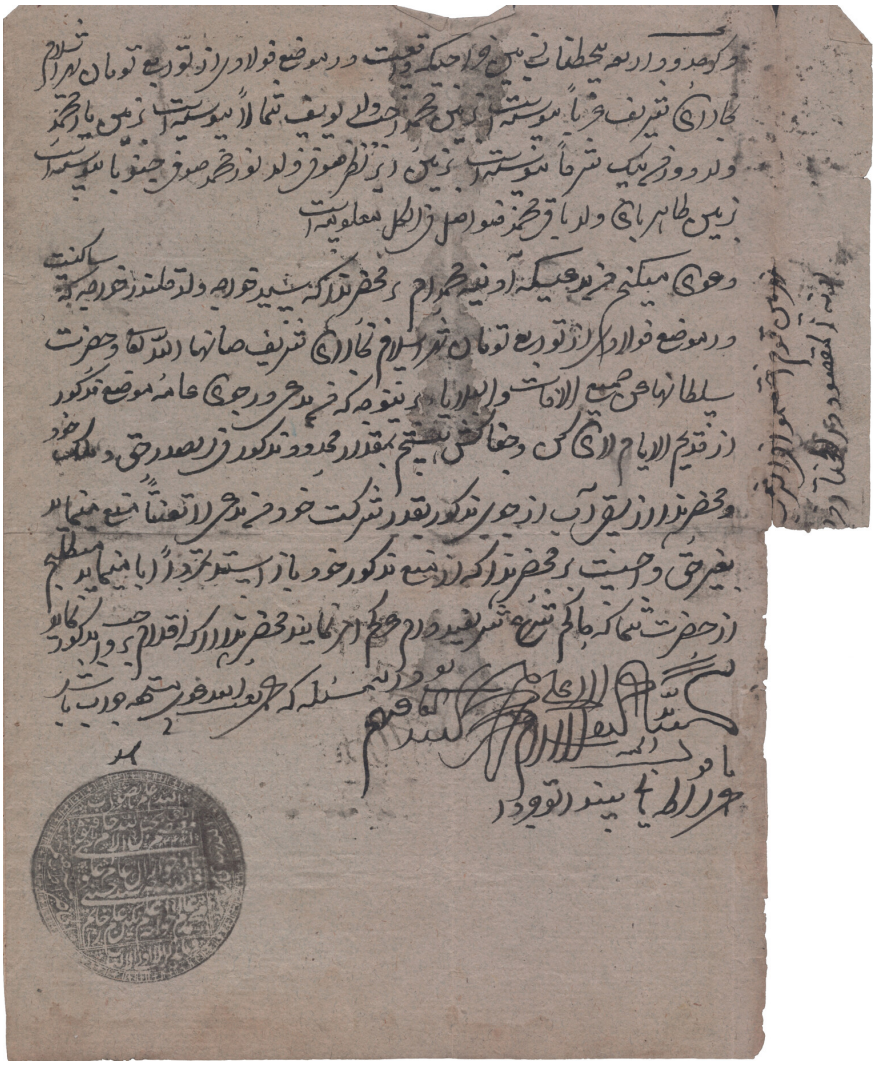

FIGURE 10.3 Doc.104. 25.9×21.9 cm. *Recto* of a claim for restitution of water rights from Bukhara with the fatwa and seal impression of one *muftī* at the bottom
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ment at some stage was brought to the *amīr*'s chancery or *dīwān* in the citadel or Ark of Bukhara. The scribes working there wrote the decree which was sealed by the *amīr*. The three Bukharan fatwas discussed above are by no means intended to constitute an exhaustive study of the issuance of Bukharan fatwas

nauk Respubliki Uzbekistan (Halle, Germany: Mitteilungen des SFB/10 no. 23, 2007) and AM: 182.

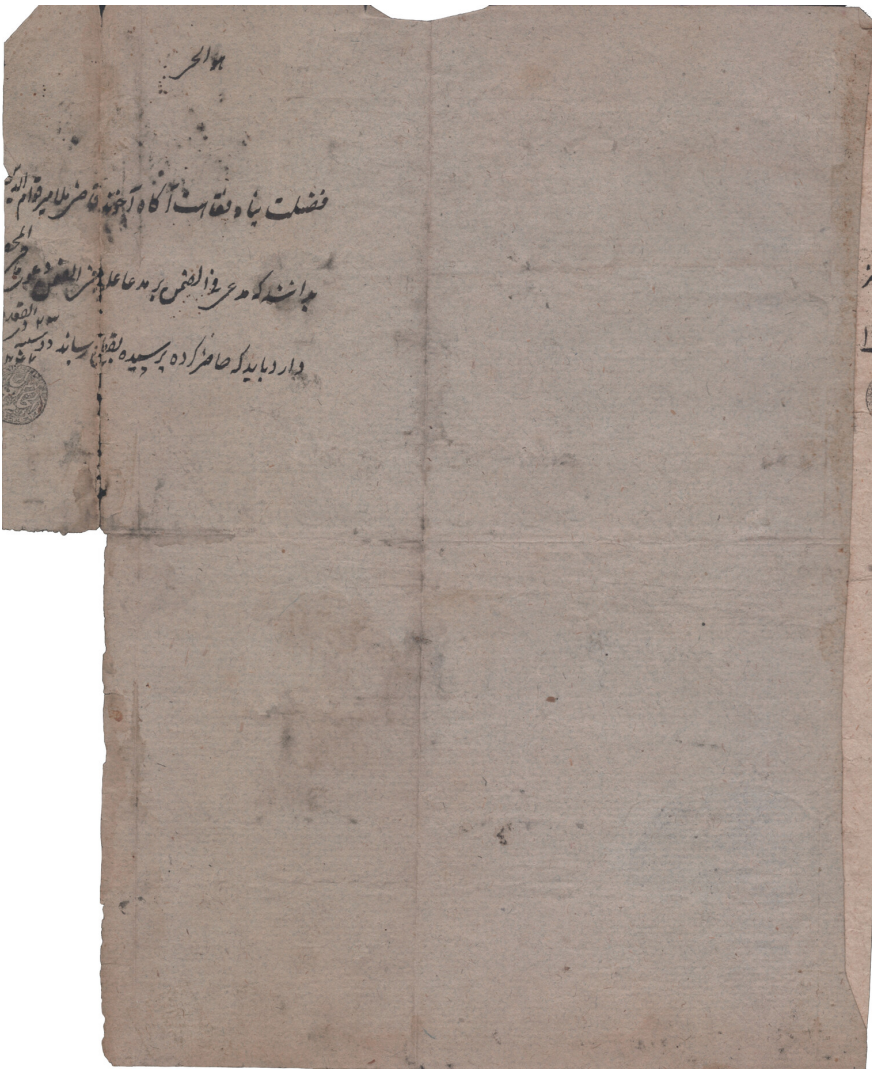

FIGURE 10.4 Doc.104. 25.9 × 21.9 cm. *Verso* of a claim for restitution of water rights from Bukhara with a sealed decree by the *amīr* dated 23 Dhū l-Qada 1247/24 April 1832 in the top right-hand corner
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or of their legal content and function. What we are interested in here is tracing the steps involved in the production of such written artefacts and their movements as they changed hands within the town of Bukhara. After such fatwa documents were used, in some cases, as in the three examples cited here, they were glued into manuscript compilations known in Central Asia as *jung*s, a practice we will examine in the next section.

3 Preservation and Displacement

Two pioneering articles by Sanjar Gulomov and Saidakbar Mukhammadaminov brought to light a distinctive preservation practice related to Islamic legal documents in the Ḥanafī milieu of Central Asia.[17] Legal documents were glued inside the bifolia of *jung* manuscript codices in the form of infixes.[18] Such legal document-rich *jung* codices are known to have been produced from the end of the sixteenth century onwards, though there may be earlier examples.[19] They represent an interesting codicological example of convergence of two types of Islamic legal writings. To use the discursive categories proposed by Brinkley Messick, the prestigious "cosmopolitan" Islamic legal texts of the "library," as compiled in a *jung*, become embedded here with the contingent, day to day, locally specific "archival" writings relating to the judge's court, such as fatwa documents and notarial acts.[20]

The compilers of such *jung*s were often *qāḍī*s and *muftī*s who used them during their daily routine or these officials' madrasa students.[21] In some cases, *jung*s were named after their *qāḍī* or *muftī* compilers, such as the *jung-i qāḍī al-ʿabd al-ḥayy* compiled by Qāḍī al-ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Khwāja b. Qāḍī Mīrakshāh,

17 See Sanjar Gulomov, "O nekotorix podlinnix dokumentakh iz kolleksii rukopisnikh proisvedenij fonda IV AN RUz," in *History and Culture of Central Asia*, eds. Bakhtiyar Babadjanov and Yayoi Kawahara (TIAS, Department of Islamic Area Studies, University of Tokyo: Tokyo, 2012), 135–170 (in Russian) and S. Mukhammadaminov, "Jung: The Collection of the Practicing Traditional Judge of Central Asia (end of 16th Century–19th Century)," Institut Francais d'Etudes sur l'Asie Centrale (IFEAC) Working Paper no. 17 (2018): 1–15.

18 On the origins and definition of the term *jung*, see Paul, "Mufti Notebooks," 360–361.

19 Mukhammadaminov, "Jung," 3. In Safavid Iran, *jung*-type compilations, also known as *majmūʿa*, were produced on a wide variety of subjects. Safavid *jung*s can sometimes include legal documents. These are either transcribed copies, summaries, or examples of documents and not actual sheets glued into the codex as infixes. See Iraj Afshar, "Maktūb and Majmūʿa: Essential Sources for Safavid Research," in *History and Culture of Central Asia*, ed. Andrew Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 52; Umīd Riḍāʾī, "Jung-i khaṭṭī az dawra-yi ṣafawī shāmil-i nūzdah ulgū-yi sanad-niwīsī," *Mīrāth-i jāwīdān* year 13 no. 51 (1384 sh./2005): 91–110.

20 Brinkley Messick, *Sharia Scripts: A Historical Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 21–26.

21 Saidakbar Mukhammadaminov, "Jung," 4–5, see also footnote: 12. A. Muminov suggests that it was the apprentices of the *qāḍī*s and *muftī*s that compiled *jung*s and that they were used as textbooks for students. In the twentieth century, reformers would criticize *qāḍī*s for limiting themselves to *jung*s to solve cases. See Paolo Sartori, "*Ijtihād* in Bukhara: Central Asian Jadidism and Local Genealogies of Cultural Change," *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient* (JESHO) 59 (2016): 220.

active as *qāḍī* in Bukhara between 1111–1121/1699–1709.[22] The *jung*s were also inherited by the successors of individuals who held *qāḍī* and *muftī* positions.[23] There is also evidence to suggest that *jung*s were compiled and transmitted within families that held *qāḍī* and *muftī* posts.[24] The original and model legal documents *jung*s contained were intended to aid the practicing *qāḍī* or *muftī* in their work. The models provided formulae similar to those found in Islamic legal formulary works known as *shurūṭ*, while originals were documents that had been used in actual cases. Both were useful for the scribes who drafted such documents. The originals, moreover, had a certain symbolic value for *jung* compilers as they contained the seal impressions and handwriting of famous *qāḍī*s or *muftī*s of the town. Not surprisingly, student *jung* compilers would often add an additional note stating that the original was written and sealed by their teacher.[25] In some cases, we find seal cuttings from original documents glued into the *jung* manuscript.[26]

The collection and preservation of legal documents in such *jung* manuscript codices by *qāḍī*s, *muftī*s, or their students does not constitute a *qāḍī* or *muftī* archive which could be systematically reviewed and consulted. Rather, the selection of documents, sometimes over 400, which ended up being preserved as infixes reflected the interests of the *qāḍī*, *muftī*, or student compilers.[27] Most *jung*s in addition to the glued-in documents contained compilations of legal questions dealing with various topics of the *sharīʿa* (*masāʾil fiqhiyya*). In some cases, the *masāʾil fiqhiyya* were included alongside famous texts on Ḥanafī law such as the *Mukhtaṣar al-Wiqāya* of ʿUbaydullāh b. Masʿūd al-Mahbūbī al-Bukhārī (d. 747/1348), which was often used by *qāḍī*s in addition to being popular within the circles of teachers and students of madrasas in Bukhara. While some *jung*s are devoted entirely to legal content, others are far more variegated and can contain personal notes of the compiler and a miscellany of non-legal texts relating to astrology, astronomy, occult sciences, mathematics, Sufism, history, and poetry.[28]

22 Mukhammadaminov, "Jung," 4.
23 Mukhammadaminov, "Jung," 7.
24 Mukhammadaminov, "Jung," 7.
25 Mukhammadaminov, "Jung," 10, "*ḥarrahahu al-ustādh maʿa khatmihi*."
26 Paul, "Mufti Notebooks", 367–368.
27 Mukhammadaminov, "Jung," 8–9.
28 These latter texts, including infixes used as amulets, demonstrate the multiple social roles that Bukharan legal practitioners played in society for example as healers. See Paul, "Mufti Notebooks," 387.

Based on the preceding, there is little doubt that the three Bukharan fatwa documents presented here were originally part of a Central Asian Ḥanafī *jung* codex, probably mainly devoted to legal questions, which was displaced at some point from its original site of production in Bukhara, Uzbekistan. The circumstances surrounding the displacement of the *jung* and its movements are difficult to reconstruct. The *jung* was acquired along with other manuscripts from Afghanistan by a private collector and clerical scholar in Qum, Sayyid Ṣādiq Ḥusaynī Ishkawarī, who runs the publishing house Majmaʿ-i Dhakhāʾir-i Islāmī (Association of Islamic Treasures). It should be noted that under the direction of Ishkawarī, the Majmaʿ has been active for several decades in safeguarding what it considers to be treasures of the Islamic world and saving them from destruction and loss mainly through digitization efforts conducted *in situ*. The problematic provenance of the *jung* and other manuscripts in this case, however, raises ethical questions about heritage preservation and research. This is a problem that is not unique to this case and is well-known with similar collections acquired by private collectors and institutions, such as for example the so-called Afghan Geniza or the Bactrian and Abbasid documents also from Afghanistan.

Ishkawarī relates that from the pile of manuscripts he bought, there was one that caught his attention. It had several pieces of glued-in folded paper inside its bifolia. These papers had large, round black ink seal impressions. On closer inspection, it became clear that over one hundred single-sheet documents of varying dimensions were glued and folded inside the manuscript. Some of the documents were glued on the edge near the spine folds of the bifolia of the manuscript. Many of the documents, however, appeared to have been removed from their original position in the bifolia, cut, and pasted to the bottom of the sewn text block when the manuscript was rebound. This had caused considerable damage to the documents. Over a period of a week, the glued documents in the bifolia and those bound to the bottom of the text block were carefully removed from the manuscript in Qum. In the end, eighty documents were rescued and digitized, the rest being completely damaged. Based on the seals and other textual clues, it became clear that these were legal documents written in Persian in the Khanate (1506–1785) and later Emirate (1785–1920) of Bukhara between the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[29] The only exception

29 On the basis of the dates on the seal impressions, the two earliest documents are doc.120 and doc.123. Doc. 120 contains four seals. The dates on three of these seal impressions are legible: 1108/1696–1697, 1111/1699–1700, and 1112/1700–1701. Most documents, however, use seals made in the first half of the nineteenth century. For example, doc. 134, discussed here, has ten seals. Of these ten, the date on eight can be read clearly: 1231/1815–1816, 1242/1826–

was a piece of scrap paper containing a handwritten recipe for making soap in Pashtu in Arabic script. This infix must have entered the *jung* later, when the manuscript was brought to Afghanistan from Uzbekistan.

A selection of sixty-two documents was subsequently edited by Muḥammad ʿAlī Bāqirzāda.[30] The publication of the edition, quite unsually, also included a CD-Rom with the colour images of the documents. Most of the sixty-two included documents are either similar in structure and form to the first two fatwas examined here or to the third one containing a decree on the verso. Following the terminology used to catalogue a similar Central Asian corpus of Islamic legal documents from Samarqand, the first two fatwas can be described as "solicited legal opinions" while the third fatwa forms part of a "claim for restitution" or "claim protocol" (*maḥḍar*).[31] The sixty-two documents include both examples of model claim protocols with names and places anonymized and actual claim protocols with an accompanying fatwa on the validity of the claim/lawsuit at the bottom of the recto and a decree on the verso.[32] It is not always clear, however, if the fatwas originally contained seal impressions or not, as many of the documents have sustained damage during their initial removal from their original position inside the manuscript or the second removal that occurred later in Qum. In Central Asian Ḥanafī practice, unsealed fatwas were known as *riwāya*.[33] Besides the fatwas, the sixty-two documents also include the text of a deed of acknowledgement (*iqrār*) dated Rajab 1248/November–December 1832.[34]

As the original manuscript and more than half of the documents found inside were subsequently sold by Ishkawarī to another collector, the only way

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1827, 1243/1827–1828, 1243/1827–1828, 1244/1828–1829, 1244/1828–1829, 1244/1828–1829, 1244/1828–1829. For comparable documentary corpora from Bukhara in this period, see Bahadir Kazakov, *Bukharan Documents: The collection in the District Library, Bukhara*, ANOR 9, trans. Jürgen Paul (Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 2001).

30 See AM. Regrettably, Bāqirzāda does not provide the dimensions of the sixty-two papers. Eighteen unpublished papers are still in the private collection of Sayyid Ṣādiq Ḥusaynī Ishkawarī.

31 Thomas Welsford and Nouryaghdi Tashev, *A Catalogue of the Arabic Script Documents from the Samarqand Museum* (Samarqand: International Institute for Central Asian Studies, 2012), 10.

32 For the former, see for example doc.083, AM: 33–34. For the latter, see doc.104, discussed in this contribution.

33 Paolo Sartori, *Visions of Justice*, 258.

34 See doc.024, AM: edition, 104–105, facsimile, 201. The text of this *iqrār* was probably used to solicit a legal opinion on its validity, as it contains two monograms used for the address to scholars at the bottom of the document, which is regrettably missing.

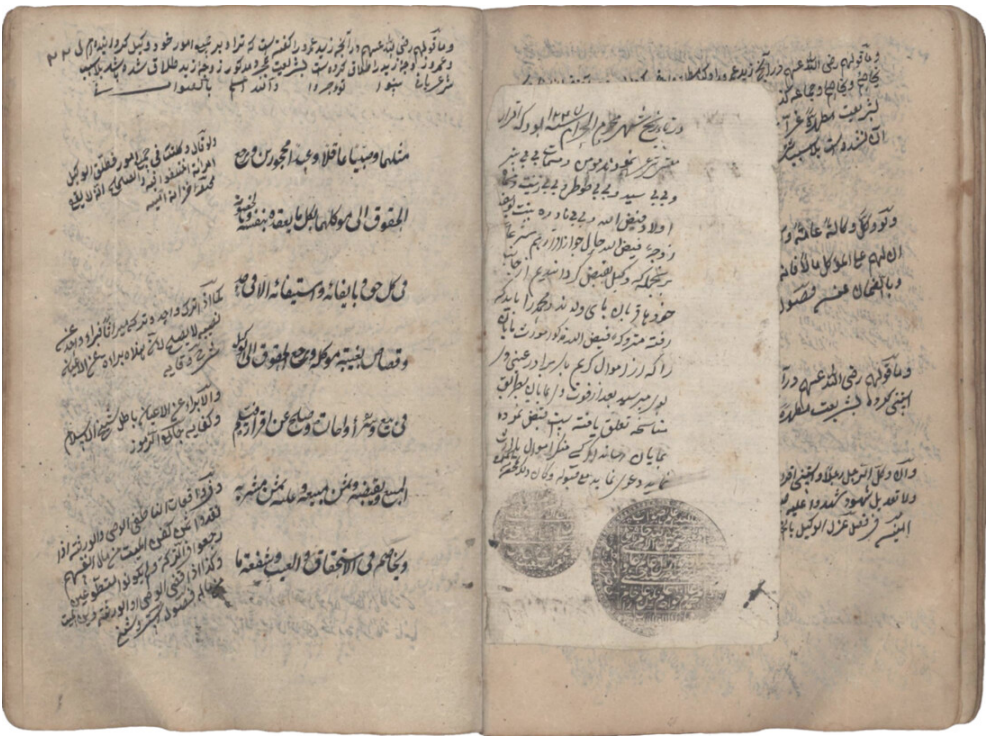

FIGURE 10.5 An *iqrār* deed dated Muharram 1247/June 1831 in the Almaty *jung* with the seal impression of the *muftī*, Muḥammad ʿĀlim Khwāja on the bottom right corner of the deed
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to confirm that the documents were originally glued in the same way as in a traditional Central Asian *jung* was to find an example of a *jung* which still had its legal documents intact inside. During a search online, I came across a travel website based in Dubai offering tours to Central Asia. The website had several images of a codex which looked like a *jung* in a glass display case in a museum in Almaty, Kazakhstan. I e-mailed the museum via colleagues in Berlin and, through divine grace (*baraka*), received images of the manuscript the following day. The Almaty *jung* proved crucial to providing confirmation that the Bukharan fatwas were once preserved as infixes in a manuscript. The Almaty *jung* also turned out to have an unexpected link with the Bukharan corpus in the "Qum" *jung*, since it contained an *iqrār* deed dated Muharram 1247/June 1831 which was sealed on the bottom right-hand corner by the Bukharan *muftī*, Muḥammad ʿĀlim Khwāja (see fig. 10.5).

His seal impression appears in all three fatwas from Bukhara examined earlier. This suggests that both the Qum *jung* and the Almaty *jung* were mobile

FIGURE 10.6 A *fatwa* infix relating to mairrage inside the Almaty *jung*
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*jung*s which, though originally compiled in Bukhara, ultimately moved elsewhere. In the case of the Qum *jung*, we do not know what Ḥanafī legal text or texts it originally contained. The Almaty *jung* contains a commentary on the *Mukhtaṣar al-Wiqāya*, which as noted before was used in Bukhara by judges and madrasa students. The Almaty *jung* provides us with a sense of how the fatwas in the Qum *jung* were originally glued in as infixes in the bifolia of the manuscript near its spine folds (fig. 10.6, 10.7). For ease of reference, the fatwa documents in the Almaty *jung* are glued next to their relevant subject section in the *Mukhtaṣar al-Wiqāya*, highlighted in red ink such as the section on divorce (*kitāb al-ṭalāq*) (fig. 10.7) or on breastfeeding, which produces the legal impediment to marriage of foster-kinship (*kitāb* ***al-raḍā***ʿ) (fig. 10.6). In some cases, the fatwa was folded when the sheet was larger than the dimensions of the folios of the codex (fig. 10.7, 10.8).

In addition, based on the images Sanjar Gulomov includes of similar *jung* codices held at the Al-Biruni Institute in Tashkent, up to three documents could be glued to each other to form a large single sheet. This sheet was glued on one

FIGURE 10.7 A second *fatwa* infix relating to mairrage in the Almaty *jung*
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edge near the spine folds of the bifolia and folded so that it did not stick out when the codex was closed.[35] The folding and unfolding of such sheets glued inside *jung* codices resulted, unsurprisingly, in considerable wear and tear.

4 Conclusion

This study has sought to reconstruct the encounter between people and written artefacts in two different ways. It began by focusing on how the production of three legal opinions (fatwas) in Bukhara has left the traces of different social actors linked to this type of legal paperwork. The production and movement of the fatwas in the hands of these actors was only the first stage, however, of their life cycle. In the second stage, the fatwas were preserved along with other types of legal documents as infixes in compilations known in Central Asia as *jung*s.

35 See photo #5: 157 in Gulomov, "O nekotorix podlinnix."

FIGURE 10.8 A *third* fatwa infix relating to a property dispute in the Almaty *jung*
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Depending on the nature of the compilation, the *jung* could serve as a personal and practical guide for *qāḍī*s, *muftī*s, scribes, or their students, often those who did not have the means to amass a vast and costly library of Islamic legal literature. On the other hand, *jung*s with legal documents containing the round circular black seal impressions of famous *qāḍī*s and *muftī*s were no doubt highly valuable on the Bukharan book market after their death or even during their own lifetimes. The fatwa infix was thus, after its use in, for example, an actual lawsuit, given new didactic and symoblic meaning inside the *jung* codex.

As we have seen, the legal documents in *jung*s were of two types: models to guide the inexperienced scribe and originals which had been used in actual cases. Depending on their type, the models were either drafted by scribes working for the *qāḍī* or the *muftī*. In the case of *muftī* or student compilers, it is likely they collected originals after they were discarded by the *qāḍī*, who was the main recipient of originals. If the compiler was a *qāḍī*, he must have selected originals for his *jung*. It is also possible, in some cases, that the litigant, rather than

the *qāḍī* recpient, preserved an original fatwa or *iqrār* deed after he recieved a judgement based on these documents from the *qāḍī*. In other words, some of the *jung* documents, especially legal deeds, may have been collected from the archive of the litigants. The precise mechanics of the collection of such legal documents and their preservation needs further research based on a much larger group of documents contained in such *jung*s.

The reuse of documents both on parchment and on paper is well known in the case of medieval Arabic manuscripts.[36] Documents or parts of documents were put to new material uses, including using them as new bifolia, title pages, or binding support for manuscripts.[37] Such practices, however, are less well studied in the case of manuscripts from outside the central Islamic lands. In the present study, Islamic legal documents in Bukhara are not given a new material use. They are preserved intact, glued near the spine folds of bifolia of the manuscripts as infixes and folded if their size exceeds the dimensions of the codex bifolia. This appears to be a distinctive preservation practice that emerged in the Ḥanafī milieu of Central Asia. This is by no means, however, the only way of preserving such legal documents. Ken'ichi Isogai has examined seven fatwa texts on five papers from a collection of 112 papers held in the Samarqand Museum. His study suggests there was also a different mode of preservation of fatwa documents. The Samarqand documents were originally bound by a thread in the middle of each sheet of paper, though it is not clear if these were the same thread tackets used to bind the quires of a manuscript.[38] This method of preservation appears to differ from the way the fatwas from Bukhara examined here were simply glued inside a manuscript. These practices, can, moreoever, be contrasted with the preservation of fatwas pasted in fatwa albums produced in a Ḥanafī Ottoman context dedicated specifically to fatwa documents.[39] In Qum, the Bukharan fatwas which were not subsequently resold by Ishkawarī were ultimately pasted onto passepartout cardboard frames and stacked together in a pile in a bookcase. Removed

36 Konrad Hirschler, "Document Reuse in Medieval Arabic Manuscripts," *COMSt Bulletin* 3/1 (2017): 33–34.

37 On the reuse of discarded documents in the production of bindings, see Boris Librenz, "An Archive in a Book: Documents and Letters from the Early-Mamluk Period," *Der Islam* 97 (2020): 120–171.

38 Isogai, "Seven Fatwa Documents," 261.

39 On Ottoman fetva albums, see Uriel Heyd, "Some Aspects of the Ottoman Fetva," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (*BSOAS*) 32, no. 1 (1969): 35–37. For images of several Ottoman fatwas glued together in such albums, see Ali Yaycioğlu, "Ottoman Fatwa: An Essay on Legal Consultation in the Ottoman Empire," (M.A. diss., Bilkent University, 1997), 190–191.

from their original Central Asian Ḥanafī environment and codicological setting inside the *jung*, the Bukharan fatwas thus acquire a new symbolic meaning and spatial setting in yet another stage of their life cycle. They become precious objects, ready for display, of Islamic written heritage in the Twelver Shiʿi Persianate cultural landscape of the shrine city of Qum.

5 Appendix: Translation of Bukharan *Fatwa* 3 (DOC.104)

Text: AM, 37–39.
Translation
Recto

1. Details of the four boundaries of five *ṭanāb*[40] of *kharājī* land (*zamīn-i kharājī*)[41] situated in Fulādī, one of the dependencies of Tūmān of the noble
2. city of Bukhara. On the west adjoining the land of Muḥammad Rajab, son of Yūsuf, on the north adjoining the land of Yār Muḥammad
3. son of Darūn Beg, on the east adjoining the land of Rīz Naẓar Ṣūfī son of Nūr Muḥammad Ṣūfī, on the south, adjoining the land of
4. Tāhir Bāy, son of Bāqī Muḥammad. All the boundaries (*fawāṣil fi l-kull*) are known.
5. I claim, as the claimant, Ādīna Muḥammad, against the present defendant, Sapīd Khwāja son of Qalandar Khwāja, who is an inhabitant
6. of Fūlādī, one of the dependencies of Tūmān of the noble city of Bukhara, may God the Exalted protect it and
7. its rulers from all sorts of calamities and disasters, the following: I the claimant,
8. for a very long time, have been oppressed regarding the public stream of the said place whose boundaries are stated at the top (of the document).
9. The defendant has determinedly (*taʿnnutan*) prevented me from accessing the water from the said stream. It is necessary for the respondent to stop this obstruction (*tamarrudan abā namāyad*). I ask from you, the judge, may God exalt you, that you order the respondent to act in accordance with what is necessary.

40 The *ṭanāb* is a unit of land measurement in Central Asia of approximately 0.4 hectares. See the reference in Paolo Sartori, *Visions of Justice*, 73, footnote 107.

41 Sartori, *Visions of Justice*, 163. The treasury owns one-fifth of the produce, while the private landowner owns one-tenth of it.

10. Seeking good omen in His Exalted name, what is the opinion of the scholars of Islam, may God be pleased with them, on this problem: Does this claim according to the stipulations of the *sharīʿa* require a reply (by the defendant),
11. or not? Reply and be rewarded (by God).

[Reply and seal of the *muftī*]:

It is (*bāshad*).
Seal: Muḥammad ʿĀlim Khwāja 1243/1827–1828.[42]

[Citation in the margin]:

The water rights of a river in a community are divided (among its members) … (missing).

Verso

[Decree by the Amīr of Bukhara]:

1. He is the Ever Living.
2. The erudite and noble *qāḍī*, Ākhūnd Mullā Mīr Qawwām al-Dīn,
3. should know that the claimant herein mentioned (on the *recto*) has a claim against the defendant.
4. They are to be summoned and questioned, and the lawsuit should be decided. [Written on] Wednesday 23 Dhū l-Qaʿda 1247/24 April 1832.
Seal: *al-ḥukm bi l-ʿadl 1247*.

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42 The seal inscription in full reads as follows: *yā ḥayyu, yā qayyūm, allāhu aʿlam bi l-ṣawāb, wa-mā yadhdhakaru illā ulūl al-bāb, allāhu yahdī man yashāʾ ilā ṣirāt al-mustaqīm, al-muʿtasim bi-ḥabli l-lāh al-aḥkam, muḥammad ʿālim khwāja ʿālam-nigīn-i ʿilm rā khātam, walīd-i pādishāh khwāja z-āl-i ʿalawī ʿālim sayyid ḥusaynī 1243*.

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11

Sociotechnical Codicology: Organic Assemblages and Occult Ontologies of Kabīkaj Invocation in Islamicate Manuscripts

Anwar Haneef

1 Introduction

In an anecdotal essay published in 1952 in *The Bulletin*, Ethel Anderson, a prominent figure in Australian modernism, recalls a failed love story she witnessed during her stay in India.[1] From November 1910 to April 1911, Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm Victor August Ernst of Prussia visited British India. During his stay in India, he met Princess Limbin Hteiktin Ma Lat, the niece of the last Burmese king, Thibaw Min, at the Allahabad Club. Upon first sight, Prince Wilhelm developed a passion for the Theravada Buddhist princess.[2] Later, when he had a chance to meet her at the Winter Palace in Allahabad, the prince tried to impress princess Ma Lat by flirting with her and gifting her jewellery. Unfortunately, her aunt, Suphayalat, who was accompanying the princess along with King Thibaw, discouraged the prince's advances. At the dinner, King Thibaw, who was drunk, in his conversation about numerous topics also attempted to explain Indian and Burmese magic and wonders to Prince Wilhelm. To strengthen his credibility, King Thibaw mentioned that his court magicians hailed from Kamrup in Assam, a region that had long been under the rule of Turco-Persian rulers, where magicians were known to be very powerful.[3] But the prince wasn't convinced. Seeing that the prince was sceptical, King Thibaw tried demonstrating the power of magic with a real example. He took a book from a nearby cabinet and opened the first page with a spell, *kabīkaj*, written on it. The king explained that the kabīkaj was the king of cockroaches and that when its name was written on the pages of a book, the book would be protected from pests, and that it was the palace librarian that had written

1 Ethel Anderson, "Home Life: Allahabad," *The Bulletin*, October 15, 1952, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-532436490, accessed November 27, 2023.

2 Maurice Collis, *Trials in Burma* (Bangkok: Ava Publishing House, 1996), 39.

3 Rabindra Das, "The Muslims of Assam: A Critical Study," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19, no. 1 (2014): 96–97.

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the spell inside the book. When the prince attempted to dismiss King Thibaw's explanations, the king mocked him in response by criticising German practices of sorcery.

This interaction between the disenchanted German prince and the enchanted Burmese king offers a small glimpse into the dynamic Islamic manuscript preservation practice of kabīkaj invocation, its practitioners, its association with magic and occult practices, and its Islamicate genealogy.[4] This article looks at the practice of kabīkaj invocation in Islamicate manuscripts as a technology rather than as a religious magic practice. Divided into three discussions, the first part addresses how kabīkaj invocation can be understood as a technology rather than as a talisman and how such a conceptualisation helps to transcend the "religion versus science" binary. The second part explores the diverse religious, linguistic, philosophical, and spatial worldviews embedded within kabīkaj and discusses how such discussions can contribute to two important debates within the fields of Islamicate occult studies and codicology. The third part argues that the technological imagination and acknowledgement of plural worldviews of kabīkaj will contribute to the attempts to decolonise the field of Islamicate manuscript studies and put forward a reinterpretation of Olly Akkerman's concept of "social codicology" as "sociotechnical codicology."

2 Technological Assemblages: Technical Skill, Organic Networks, and Cosmological Forces

2.1 *Kabīkaj: Aura, the Occult, and Botany*

In Islamicate cultures, texts are highly valued and revered objects that provide the possessing person or institution with social status, financial benefit,

4 "Islamicate" is a term introduced by Marshall G.S. Hodgson in his book *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume One, The Classical Age of Islam*. For Hodgson, "Islamicate" denotes a culture centred on a lettered tradition that has been historically distinctive of societies in which Muslims and their faith is recognized as prevalent and socially dominant in one sense or another, and which has been naturally shared in by both Muslims and non-Muslims who participate at all fully in that society. He distinguishes "Islamicate" from "Islam," which is the religion of Muslims. Here the term "Islamicate" is used because, in Hodgson's definition Turco-Persian identity falls within the broader scope of Islamicate. See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, vol. 1, The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 57–59.

FIGURE 11.1 *Nāg Kechli* (snake slough) kept inside a bookshelf to repel termites, posted by Rana Safvi رعنا राना on Twitter on June 2, 2023, accessed November 27, 2023.

religious authority, and a sacralised aura.[5] These values attributed to the materiality of texts, in addition to their conceptual—regarding the content and reverence associated with *kitāba* (writing)—value, paved the way for the development of diverse manuscript preservation practices across Islamicate cultures from the early medieval period. Like the extension of binding boards beyond the text blocks in Southeast Asia, the usage of *nāg kechli* (snake slough) in India (fig. 11.1) and the inscription of spells like *ʿazīmat al-sāriq* (spell against theft) for protection against theft in Yemen, many manuscript preservation techniques have been practised across Islamicate cultures.[6] One such technique associated with Islamicate manuscript preservation is the invocation of kabīkaj.

5 Mahmood Kooria, "Texts as Objects of Value and Veneration: Islamic Law Books in the Indian Ocean Littoral," *Sociology of Islam* 6, no. 1 (2018): 61.

6 Florian Sobieroj, "Arabic Manuscripts on the Periphery: Northwest Africa, Yemen and China," in *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*, ed. Jörg B. Quenzer, Dmitry Bondarev and Jan-Ulrich Sobisch (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 95; Karin Scheper, *The Technique of Islamic Bookbinding: Methods, Materials and Regional Varieties* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2018), 348; Amélie Couvrat Desvergnes, "Skin against Paper: Identification of Historical Interleaving Materials in Indo-Iranian Manuscripts," *The Book and Paper Group Annual* 34 (2015): 133–134.

The word kabīkaj, or its various forms, is a talismanic formula inscribed once or several times on the first or final folios of Islamicate manuscripts to protect them from human and floral-faunal agents that destroy them.[7] The spell was very popular, appearing in manuscripts written in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Sanskrit, and other vernaculars, spanning a vast geography from Morocco and Anatolia to Ethiopia, Iran, Yemen, India and Indonesia.[8] Its usage can be traced back at least to the twelfth–thirteenth centuries, a time which roughly coincides with the conclusion phase of the "book explosion" period in the medieval Islamic world.[9] The practitioners of the manuscripts, including authors, scribes, librarians, owners, book sellers, and readers, either casually inscribed this talisman into the texts or did so out of obligation.[10] Although the word is used to protect manuscripts from diverse factors like the evil eye, uninitiated readers, monsoon weather, humidity, censorship, and so on, the most popular usage of the spell is to protect manuscripts from *al-ḥasharāt* (vermin) and *al-araḍ/al-sūs* (termite/worm) attacks.[11]

Kabīkaj is variously interpreted as the name of the jinn king of reptiles, the king of cockroaches, and the name of a termite repellent plant known as Ranunculus Asiaticus.[12] While the first two interpretations seem valid in specific contexts, most scholars who have worked on the word emphasize

7 Here, "destruction" means both material and spiritual degradation. This is because kabīkaj was also used to protect certain books from being read by uninitiated people. Being read by undeserving people was also seen as a destruction of the spiritual aura of a text. For this point, see Olly Akkerman, "The Bohra Manuscript Treasury as a Sacred Site of Philology: A Study in Social Codicology," *Philological Encounters* 4, no. 3–4 (2019): 194.

8 Finbarr Barry Flood, "Before the Mughals: Material Culture of Sultanate North India," *Muqarnas Online* 36, no. 1 (2019): 29.

9 Bakr b. Ibrahim al-Ishbīlī, *Kitāb al-taysīr fī ṣināʿat al-tafsīr*, vol. 7–8, ed. ʿAbd Allah Kannūn (Madrid: Revista del Instituto de Estudios Islamicos en Madrid, 1959), 40. For the idea of a "book explosion," see Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 110–122.

10 "Practitioner" is used here in its broadest sense, encompassing artisans, intermediate servants, and consumers. It includes anyone who works with their hands in craft production, like a paper maker, author, book binder, in addition to those who do not maintain autonomous control over their production, like a transporter or a cleaner of bookshelves, and those who make use of or simply encounter the objects. See Steven A. Walton, review of *Artisan/Practitioners and the Rise of the New Sciences, 1400–1600*, by Pamela O. Long, *Aestimatio: Sources and Studies in the History of Science* 11 (2014): 102.

11 Adam Gacek, "The Use of 'Kabīkaj' in Arabic Manuscripts," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 1 (1986): 49; Sobieroj, "Arabic," 95.

12 James W. Pollock, "Kabikaj to Book Pouches: Library Preservation Magic and Technique in Syria of the 1880's and the 1980's West," *MELA Notes* 44 (1988): 8–9.

the botanical interpretation of kabīkaj as the name of a plant.[13] According to Adam Gacek, the tradition of using kabīkaj, or Ranunculus Asiaticus, in manuscripts was started by pressing the plant specimens against the folios or placing their leaves between bifolios of the manuscripts. Due to several reasons, like the unavailability of the plant type in certain geographical areas, these practices evolved over time into the occultic invocation of kabīkaj by just inscribing its name.[14] The kabīkaj plant contains the chemical compound protoanemonin ($C_5H_4O_2$). When the plant is dried and comes into contact with air, protoanemonin synthesizes to anemonin ($C_{10}H_8O_4$), which has strong toxic characteristics that can repel insects and control fungal contamination in manuscripts.[15] The plant was used in the production of paper and ink in the Safavid empire to ensure the longevity of manuscripts, something that also emphasises the botanical interpretation of the word.[16]

Scholarship on kabīkaj has mainly focused on the spell's origin, etymology, and talismanic features.[17] The material foundations and social life of the word have received less attention. Studies that concentrate on those aspects restrict kabīkaj entirely to the context of magic, a perspective which overlooks the plural possibilities of engagement with manuscripts offered by the spell.[18] The concept of "technology," adopted from Bruno Latour, allows us to capture the diverse possibilities of engagement kabīkaj offers with the manuscripts and the multiple worlds in which they are embedded. This article argues that understanding the practice of kabīkaj invocation as a technology can illuminate the interconnectedness of social lives, material foundations, and occult-talismanic

13 Pollock, "Kabikaj to Book Pouches,", 8–9; Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2009), 137–138.

14 Julia Solomon, "Ancient Secrets Revealed," *McGill Reporter*, December 23, 2010, https://reporter.mcgill.ca/ancient-secrets-revealed, accessed November 27, 2023.

15 Kamran Mahlooji, Mahsima Abdoli, and Arman Zargaran, "Gabigaj: A Persian Herb for Protecting Manuscripts against Fungies and Insects from Safavid Era (1501–1722 AD)," *Journal of Research on History of Medicine* 9, no. 1 (2020): 67; Robert Hill and Ruth Van Heyningen, "Ranunculin: The Precursor of the Vesicant Substance of the Buttercup," *Biochemical Journal 49*, no. 3 (1951): 332.

16 Mahlooji, Abdoli, and Zargaran, "Gabigaj," 67.

17 Gacek, "Use," 49–53; Gacek, *Arabic*, 137–138; Mahlooji, Abdoli, and Zargaran, "Gabigaj," 63–68; Emilie Savage-Smith, "Introduction," in *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, ed. Emilie Savage-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), xiii–xliv.

18 Arun Singh and Manouchehr Moshtagh Khorasani, "An Analysis of Qur'anic Inscriptions on Safavid Afsharid, Zand and Qajar Period Iranian Arms and Armour," *Quaderni Asiatici* 96 (2011): 134–135. For the problem of using the word "magic" to describe Islamicate occult practices, see Travis Zadeh, "Magic, Marvel, and Miracle in Early Islamic Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. David J. Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 235–267.

qualities of the concept without confining it only to the category of the supernatural or a normal marginal text.[19]

2.2 *Latour and Hybrid Technologies*

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger conceptualises technology as both a means to an end and a human activity.[20] For Heidegger, the use of technology should involve the mastery of body and mind over the tools to ensure that the tools do not control humans. Criticising the anthropocentrism in Heidegger's argument, which presumes unilateral agency of humans over tools, Bruno Latour contends that technology operates as multiple and heterogenous assemblages. For Latour, just as the acts of human beings influence technology, the networks of technology also influence human beings. He asserts that it is the combined potential of these multiple actors that enables a "working piece of technology."[21] When humans and tools come together, a third "hybrid" is formed that has properties different from the separate properties of its individual components, the human beings and tools. For example, a hammer's existence and operation are only activated by diverse actors such as carpenters' accumulation of resources, motivation, and abilities, factories for their assembly, mines for ores, forests for woods, and even the antiquity of the planet that originally enables everything. Only within this assemblage—where human beings are just one among several actors—can a "nail-hitting hammer" come into being.[22] Finally, in a criticism of Heidegger's idea of mastery, Latour discusses the notion of "technical skill," which refers to specialized skills that only produce actions when combined with specific tools in an assemblage arrangement, rather than having supremacy over the technology.[23]

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19 The idea of the supernatural versus the natural is a binary built upon the fundamental understanding of what encompasses the natural. The notions of natural and supernatural, in their modern sense, were developed from medieval Christian theology. In medieval Christian theology, the supernatural was something connected to God. The idea was that God has the power to produce miracles, i.e., events that exceed all nature. "Nature" or "natural" encompass all orderly repetition of beings through intelligible reason. See Marinos Sariyannis, "Studying Ottoman Views of the Supernatural: The State-of-the-Art and a Research Agenda," *Aca'ib: Occasional Papers on the Ottoman Perceptions of the Supernatural* 1 (2020), 5–10.

20 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 1.

21 Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 174–215.

22 Bruno Latour, "Morality and Technology," trans. Couze Venn, *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 5–6 (2002): 249.

23 Roslyn Kerr, *Sport and Technology: An Actor-Network Theory Perspective* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 15.

The practice of kabīkaj invocation in Islamicate manuscript preservation shares several features with Latour's concept of technology. Scholars working on Islamicate talismanic practices and objects have already employed the term of technology to define them. Finbarr Barry Flood uses the idea of "devotional technology," while Liana Saif has taken a more Foucauldian direction by employing the expression "technology of self." Likewise, Matthew Melvin-Koushki uses the more precise term of "occult technologies."[24] While these works point to the creative conceptualization of talismanic or occult practices as technology, they do not address their networks or the way they operate. By critically engaging with the diverse elements in Latour's technological imagination, this article elaborates on the networks and the processes through which Islamicate talismanic practices and objects, and thereby kabīkaj, operate.

2.3 *Chemical kabīkaj: Science, the Occult, and Organic Unfolding*

In the pre-modern Greco-Arabic scholarly tradition, there were no strict boundaries between science and the occult, or between technologies and talismans. The occult sciences were conceptualized as a subcategory of the Hellenic natural and mathematical sciences. Features like causality, empiricism, and artificiality were all shared by occult sciences as well as by the natural and mathematical sciences. Following Ibn Sīnā, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Akfāni (c. 1286–1348) in *Irshād al-Qasīd ilā Asnā' al-Maqāsid* classifies occult sciences as natural sciences.[25] These sciences were theorized as apparatuses that marry spirits to bodies and bodies to spirits to reach the *bāṭin* (non-visible) through the *ẓāhir* (visible).[26] For Ya'qūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindi (c. 801–873), rather than metaphysical powers, talismanic objects work through astral rays that build up the fabric of the cosmos like gravity and other natural forces.[27] These astral rays were conceptualized as material energies that cause the effects of the talismans on intended objects. Also, Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhī (c. 787–886) explains how occult sciences are founded on the methodological principles of rational sciences like *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), *taḥqīq* (independent verifi-

24 Finbarr Barry Flood, *Technologies de dévotion dans les arts de l'Islam: pèlerins, reliques et copies* (Paris: Hazan, 2019); Liana Saif, "Mastering Nature and Soul: Contemplations on Magic and Talismans in Islam," *Ajam Media Collective*, October 28, 2020, https://ajammc.com/2020/10/28/magic-talismans-islam/; Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic) Occult Science Science?" *Theology and Science* 18, no. 2 (2020): 315.

25 Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic)," 311–312.

26 Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic)," 304; 'Abdul Qādir Musliyar Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa Muḥyussunna* (Kottakkal: Barakath Book Stall, 2010), 526–527.

27 Saif, "Mastering Nature."

cation), and *tajriba* (experience), with *tajriba* entailing the methodologies of *muʿāyana* (observation) and *al-wujūd al-ḥāḍir* (direct discovery).[28] Talismans, according to Jābir b. Ḥayyān (c. 721–815), reproduce the very act of creation and imitate natural phenomena.[29] Like modern laboratory scientific practices aimed at creation and imitation, occult sciences could thus only be reproduced in highly controlled and artificial settings where the potentials of technology, human and non-human combine together to form an affect.[30] For example, practitioners of kabīkaj used to catch their breath while inscribing the word in the manuscripts, and it was only upon the combination of this breathing practice and the formula that the repellent function of the talisman were believed to manifest its properties.[31] In short, during the pre-modern period, "science" and "the occult" were not two mutually exclusive entities, but were rather adjacent disciplines serving to understand and engage with the universe.

This connection between science and occult practices in the pre-modern world and the combinational network of acts and objects in occult practices offer a template to juxtapose Latour's idea of technology, which is mostly used in modern techno-scientific contexts, with the domain of Islamicate talismanic practices—specifically with the practice of kabīkaj invocation. As discussed, kabīkaj invocation is commonly employed to repel termite and fungal attacks on pre-modern Islamicate manuscripts, which were produced from materials such as paper, parchment, papyrus, and textiles. These materials were bound using organic substances like *nashāʾ* (plant-based starch), *ghirāʾ al-ḥūt* (fish-glue), *muḥḥ al-bayḍ* (egg yolk) and *ʿasl* (honey).[32] Made up of organic particles, these materials contain cellulose, an organic chemical compound that forms the primary cells of plants and some fungi. Termites and certain types of fungi are able to feed on cellulose by utilizing the enzymes produced by bacteria and protozoa in their digestive systems. Likewise, animal skins used for parchment production contain collagen, which is composed of protein molecules known as amino acids. Protease enzymes found in the digestive systems of insects and fungi break down the proteins that make up the organic

28 Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic)," 314.

29 Saif, "Mastering Nature."

30 Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic)," 316.

31 A. Ginanjar Syaʿban, "Kabikaj, Lafadz Jimat di Muka Kitab," *Attarbiyah*, November 14, 2017, https://wakidyusuf.wordpress.com/2017/11/14/kabikaj-lafaz-jimat-di-muka-kitab, accessed November 28, 2023.

32 Scheper, *Technique*, 85, 164; Gacek, "Use," 49; Michaelle Biddle, *Saving Nigeria's Islamic Manuscript Heritage* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Library, 2008), 4.

materials into amino acids, which serve as necessary nutrients for their survival and reproduction.[33] That is, dialectically, kabīkaj is operating as an antidote to these diverse processes of complex chemical synthesis that form around—and thereby bring into existence—Islamicate manuscripts. Drawing upon the idea of "hybrid technology," it is these entanglements of diverse actors like insects, organic materials, chemical compounds, protozoa, reverence for manuscripts, and other elements that enable the existence of the technology of "termite-repelling kabīkaj." Outside these heterogenous actors, networks, and processes, the practice of kabīkaj invocation as a preservation technique and the underlying cosmology that determines its effectiveness would not have been able to unfold—that is, it would have remained an inoperative word and not a functional piece of talisman or repellent.

2.4 *Consequential Networks: Practical Knowledge, Technical Skill, and Scribal Politics*

Another important aspect in the context of technological imagination of kabīkaj is "mutual affect." For Latour, just like human beings, non-human beings also have the same potential to engage and make impacts on networks.[34] Latour refers to both the human and non-human entities in networks as "actants." This is because, for him, ontology is fundamentally relative and positionality is purely defined by the relative situation between actors in their networks.[35] Irrespective of biotic or abiotic, agency or subjectivity is something purely determined by the ability of an existence to create affect in its network. Anything that makes an impact could become an actant. This allowed Latour to propose that there is a "symmetrical" agency between humans and non-humans in a network, where both affect each other, rather than the traditional conception of unilateral influence of human beings on non-humans.[36]

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33 Scheper, *Technique*, 394.

34 Graham Harman, "Entanglement and Relation: A Response to Bruno Latour and Ian Hodder," *New Literary History* 45, no. 1 (2014): 38–43.

35 Harman, "Entanglement and Relation," 37–38.

36 Latour extended the idea of symmetry from early science studies to anthropology, later called symmetrical anthropology. He applied the idea to understand the status of actors in all phenomena. For him, in all knowledge constructions, things, along with human beings, should also be counted as agents. This symmetrical approach without hierarchizing subjects over objects and provisioning proportional agencies to actors according to their roles were based on his advocacy for suspending the non-modern division of culture and nature. For a detailed discussion of symmetry and agency, see Ian Hodder and Gavin Lucas, "The Symmetries and Asymmetries of Human-Thing Relations: A Dialogue," *Archaeological Dialogues* 24, no. 2 (2017): 119–137.

However, while agreeing with Latour's idea of mutual affectivity in networks, this article does not follow his conception of a flattened human and non-human ontology where human beings and non-human beings are equal in their potential for affect. Instead, it aligns more with Alf Hornborg's concept of "consequences." For Hornborg, non-humans have consequences over humans and humans have agency over non-humans in mutually impacted networks. He defines agency as the capacity to act, driven by purpose.[37] When purposes are attributed to humans, they fall under the category of intentions, and attributing these purposes or intentionality to non-humans is theoretically a form of fetishism. The purposes that drive living beings presuppose a certain potential for communication and sentience, and this capacity for sentience and communication defines a subject.[38] While biotic entities register specific aspects of their environment and respond to them, abiotic entities lack these capacities and are thus objects. However, the absence of sentience or communication does not preclude them from making impacts in their surroundings. As objects in networks, they can constrain, prompt, or mediate between humans, other non-humans, and networks. It is these relations that Hornborg calls "consequences."[39] Thus, consequences allow us to understand the mutual affects of tools, humans, and contexts that enable the operation of technologies without suspending the fundamental differences between subjects and objects. In context of kabīkaj, the idea of consequence offers a more nuanced understanding about the theological context of its practice and affect.

Etymologically, the term "talisman" encompasses the idea of mutuality. The word talisman is derived from the Arabic *ṭillasm*. Jābir b. Ḥayyān's *Kitāb al-Nukhab* traces the origin of the word *ṭillasm* to the reversal of another Arabic word, *musallaṭ*, which means something that is authorized to have an impact over something else.[40] Emilie Savage-Smith notes that, in the pre-modern Islamicate world, the textual and practical traditions of talismans were operating differently. Savage-Smith notes that the designs and inscriptions on talismanic artifacts were different from the designs and inscriptions that were mentioned in the contemporary talismanic literature. For her, then, rather than adhering to the talismanic literature, the practitioners of talismans were fol-

37 Alf Hornborg, "Artifacts have Consequences, not Agency: Toward a Critical Theory of Global Environmental History," *European Journal of Social Theory* 20, no. 1 (2017): 98.

38 Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 91–92.

39 Hornborg, "Artifacts," 99.

40 Saif, "Mastering Nature."

lowing the traditional approach based on their generational and experiential practical knowledge.[41]

Talismanic practices were practical knowledge, because apart from their para-literary existence they were also codified and expected to cause external and real-world effects with a fair degree of reliability.[42] In her discussion of practical knowledge, Pamela H. Smith notes that practical knowledge is not something that operates in isolation but is always structured by diverse factors. Among those factors is the materiality of objects.[43] For example, the vulnerability of manuscripts to destruction, which is a material condition, is one of the fundamental aspect that enable the kabīkaj invocation technique. In the absence of this material condition of manuscripts, the practice of kabīkaj invocation would probably not have emerged. Similarly, it is also the material condition of kabīkaj as a body capable of receiving metaphysical powers and radiating material energy that led to the practice of the inscription of the word, as will be discussed in the next part.[44] Therefore, without considering the material conditions of the object, their mutual conditioning, and their role in making consequences in a network, the operation of a talismanic technology cannot be understood.

Since occult sciences are the recreation of natural laws, highly artificial contexts are very important for these practices. The most significant of these artificial settings is the technical skill that the practitioners of the talismanic technologies must maintain. As previously mentioned, technical skills are specialized skills that produce actions or outputs when combined with specific tools or technologies in an assemblage.[45] Similarly, talismanic objects, although believed to operate with their astral radiations, require human skills such as speech or sacrifices, in addition to their craft part of talismanic objects or

41 Emilie Savage-Smith, "Islamic Magical Texts vs. Magical Artefacts," *Societas Magica Newsletter* 11 (2003): 1–6.

42 Pamela H. Smith, "The Codification of Vernacular Theories of Metallic Generation in Sixteenth-Century European Mining and Metalworking," in *The Structures of Practical Knowledge*, ed. Matteo Valleriani (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 372–373.

43 Smith, "Codification," 377–382.

44 Objects have inherent capacity by their design, material and constitutional properties to inflict or repel effects. Apart from the power of the inscriptions written over it, certain matters—like various types of iron and steel, or iron oxide and water, etc.—have ontological properties for themselves that mean that it is only in associating with them that the inscriptions could transform into talismans. See Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Barakāt Jōhari Nezāmi, *Javāhernāme-ye-Nizāmi*, ed. Iraj Afshār (Tehran: Mirās-e-Maktūb, 2004), 226.

45 Kerr, *Sport and Technology*, 15.

images.[46] There are several practices associated with occult sciences, such as the observation of total seclusion, maintaining a vegetarian diet, astrological obedience, etc. It is only when they are combined with these practices that the talismanic objects and practitioners can expect the affect.[47] Discussing the consequences, Smith notes that these specific bodily labours, be they mental imaginations or bodily flexions, can influence practical knowledge and structure the operation of technologies in the future.[48] The practice of holding one's breath while writing kabīkaj on texts in Java, Indonesia noted by Ginanjar Syaʿban's is an example of that.[49]

But there's a problem with Syaʿban's historical analysis of kabīkaj in the Malay world. Like in King Thibaw's story of the magicians of Kamrup, Syaʿban notes that practitioners of kabīkaj in the Malay world see the practice as a marker of their entangled histories with the Persianate cosmopolis.[50] Syaʿban notes the existence of kabīkaj invocation in Indonesia only as historical evidence for the Southeast Asian connection with the Persianate cosmopolis, and he fails to highlight the explicit role of the Arabic cosmopolis across the Indian Ocean in popularizing the technique in Indonesia. Practiced across the Indian Ocean littorals of Yemen, the Swahili coasts, Gujarat, Malabar, and Java, the intellectual and material mobility within the Arabic cosmopolis facilitated by the Indian Ocean monsoons also enabled the circulation of kabīkaj technology across the Oceanic Islamicate world. During a visit to the *Dār al-Iftāʾ al-Azhariyya* Library in Cāliyam, Kerala in March 2023, I could find the invocation *yā kabīkaj* inscribed on the folio of a multiple-manuscript copy of *Sabʿat al-Kutub*, a traditional anthology text popular in Malabar and Coromandel coasts for teaching Arabic grammar and syntax, belonging to the private collection of the Shāfiʿī jurist Shaykh Shihābuddīn Aḥmad Kōya al-Shāliyātī

46 Saif, "Mastering Nature."

47 Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic)," 316.

48 Smith, "Codification," 377–379. For the relation between materiality and practices like consumption and veneration associated with manuscripts, see Akkerman, "Bohra," 192–194.

49 Syaʿban, "Kabikaj."

50 Marshall G.S. Hodgson introduced the concept of "Persianate" in his book *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume Two, The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Period*. Hodgson uses the term to denote the geographical area between the Balkans to Turkestan and China and South and Southeast Asia into Malaysia, where Persian was the standard literary language among Muslims, and a whole artistic and literary cultural tradition carried in or inspired by Persian existed between the late medieval and early modern period. See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume Two, The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 293.

(c. 1884–1954). Although I was not allowed to take photos of the manuscript or even the compound of the library because of the strict *fatwā* (legal ruling) issued by al-Shāliyātī prohibiting the practice of photography in Islam, which is still strictly adhered by the custodian of the library, the historical evidence for the practice of kabīkaj invocation in Malabar points to the shared technological imagination of kabīkaj invocation within the Arabic cosmopolis across the Indian Ocean networks.[51]

Olly Akkerman refers to this complex of sociality, tools, and technical skills in manuscript cultures as "scribal politics." Akkerman indicates two dimensions of copying in manuscript cultures, referred to the "scribal" and the "scriptural." In this framework, the social dimension of manuscript copying is referred to as the "scribal." Akkerman includes various practices related to the scribe's social setting, such as dress codes, posture, ritual purity, and the reciting of Qur'anic verses as examples of the scribal dimension. The technical and aesthetic practices, such as the material, tools, and designs associated with manuscript cultures, are called the "scriptural." It is the entangled assemblage of these scribal and scriptural cultures that she refers to as "scribal politics." It is these socio-technical networks that shape the material aspects of specific manuscript cultures.[52] Akkerman's scribal politics offers a critical perspective to address the diverse consequential networks like practical knowledge, technical skill, and artefactual materiality that affect and get affected by talismanic technology within Islamicate manuscript cultures—particularly the technique of kabīkaj invocation.

2.5 *Organic and Cosmological Assemblages of* Rūḥāniyyāt

Another important characteristic of technology is its ontological configuration as networks. Latour emphasizes that for technologies to be effective, their heterogenous actors should come together and operate as a network. However, this

51 Ronit Ricci introduced the concept of the "Arabic cosmopolis" in her book *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia*. Ricci coined the term inspired by the concept "Sanskrit cosmopolis," introduced by Sheldon Pollock. By "Arabic cosmopolis," Ricci means the unique political and cultural status of the Arabic language, which developed almost simultaneously across large parts of India and Southeast Asia, and the knowledge and cultural discourses that developed along with it. The concept of the Arabic cosmopolis charts the history of transition from the use of cosmopolitan Arabic to the emergence of vernacular literary cultures across the geographies connected by it. See Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 13–21.

52 Akkerman, "Bohra," 191–192.

paper discusses Latour's concept of networks in light of the idea of "assemblage," popularized by Gilles Deleuze. Although there are theoretical discussions of the difference between network analysis and assemblage thinking, Latour in several contexts uses "networks" interchangeably with "assemblages" and cites directly from Deleuze.[53] For Deleuze, assemblages are multiplicities that consist of many heterogeneous terms and establish relations horizontally over space and categories as well as vertically across time. Assemblages are never linear successions or determined patterns, but rather offer infinitely possible unexpected filiations.[54] To understand the operation of talismanic technologies or mechanisms in general, "assemblage" offers wider possibilities. In Islamicate mechanisms, particularly in talismanic technologies, the output or the effect of the composition is left to the *qudra* (omnipotence) of God even when heterogenous components are properly combined. Therefore, unexpectedness or non-predictability is always an ontological part of them.[55] To contain the inherent unexpectedness or the theological act of *tawakkul* (trust in God's decision) in Islamicate mechanisms, assemblage offers a better theoretical framework.

Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubi (d. 964) states that the efficacy of talismanic objects is the result of complex assemblages of multiple influences. He identifies four *rūḥāniyyāt* that are essential for the operation of talismans. *Rūḥāniyyāt* are agents of astral influences. The four *rūḥāniyyāt* are: the *rūḥāniyyāt* of the world, which acts through astral rays; the *rūḥāniyyāt* of the instruments; the *rūḥāniyyāt* of the *niyya* (intention); and the *rūḥāniyyāt* of manual labour.[56] Assemblage of these *rūḥāniyyāt* encompasses both the celestial and terrestrial worlds and activate the will of God and humans in the universe. In other words, it is the combination of metaphysics, technology, technical skill, and

53 Latour discusses the connection and similarity between his network analysis and assemblage thinking in several places. For example, he argues that the original usage of the word "network" intended to mean something similar to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of "rhizome," which refers to "a series of transformations." See Bruno Latour, "On Recalling ANT," *The Sociological Review* 47, no. 1 (1999): 15.

54 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 219; Manuel DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 1–3.

55 For discussions on the relation between natural causality and divine omnipotence in Islamic philosophy, see Jon McGinnis, "Occasionalism, Natural Causation and Science in al-Ghazali," in *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, ed. James E. Montgomery (Leuven: Peeters Publication, 2006), 445–457.

56 Saif, "Mastering Nature."

mentality, each with their own heterogeneous histories, that constitutes the primary assemblage of an operating talismanic technology. Like the hammer, it is the assemblage of the organic actants like human beings, insects, fungi, bacteria, collagen, and cellulose; affective actants like the respect for and veneration of books, and the fear of losing knowledge; and cosmological actants like the faith in the *qudra* of God, and the ability of objects to receive spiritual elevation that enact an effective talismanic technology by exerting consequences across time and space. Conceptualising the practice of kabīkaj invocation as a technology of organic and cosmological assemblages with both agencies and consequences in operation, rather than as a magical ritual, allows us to understand the interconnected social lives, material foundations, and metaphysics of the phenomena without falling into the trap of the religion versus science binary or anthropocentrism.

3 Entangled Ontologies: Linguistics, Theology, Cosmology, and Animalscapes

3.1 *Jurisprudence of Linguistics and Hermeneutics of Etymology*

Hugh McDiarmid, a prominent figure during the Scottish Renaissance, refers to kabīkaj in his 1955 poem *In Memoriam James Joyce*:

> And the word Kabikaj, constantly recurring
> In manuscripts from India, and said to be
> An invocation to the King of the Cockroaches
> Or an angel concerned with the repression
> Of exuberant Cockroaches and other insects
> Which destroy books.[57]

McDiarmid discusses kabīkaj in the context of Sanskrit. He associates kabīkaj with the quest for a universal lingua franca, challenging the dominance of English by exploring Eastern languages and orthography. Interestingly, the Islamic jurisprudential rulings surrounding kabīkaj were developed around these non-Arabic roots of the formula. According to Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī (c. 973–1048), the word kabīkaj derived from the Sanskrit word *kāpi*, meaning monkey. The logic of the nomenclature is argued to be either a reflection of the

57 Hugh McDiarmid, *Complete Poems*, vol. 1–2, eds. Michael Grieve and W.R. Aitken (Manchester: Carcanet, 1993–1994), 790.

plant's restless character, akin to that of a monkey, or the fact that monkeys are fond of the plant. In Indic cultural beliefs, *kāpi* is an epithet of the Hindu god Vishnu.[58] This etymological genealogy has resulted in the issuing of *fatāwā* (sing. fatwa) prohibiting the practice of kabīkaj. For example, in a recent online fatwa, Shaykh Bakr b. ʿAbdullah Abī Zayd, citing Shaykh Naṣīruddīn al-Albānī, opined that the invocation of kabīkaj in manuscripts is an act of *shirk* (polytheism), since *al-ruqa'* (incantation) is deemed unreligious in Islamic teachings. Another reason he cites is the *ʿajamī* (non-Arabic) genealogy of the term.[59] The legal ruling of *shirk* pertaining to the invocation of kabīkaj is not just influenced by the polytheistic etymology and the hermeneutics associated with the term, but also by the more popular understanding about the invalidity of non-Arabic languages in divinatory practices as well as the conception of Arabic as the only valid language of Islam and faith. Another recent *fatwa* by a contemporary Shāfiʿī scholar from Kerala, India, Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir Musliyār Ponmaḷa, discusses the topic in detail.[60] In discussing the difference between *riyāḍa al-asmā'* (spiritual treatment using the divine names of Allah) and talismanic practices, Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir in his *Fatāwa Muḥyussunna* cites the Ottoman polymath Kātip Çelebī and Ibn Khaldūn:

> *Asmā'* is the discipline that practices the divine names of *al-asmā' al-ḥusna* and the secrets to make them work [...] It is by merging and detaching the forces of heaven [with or from the forces of earth] the practices of talismanic experts work [...] [while] the universe submits to the power of the experts of *asmā'*. For the experts of *asmā'*, neither the heavenly forces nor other things are needed for their practice. What matters to them above those forces is the help from Allah.[61]

Quoting this, Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir writes that there is no prohibition of the practice of *asmā'*, while the practice of talismans is theologically and jurisprudentially contested.[62] The only discussion he brings in to elaborate on the ambiguity is the linguistic one. Citing the fifteenth-century Shāfiʿī jurist and hadith scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (1372–1449), Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir writes:

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58 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī, *Saydāneh*, vol. 2, trans. Abū Bakr ibn ʿAli al-Kāshānī, eds. Manuchehr Sotoodeh and Iraj Afshār (Tehran: Shahid Beheshti University, 1980), 579.

59 Sheikh Bakr ibn ʿAbdullah abī Zayd, *Muʿjam al-Manāhī al-Lafẓiyya wa Fawā'id fil Alfāẓ* (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣimat fil Nashr wal Tawzīʿ, 1996), 563.

60 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 528.

61 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 527.

62 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 527–528.

> Regarding written amulets and uttered spells, this is the opinion of our jurisprudential school. Writing and uttering words whose meanings are unknown is *ḥarām*. The Mālikī scholar Ibn al-Rushd and the Shāfiʿī scholar Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām are among the scholars from our and other schools who ruled that spells with unknown non-Arabic words are *ḥarām*.[63]

Agreeing to this line of thought, Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir shows his dismissal of amulets and talismanic practices in non-Arabic words in Islam. Kabīkaj, having either a Sanskrit or a Persian root, also with a known etymological connection with Hindu gods, comes under this legal prohibition of using non-Arabic words in talismanic practices for many people across the Islamic community. But interestingly, *Samastha Kerala Jem-iyyatul Ulama*, the official forty-member scholarly body of one faction of Sunni Muslims in Kerala in which Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir holds the secretary position, claims their scholarly affiliation to al-Shāliyātī, who used the formula kabīkaj in his texts. So, although there were legal opinions prohibiting the use of non-Arabic words in talismanic practices, there were always diverse hermeneutical interpretations and conceptualisations (like seeing kabīkaj not as a talisman) that facilitated the practice even among communities that textually dismiss it. For example, the Arabic numerical value of *yā kabīkaj* is the same as that of the word Allāh, namely 66.[64] So, conceptualising kabīkaj in this way makes it a mathematical variation of *asmāʾ* rather than a prohibited non-Arabic talismanic spell. In short, the theological, linguistic, and hermeneutical discourses that shape kabīkaj are fundamental to understanding the legal and practical terrains of the spell's usage across communities and thus its technological location within the human or community-manuscript assemblage.

3.2 *Theology of* tawassul *and* istighātha

As discussed, kabīkaj has been inscribed in diverse forms across Islamicate manuscripts, and among the most popular forms are the ones that are written along with *ḥurūf al-nidāʾ* (vocative particles) and *afʿāl al-duʿāʾ* (supplicative verbs), such as *yā kabīkaj* (oh! kabīkaj) or *iḥfaẓ kabīkaj* (please protect, kabīkaj!). Kabīkaj with these vocative or supplicative add-words can be seen as either addressing the kabīkaj itself, reminiscent of the practice of *istighātha* (calling for divine aid) like *yā kabīkaj iḥfaẓ al-waraq min al-araḍa ʿadada*

63 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 528.

64 Albert Dietrich, *Medicinalia Arabica: Studien über arabische medizinische Handschriften in türkischen und syrischen Bibliotheken* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967), 41.

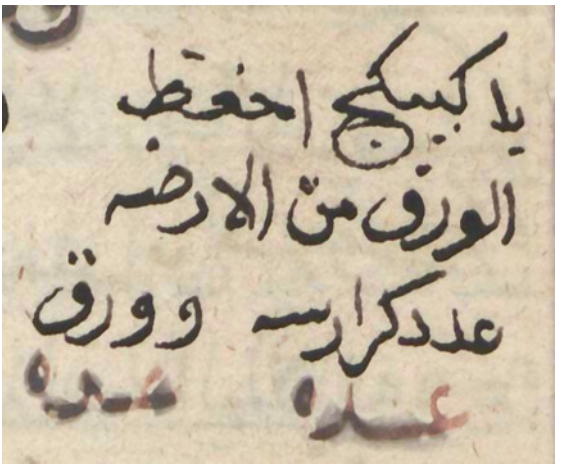

FIGURE 11.2
Yā kabīkaj iḥfaẓ al-waraq min al-araḍa ʿadada kurāsa wa-waraq ʿaddahu ʿaddahu' in *Iʿlām al-Nās bi-mā waqaʿa li-l-Barāmika maʿa Banī al-ʿAbbās*, fol. 1ª. Vollers 622, Universitätbibliothek Leipzig.

kurāsa wa-waraq ʿaddahu ʿaddahu (oh kabīkaj! protect the paper from the termite, all the books and papers, all their numbers, all their numbers) (fig. 11.2), or addressing God through kabīkaj like *iḥbis yā kabīkaj al-arḍa yā ḥafīẓ yā Allāh yā Allāh yā Allāh* (oh! Kabīkaj protect from termites, oh! Protector, oh! Allah oh! Allah oh! Allah) (fig. 11.3), similar to the practice of *tawassul* (intercession). *Ḥurūf al-nidāʾ* are normally used for identifying persons or objects in conversations, but are also technically used in the context of *istighāsa*.[65] Also, although the particles are generally used along with living beings, it is often used with non-living beings as *majāz* (metaphor) or by *taqdīr* (perceiving something as something else) as per the rhetorical rules.[66] Either way, with the use of *ḥurūf al-nidāʾ* and *afʿāl al-duʿāʾ*, kabīkaj is transformed into a subject—the capacity to act—or attributed with a certain level of subjectivity—the capacity to be acted through—here by its practitioners.

In technical terms, *istighātha* is the seeking of aid from God for lifting difficulties and opening paths. A subcategory of *duʿāʾ* (supplication), *istighātha* seeks help for an actual or potential difficulty.[67] Thus, even when asked directly

65 Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dasūqī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Dasūqī ʿalā Mukhtaṣar al-Maʿānī li-Saʿad al-Dīn al-Taftāzāni*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Maktabat al-ʿAṣriyya, 2007), 440–441.

66 In the Qurʾan, *ḥurūf al-nidāʾ* is used to denote abiotic beings like earth and sky, because they are obedient to the commands of Allah, which is a general feature of biotic beings. Since they share a feature with biotic beings, they are perceived to be like biotic beings in this context, and the vocative particle is attached to them. See Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-asrār al-taʾwīl al-maʿrūf bi-Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwi*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dar Ehia al-Tourath al-Arabi, 1998), 136.

67 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Fatḥ al-Majīd li-sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (Riyadh: Dār al- Ṣamīʿī li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ), 301.

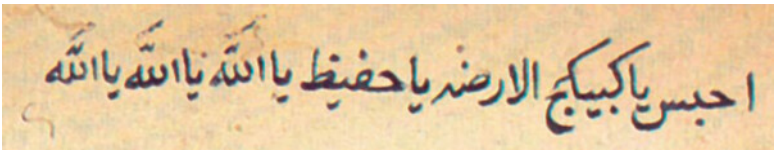

FIGURE 11.3 *Iḥbis yā kabīkaj al-arḍa yā ḥafīẓ yā Allāh* in Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2009), 137.

to some subjects or objects, theologically it is seeking God to create help through or in them.[68] While *tawassul* is seeking help from God through the mediacy of an object or subject, what makes *tawassul* different from the idolatry practices of polytheists in a theological sense is that while polytheists seek *taqarrubun ilā-wāsiṭa* (closeness to the mediator), in *tawassul* it is *taqarrubun bi-l-wāsiṭa* (closeness through the mediator).[69] Although all human acts are implicitly either *istighātha* or *tawassul*, technically they are referred to by different terms in the context of *al-umūr al-khāriqa*, which are things and events that are normally outside the analogical understanding of causality.[70] "Consequences" make it possible to incorporate the theological nuances of this discussion. Since in both *istighātha* and *tawassul* the subjectivity attributed to kabīkaj by its practitioners is relational to the omnipotence of Allah, and not its own, "consequence," rather than "agency," offers the space to accommodate the performativity of the formulae within the Islamicate context without pushing it into polytheism. As discussed above, Hornborg's "consequence" doesn't consider abiotic objects to have ontological subjectivity even when affecting their surroundings, while Latour's "agency" attributes ontological subjectivity to objects, something which is more aligned with *taqarrubun bi-l-wāsiṭa*.

3.3 *Platonic Ontology of* ʿilm al-ḥikma

Apart from the theological dimension of *istighātha* and *tawassul*, the invocation of kabīkaj is also predicated on the concept of *ʿilm al-ḥikma* (the science of wisdom). Across Islamicate history, several scholars have identified *ʿilm al-ḥikma* with *al-ʿilm al-ʿaqlī* (rational science).[71] As discussed above, there were no strict boundaries between occult sciences and natural and mathematical sciences in the pre-modern Islamicate world, and talismanic practices

68 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 405.

69 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 489–490.

70 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 406.

71 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Meaning and Role of "Philosophy" in Islam," *Studia Islamica*, no. 37 (1973): 64.

were understood to be based on rational methodologies. So, *ʿilm al-ḥikma* also applies to all sorts of Islamic talismanic inscriptions in all forms. The concept of *ʿilm al-ḥikma* is fundamentally Platonic.[72] In Platonic ontology, the divine or true nature of realities is *ʿālam al-mithāl*, which is an aspatial and atemporal essence that provides the formal basis for the material world, and all real world existents are only the corresponding realities of this ideal abstract realm.[73] It is because of this ontological foundation of natural philosophy and cosmological laws that Ibn Khaldūn considered talismanic practitioners better than pseudo-*asmāʾ* practitioners, as for him the former at least have some alignment with the natural phenomena.[74]

In the specific case of kabīkaj, the philosophical ontology is based on the real essence of the Ranunculus Asiaticus. In the medieval Islamicate Platonic conception, toxicity was an inseparable attribute of the eidetic form of Ranunculus Asiaticus.[75] The invocation of kabīkaj was based on the idea that unless it was toxic, the Ranunculus Asiaticus was never the Ranunculus Asiaticus. This is because the actual Ranunculus Asiaticus was inseparable from the idea or form of Ranunculus Asiaticus, and the manifested Ranunculus Asiaticus was nothing but a subsidiary reflection of that reality. Therefore, in the practice of kabīkaj invocation, the word kabīkaj is regarded as being just as real as the actual kabīkaj plant, as both are only different manifestations of a single true form of the Ranunculus Asiaticus. As of *ʿilm al-ḥikma*, the inscription of kabīkaj can have the same affects of the plant, as the epigraphy too comes under the universal form of the Ranunculus Asiaticus. Thus, the ontology of kabīkaj is grounded in the cosmology that the true essence of the plant lies in its form, rather than in its material attributes, and this form can also be harnessed through the invocation of its name.

These onto-theological and cosmological imaginations also contribute to two important discussions regarding talismans in general and kabīkaj in particular—Savage-Smith's discussion on the textual-practical gap of medieval Islamicate talismans and Akkerman's discussion on the transformation of kabīkaj invocation from the usage of the actual plant. As mentioned, Savage-Smith notes that during the medieval period, the literary tradition of Islamicate talismanic discourses did not impact its practical tradition and was thus operating separately. However, although Savage-Smith's argument about the direct influ-

72 Singh and Khorasani, "An Analysis," 134.

73 For the connection between Islamic philosophy, *ʿālam al-mithāl*, and Plato, see Fazlur Rahman, "Dream, Imagination and ʿĀlam al-Mithāl," *Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (1964): 167–180.

74 Ponmaḷa, *Fatāwa*, 526.

75 Singh and Khorasani, "An Analysis," 134.

ence of the contemporary talismanic literary production in medieval Islamicate talismanic craft is historical, talismanic craft was not necessarily operating in isolation from the textual world. Smith notes how practical knowledge, although operating at a distance from textual knowledge was still structured by it and vice versa. For example, the vernacular geological knowledge of sixteenth-century miners in German Saxony was influenced by Aristotelian earth science. The idea of miners that it was the growth of minerals inside the earth that stirred up the subterranean air circulation causing the variation in temperature of the earth traces its origin to Aristotle's *Meteorologica*.[76] Smith and Matteo Valleriani used the term "structure" to describe this relation. "Structure" denotes the social dimensions and conceptual systems in which a knowledge system is embedded.[77] In the same way that the German miners' practical knowledge was structured by Aristotle's theories, the Islamic talismanic craft was also structured by textual traditions. Although not directly impacted by contemporary literary tradition, pre-modern talismanic practices were still structured by solid theoretical foundations like Platonic ontology, theological discourses around *istighātha* and *tawassul*, and jurisprudential debates around language and hermeneutical considerations about etymology, all of which developed elaborate textual corpora across the generations. Shahab Ahmed describes these foundations as "Con-Text." Con-Text is the entire accumulated collection of ways and meanings of Islam that have been historically developed, practiced, and recorded up to any given moment—the comprehensive historical vocabulary of Islam at a particular moment. Ahmed writes:

> [Con-Text] includes all encyclopaedia of epistemologies, interpretations, identities, persons and places, structures of authority, textualities and intertextualities, motifs, symbols, values, meaningful questions and meaningful answers, agreements and disagreements, emotions and affinities and affects, aesthetics, modes of saying, doing and being, and other truth-claims and components of existential exploration and meaning-making in terms of Islam that Muslims acting as Muslims have produced, and to which Muslims acting as Muslims have attached themselves during the process of hermeneutical engagement with Revelation.[78]

76 Smith, "The Codification," 388.

77 Matteo Valleriani, "Foreword," in *The Structures of Practical Knowledge*, ed. Matteo Valleriani (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), vii.

78 Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 356–357.

It is this trans-generational Con-Text of textual theories that enabled the context for vernacular talismanic crafts to perform and exist in an Islamically meaningful way even when separated from contemporary literary scholarship on the topic. That is, although separated, the relationship between the literary and practical dimensions of pre-modern Islamicate talismanic practices were never independent or isolated.

Another interesting technological aspect is the historical transition of the practice of kabīkaj preservation—from using real kabīkaj leaves to invoking the name to generate the affect. Akkerman notes that it was the wide unavailability of kabīkaj plants across the Islamicate world that led to the development of the practice of kabīkaj invocation with the formula.[79] But such an argument seems reductionistic as it confines the dynamic practice of kabīkaj invocation across a larger geography over the generations to a single utilitarian reason of unavailability. Scholars have noted that the technique of kabīkaj invocation was already in practice at least from the sixteenth century within manuscript cultures of the Safavid empire, where the kabīkaj plant was growing natively.[80] Akkerman also mentions an important point in the context of South Asia which contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the technological transition. She notes that the widespread availability of the neem plant in the Indian subcontinent, which has similar repellent qualities to those of kabīkaj plants, like bitterness and anti-fungal and viral toxicity, did not actually stop the practitioners of kabīkaj invocation from copying the formula in their manuscripts. Instead, what happened was that the neem plant was considered to be an additional repellent that reinforced the protective power of kabīkaj formula.[81] Here Akkerman points to an important context of the parallel and complicated relation between using real plant specimens and invoking talismanic spells rather than a linear transition where one replaces another. Like this relation between kabīkaj formula and neem plant, the relation between kabīkaj formula and the kabīkaj plant itself could also be layered. Rather than just being due to unavailability, the above-discussed tradition of onto-theologies and cosmologies existing within the Islamicate world could also have encouraged the practitioner communities to adopt the invocation of kabīkaj along with or rather than kabīkaj plants. Instead of understanding the relation between the kabīkaj plant and kabīkaj formula as a linear transition caused by the utilitarian reason of unavailability, their transformation should be understood as a com-

79 Olly Akkerman, *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books: Arabic Manuscripts among the Alawi Bohras of South Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 286–288.

80 Mahlooji, Abdoli, and Zargaran, "Gabigaj," 65.

81 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury*, 288.

plex process facilitated by an assemblage of diverse ontologies and worldviews along with practical and utilitarian reasons. That is, although maybe for utilitarian reasons, the hermeneutics of etymologies, the jurisprudence of languages, and the theology of divine aid revolving around kabīkaj have all certainly created a context for kabīkaj where its utilitarian practice could gain social validity and moral affirmation.

3.4 *Spatial Conception of Animalscapes*

Finally, the technique of kabīkaj invocation also offers critical perspectives on human-animal entanglements and the conception of space within Islamicate scribal politics. One of the most imperative occasions where micro-fauna—insects, termites, fungi, bacteria, etc.—mark their presence in human imagination is when they "attack" or "destroy" assets. Manuscripts were among the most valuable possessions in Islamicate intellectual and emotional imaginations. The micro-faunal destruction of manuscripts was thus always a concern that evolved along with the proliferation of texts in the Islamicate world. These acts of "attack" or "destruction" of manuscripts offer a critical point of departure to understand the spatial imaginations underlying the practice of kabīkaj invocation. In Islamicate vocabulary, all micro-fauna comes under the generic category of *al-ḥasharāt* (vermin). In pre-modern Europe, the category of vermin reproduced the Cartesian duality between creatures that are ethically worthy of consideration and those that are despised as "zoological outcasts."[82] This Cartesian conception was affirmed by the Renaissance-era perception of space as something completely belonging to humans and seeing everyone and everything else as encroachers on human space. It was these binary and the Renaissance-era anthropocentric spatial imagination that built the foundation for the modern human-vermin encounters where humans terminate vermin with tools.

The technique of kabīkaj invocation offers a different perspective on the human-vermin relationship. Rather than eliminating them, the invocation of kabīkaj highlights a context where manuscripts are protected from vermin. That is, in scribal politics the practitioners of kabīkaj prevent vermin from colliding with their space, namely the manuscripts. This prevention, rather than annihilation, is caused by the practitioners' basic acknowledgment of the omnipresence of vermin around the manuscripts.[83] Manuscripts there were

82 Lucinda Cole, *Imperfect Creatures: Vermin, Literature, and the Sciences of Life (1600–1740)* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2016), 7.

83 Semih Çelik, "Humans in Animalscapes: Reconstructing Vermin-Human Interactions in Rural Anatolia and Mesopotamia (ca. 1600–1850)," *DIYÂR* 3, no. 1 (2022): 55.

not just understood as merely a source of knowledge, but were conceptualised as spaces shared between, or habitus co-inhabited by, human and vermin. Thus, the kabīkaj technique was used to negotiate the spatial configuration between the two. Here, the relation between human and vermin are "co-dwelling without either harmony or conquest."[84] One important thing to note here is that, more than actual human-vermin co-dwelling, the invocation of kabīkaj underlines the "spatial conception" between them. Kabīkaj is not inscribed on manuscripts after they are attacked by vermin to stop them from further destruction. Rather, it is generally seen inscribed on manuscripts that are potentially vulnerable. Obviously, in these contexts the vermin is not always actual, but perceived. That is, manuscripts are often "perceived vermin spaces" where humans come into contact with them. Semih Çelik uses the concept of "animalscape" to identify these perceived animal spaces.[85] In short, the technique of kabīkaj invocation establishes a critical Islamicate spatial configuration where manuscripts are also acknowledged as material spaces of diverse life and knowledge forms—animal and knowledgescapes—and it can only be explicated by conceptualizing kabīkaj along with the multiple cosmologies and imaginary configurations that come along with it.

4 Sociotechnical Codicology and the Decolonisation of Manuscript Studies

Conceptualising talismanic practices as technology and acknowledging their diverse cosmologies is important in the context of decolonising manuscript studies. Melvin-Koushky discusses how the "colonialist-orientalist dogma" banished Islamicate occult imaginaries from the global histories of science and how this contributed to creating the religion versus magic narrative within Islamicate intellectual history.[86] While scholarship influenced by nineteenth-century scientism negated both Islamic religion and magic as bad, scholarship inspired by the twentieth-century counter-movement of religionism divided religion into true and false where magic and occult imaginations were again relegated to the category of bad.[87] For Melvin-Koushky, decolonising Islamicate occult sciences also means escaping the Islamist religionist narratives

84 Anna L. Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 10.

85 Çelik, "Humans," 51.

86 Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic)," 303–304.

87 Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic)," 306.

along with the scientist narratives. This is because Islamist religionism is also based on prioritising a particular form of rationality and cosmology over the diversity of other cosmologies and imaginations that existed in Islamic history. As discussed before, understanding talismanic and occult practices and specifically the invocation of kabīkaj as technologies allows us to transcend the science-occult binary and understand talismanic practices or kabīkaj as techniques aimed at harnessing external results by manipulating material forces just like any other scientific machinery. In this way, a technological understanding of kabīkaj invocation offers the possibility to decolonise the scientist and religionist tendencies prevailing in magical paratextual analysis in the field of manuscript studies.

In her article "Reclaiming Manuscripts: Divination, Social Justice, and Islamic Codicology," Nur Sobers-Khan discusses the need to appreciate diverse cosmologies, epistemologies, and forms of knowledge embodied by Islamicate manuscripts and the role of this appreciation in enabling a decolonial, non-patriarchal, and post-Enlightenment future of the field.[88] She notes that the field of manuscript studies is still almost dominated by approaches that claim to be "empirical," "objective," "scientific," and based on "philology" and "historical context."[89] In an introductory Islamic manuscript codicology course I attended at the Institute for Islamic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin in the winter of 2022–2023, out of the total twenty-seven author-specific course materials, twelve were written by white male scholars and ten were written by white female scholars. Male and female scholars of colour in the field accounted for only the remaining five materials in the syllabus. This anecdote highlights how even in 2023 in an institute long dominated by philological and ethnographic research, courses on Islamicate codicology are still predominantly designed around white Euro-North American scholarship.

Sobers-Khan notes that the marginalia, paratexts, contents, and materiality of Islamicate manuscripts give access to the diverse cosmologies and epistemologies that are lost due to the reductionistic hermeneutics of colonial modernity and rationalism dominating the field. Classical European Islamic manuscript studies have often focused on comparing Islamicate manuscript practices to contemporary European practices or categorised them using European vocabularies. Studies inspired by archaeology have expanded on these problems, but they have tended to focus mostly on understanding the material

88 Nur Sobers-Khan, "Reclaiming Manuscripts: Divination, Social Justice, and Islamic Codicology," in *Critical Muslim: Relics*, ed. Ziauddin Sardar (London: Hurst Publishers, 2020), 86–90.

89 Sobers-Khan, "Reclaiming Manuscripts," 88.

aspects of manuscripts. Later, attempts were made to historically situate manuscripts in their contexts and networks. Gacek defines codicology as a discipline that goes beyond the archaeology of the manuscript and embraces aspects like their "history, history of their transmission, collections, collectors, libraries and the like."[90] However, questions concerning Gacek and others were more the when and where of manuscripts, their provenance, practices, and purposes. Questions about the diverse cosmologies and intellectual and emotional worlds those manuscripts encompassed have rarely been asked by codicologists.

For Sobers-Khan, reclaiming the plural visionary landscapes embedded in Islamicate manuscripts opens the possibility of reminding us about the heterogenous and ambiguous histories, layered narratives and creative imaginations that were always marginalised in global histories of cultural and intellectual production.[91] Akkerman's concept of "social codicology" offers a critical perspective to reclaim these marginalised cosmologies and ontologies. Social codicology considers manuscripts from a different angle, surpassing the borders of classical philology, codicology, and palaeography. It emphasises the emotional, intellectual, political, material, and organic contexts of manuscripts like looting, mobility, demise, termites, and human and climate violence that enable the historical embeddedness of the manuscripts.[92] For example, Akkerman writes about the social life of kabīkaj. She discusses how codicological features like kabīkaj are constantly in flux and acquire new meanings in different contexts and changing geographies through the introduction of new scribal practices.[93] In short, social codicology brings the materiality of the manuscripts and the social and cosmological worlds that give meaning to them to the centre of enquiry.[94]

All the same, there is a theoretical problem with social codicology. It has a strong anthropocentric foundation to it. In clarifying the confusion around agency in social codicology, Akkerman writes that "it is not the manuscript that has agency, but the agency people attribute to the texts as objects."[95] That is, in social codicology agency is always "given to texts from outside."[96] Although this article also takes a critical stance towards the idea of agency of manu-

90 Gacek, *Arabic*, 64.
91 Sobers-Khan, "Reclaiming Manuscripts," 84.
92 Akkerman, "Bohra," 197.
93 Akkerman, "Bohra," 194–195.
94 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury*, 351–352.
95 Akkerman, "Bohra," 199–200.
96 Akkerman, "Bohra," 197.

scripts, it does not agree with Akkerman's idea that agency is given to texts by people. This idea feeds into the Enlightenment rationality of foregrounding human beings as the fundamental propellors of history and ontology. Rather, as discussed before, the present article emphasises the concept of object consequences where the manuscripts are conceptualised as having their inherent potential to impact their networks without the agency being given from outside. Substituting the "social" in social codicology with Latour's concept of "sociotechnical" can offer a non-anthropocentric version of the concept.

In the second edition of *Laboratory Life*, Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar dropped the word "social" from the book's subtitle. First published as *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* in 1979, the second edition in 1986 came out as *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*.[97] This was because by the time of the second edition, Latour had become a strong believer in the idea that "social" avoided "things" or "objects."[98] According to Latour, any social structure relies on human and non-human actants, and it is this network of humans and non-humans that holds society together as a durable whole.[99] The keyword Latour replaces "social" with is "sociotechnical."[100] In *On Technical Mediations—Philosophy, Sociology, Genealogy*, Latour presents the concept of "technical mediation." Similarly to the concept of "hybrid," by "mediation" Latour means the co-influence of humans and artefacts.[101] That is, in the practice of kabīkaj invocation, the manuscript with the kabīkaj formula at its margins is not the same manuscript it was before. But it is a manuscript with more possibilities—those that made a practitioner write the formula on it, that repel termites, that make a person curious about it, that distract a reader's eye from the central contents and draw it towards itself, etc. The ontological potential of the manuscript has multiplied. The manuscript is not then a manuscript as such, but a sociotechnical manuscript (artefact) mediated by kabīkaj (technique) and its practitioners (subject). Now, replacing "social" with "sociotechnical" in social codicology will not be a reversal of the concept, but would rather

97 Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979); Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986).

98 Steve Matthewman, *Technology and Social Theory* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 105.

99 Bruno Latour, "Technology is Society Made Durable," in *A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*, ed. John Law (London: Routledge, 1990), 103.

100 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 5–7.

101 Lucia Santaella and Tarcísio Cardoso, "The Baffling Concept of Technical Mediation in Bruno Latour," *MATRIZes* 9, no. 1 (2015): 170.

be more aligned with it. This is because Akkerman writes that "socialising codicology … [includes] ritual, mechanical, spatial, and social practices and oral histories of book copying, consuming, collecting, venerating and preserving"—what she calls "scribal politics".[102] That is, similarly to the Latourian conception of the sociotechnical, social codicology conceptualises manuscripts as intersections of the material, emotional, and intellectual.

In this way, the sociotechnical conception of codicology offers a critical framework to decolonise Islamicate manuscript studies in two directions. One, by focusing on the overlooked ontologies embedded in the manuscripts, it situates the various jurisprudential, hermeneutical, theological, ontological, and cosmological worlds of kabīkaj at the centre of inquiry along with technical, literary, and social aspects of the formula. Two, by transcending the anthropocentric foundation of the field and emphasising the heterogenous human assemblages and non-human associations that makes every manuscript possible, it understands the invocation of kabīkaj as networks of human-vermin spatial negotiations, organic-chemical synthesis, relationship between practitioners and tools, manuscript materials and communal emotions, etc. Sociotechnical codicology thus allows us to understand the diverse assemblages and ontologies that manuscripts and their scripts are embedded in which makes them meaningful within their multiple Con-Texts (in Shahab Ahmed's sense) across time and space. Also, sociotechnical codicology invites us to "engage with, decipher, observe, deconstruct, read, and—if possible—participate […] if we want to understand how texts work" and why their manifold sociotechnical modes of being matter.[103]

5 Conclusion

Although centred around questions of materiality, the field of codicology is still very much untouched by theoretical and philosophical concepts developed within the field of materiality studies. Giovanni Ciotti highlights this gap and emphasises the need for more theoretical approaches in the field of manuscript studies.[104] This article has approached Islamicate manuscript cultures from a new materialistic perspective and explored how such juxtapositions allow us to

102 Akkerman, "Bohra," 197.

103 Akkerman, "Bohra," 199.

104 Giovanni Ciotti, "Notes for an Ontological Approach within Manuscript Studies: Object Oriented Ontology and the Pothi Manuscript Culture," in *Exploring Written Artefacts: Objects, Methods, and Concepts*, vol. 1, ed. Jörg B. Quenzer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021): 865.

address different overlooked questions and thereby politically and intellectually decolonise the discipline. Divided into three central discussions, the first discussion argued that understanding the practice of kabīkaj invocation as a technology rather than as magic or a talisman restricted to religion offers the possibility to conceptualise the practice within its heterogenous contexts and cosmologies. Critically engaging Bruno Latour's concept of "technology," this part established the preliminary concepts upon which the later arguments in the article were drawn and discussed how kabīkaj invocation operates within its complex material foundations and sociotechnical lives. The second discussion elaborated on the diverse ontologies and cosmologies embedded within the practice of kabīkaj invocation and emphasised how highlighting them furthers two central discussions—theory-practice division in Islamicate talismanic cultures and the unavailability of kabīkaj plants theory—within Islamic occult studies and codicology. The final discussion theorised how acknowledging kabīkaj as a technology and its diverse onto-theologies and cosmologies are fundamental in decolonising the field of Islamicate manuscript studies. Also, the final part of the article reframed Olly Akkerman's concept of "social codicology" as "sociotechnical codicology" and elaborated on its importance as a methodology to understand the diverse sociotechnical lives of Islamicate manuscripts and their meaning-making process outside the anthropocentric logic of the Renaissance-era and colonial modernity dominating the discipline.

Now, apart from the chemical and entomological networks, the conceptualisation of kabīkaj as a nexus of diverse assemblages also allows us to understand the critical relationship between manuscripts and climate change. Climate change is one of the biggest threats affecting manuscript collections across the world. A 2018 study published in the *Climate Risk Management* journal assessed 1,232 archival repositories across the United States and found out that 98.8% of them were "likely to be affected by at least one climate risk factor."[105] A recent report published by the European Union warns that galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) in Europe are affected by rising temperature and humidity, droughts and floods, melting glaciers and rising sea levels, and invasive species and pests.[106] Across the continents in the city of Chinguetti in Mauritania, a UNESCO world heritage site which holds around 6,000 Ara-

105 Tara Mazurczyk, Nathan Piekielek, Eira Tansey, and Ben Goldman, "American Archives and Climate Change: Risks and Adaptation," *Climate Risk Management* 20 (2018): 118.

106 Magdalena Pasikowsa-Schnass, "Museums, Libraries and Archives in the Face of Climate Change Challenges," *EPRS: European Parliamentary Research Service*, 2023, https://policycommons.net/artifacts/5032607/museums-libraries-and-archives-in-the-face-of-climate-change-challenges/5798111.

bic manuscripts in thirteen local libraries from the eighth to the seventeenth centuries, the manuscripts are at the verge of destruction by climate crises like flash floods, the expansion of Saharan sand dunes, and heat. Custodians of these local manuscript collections live with the constant fear of the erasure of their heritage.[107] In Indian Ocean littorals, local Muslim libraries in the region of Gujarat use techniques like mothballs and pouches stuffed with rice in bookshelves to resist the rising humidity in their coastal geographies.[108] As discussed, Islamicate manuscripts were produced mostly of organic materials and these materials were very vulnerable to fluctuations in weather and climate. Holly Prochaska, the interim head of the Archives and Rare Books Library at the University of Cincinnati, comments on the vulnerability of pre-modern manuscripts in the face of climate change. Prochaska remarks that "the higher the humidity, the higher the temperature, the quicker [manuscripts] will break down their organic materials. Leather will wet rot. Collagen fibres in velum will tighten and shrink."[109]

Emerging as an antidote within this organic assemblage, kabīkaj offers a point of departure to understand the position of Islamic manuscripts within an assemblage of organic materials and fluctuating climate conditions. Torsten Wollina has described the writing and preservation of manuscripts as acts in defiance of nature. According to Wollina, "people copied and continued the works of other authors precisely because environmental dangers, among others, threatened the survival of knowledge. Writing promises a way in which knowledge can transcend natural limitations, both in time and space."[110] These attempts to transcend nature were always embedded within diverse emotional forms like the veneration of texts, the fear of a loss of knowledge, and the respect for authors and ancestors that developed between communities and manuscripts. The fear of losing knowledge was always present within the Islamic world, and the loss of knowledge was often associated with the imminence of apocalypse.[111] Wollina discusses water networks like *ḥawḍ* (tank

107 Ruby Mellen and Marco Longari, "Mauritania's Ancient Libraries Could be Lost to the Expanding Desert," *The Washington Post*, March 20, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2023/mauritania-libraries-desert.

108 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury*, 225.

109 Emmet Lindner, "Floods, Fires and Humidity: How Climate Change Affects Book Preservation," *The New York Times*, January 7, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/07/books/climate-change-book-preservation.html.

110 Torsten Wollina, "Nature Made Absent: Environmental History and Arabic Manuscript Studies," *Damascus Anecdotes*, September 1, 2019, https://thecamel.hypotheses.org/1637.

111 Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mughīrat al-Jaʿfiyyi al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Riyadh: Dār al-Ḥaḍāra li al-Nashri wa-l-Tawzīʿ), 27.

for ablution) around pre-modern Islamic institutions and libraries, their role in making Islamicate manuscripts constantly vulnerable and how that led to the development of different preservation techniques like the invocation of kabīkaj. Along the line of Wollina's thought, kabīkaj invocation appears as a dialectic formula between natural and anti-natural. It is natural as it harnesses the natural forces and anti-natural as it resists other natural forces.

This complex positionality of kabīkaj offers a critical perspective to understand climate resilience within Islamicate societies. Although practices like kabīkaj were not actually successful in preserving the manuscripts against climate crises, they should be understood contextually within the spatio-temporal networks that produced them. Deeply interwoven with climatic conditions and organic materials, kabīkaj offers a perspective on how people experienced and interpreted ecological calamities and how they developed their own forms of subject and object resilience. As a marker of community resilience towards climate change and temperature variations, kabīkaj offers itself as a source to tap the historical climatological data—emotions, interpretations, and cosmologies surrounding climate change—of the pre-modern Islamicate world. In this way, a sociotechnical codicological understanding of kabīkaj invocation allows us to address multiple lacunae in the field of manuscript studies like the intersection of climate, manuscripts, emotions, community resilience, and cosmologies, which all traditionally fall outside the scope of the discipline.

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PART 5

Ethnography and Codicology: Materiality and Community

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12

Exploring the Manuscripts of Tuwāt: History and Community Memory in the Algerian Sahara

Ismail Warscheid

One late afternoon in April 2009, I was waiting with my dusty travel bag on a deserted square in Adrar, a city in the middle of the Algerian Sahara, to start my first fieldwork on Muslim scholarly culture in the oases of Tuwāt.[1] I had just begun a Ph.D. project on premodern Saharan *fiqh* literature, and the region was the first place where I hoped to access local collections of Arabic manuscripts. A few weeks earlier, in Paris, I had told a fellow Ph.D. student from the Mzāb—another Algerian oasis region whose inhabitants are mostly Tamazight speakers and practitioners of *ibāḍī* Islam—about my plans. He suggested connecting me with one of his colleagues, an assistant lecturer at the local university, for whom I was waiting now. I still remember how my Ph.D. colleague contacted his friend in a call shop in Paris' vibrating Goutte d'Or district and how the two of us later had lunch in a Turkish restaurant while he was pointing to the various shops in the street run by immigrants from the Mzāb. We had met for the first time at a graduate seminar in Constantine in eastern Algeria and quickly realized that we shared similar research interests. He was studying the history of customary law in the *Mzābī* community. At the same time, I set off to work on Saharan *fatāwā* collections.[2]

The colleague in Adrar with whom my friend had connected me was also a native of the Mzāb region, but he came from an Arabic-speaking background. His family belonged to the Shaʿānba, a confederation of former nomadic groups

1 By the term Tuwāt, I refer in what follows to the three oasis districts of Gourara, Touat, and Tidikelt that, before the French conquest in 1900, were considered as a single geographical entity. On the region and its history, see Rachid Bellil, *Les oasis du Gourara, Sahara algérien*, 3 vols. (Paris: Louvain, Éd. Peeters, 1999–2000); Nadir Marouf, *Lecture de l'espace oasien* (Paris: Sindbad, 1980); Judith Scheele, *Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara: Regional Connectivity in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

2 By now, we have both finished: Bi-l-Ḥājj Nāṣir, *al-Naẓm wa-l-qawwānīn al-ʿurfiyya bi-Wādī Mzāb fī l-fitrat al-ḥadītha* (Ph.D. diss., University of Constantine, 2014), Ismail Warscheid, *Droit musulman et société au Sahara: la justice islamique dans les oasis du Grand Touat* (*Algérie*) *aux XVIIe–XIXe siècles* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

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who, historically, controlled the northern parts of the central Sahara. After a two-hour drive in a shared cab from Timimoun airport, where the plane from Algiers had landed, I finally arrived and became increasingly nervous since my contact initially failed to arrive. He later explained that he had been teaching a course. Still, at that very moment, I was starting to seriously worry about what I would do if he did not come. I was alone in a strange and silent city, imagining the Sahara as a lost place, certainly without any accommodation structures. My fieldwork preparation had merely consisted of exchanging a few text messages and my supervisor's recommendation to reach out, once arrived, to a certain Monsieur Smaili whose help, he thought, could be beneficial for my project. When, to my great relief, my host came to pick me up, he drove me to a nearby hotel where he had already booked me a room at his own expense. In the evening, he invited me to have dinner at a friend's place, who was also a *shaʿānbī* "expatriate" from Ghardaïa, the capital of the Mzāb region.

The next day, I went with him to the local university to attend a conference on the history of Tuwāt. The program was typical for the scientific events celebrating the *turāth*—the Nation's cultural heritage—that have become frequent in North African countries during the last decades. Panels featured national academics, among them many "sons of the region" (*abnāʾ al-manṭiqa*) and various religious scholars from local centres of Islamic learning. Presentations and discussions dealt almost exclusively with the region's scholarly traditions. Speakers presented these traditions as a local particularity within the Algerian nation-state framework. They narrated the biographies of native scholars, listed their writings, and praised their mastery of Islamic sciences, starting with jurisprudence (*fiqh*). For more contemporary figures, the presenters did not fail to mention the scholar's engagement in the Nation's struggle for independence from France. During the conference, I had the impression that the oases of Tuwāt had become a symbol for an "authentic" national Islam, rooted in centuries-old scholarly traditions and seeking to distinguish itself from political Salafism and religious practices and beliefs that contemporary Sunni mainstream thought condemns as "blameworthy innovation" (*bidʿa*). Local religious life was supposed to represent the idea of an "Arab and Islamic Maghrib" (*al-Maghrib al-ʿarabī al-islāmī*) that has become a central and controversial theme in official discourses on cultural identity in contemporary North Africa.

Upon our arrival at the university, I ran immediately into Monsieur Smaili, or rather Moulay, as most people call him, since he belongs to the Awlād Sīdī Ḥammū bi-l-Ḥājj, a confederation of *shurafāʾ* families whose branches spread from Southern Morocco to Mauritania, Mali, and Niger between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. A former college teacher of Arabic con-

verted into a businessman and local politician, Moulay is deeply committed to preserving the memory of his native region and his family. When we met, he was even preparing a degree in manuscript edition at a university in Cairo. My encounter with him was decisive for my research in Tuwāt. Moulay agreed to act as a guide and intermediary, greatly facilitating my investigations. He introduced me to the owners of the various manuscript collections in the region. He arranged interviews with local notables and scholars. He was even willing to drive with me hundreds of kilometres to visit a private library (*khizāna*, pl. *khazā'in*)[3] in the Tidikelt area and to make the same trip again after I realized that I had forgotten to take pictures of one of the manuscripts that interested me. Most importantly, he did me the honour of welcoming me into the intimacy of his home and sharing his family life with me. During my three stays in Tuwāt between 2009 and 2012,[4] I could always rely on his friendship and hospitality, without which I would have been unable to carry out my project. My debt to him is vast.

Why this long introspective account that would probably have been more suitable in the acknowledgments section of my Ph.D. thesis? The reason is that it nicely illustrates what this essay wants to address, namely the question of what it means to work as a historian in societies that have developed ways to commemorate the past that are different from those with which our socialization has made us familiar.[5] In the oases of Tuwāt, research methods bore little resemblance to those usually associated with a Ph.D. project in history or philology. No public libraries or archives existed where access conditions are standardized, in the sense that anyone could readily receive permission to consult documents there. Although public authorities inaugurated a spacious National Centre for Manuscripts in Adrar in January 2007, it hosted only a dozen manuscripts when I went there in 2009.[6] Likewise, the digitization project conducted by Élise Voguet and her research team from the French *Cen-*

3 On private libraries in Tuwāt, see Saïd Bouterfa, *Les manuscrits du Touat: le Sud algérien* (Algiers: Éd. Barzakh, 2005); Bashār Mukhtār and Hassānī Qwīdar, *Fihris makhṭūṭāt wilāyat Adrār* (Algiers: CNRPAH, 1999). For a thoughtful and fresh study of manuscript libraries in the contemporary Muslim world, see Olly Akkerman, *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books: Arabic Manuscripts among the Alawi Bohras of South Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

4 Each time I visited the region, I spent one month there.

5 Michel de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 139–140.

6 Cf. Judith Scheele, "Coming to Terms with Tradition: Manuscript Conservation in Contemporary Algeria," in *Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy, and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*, ed. Graziano Krätli, Ghislaine Lydon (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 307–314.

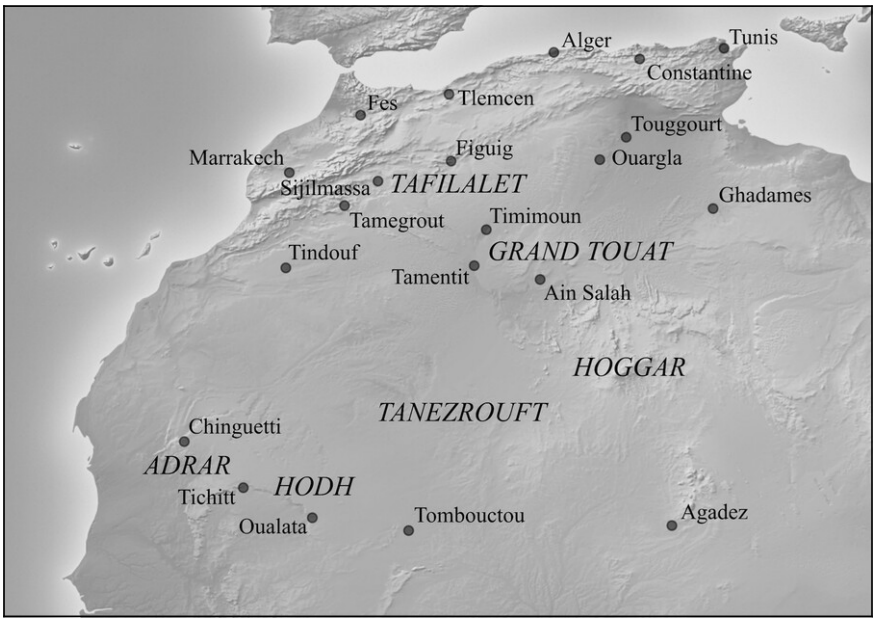

FIGURE 12.1 The Sahara in the early nineteenth century
MAP TAKEN FROM WARSCHEID, *DROIT MUSULMAN*, 273

tre National de la Recherche Scientifique had not yet started.[7] The interplay of two types of social institutions fashioned the ways of remembering the past and preserving its traces: those organizing the transmission of Muslim scholarly knowledge according to "traditional" or "modern" norms—the *zāwiya*, the *madrasa*, the university—and those structuring interpersonal relationships, primarily genealogy and kinship.

The manuscripts I wished to consult were part of private collections that belonged to members of the region's notable families or the various centres of Muslim learning scattered across the oasis villages (*qṣar*, pl. *qṣūr*). Simultaneously, my inquiries took place in a context profoundly marked by the rise of the neo-traditionalism I have already mentioned.[8] In the public sphere, the omnipresent references to scriptural Islam and religious knowledge (*ʿilm*) acted as powerful discursive tools in defining the modalities of integration into or

7 The digitized copies are available for consultation at the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes in Paris-Aubervilliers.

8 On neo-traditionalism in the Maghrib, see for example Jason Idriss Sparkes, "Morocco as a Hub of Globalised Traditional Islam," *Religions*, 13, no. 5 (2022): 392.

exclusion from local communities. Similarly, most people I talked to perceived the oases' past through the notion of Islamic exemplarity embodied by the generations of saints and scholars the region had produced. In what follows, I want to make a few remarks on the implications of such a configuration for conducting historical research. My aim with this is not to provide a fully developed analysis of the notion of *turāth* in contemporary Algeria, but rather to offer a personal account of the conversations and readings I engaged in while conducting fieldwork in the oases of Tuwāt.

1 A History of Scholarship, Manuscripts, and Genealogy

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the oases of Tuwāt developed into one of the leading centres of Muslim scholarship in the central Sahara. A close-knit network of *zāwiyas* led by local scholarly families progressively emerged and attracted students from the region and neighbouring areas. Conversely, *Tuwātī* scholars travelled widely across the Islamic West and the Middle East "seeking knowledge" (*li-ṭalab al-ʿilm*) and acquiring manuscripts.[9] One principal outcome of the flourishing intellectual and religious activities was the spread of Islamic legal institutions inside the oases. As *qāḍīs* and *muftīs*, local scholars diffused *fiqh*-shaped forms of normative regulation, closely interacting with the councils of communal notables (*jamāʿa*, pl. *āt*) that existed in every *qṣar*.[10] In the second half of the eighteenth century, the growing importance of Islamic adjudication led to the creation of a jurisprudential council (*shūra*) in which the region's leading jurisconsults discussed local cases.

The centrality of the study and practice of Islamic law is also apparent in the writings of *Tuwātī* scholars. As elsewhere in the Sahara, the spread of Muslim scholarly culture fostered the development of significant literary traditions, particularly from the seventeenth century onwards. The output of local authors thereby deeply reflects their sustained endeavour to promote Islamic norms as the bedrock of social relations. Most importantly, between 1750 and 1850, jurists from Tuwāt produced several lengthy *fatāwā* and "case" collec-

9 On the link between higher studies and the constitution of libraries in the Saharan context, see Ghislaine Lydon, "Inkwells of the Sahara: Reflections on the Production of Islamic Knowledge in Bilad Shinqit," in *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, ed. Scott S. Reese (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 39–71.

10 Warscheid, *Droit musulman*.

FIGURE 12.2 A *folio* from the *Ghunya*, collection *khizānat al-Balbālī*, Kousam
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

tions (*nawāzil*).[11] The largest of these collections is the *Ghunyat al-muqtaṣid al-sā'il fī-mā waqa'a fī Tuwāt min al-qaḍāyā wa l-masā'il* ("the indispensable tool for those who inquire on the disputes and legal questions that have arisen in Tuwāt"). It was compiled during the first half of the nineteenth century by two scholars from the al-Balbālī family who gathered hundreds of *fatāwā* from local jurists, to which they added numerous transcriptions of letters, notarial deeds, and other legal documents. The question of the preservation and study of these jurisprudential texts extends far beyond academic research concerns. Today, the *Ghunya* and the other *nawāzil* collections are considered the most emblematical contribution of the region to Algeria's *turāth*. In a way, they represent the centuries-long accumulation of scriptural knowledge on which Tuwāt's scholars base their claim to religious authority within the Nation.[12]

However, the historical process that led to Tuwāt's integration into Algeria's national space was complex. Until the French occupation in 1900, the Sultans of Morocco considered the oases a Saharan outpost of their realm. The Saadian sultan Aḥmad al-Manṣūr (r. 1578–1603) ordered his army to occupy the oases in 1584 before conquering the West African Songhay Empire a few years later.[13] After the fall of the Saadians towards the middle of the seventeenth century, Tuwāt remained closely connected to the succeeding 'Alawī dynasty, at least until the early nineteenth century. Most *qāḍīs* in the oases held formal appointments from the 'Alawī sultan, and historical sources such as the *nawāzil* collections attest to regular military campaigns to raise taxes (*ḥarka*). They also mention the local presence of governors and other official representa-

11 Warscheid, *Droit musulman*, 58–83. On the *nawāzil* genre in the Saharan context, see Ismail Warscheid, "*Nawāzil* de l'Ouest saharien (XVII^{e}—XX^{e} siècles): une tradition jurisprudentielle africaine," in *L'encyclopédie des historiographies: Afriques, Amériques, Asies*, vol. 1 *Sources et genres historiques* (*Tome 1 et Tome 2*), eds. Nathalie Kouamé, Éric P. Meyer, and Anne Viguier (Paris: Presses de l'Inalco, 2020), 1272–1281.

12 Cf. Judith Scheele, "Recycling *Baraka*: Knowledge, Politics, and Religion in Contemporary Algeria," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 49, no. 2 (2007): 304–328. We see similar developments in Mauritania. In 2012, the Mauritanian government created a *High Council for Fatwa and Petitions* (*al-majlis al-a'lā li-l-fatwā wa-l-maẓālim*) in Nouakchott. The council promotes Malikism as Mauritania's national "school of law," most notably through the edition of local *nawāzil* collections. In 2017, for example, the council published the edition of the *nawāzil* by the eighteenth-century scholar 'Abd al-Raḥmān Anbūya from Walata. See 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ṭālib Muḥammad al-Maḥjūbī al-Walātī al-mullaqab Anbūya, *Majmū' al-nawāzil al-ma'rūf bi-majmū' Anbūya*, (Nouakchott: al-Majlis al-a'lā li-l-fatwā wa l-maẓālim, 2017).

13 Louis Mougin, "Les premiers sultans sa'dides et le Sahara," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 19 (1975): 169–187.

tives.[14] Furthermore, kinship ties, commercial activities, or the frequentation of centres of religious learning like the *Nāṣirī zāwiya* in Tamgrout connected many locals to southern Morocco.

On the other hand, the political history of Tuwāt is also one of considerable and continuous autonomy. Notwithstanding the oases' integration into the ʿAlawī sultanate, internal affairs remained mainly in the hands of local communities who often challenged the sultan's executive bodies (*makhzan*). In this regard, they can be compared to the so-called "dissident" territories (*bilād al-sā'iba*) of the Atlas Mountains or the deserts of present-day Mauritania, where the recognition of the *imām*, the legitimate Islamic ruler, was a rather symbolic act.[15] Inside the villages of Tuwāt, a system of autonomous self-governance prevailed in which local lineage groups competed for political and social hegemony. The constant pressure of surrounding Bedouins like the Shaʿānba on oasis communities further complicated such competition.[16]

Living in the villages of the oases was concomitant with being associated with a specific social status group depending on genealogical and cultural prestige, or to be more precise, those with the power to operate such classifications sought to distinguish themselves from those lacking it. A detailed discussion of this question is beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say that we can observe two principal ways through which pre-1900 *Tuwātī* elites articulated their claims to power. Some put forward their alleged genealogical connection to the Prophet of Islam, the *shurafā'* families; others insisted on learning and piety as a collective heritage and source of social prestige, the *mrābṭīn*. At the same time, *mrābṭīn* and *shurafā'* families jointly managed local affairs inside the various oasis villages. Their leading figures controlled the management of collective resources. They supervised the work of the *qāḍī* courts and

14 Ismail Warscheid, "Les jours du Makhzen: levée d'impôt et relations communautaires dans les oasis du Touat (Sud algérien), 1700–1850," *Revue d'Histoire du XIXe Siècle*, 59 (2019): 31–48.

15 See Houari Touati, "Le prince et la bête: enquête sur une métaphore pastorale," *Studia Islamica*, 83 (1996): 101–119; Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh, "Théologie du désordre: Islam, ordre et désordre au Sahara," *L'année du Maghreb*, 7 (2011): 61–77.

16 Cf. Alfred Georges Paul Martin, *Les oasis sahariennes* (*Gourara—Touat—Tidikelt*) (Alger: Édition de l'imprimerie algérienne, 1908); Alfred Georges Paul Martin, *Quatre siècles d'histoire marocaine: au Sahara de 1504 à 1902, au Maroc de 1894 à 1912* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1923). On A.G.P. Martin's two books, see Ismail Warscheid, "Comment écrire un passé qui ne soit ni colonial ni classique? Le cas du Tuwāt algérien," in *Après l'Orientalisme: l'Orient créé par l'Orient*, eds. François Pouillon and Jean-Claude Vatin (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 213–226.

coordinated the complex relations with the ʿAlawī sultanate and the various Bedouin groups.

In North African oasis societies, the push of certain lineage groups towards leadership within their communities while claiming a specific social status finds its counterpart in the existence of those who had to resign themselves to a permanent subaltern position for similar reasons. In their case, an inherent lack of "nobility" was supposed to justify the power exerted over them. Unsurprisingly, these mechanisms of subordination were intrinsically bound to the question of trans-Saharan slavery and its enduring consequences. Tuwāt was a hub of the trans-Saharan slave trade for centuries. Until today, its population mirrors the painful history of the enslavement and deportation of West Africans.[17] The widespread practice of slavery gave rise to the status category of "slaves" (*ʿabīd*), to which also manumitted persons and their descendants belonged. Most enslaved persons were to perform domestic services inside *mrābṭīn* and *shurafāʾ* households. For women, this often meant being exposed to sexual exploitation.[18] Agricultural labour was left mainly to a different category of people with subaltern status and probable West African origins who, at least legally speaking, were free, the *ḥarāthīn*.[19] Members of *ḥarāthīn* lineage groups worked in their vast majority for *mrābṭīn* and *shurafāʾ* families who owned most of the oases' agricultural resources and properties.

Of course, the dynamics of social hierarchies in Tuwāt were less schematic than this summary may suggest. Nevertheless, it helps to understand why genealogical memory and knowledge still play a crucial role in contemporary representations of collective identities.[20] The distinction between four status groups (*shurafāʾ*, *mrābṭīn*, *ḥarthānī*, and *ʿabīd*) within oasis communities continues to impact heavily upon social relations in Tuwāt. Having been "adopted" by a member of a well-known *shurafāʾ* family, I came to realize that a significant part of my investigations took place among his extended kin, other *shurafāʾ* families, or *mrābṭīn* groups with whom his branch of the Awlād Ḥammū

17 John Wright, *The Trans-Saharan Slave Trade* (London, Routledge, 2007).

18 Cf. Bruce Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Rainer Oßwald, *Sklavenhandel und Sklavenleben zwischen Senegal und Atlas* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2016).

19 My transliteration follows the way the term appears in the local manuscripts, namely حراثين instead of the more common حراطين.

20 Judith Scheele, "Embarrassing Cousins: Genealogical Conundrums in the Central Sahara," in *Past is Present: The Religious and Political Uses of Genealogies in Muslim Societies*, eds. Sarah Bowen Savant and Helena De Felipe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 89–101.

bi-l-Ḥājj had over time developed ties of friendship. Additionally, it seemed inconceivable for most of my interlocutors that people belonging to *ḥarthānī* and *ʿabīd* families may also have something to say about the history of Muslim scholarship in Tuwāt.

At first glance, the colonial conquest and Tuwāt's integration into French Algeria in 1900 did not seem to have had much impact on how Islamic learning and legal institutions operated within local society. Exploring the archives of *qāḍī* courts in the Tidikelt region during the 1950s and 1960s, Judith Scheele describes a situation comparable to the one we can reconstruct from the evidence provided by the older *nawāzil* records.[21] Within the institutional framework of *qāḍī* courts and *jamāʿa* councils, the leading figures of *mrābṭīn* and *shurafāʾ* families coordinated judicial procedures and managed communal affairs, most notably regarding the preservation of water resources. The practice of issuing fatwas (*iftāʾ*) also remained widespread, and local scholars regularly met to discuss the various cases submitted to the *qāḍīs* in the oases. The only significant innovation brought by the French administration was the introduction of the Ottoman-inspired courthouse (*maḥkama*) system.[22] Before, lawsuits most often took place in local mosques or *zāwiyas*. Furthermore, some of the scholarly families that had been prominent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries maintained their influence and continued to provide oasis communities with *muftīs* and *qāḍīs*. The al-Bakrī family even succeeded in re-establishing its control of the office of the principal judge (*qāḍī al-jamāʿa*) that had passed from them to the al-Balbālī in the early nineteenth century.[23]

The writings of *Tuwātī* scholars in the twentieth century suggest an even more substantial continuity. Authors remained faithful to the literary models inherited from the past, composing chronicles, biographical dictionaries, hagiographies, or fatwa collections. In this respect, the oases of Tuwāt forcefully illustrate the persistence of forms and practices of literary expression in the Sahara and Sahel that emulate the traditions and stylistic conventions of premodern Muslim scholarship. Take, for example, the collection of fatwas by

21 Judith Scheele, "Councils Without Customs, Qadis Without States: Property and Community in the Algerian Touat," *Islamic Law and Society*, 17, no. 3 (2010), 350–374.

22 Allan Christelow, *Muslim Law Courts and the French Colonial State in Algeria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

23 See the biographies in ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Bakrī, *al-Nubdha fī tāʾrīkh Tuwāt wa l-aʿlāmihā: min al-qarn al-tāsiʿ al-ḥijrī ilā l-qarn al-rābiʿ ʿashra* (Oran: Dār al-Maghrib li-l-nashr wa l-tawzīʿ, 2007) and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sīdī ʿUmar, *Qaṭf al-zaharāt min akhbār ʿulamāʾ Tuwāt* (Tīmī: Madrasa Sīdī al-Bukhārī, 2002).

FIGURE 12.3 The *qṣar* of Tamentit
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Balbālī, who served as a *qāḍī* and *muftī* in the 1930s et 1940s.[24] The fatwas in the volume do not significantly differ from those I studied in my Ph.D. dissertation. Relying on standard reference works of the post-1500 *Malikī* school, such as Khalīl's *Mukhtaṣar* or al-Wansharīsī's *Miʿyār*, as well as the various local *nawāzil* collections, ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Balbālī is concerned with the same jurisprudential problems his predecessors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries discussed: transactions on landed property, domestic relations, the transmission of shares in the water irrigation system, and the caravan trade.

Moreover, the volume contains almost no explicit reference to the new political order emerging under French rule. The only occurrence I was able to locate is a fatwa on whether modern paper money is subject to legal almsgiving (*zakāt*).[25] The reader gets the impression that Islamic law operates within a timeless setting in which the Muslim community remains protected from all external influences. The absence of any juridical or theological engagement

24 Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sīdī ʿUmar, *al-Jawāhir al-liʾālī min fatāwā al-shaykh Sīdī ʿAbd-Karīm al-Balbālī* ([s.l.], [n.d.]), 2003.

25 ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sīdī ʿUmar, *al-Jawāhir al-liʾālī*, 84–91.

with the consequences of the French conquest in 1900 may be peculiar to al-Balbālī's collection. A deeper investigation of scholarly writing in Tuwāt during the colonial period would be necessary to assess the strategies developed by local '*ulamā*' to deal with the new order imposed by the colonial authorities. French colonial rule elsewhere in the Sahara led to extensive and controversial debates among Muslim scholars.[26] The *muftī*'s silence thus appears somewhat mysterious and may result from posthumous editorial choices. More importantly, it reflects a much larger discursive framework celebrating continuity in religious and cultural matters that I encountered almost immediately when I started my fieldwork.

2 The Discourse of Continuity

The emphasis I place on the prominent role of an ongoing tradition of Muslim scholarship in shaping the history of Tuwāt reflects how local culture presents itself to the foreign visitor upon their arrival. The notion of continuity invests almost any public discourse on history and culture, putting at its centre scriptural religious knowledge (*'ilm*) as the connecting link between the old and the modern. In a recent book devoted to the region's most prominent scholars, a member of the al-Bakrī family succinctly expresses the all-pervading idea of the region's abiding and unchanging Islamic identity: "The people of Tuwāt have embraced Islam with all their heart and dedicated themselves to memorizing the book of God. Hence, the study of religious sciences (*'ilm*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) flourished. The number of *zāwiyas* and scholars multiplied, and through them, wealth and divine blessings spread."[27]

The author's assertion mirrors the enduring relevance of religious studies within local society. Tuwāt still hosts many institutions for Islamic higher learning, some directed by descendants of scholarly families already mentioned in the eighteenth-century *nawāzil* collections. Walking in the streets of Adrar, I regularly encountered young turbaned students from these religious schools. Called *ṭulba*, they often participate in public and private events as Qur'an

26 See for example Augustin Jomier, "Islam, pureté et modernité: les 'innovations blâmables' en débat au Maghreb, 1920–1950," *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 73, no. 2 (2018), 385–410, Yahya Wuld al-Bara, "Les théologiens mauritaniens face au colonialisme français: étude de fatwa-s de jurisprudence musulmane," in *Le temps des marabouts: itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique Occidentale Française v. 1880–1960*, eds. Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson (Paris: Karthala, 1997).

27 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Bakrī, *al-Nubdha fī tā'rīkh Tuwāt*, 20.

FIGURE 12.4 A picture of Muḥammad bi-l-Kabīr in the *khizānat al-Balbālī*, Kousam (photo by the author).

reciters or prayer leaders. On official occasions, their teachers sit as distinguished guests between local politicians and other dignitaries eager to be seen in the proximity of men of religion.[28] When the most famous and respected scholar in twentieth-century Tuwāt, Muḥammad bi-l-Kabīr (1911–2000), passed away, the former Algerian president Abdel Aziz Bouteflika attended the funeral in person. The memory of bi-l-Kabīr also shapes public space. A newly built quarter in Adrar bears his name, as does the local airport and the university's institute of social sciences and theology.

The staging of religious scholarship as the purported essence of Tuwāt's cultural "identity" provided a starting point for my investigations. Since the manuscripts I was searching for were part of the private collections belonging to *mrābṭīn* and *shurafā'* families, it was indispensable for me to find a way to connect with them. Only Moulay's unfailing and generous support made such a connection possible in the first place. At the same time, he could present himself to others as an indispensable interlocutor for western researchers and a promoter of Tuwāt's cultural heritage. Even a precarious Ph.D. student from France may become an eminent *ustādh* in a society where professional categories largely determine the perception of a person's social standing. However, engaging with the owners of the private libraries further required finding a common language to communicate, both linguistically and culturally. How to formulate questions and requests in a way that makes sense for those whose manuscripts you want to read? I quickly realized that my interest in Islamic law and "traditional" Muslim education significantly contributed to creating a space for dialogue and discussion. It is likely that my partial Middle Eastern ancestry was of some help as well. Additionally, being a male researcher in a highly gendered society undoubtedly facilitated access to social spaces strongly associated with masculinity. On the other hand, it precluded any access to female-associated areas of social life.

A key element in negotiating such mutual understanding was to oppose the legacy of religious learning that local scholars have transmitted over centuries to contemporary Salafist or *wahābī* readings of Islam. My interlocutors stressed, for example, the maintenance of peace inside the oases during the *Décennie Noire*, the bloody conflict between the Algerian government and Islamist groups in the 1990s. Some invoked a tradition according to which the blessing (*baraka*) of Tuwāt's scholars and saints has always protected its inhabitants against the world's evils. Similarly, Algerians from the north of the country

28 See also on this point Mohammed Hachemaoui, *Clientélisme et patronage dans l'Algérie contemporaine* (Paris: Karthala, Aix-en-Provence: IREMAM, 2013).

who had settled in the *Wilāya* of Adrar presented life in the oases as shaped by the locals' profound and quietist faith that contrasted with the raw urban realities of Algiers and other big cities. Calm and peacefulness were terms that often came up in our discussions, as did the comparison with the first Muslim community in Medina. It was only during my last trip to Tuwāt in 2018 that I heard dissenting voices—probably because my ability to understand vernacular Arabic had much improved—from locals and "Northerners" (*nordistes*) alike. Some openly criticized the persistence of social hierarchies they perceived as archaic and exploitative. Others expressed the frustration of living in a neglected and marginalized region of Algeria despite the enormous revenues generated by the local oil and gas production.

To what extent the discourse of continuity reflects a general rise of neotraditionalist ideas and movements in the Maghrib and West Africa is beyond the scope of our discussion here. Yet the enthusiasm for the "spiritual" and "scholarly" legacy of the *zāwiyas* appears to be a relatively recent phenomenon. Since the 2000s, there has been a significant increase in Arabic publications on Muslim scholarship in Tuwāt, mostly historical studies or text editions. The authors of these works are almost exclusively local academics, religious scholars, or members of distinguished *Tuwātī* families.[29] Likewise, local and national media regularly broadcast programs or publish articles on Tuwāt's scholars and manuscripts. This new dynamism in academic publishing and public visibility sharply contrasts with research up until the 1990s. The French historian Gilbert Grandguillaume offered a cursory reading of the *Ghunya* in a series of articles in the 1970s, but other than that, there was very little research on the topic.[30]

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29 I counted about fifty titles during my stays that have been published since the 2000s. Among the most often quoted are al-Bakrī, *al-Nubdha fī tāʾrīkh Tuwāt wa l-aʿlāmihā*, al-Bakrī, *Silsilat ʿulamāʾ Tuwāt*, 2 vols. (Oran: Dār al-Maghrib li-l-nashr wa l-tawzīʿ, 2008); Muḥammad Bāy Bi-l-ʿĀlim, *Qabīla Fulān fī l-māḍī wa l-ḥāḍir wa mā lahā min al-ʿulūm wa l-maʿrifa wa l-maʾāthir* ([s. l.], [s. é.].], 2004), idem, *al-Riḥlat al-ʿāliya ilā minṭaqa Tuwāt* (Algiers: Dār Hūmah, 2005); Maḥmūd Faraj Faraj, *Iqlīm Tuwāt khilāl al-qarnayn al-thāmin ʿashara wa l-tāsiʿ ʿashara al-mīlādiyayn* (Algiers: Office de publications universitaires, 2007); Aḥmad Abā-l-Ṣāfī Jaʿfrī, *al-Rijāl fī l-dhākira: Muḥammad b. Ubba al-Muzammirī ḥayātuhu wa athāruhu* (Oran, Dār al-gharb li-l-nashr wa l-tawzīʿ, 2007); al-Hājj Aḥmad al-Ṣadīq, *al-Tāʾrīkh al-thaqāfī li-iqlīm Tuwāt: min al-qarn 11h ilā l-qarn 14h/17m ilā 20m* (Adrar: Direction culturelle de la wilaya d'Adrar, 2003); Bin ʿAbd al-Karīm, Muḥammad Sālim, *Absaṭ al-ʿibārāt wa aṭyab al-nafaḥāt bi-dhikr baʿḍ ʿulamāʾ wa ṣāliḥī manṭiqa Tuwāt* ([s.l.], Shams al-Zībān li-l-nashr wa l-tawzīʿ, 2011).

30 Gilbert Grandguillaume, "Régime économique et structure du pouvoir: le système des foggaras du Touat," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 13–14 (1973), 437–457; Gilbert Grandguillaume, "Universalisme musulman et pratique locale au Touat," in *Actes du XXIXe Congrès international des orientalistes: études arabes et islamiques I—histoire et*

The Algerian sociologists Nadir Marouf and Rachid Bellil, both authors of precious ethnographic studies on the oases, make almost no mention of scholarly traditions or the local manuscript collections. In this regard, the more recent anthropological work of Judith Scheele on the pivotal role of Tuwāt in trans-Saharan mobility illustrates a remarkable shift in scholarly attention, as she integrates Arabic manuscript sources in her analysis of ethnographic materials.[31] One has the impression that the "oral culture" paradigm in research on rural areas such as Tuwāt that dominated in the 1980s and 1990s has increasingly given way to a new focus on Islamic literacy and its social roles.

The various local authors writing on history and culture in Tuwāt adopt a strikingly uniform and selective approach. Most studies display a similar structure, built around a content that is often repetitive. Each author begins by giving a general overview of the oases' history and culture, which he—I did not encounter any female author—perceives in the light of an ideal Muslim society, carefully eliminating those elements that do not fit in such a narrative. Most notably, the history of Tuwāt's prosperous and ancient Jewish community only appears in the context of its disintegration in the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century at the instigation of a preacher and jurist from the city of Tlemcen in western Algeria, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī (d. 1503?).[32] In the standard narrative found in most publications, al-Maghīlī becomes a champion of faith and the founding figure of Muslim scholarship in the oases. Quite interestingly, and in sharp contrast to the impact al-Maghīlī's work had on the intellectual history of Islam in West Africa, I came across very few references to his writings in the sources I explored in my dissertation, where he is remembered chiefly as a local saint.

In other words, local authors usually describe local customs and ways of living, limiting themselves to those they consider to be in harmony with Islam. Unsurprisingly, Tuwāt's institutions of religious learning receive most of their attention. However, the authors also emphasize the sophisticated nature of

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civilisation ed. Claude Cahen, (Paris: L'Asiathèque, 1975): 89–93; Gilbert Grandguillaume, "Le droit de l'eau dans les foggara du Touat au XVIIIe siècle," *Revue des études islamiques*, 43, no. 2 (1977): 287–332; Gilbert Grandguillaume, "De la coutume à la loi: droit de l'eau et statut des communautés locales dans le Touat précolonial," *Peuples méditerranéens*, 2 (1978), 119–133.

31 See Scheele, *Saints and Smugglers*, especially 25–59 and 164–198.

32 See for example al-Ṣiddīq, *al-Tārīkh al-thaqāfī li-iqlīm* Tuwāt, 53. On al-Maghīlī, see among others John O. Hunwick, "Al-Mahîlî and the Jews of Tuwât: the demise of a community," *Studia Islamica*, 61 (1985): 155–183; John O. Hunwick, *Shar'ia in Songhay: The Replies of al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia al-Hajj Muhammad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

the irrigation system inside the oases based on complex networks of underground channels, called *foggāra*, as a manifestation of the genius of *Tuwātī* people who have succeeded in domesticating a hostile natural environment.[33] By contrast, the sensitive topic of Tuwāt's prominent role in the trans-Saharan slave trade or the different forms of servile relations on which almost all economic and agricultural activities relied do not appear. Likewise, studies barely engage with the coexistence of the region's Arabic- and Tamazight-speaking communities. The main section either presents the life and work of a scholar, provides an overview of the different places of religious learning in Tuwāt, or contains the edition of a manuscript, to which photos of local scholars from the twentieth century, such as the omnipresent Muḥammad bi-l-Kabīr, are added in the appendices. The works of contemporary local '*ulamā*' furthermore imitate the style of classical biographical dictionaries (*tarājim*, *ṭabaqāt*). Here, we again observe that authors carefully avoid any potentially controversial topic. For example, at best, authors only briefly mention Tuwāt's historical ties to southern Morocco. Similarly, the aspects that seem incompatible with the mainstream Sunni vision of what a Muslim scholar should look like are left out of the picture. We thus learn much about the erudition of Tuwāt's *muftīs* and *qāḍīs* but very little about their activities as Sufi mystics and even less about their expertise in the occult sciences.

The various works published in the last decades became a crucial tool for my research. On the one hand, they allowed me to formulate questions that my interlocutors considered meaningful. For example, I could inquire about the genealogical ties and concepts that still shape most social relations in the oases.[34] On the other hand, reading these studies provided me with the names of local scholars and the titles of manuscripts that rendered my research comprehensible. I realized that the most promising approach to connecting with the owner or the guardian of a private library was to ask him about specific books and authors. By contrast, framing my questions in a general or undetermined manner, for example by inquiring whether the collection hosted a particular type of text, like a fatwa collection or a chronicle, proved not very useful. Such a question ignored the very principle of how locals perceived manuscripts as historical objects. In my interlocutors' eyes, the manuscript's intrinsic individuality preceded any categorization by genre or disciplinary specialization. Each text contributed, through its title and author, to the constitution of a fam-

33 Grandguillaume, "Régime économique et structure du pouvoir,"; Judith Scheele, "L'énigme de la faggāra: commerce, crédit et agriculture dans le Touat algérien," *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 67, no. 2 (2012): 471–493.

34 Scheele, *Smugglers and Saints*, 125–163.

ily memory that placed scholarly practice and writing in a genealogical context. I would even argue that this was why it became conceivable for my hosts to show a stranger the writings and books of their ancestors.

3 The Changes of the Twentieth Century

So far, I have mainly tried to show that contemporary narratives on Tuwāt's literary heritage tend to reflect the historical hegemony of *shurafāʾ* and *mrābṭīn* families. In the final section, I shall argue that the discursive framework stressing continuity in cultural traditions is paradoxically also an expression of a new historical consciousness that resulted from the region's integration into Algeria's national space and the popularization of Islamic reformist ideas.

Notwithstanding appearances, *Tuwātī* society has undergone profound changes since the French conquest in 1900. First, the remodelling of borders in the early twentieth century radically redefined the region's position within its Saharan and North African environment.[35] The progressive dissolution of the multiple networks connecting Tuwāt to southern Morocco entailed increasing exchanges with northern Algeria and the eastern Saharan regions, most notably the Mzāb. A shift in migratory movements further illustrates this process: Whereas the *nawāzil* records from the eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries suggest that people from Tuwāt in the past mainly emigrated to Morocco and West Africa, working opportunities in northern Algeria now attracted many of them. Simultaneously, the oases saw the steady arrival of *Mzābīs*, *Shaʿānbīs*, and "northerners" (among them many from the Kabylia region), who mostly settled in Adrar, the new administrative capital. As to local scholars, their "traveling for knowledge" declined drastically. Unlike their ancestors who had studied in the cities and *zāwiyas* of Morocco, or even in Egypt, few local *ʿulamāʾ* in the twentieth century sought knowledge in foreign places and, if they did, their travels most often remained within the borders of Algeria.[36]

The life of Muḥammad bi-l-Kabīr seems exemplary in this respect. Born in 1911, he first studied with the leader of the al-Bakrī *zāwiya* in Tamentit, Aḥmad Dīdī (d. 1951). The young Muḥammad bi-l-Kabīr then wished to go to Fez and continue his education at the prestigious Karaouine mosque. According to

35 Cf. Ross Dunn, *Resistance in the Desert: Moroccan Responses to French Imperialism, 1881–1912* (London: Croom Helm, and New York: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).

36 See the biographies of twentieth-century *Tuwātī* scholars gathered in Bin ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Absaṭ al-ʿibārāt wa-atyab al-nafaḥāt*.

local traditions, however, his father opposed this plan. He sent him instead to Tlemcen. Bi-l-Kabīr became a close disciple of the shaykh of a Sufi brotherhood from his native region, Abū Falja b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Karzāzī, who was at the same time residing in the city. Later, bi-l-Kabīr returned to Tuwāt. In 1949, after a short stay in Timimoun, he founded a *madrasa* in Adrar that attracted hundreds of students from Algeria and West African countries until he died in 2000.

The twentieth century's ruptures and changes, in fact, considerably affected the world of Tuwāt's '*ulamā*'. Despite the contemporary emphasis on "traditional" erudition and the persistence of cultural practices that revolve around the memory of saints and scholars, the oases of Tuwāt did not remain untouched by the spread of Muslim reformist movements that began in the late nineteenth century.[37] The *nawāzil* collection of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Balbālī contains several fatwas seeking to prove the licit character of devotional practices that in the 1930s became targets of the early *ṣalafiyya*: joint *dhikr* sessions during funerals, "pious visits" (*ziyāra*) made to the tombs of locals saints, and group recitation of the Qur'an.[38] It is worth quoting here one of the arguments put forward by the *muftī* to justify the practice of *dhikr*: "One proof for its lawfulness is the fact that for centuries (*min qadīm al-zamān*), *qāḍīs* and jurists have not blamed such practice (*ʿamal*) or tried to change it."[39] While the mufti mobilizes the well-known *mālikī* notion of "continuous practice" (*ʿamal*), the apologetic purpose differs from the way the concept appears in the older *nawāzil* collections, where it principally refers to local jurisprudential conventions or habits. Writing within the tradition of Malikism, al-Balbālī addresses new theological or moral issues.[40] In doing so, his fatwa raises the question of the impact of the *Iṣlāḥ* movement led by the scholar and publicist Ibn Bādis (d. 1940) and the *Association des oulémas musulmans algériens* that he founded in Constantine in 1931.[41] Augustin Jomier has recently shown how profoundly the spread

37 Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reformism in Twentieth Century Africa* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

38 ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sīdī ʿUmar, *al-Jawāhir al-liʾālī*, 61–77.

39 ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sīdī ʿUmar, *al-Jawāhir al-liʾālī*, 66.

40 On *fatwā*-issuing in nineteenth–early twentieth century *Malikism*, see Etty Terem, *Old Texts, New Practices: Islamic Reform in Modern Morocco* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

41 On Ibn Bādis and the Association des oulémas musulmans algériens, see Charlotte Courreye, *L'Algérie des oulémas: une histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine (1931–1991)* (Paris, Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2020); James McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ali Merad, *Le réformisme musul-*

of *Iṣlāḥ* ideas changed religious culture and society in the neighbouring Mzāb during the interwar period.[42] It would be worthwhile to investigate how things developed in Tuwāt.

Even more significant in this context is the institutional transformation that local teaching and learning centers underwent. The model of the *zāwiya* funded by *ḥubus/waqf* endowments progressively gave way to the "religious school" (*madrasa*) model whose emergence in twentieth-century North and West Africa reflected a general desire for renewal in Islamic education.[43] Its adoption furthermore entailed reorganizing the funding schemes that had hitherto sustained religious learning, as, from a legal point of view, the *madrasa* became private property (*milk*). I have mentioned earlier that, upon his return to Tuwāt, Muḥammad bi-l-Kabīr opted for the *madrasa* model in the 1940s. Several of his local students did the same and opened *madrasas* in various villages. More research is needed to determine to which degree such changes resulted from the new legal and administrative framework imposed by French colonization and, later, by the Algerian state. Nevertheless, they indicate a profound remodelling of religious and social space during the twentieth century.

The creation of a *madrasa* in southern Tuwāt by an immigrant from Morocco, Mawlāy Aḥmad al-Ṭāhirī (d. 1978), further illustrates this point. Al-Ṭāhirī was born in the region of Marrakech in 1907 among the Awlād Bū al-Sibāʿ, a confederation of lineage groups reputed for their trans-Saharan trade activities.[44] According to local traditions, he spent many years as a teacher in Shinqīṭ in present-day Mauritania before moving to Tuwāt in 1937. Al-Ṭāhirī settled in the *qṣar* of Sali. Helped by a local fraction of the *shurafā'* family, Sīdī Ḥammū bi-l-Ḥājj, he founded a *madrasa* that was to become an important regional centre of scholarship.[45] In a sense, al-Ṭāhirī's arrival is part of a long list of Muslim saints and scholars who, during their wanderings across the Sahara,

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man en Algérie de 1925 à 1940: essai d'histoire religieuse et sociale (Paris, La Haye: Mouton et Cie, 1967).

42 Augustin Jomier, *Islam, réforme et Colonisation: une histoire de l'ibadisme en Algérie (1882–1962)* (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2020). See also, for the case of the Aurès region in Eastern Algeria, Fanny Colonna, *Les versets de l'invincibilité: permanence et changements religieux dans l'Algérie contemporaine* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1995).

43 Cf. Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power, and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001).

44 Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

45 Bin ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Absaṭ al-ʿibārāt wa atyab al-nafaḥāt*, 77–157.

ended up in Tuwāt and, with the support of local communities, set up centres of Islamic learning. However, his choice of the "modern" institution of the *madrasa* demarks him from his predecessors. Moreover, although he had received initiation into the *Qādiriyya* tradition and one of its local biographers describes him as a man of religion "uniting in himself the exoteric and esoteric sciences" (*al-jāmiʿ li-ʿulūm al-ẓāhir wa-l-bāṭin*),[46] al-Ṭāhirī seems to have been discrete about his Sufi affiliation and essentially concentrated on the teaching of theological and legal sciences.

Al-Ṭāhirī's discretion about his affiliation with the *Qādiriyya* echoes observations I made during my fieldwork. Sufism was not a subject on which my interlocutors were eloquent without explicitly condemning it. A certain ambiguity characterized their attitude. On the one hand, they often adopted a critical stance towards Sufi rituals and Muslim hagiography; on the other, many actively participated in the various *ziyārā* festivals organized in honour of local saints. I first interpreted their attitude as a distinctive feature of Saharan Islam, which integrates Sufism into the Muslim scholar's way of life and is wary of ecstatic religious practices.[47] However, reading my eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources, I realized that my interlocutors' ancestors did not necessarily share such a taste for devotional sobriety. Here, for example, is what an early nineteenth-century dictionary has to say about one of the most prominent jurists of the al-Bakrī family, the qadi Muḥammad al-Bakrī (d. 1721): One day, the saint Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān passed through Tamentit with his disciples (*fuqarāʾihi*) performing *dhikr*. Al-Bakrī left his home to contemplate the ceremony. As soon as he had arrived at the scene, he entered a state of ecstatic excitement (*ḥāl*) so powerful that the saint ordered his followers to stop lest the qadi "lose control of his mind" (*allā yajdhūb*).[48] Such narratives sharply contrast with the restraint that characterized the devotional meetings I was able to attend.[49]

The developments within contemporary Tuwāt's religious and scholarly culture require further research. I noted them along the way while investigating the local manuscript collections. Nonetheless, I contend that the traditionalism on which locals pride themselves today is, to a significant extent, a product of

46 Bin ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Absaṭ al-ʿibārāt wa aṭyab al-nafaḥāt*, 78.

47 Cf. Charles Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania: A Case Study from the 19th Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

48 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Bakrī, *al-Kawākib al-barriyya fī l-manāqib al-bakrīyya*, mss. collection *khizāna Aḥmad Dīdī*, Tamantit, Wilaya of Adrar, 53.

49 On this point, see Fanny Colonna's remarks about a similar phenomenon in the Aures. Colonna, *Les versets de l'invincibilité*, 165–223.

FIGURE 12.5 Prayer gathering led by Shaykh Ḥassān al-Anṣārī al-Inzigmīrī, one of the leading scholars in contemporary Tuwāt, in his madrasa in the *qṣar* of Inzegmir, May 1, 2010
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

the social and political changes of the twentieth century. These changes include the region's incorporation into the emerging Algerian Nation, the rise of Muslim reformism and its impact on religious practices, and the reconfiguration of trans-Saharan trade and migration networks. Since the 1970s, this reconfiguration has entered a new phase as a consequence of the droughts and political crises in the Sahel zone.[50]

In this context, I shall at least briefly evoke the evolution of relations between subaltern groups and their former masters, as it constitutes a sensitive topic in all contemporary Saharan societies.[51] Indeed, the renewed interest in

50 Cf. Scheele, *Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara*.

51 See, among others, Remco Ensel, *Saint and Servants in Southern Morocco* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Hall, *A History of Race*, Ann E. McDougall (ed.), *Devenir visibles dans le sillage de l'esclavage: la question haratin en Mauritanie et au Maroc*, special issue in *L'Ouest saharien* 10/11 (2020); Urs Peter Ruf, *Ending Slavery: Hierarchy, Dependency, and Gender in Central Mauritania* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 1999); Villasante-de Beauvais, Marielle (ed.), *Groupes serviles au Sahara: approche comparative à partir du cas des arabophones de Mauritanie* (Paris, Éd. du CNRS, 2000).

Tuwāt's *turāth* does not seem to extend to the history of the *ḥarthānī* and *ʿabīd* groups. To the best of my knowledge, none of the many studies published in recent years deals with the cultural heritage of enslaved persons from West Africa and their descendants. On the contrary, during my fieldwork, I repeatedly heard derogatory comments presenting the *ḥarthānī* and *ʿabīd* population as indispensable but uneducated service providers.[52] Although they deserved charity and care, they were deemed unworthy to appear in the official historical record. Such a conception seems at odds with the increasing social mobility among these groups after Algeria's independence in 1962, while *shurafāʾ* and *mrābṭīn* elites became economically weakened.[53] However, it may precisely constitute a reaction of Tuwāt's former leading figures against the progressive dissolution of the "old" order.

4 Conclusion

The exploration of Arabic manuscript collections in the contemporary Sahara depends substantially on the researcher's ability to situate himself or herself within interpersonal networks structured by genealogy, kinship, and religious identity. From this perspective, the discussion of my research in Tuwāt in this chapter intends to delineate a historian's approach to the concept of "social codicology." While my main interest as a scholar of pre-1900 Islam still lies in the content of the manuscripts, I believe that the historical and philological analysis of such content can only benefit from considering the anthropological dimension of searching for sources "in the field."[54]

The various digitization projects of the last decades and the development of public collections provide precious alternatives in the context of political instability and insecurity, which make fieldwork almost impossible in many parts of the Sahara.[55] However, in the oases of Tuwāt, as in many other places across North and West Africa, such initiatives are slowly progressing, and, in my view,

52 I discuss this question in more detail in a forthcoming paper.

53 Scheele, *Smugglers and Saints*, 146–153.

54 Olly Akkerman's recent book on the South Asian Bohra community and their manuscripts forcefully illustrates the potential of research on contemporary manuscript libraries in the Muslim world. Cf. Akkerman, *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*.

55 On these various initiatives, see Bernard Salvaing, "À propos d'un projet en cours d'édition de manuscrits arabes de Tombouctou et d'ailleurs," *Afriques* [Online], Sources, online December 25, 2015, accessed November 14, 2023. URL: http://afriques.revues.org/1804, Graziano Krätli, "West African Arabic Manuscript Heritage at a Crossroads: Dust to Digital or Digital Dust," *Annuari de Filologia: Antiqua et Mediaevalia*, 5 (2015), 41–66.

no digital copy of a manuscript can replace the experience of engaging with the geographical and social contexts that fashioned its making and preservation.[56] Furthermore, in Algeria and elsewhere, access to manuscripts preserved in public collections remains no less subject to one's ability to manoeuvre through the complexities of interpersonal relations that still largely determine to which extent researchers may consult them.

For "outsiders" like myself, the new visibility of neo-traditionalist Muslim scholarly culture in contemporary North and West African countries was of great help. I would even argue that the mobilization of Islamic manuscripts and Muslim scholarship as a central theme in discourses on identity and religious belonging has played a vital role in the renewal of studies on Saharan Islam since the early 2000s.[57] Accessing materials has become easier as the researcher's interest often contributes to such discourses. In this respect, my observations reflect broader dynamics of cultural politics in the Middle East and the Muslim world. Internationally operating institutions such as the Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation have become powerful actors in shaping the relationship between historical memories and religious identities.[58] In the case of the Maghrib and the Sahara, I shall stress that, until the 1990s, social anthropologists and historians investigating social and cultural life within rural communities frequently faced the categorical refusal of their interlocutors to show them any historical document.[59]

At the same time, the image of Muslim scholarly culture in the Sahara reflecting religious authenticity, erudition, and continuity produces blind spots and taboos in remembering the past. Paradoxically, the "rediscovery" of scholarly traditions seems less to result from an interest in the historical processes that produced them than from the quest for culturalist arguments in contemporary struggles. On the one hand, such a situation has constraining effects on accessing socially and politically sensitive documents, such as legal deeds or chronicles revealing genealogical ties. On the other hand, locals and non-locals alike tend to perceive the results of historical research essentially in the

56 For example, visiting a Bedouin camp or a village where humans and animals closely cohabitate may be extremely helpful in understanding what is at stake when Muslim jurists discuss questions of ritual purity (*ṭahāra*).

57 Ismail Warscheid, "The Islamic Literature of the Western Sahara: Sources and Approaches," *History Compass*, 16/5 (2018), 1–10.

58 I thank the anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this point.

59 See, among others, Geneviève Bédoucha, *L'eau, l'amie du puissant: une communauté oasienne du Sud tunisien* (Paris: Archives contemporaines, 1987); Bellil, *Les oasis du Gourara*; Colonna, *Les verses de l'invincibilité*; Marouf, *Lecture de l'espace oasien*.

light of present issues. How should one then best engage with what in my opinion, defines the historian's main task, namely to study changes and ruptures? It would, of course, be presumptuous to discuss such a question in concluding a chapter. Nevertheless, Leopold von Ranke's famous call to write history "as it essentially was" (*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*),[60] notwithstanding its undoubtedly utopian and somewhat old-fashioned character, could at least serve us as helpful advice.

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60 Cf. John Toews, "Historicism from Ranke to Nietzsche," in *The Cambridge History of Modern European Thought*, eds. Warren Breckman and Peter E. Gordon (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019): 301–329.

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13

Social Codicology in the Digital Age: Sensing Secret Bohra Manuscripts *in situ* and on the Screen

Olly Akkerman

1 Introduction: Books beyond Reading

In this essay[1] I explore the link between codicology and social practice among the Alawi Bohras, a small Muslim community in Baroda,[2] India, and their living manuscript culture. More specifically, I focus on the link between the efficacy and materiality of manuscripts beyond reading. Based on archival and ethnographic fieldwork, I describe how the community experiences manuscripts and other forms of writing in their daily lives and derives meaning from them, as well as through the sacred space where they are kept, the *khizānat al-kutub*, or treasury of books.

The Alawi Bohras are a mercantile Muslim community from Gujarat, comprising roughly 8,000 believers in total. They inhabit a small quarter of the old city of Baroda, known as Badri Mohallah. As Shiʿi Ismāʿīlī Muslims, the community traces back its history and the transmission of its books to the Fatimid Caliphate, which ruled much of Egypt, North Africa, and the Mediterranean from the early tenth until the late twelfth century C.E. Whereas the community's predecessors initially settled in Yemen right before the fall of the Fatimid empire, via Indian Ocean networks their followers permanently established themselves in Gujarat in the fifteenth century, preserving an Arabic manuscript tradition in secret *khizānāt al-kutub*. The Alawi Bohras of Baroda are one of several Bohra communities which continue to exist today. They actively and

1 Sections of this contribution were discussed during a paper titled *Sensing Secret Manuscripts: Bohra Sacred Manuscript Rituals in the Digital Age*, presented during a workshop titled "Practices of Devotion to the Ahl-e Bait at Home and in Diaspora: Materiality, Ritual, and the Digital Senses" in Paris in 2023, organized by the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and Toronto University. All pictures are taken by the author unless stated otherwise. Pictures and conversations are published with the permission of the Alawi Bohra community. Names and terms are transliterated in Arabic. I would like to thank Karen Ruffle and her *Sensing Shiʿism* working group members for our inspiring sessions in Exeter and the discussions that followed.

2 The official name of the city is "Vadodara." The Alawi Bohras, however, prefer its colonial name of "Baroda."

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deliberately preserve and practice a unique Arabic Fatimid-Yemeni manuscript culture in Gujarat focused on sacred artefacts, enshrined in a specially designated treasury of books, which is only accessible to the highest clerics. Through an oath of secrecy, all Bohra communities practice *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimilation) to the outside world.[3]

As a study in social codicology, I focus on the social meaning of secret Bohra manuscripts through the community's epistemic tradition and local understanding of materiality, rather than relying on the author's Eurocentric textual paradigm of favouring hermeneutics, text, and script over codicology and social usage.[4] Even in cases where Islamic codicology is studied in Europe and North America, this usually happens through the prism of the medieval European manuscript tradition, not considering local vernacular understandings of the book in non-European cultures and societies.

Through photographs of manuscripts, documents, and other forms of writing, as well as the ceremonies and rituals they feature in, I document how believers encounter secret Bohra manuscripts in their various material manifestations as *kutub*, scrolls, talismans, and clerical notes, without necessarily reading, touching, or sometimes even seeing them. As the majority of these manuscripts are considered highly esoteric, their direct physical access is restricted to a minority of believers, most of whom only have access to printed religious-exoteric texts.

Instead, as I will discuss, believers experience their agency and efficacy through the sacred materiality that is attached to them as objects that cannot physically be accessed, yet are experienced in various ways through practices such as witnessing and gazing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, and ingesting. The recent pandemic and the inevitable switch to online communal devotional practice, however, have changed the way in which believers derive

3 For a discussion on ethics, access, and secrecy, see Olly Akkerman, *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books. Arabic Manuscripts among the Alawi Bohras of Baroda* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 21–44, 102–105.

4 On this gap, see also Annette Hornbacher, "Introduction—Balinese Practices of Script and Western Paradigms of Text: An Anthropological Approach to a Philological Topic," in *The Materiality and Efficacy of Balinese Letters. Situating Scriptural Practices*, eds. Annette Hornbacher and Richard Fox (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1. See also Richard Fox, "Substantial Transmissions: A Presuppositional Analysis of 'The Old Javanese Text' as an Object of Knowledge, and Its Implications for the Study of Religion in Bali," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 159 (1) 2003: 65–107, and: "Plus ça change … Recent Developments in Old Javanese Studies and Their Implications for the Study of Religion in Contemporary Bali," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 161(1) 2005: 63–97.

efficacy from their manuscripts through these practices. I therefore end this essay with several examples of digital sacred artefacts. These raise the question of the digital sensorium, referring to whether the pandemic has made it possible for manuscripts to be efficacious digitally and thus immaterially, and whether this development has changed the inaccessible manuscript culture of the *khizāna*.

1.1 *Sensing Secret Manuscripts and Their Efficacy*

In the year 2014, I found myself in the fortunate position of being permitted to stay with the Alawi Bohras in their *mohallah* (quarter) in Baroda for a period of several months. I had been personally invited by their Dāʿī, the head of the community's sacerdotal royal family, to catalogue a collection of ca. 500 written artefacts stored in the community's *khizānat al-kutub*, and document its "living" manuscript culture. In one of the old *havelis* (mansions) of Badri Mohallah, the Alawi Bohras, I learnt, preserved an ancient Arabic manuscript culture, which they traced back via the Indian Ocean to Yemen and the royal *khizānāt* of Fatimid Cairo.

This manuscript culture was considered ancient and secret, but at the same time, as I observed, it was very much alive.[5] As I catalogued piles of *makhṭūṭāt* (manuscripts) with a simple pencil and notebook, I witnessed how manuscript titles dating back to the Fatimid and post-Fatimid period from Egypt and Yemen were taken out of their cupboards as they were ceremoniously revealed among initiated believers, and on other occasions were copied by hand with utmost care and precision. I observed that the material survival of these secret manuscripts from the past played an important role in the community's day-to-day lived experience. The question of what it means to be Bohra, I was explained, and the community's "Neo-Fatimid" identity as Shiʿi Ismāʿīlī Ṭayyibis in Gujarat, could not be understood without them.[6]

As the community's appointed court historian, as well as semi-official manuscript curator and accidental anthropologist, I soon learnt that my Eurocentric academic and rather sterile understanding of a "manuscript" was radically different from the manuscript tradition I was encountering among the Alawis *in situ*. Thus far, my disciplinary training in philology, palaeography, and codicology had served me well in the sanitized reading rooms of university libraries,

5 For a discussion on the notion of a writing cultures that are "alive," see Richard Fox, "The Meaning of Life, or How to Do Things with Letters," in *The Materiality and Efficacy of Balinese Letters. Situating Scriptural Practices*, eds. Richard Fox and Annette Hornbacher (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 23–50.

6 Akkerman, *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 3–6.

where manuscripts gained new social lives removed from their natural habitat and local ecosystems of creation, circulation, and material demise. Though useful for reading colophons and identifying dates, these skills turned out to be less suited for making sense, in the most literal "sense" of the word, of these manuscripts as they were seen, understood, valued, and used by their owners, custodians, and everyone else in the community who interacted with them, either directly and physically or from a distance. Far beyond my own academic comfort zone of the "philological laboratory," I had to learn how to "re-see" the manuscripts that were in front of me as I became aware of the sensory experience of manually working with handwritten books.

Rather than mining these rare Ismāʿīlī manuscripts for their content, "re-seeing" entailed embodying them, just as the community did, through gazing at them during ceremonies, as well as through touch, smell, sound, and at times even ingesting them as "something" that radiated *baraka* (blessings). Through these experiences I learnt that, as the outsider, my presence did not only have an effect on the environment of the *khizāna* by dusting, cataloguing, "curating" its manuscripts and getting rid of their unwelcome inhabitants. Just as the people, climate, natural ecosystems, and the cuisine of Badri Mohallah had an effect on my constitution, so, to my surprise, did the manuscripts affect me in various unexpected ways.

There is a reason why, in his *Among Arabic Manuscripts*, Ignaty Kratchkovsky describes how the manuscripts he worked with "whispered" to and "gazed" at him, and how he perceived them as objects over which "death itself has no power."[7] If one is in the privileged position of spending a considerable amount of time in their physical presence rather than on the screen, manuscripts, as any other handcrafted artefact, have an effect on the senses. The nature of this physical encounter, as I discussed in the introduction to this volume, influences our relationship with the object, or in this case, the written artefact.

Whereas the phenomenon of agency and the efficacy of things and texts on people has received considerable attention in recent years in anthropology, their impact on historic and contemporary manuscript cultures in Muslim contexts is a nascent field.[8] The efficacy of "things" on the researcher and his or

7 Ignaty Y. Kratchkovsky, *Among Arabic Manuscripts: Memories of Libraries and Men* (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 9–10.

8 Petra Sijpesteijn and Marcela Probert, eds., *Amulets and Talismans of the Middle East and North Africa in Context. Transmission, Efficacy and Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 2022); Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz, eds., *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities* (Hamburg: Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, 2023); Richard Fox, *More than Words. Transforming Script, Agency, and Collective Life in Bali* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018);

her positionality vis-à-vis the object they interact with has not yet been much reflected on, as was discussed in the introduction to this volume.

Like Kratchkovsky, I would find comfort in the materiality of the manuscripts I encountered among the Alawis, such as the smell of the soft leather deer bindings or the touch of handmade papers of the *khizāna*. To my surprise, at times I would even derive strength from certain marginal notes when I was overwhelmed by the manual labour of cataloguing the daunting piles of manuscripts that were stacked next to me on the floor in the monsoon heat.[9] Becoming part of the day-to-day life of the *mohallah*, it became impossible to ignore the ritual efficacy that was attributed to the manuscripts from the *khizāna* by their custodians as well as by my neighbours and friends as carriers of *baraka*, talismans, and sacred objects.

Would the scrolls, talismanic notes, and magical marginalia I discuss in this essay give me instant healing and *baraka* when handling them? Perhaps not. Yet finding snippets of centuries-old manuscripts in the pleats of my *rida* (traditional Bohra dress for women)—as a result of moving and cataloguing them—certainly sent shivers down my spine and caused all kinds of ethical dilemmas in regards to what to do with them.[10] In the same vein, being subjected to rituals of initiation to access esoteric manuscripts certainly did not leave me indifferent, nor did the ancient scribal traditions I participated in, which are considered a *jihād* (striving) of the ego, leave me untouched.[11]

Re-seeing manuscripts through the community's perspective had been a steep learning curve. For months I was so focused on counting folios and identifying watermarks that I had failed to observe that the treasury of books was indeed the centre of life of the community. I had to essentially un-learn how to look at manuscripts from my western academic training, shifting my perception from books as carriers of philology to "things" with social lives, biographies, life cycles, power, efficacy, and agency.

It was through the Mazoon Saheb, the custodian of the treasury of books as well as a professional scribe, scholar, and fervent collector, that I was initiated into the universe of his *khizāna*. The Mazoon Saheb was not merely the caretaker of manuscripts; he was also chief *qāḍi* and one of the highest-ranking

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Fox and Hornbacher, eds., *Materiality and Efficacy of Balinese Letters*. For a comparative perspective, see Antonella Brita et al., *Manuscripts and Performances in Religions, Arts, and Sciences* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024).

9 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 250, 251.

10 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 42.

11 See for thick descriptions of these experiences Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, for example 249–251.

members of the royal family at the time. Throughout his whole life, he had been trained with a view to one day serving the community as Dāʿī. I, on the other hand, at the time was a simple graduate student from Europe, female, with no proper *madrasa* training, nor any understanding of Bohra royal etiquette, nor *purdah* (gender segregation).

What the Mazoon and I had in common, however, was our love for handwritten books and "manuscriptology," as it is still known in India.[12] Being among manuscripts and appreciating their codicology are rare privileges, something the Mazoon and I instantly recognized.[13] In our manuscript conversations, we found a liminal space beyond gender and royal hierarchies, as well as beyond generational and confessional differences. We were no longer the future Dāʿī of the community and the graduate student, but two bibliophiles who had found a common language: the language of handwritten books. Through our manuscript sessions, we reached a sense of what Johannes Fabian calls *coevalness*, and my position in Badri Mohallah changed from guest and outsider to *Ollybehn* ("Olly sister") and almost adopted member of the royal family.[14]

Rather than skimming through the treasury of books myself, my fieldwork thus involved accessing and reading manuscripts *with* the community, according to their episteme, traditions, ritual etiquette, and, most importantly, on their terms. The Mazoon and I would read treatises and documents together, and he would share both his and his forefathers' personal notes through which generations of Bohra Dāʿīs had studied them. We would decipher marginalia and colophons together and catalogue the manuscripts according to his wishes and time schedule, as well as the rhythm of the *mohallah*. I learned to *observe* during quieter moments and started to notice when and how manuscripts were taken out of their cupboards for consultation or were revealed during rituals and ceremonies.[15]

Through these activities, I learned to *participate* in the life of the *khizāna* and the *mohallah* at large, and eventually I was granted permission to copy an entire

12 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 210.

13 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 210.

14 This position was not without its challenges. See *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 202–208. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia, 1983).

15 François Déroche and Carine Juvin argue for the importance of the portability of inscribed objects, which, as they write "makes the object eminently linked to social practices and favours its insertion into transcultural phenomena." François Déroche and Carine Juvin, "Introduction," Special issue From Visual Power to Private Stories: Inscribed Objects from the Medieval Arab World *Journal of Material Cultures in the Muslim World*, vol. 4 (2023), 1–2.

manuscript under the Mazoon's supervision according to the scribal protocols and rituals of the *khizāna*.[16] Through our manuscript sessions, in addition to becoming an honorary member of the *mohallah*, I not only learned how to re-see the manuscripts through the lens of the community and observe the busy social life of the *khizāna*. I started to see that the books of the *khizāna* and the people of the *mohallah* could not be separated from another, nor understood without each other.

This experience led me to write a monograph which became an ethnography of manuscripts and their custodians: a study in what I referred to as "social codicology." In that study, I suggested moving away from the idea that manuscripts are inert carriers of text and instead focus on the social framework in which they constantly gain meaning as "things" through their interaction with communities, readers, and archives of knowledge. In doing so, the study focused on one simple question: *What is it that people do with their books, and why?* My aim was to humanize the people who write, use, and venerate manuscripts as part of their living, local, and day-to-day understanding of Islam in the past and present and give them the agency they deserved. I wanted not merely to give the Alawi Bohras *a* voice, but to make the people of Badri Mohallah central to the monograph, in an attempt to do justice to the multiple ways in which they see their *khizāna* and experience the efficacy of its living manuscript tradition.

As the years passed after my fieldwork, however, I realized more and more that the question of *what is it that people do with their books, and why?* did, in fact, not fully do justice to the community and their *khizāna* tradition. The question had been a valid one, as the community confirmed after the publication of the book. In fact, the monograph had taken on its own social life, as the Dāʿī of the community made it obligatory reading for all believers during one of his *majālis* (religious gatherings).[17] Yet talking to members of the various Bohra diasporic communities across the Indian Ocean, I realized that the question assumed that, as "things," Bohra manuscripts were passive and inanimate. As such, the question dismissed the possibility of the books having a life force and autonomy of their own, which is not how believers related to their manuscript tradition.[18] After all, I had observed how believers experienced the many written forms of the *khizāna*, and, as mentioned earlier, I myself had

16 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 211.

17 See "Alavi Bohras," https://alavibohra.org/a%20neo-fatimid%20treasury%20of%20books%20olly%20akkerman%204--1444%2011--2022.htm, accessed November 7, 2023.

18 See also Martin Brückner, "The Place of Objects and Things in the Age of Materiality," in *Open Cultural Studies* (2019) 3: 495.

not remained unaffected by the sensory experience of working with physical manuscript copies in Baroda.

The question of *what is it that people do with their books, and why?* would therefore not be complete without turning it around, acknowledging the efficacy of manuscripts as objects with meaning, power, agency, and thaumaturgic qualities, thus making object and human equal rather than making the former subordinate to the latter. According to Martin Brückner, objects are non-human actants performing variable roles inside networks of materiality. As such, he argues, they are inadvertent agents in material practices.[19] Along similar lines, Jane Bennett makes a case for recognizing the "vital force" that is inherent to things, their "political agency and the active participation of non-human powers in events". Things, she claims, possess a "vital materiality" that flows through and across bodies, both human and nonhuman, and agency always emerges as the effect of ad hoc configurations of human and non-human forces.[20]

Among the Alawi Bohras, manuscripts should thus not be seen as inert things, but as active participants in the material practices of the *khizana*. As human actors, the community relies on the efficacy of its manuscripts while at the same time affirming the agency of their manuscripts in their interactions with them, a phenomenon which Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz also describe in *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities*.[21]

The manuscript's materiality, or even immateriality, as I observed in Baroda, is never coincidental, and this has an impact on how it is experienced in its ritual efficacy. Following this object-oriented ontology, the question *what is it that people do with their books* should be in conversation with the question *what is it that books do with their people*—i.e., their custodians, collectors, copyists, readers, admirers, venerators, etc.[22] Or, in other words, the questions should be *what is the efficacy of manuscripts and their materiality on people? And through which sensorial modes is this efficacy experienced*?

In order to provide legitimate answers to these questions, I will discuss the different forms of writing of the *khizāna* and how the manuscripts are experienced sensorially as secret and foremost sacred objects with a "vibrant matter." First, however, we must examine the community's local understanding of script, materiality, and immateriality and how this emic social meaning of codicology is translated to ritual practice and efficacy.

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19 Brückner, "The Place of Objects and Things in the Age of Materiality," 496.

20 Jane Bennet, *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

21 Kohs and Kienitz, *Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities*, 3–4.

22 I would like to thank Anwar Peera Haneefa for his insights on this matter.

1.2 *Materiality and Social Practice*

In tackling the question of the codicology of manuscripts, their social role, and ritual efficacy, Daniel Miller's notion of materiality is relevant. He states: *the appearance of the object demonstrates that which must have been responsible for its existence*.[23] In other words, the way an object *looks* should be directly connected with what people *did* with it, how it was made, used, etc., and how people were affected by it.

The more time I spent observing the Alawis and their manuscripts inside, but especially also outside the *khizāna*, participating in communal gatherings, ceremonies, and rituals at the mosque, the *jāmaʿat khāna* (communal centre), at people's homes, graveyards, and during *ziyāra* (pilgrimage), the more I understood that the community's various forms of sacred texts circulated outside the treasury of books on numerous occasions, despite their status of being secret. Moreover, I noticed that the ways in which the books and documents of the *khizāna* operated outside their natural habitat, and the social roles they played during these "outings," was strongly linked to their material format. Cataloguing these texts as objects enshrined in the *khizāna*, I realized that their codicology, as we will see, often revealed how they were used in the community. Conversely, as I was observing the social role of the same manuscripts and documents during ceremonies, I realized that the way they were used explained their material format. I started to notice that the various material forms and textual practices in the community were linked to larger manuscript genres and documentary cultures in the *khizāna* and that, as objects, their social meaning was clear to all believers, whether they had access to the text or not.

Manuscripts, documents, and other forms of writing, I learned, look the way they do because they fulfil a certain purpose. These purposes include, but are certainly not restricted to reading alone, as handwritten texts have multiple social lives—to refer to Arjun Appadurai—and biographies—as Igor Kopytoff calls them—as I describe in the introduction to this volume.[24] Their codicological format and social lives as codices, scrolls, notebooks, decrees, broadsheets, catalogues and lists, registers, palimpsests, letters, talismans, and inscriptions,

23 Daniel Miller, "Materiality: An Introduction," in *Materiality: An Introduction*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 29.

24 Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction. Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1986), 3–63; Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1986), 64–92.

are not accidental or universal, but are culturally specific and socially deeply embedded in the communities in which they circulate and are consumed.

Having observed how the Alawi Bohras meticulously preserve an Ismāʿīlī manuscript culture from the past, I realized that when it comes to communities and the codicology of their books, little is left to chance. Through this lens, there are no coincidences in the materiality of manuscripts.[25] Even if a scribe makes a mistake or manuscripts are damaged by water or termites, the way we as humans respond to elements that are beyond our control is culturally specific. For instance, whereas in one social-historical context, termite-infested books end up in the garbage or are recycled, in another, discarding practices of decrees and documents included disposing of them in repositories of "sacred trash," such as we know from the examples of the Cairo and Afghan genizot and the Qubbat al-khazna and Ḥaram al-Sharīf corpora in Damascus and Jerusalem.[26]

In the South Asian and Indian Ocean context of Gujarat, on the other hand, it is not uncommon for manuscripts, documents, and other sacred artefacts such as idols and relics to be ritually disposed of in lakes or oceans, burnt, or buried. Through oral history these discarding practices can also be historically traced in the various Bohra communities.[27] Among the Alawi Bohras, I observed how the material decay of their manuscript collection, which is entirely written on paper, is actively fought against through paratextual practices, such as by writing protective formulae in the margins, which are combined with local preservation techniques, such as adding botanical leaves between the folios, or treating the manuscripts with rice pouches, *neem*, cloves, or cucumber extract. If the material damage is irrevocable, the Alawis ritually dispose of their manuscripts by dissolving their snippets in the water tank of their mosque for *baraka* (blessings) and *ṣiḥḥa* (healing) purposes. Through this practice, the sacred texts and scripts of the *khizāna* thus gain a new social life as sacred, talismanic dust in their immaterial form.

In regards to the materiality and the immateriality of the sacred, Daniel Miller argues that material cultures of all kinds, like "things," "objects," "prod-

25 Towards the end of the Social Codicology workshop in Rabat, I provocatively suggested that there are no coincidences in codicology. Instead of making generalizing claims about codicology of a philosophical nature, with this statement I intended to start a discussion on the multiple ways in which the materiality of handwritten texts is linked to their specific social usages. The aim of this discussion was to link the inquiry of *what people do with their books*, with the question *why their books look the way they do*.

26 See, for instance, Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Schocken, 2011).

27 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 289–290.

ucts," or "artefacts," represent and materialize immaterial ideas.[28] Even objects that are considered extremely sacred, untouchable, and therefore immaterial, are still commonly expressed through material culture. This can refer to material forms, but it also includes practices and rituals.[29]

In addition to traditions of discarding texts, the ways in which people, communities, and societies give expression to the sacred materiality of their holy books and objects through ritual and ceremony is highly specific to their social, spatial, and temporal contexts. One community may ceremoniously bring their holy book to bed upon sunset, and publicly awaken it upon sunrise, as can be observed among the Sikhs in their *gurdwaras* (temples), whereas in other communities in South Asia, such as that of the Bohras, sacred texts are enshrined in secret book treasuries. Purposively shrouded in mystery, as objects they are only revealed to believers on rare occasions.

The materiality of manuscripts and documents, including their shape, appearance, script, and palaeography, I argue, should thus not be taken for granted. Material manifestations of text are deeply anchored in the social context they are embedded in and the larger manuscript cultures they are part of. In addition to their social embeddedness, there are of course other factors which shape manuscript and documentary cultures. Besides the influence of geography, climate, and economics, the materiality of manuscript cultures largely depends on the human element in textual practices: personal interventions, aesthetics, and choices, and the introduction of new rituals, traditions, and meanings, instead of one timeless and fixed tradition.

1.3 *Script, Efficacy, and Sacred Materiality*

Thus far we have established that, through the lens of social codicology, it becomes apparent that social practice and materiality cannot be separated, and that Bohra manuscripts have a wide variety of social roles that include, but are certainly not limited to, reading alone. Yet in addition to social practice and codicology, one cannot get around the fact that manuscripts and documents are made up of *text* and *script*. When focusing on the social embeddedness of Bohra secret manuscripts, how do text and script relate to social practice, codicology, and ritual efficacy?

The paradigm in European book culture and philology dictates that text and content dominate the materiality and codicology of written artefacts. For

28 Miller, "Materiality: An Introduction," 4.

29 For an in-depth discussion on the materiality of the sacred, see Birgit Meyer, "Introduction. Material Religion—How Things Matter," in *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*, eds. Dick Houtman and Birgit Meyer (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 1–23.

instance, Albert Henrichs, a scholar of ancient Greece, argues that, historically, books, in the form of the codex, were invented for the sake of recording text. As, according to his hypothesis, this was their main function, books were therefore more dependent on text for their survival than the other way around. In other words: without text, physical books would not exist. He further suggests that, historically, it was the text which imposed the format of the book instead of the other way around.[30] Heinrich thus sketches a book-text relationship in which text dominates the material form of the book.

Can this normative concept of Western theory regarding script and text be translated to Alawi Bohra manuscript culture *in situ*? Bohra manuscript culture is based on a chain of transmission of Fatimid-Ṭayyibī intellectual history. As such, one could argue that its manuscripts are merely a manifestation of the material forms of this process of transmission in the temporal space of this world. However, as we will see in this essay, from an emic perspective it becomes clear that, to the Bohras, their manuscripts are more than vehicles or repositories of written texts. Instead, they are seen as sacred objects, having talismanic and other powers of agency attributed to them as "things."

Anette Hornbacher describes the dangers of researching script and texts from local non-Western epistemic traditions, in this case Balinese letters, from a European perspective. She argues that scholars fail to acknowledge the double function of script as both a medium of local literature or doctrine as well as the ritual role of its inherently powerful visual elements for esoteric purposes.[31] Just as the majority of Alawi Bohra believers do not have direct access to the manuscripts of the *khizāna* due to their highly esoteric content, secret scripts (see fig. 13.10), and vocabulary, the mystical characters of Balinese script, the *aksara*, are considered powerful instruments of esoteric cosmological speculation and ritual efficacy that should not be revealed publicly.[32]

From the perspective of Bohra believers or Balinese Hindu practitioners, the significance of mystical *aksara* or *khizāna* manuscripts in their day-to-day life is not to convey a consistent religious doctrine or theological canon to the public, as may have been the case in ancient Greece or European religious hermeneutic traditions. Instead, their social meaning lies in the significance of manuscript efficacy in ritual practice, as they are seen as visual manifestations of cosmic

30 Albert Henrichs, "Hieroi Logoi and Hierai Bibloi: The (Un)Written Margins of the Sacred in Ancient Greece," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 101 (2003): 207–266.

31 Hornbacher, "Introduction—Balinese Practices of Script and Western Paradigms of Text: An Anthropological Approach to a Philological Topic," 3, 10.

32 Hornbacher, "Introduction," 5.

power.[33] From a Balinese perspective, they are imbued with life and power, as Hornbacher argues, and therefore they "create their own 'presence' of being," because "they display the potency of affecting cosmic power."[34]

In the case of the Alawi Bohras, the manuscripts in the *khizāna* acquire another layer of sacred materiality, in addition to their esoteric content, by the fact that they are personally copied by the Dāʿī. Due to his special status of being *ka-l-maʿṣūm* (Ar. "almost infallible"), agency is attributed to all material objects the Dāʿī touches or owns, such as coconuts, sweets, bottles of water, coins, textiles, or texts, a phenomenon which is not unheard of among other devotional communities in South Asia. It is thus in this context that we should look at the writing practices of the *khizāna*, and from this perspective the relationship between script, sacred materiality, efficacy, and social usage is best explored.

From scribbles and personal notes to the most majestic codices, all forms of writing are copied manually in the *khizāna* by the Dāʿī and his closest male and sometimes female relatives, who have been initiated into the ancient Bohra scribal tradition from an early age. As I experienced through participant observation as a scribe, the copying practices of the *khizāna* are highly ritualized and require scribal and scriptural etiquette[35] as well as the attainment of a state of spiritual and bodily purity, as the aim of copying is not only re-producing the text but also embodying its esoteric truths.

2 Sensing the *Khizāna in Situ*

In this section we will walk through the *khizāna* and its different writing forms and formats, including secret codices that legitimize and paratexts that safeguard and curse, evanescent scrolls that initiate and hold together the Alawi Bohra universe, but also have the power to divide it, personal notebooks and manuscript leaves that aid the Dāʿī in his task of serving the community as the living *khizāna* during his sermons, talismanic seals that heal, and sacred book hands that bless and protect. In each case I will discuss the *materiality* and codicological format of the manuscript, the *occasion*, or how and when the manuscript is revealed or circulates outside the *khizāna*, the *sensorial experience* of those who encounter and interact with it, and finally, the *efficacy* as experienced by the believers.

33 Hornbacher, "Introduction," 17.

34 Hornbacher, "Introduction," 18.

35 See Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 300–328.

Through photographs and descriptions, I have tried to illustrate the phenomenon of ritual manuscript efficacy by reconstructing the social embeddedness of these forms of writing in the community by observing social practice and analyzing the codicological features of the manuscripts. Given the importance of the emic perspective of the community, I have used the codicological terminology of the Bohras as much as possible in these descriptions.

2.1 *Seeing Secret Codices*

The *khizānat al-kutub* derives its name from its primary function of enshrining *kutub* (s. *kitāb*) or "books," which are also referred to by the clerics as *makhṭūṭāt*, or "manuscripts." Remaining faithful to the practices and terminology of the community, I have chosen the verb "enshrining" rather than "storing," as the Alawi Bohra *khizāna* should be seen as a *treasury of books*, rather than as a "library" or "archive" in the modern, secular sense.[36] What may be confusing to the outsider is that what constitutes a "manuscript" in the *khizāna* is rather fluid. For instance, as part of this collection, there are historic documents from the Fatimid and post-Fatimid periods which have been preserved in codex form and are read and stored as such.[37] There are also plenty of examples, however, where manuscripts, such as historiographic works or *fiqh* (jurisprudence) compendia, have turned into documents through their rich paratextual features. These paratextual traditions, as we will see, are by no means random notes or scribbles. Instead, they form intricate systems of notes which are linked to the genres of these texts, yet at the same time they have their own social life in the *khizāna* and can therefore be seen as self-contained micro-repositories within manuscripts. The codicological format of texts and their content can thus, in some cases, be deceiving.

To the Alawi Bohras, however, all forms of handwritten texts copied by the Dāʿī are considered manuscripts, including "manuscript of a scroll," or a "manuscript of a *kitāb*," a categorization which can best be understood through the sacred materiality attributed to them. As noted, due to their esoteric content, *khizāna* manuscripts are considered secret, which translates to strict conditions of access. Only the Dāʿī and his confidants are authorized to touch, consult, read, and copy them. Some manuscripts, however, are considered more secret than others, depending on whether they belong to the genre of *bāṭinī*

36 For a more detailed discussion on "Neither library nor archive," see Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 105–118.

37 See Olly Akkerman, "The Bohras as Neo-Fāṭimids: Documentary Remains of a Fāṭimid Past in Gujarat," in *Journal of Material Cultures in the Muslim World* 1 (2020): 286–308.

(esoteric) or *ẓāhirī* (exoteric) knowledge. In Alawi Bohra manuscript culture, paratexts play an important role in making them less accessible, through secret scripts, alphabets, and protective spells.[38] As we will see, the social life of these paratexts also transcends the codex into ritual practice. In addition to paratexts, the codicological format of the codex also contributes to the inaccessibility of Alawi Bohra manuscripts; its binding, often held together with a *lisān* (envelope) flap, cotton string, or enveloped in a cotton pouch, keeps the esoteric content of the manuscript hermetically closed, even if it is casually lying around in the *khizāna* (see fig. 13.1).

All *khizāna* manuscripts and documents are stored in traditional iron cupboards and stacked horizontally on top of each other (see fig. 13.2). These utilitarian cupboards have no locks and keys, and they are thus technically speaking open to whomever is able to enter the *khizāna*. It is the rituals and etiquette of the community that function as the invisible but crucial lock and keys that are part of a Bohra habitus or code of conduct in the *mohallah*.[39]

Yet despite these ritual locks and keys which guarantee non-access, believers encounter the esoteric manuscripts of the *khizāna*, as the following pictures illustrate. In the first picture (fig. 13.3), the Dāʿī, seated to the right, is seen during his audience receiving believers in his office, which is the same room as the *khizāna*. As we will see below, this particular spatial arrangement is significant. Among several printed books and reference works, a manuscript copy in the form of a codex is casually lying around in the foreground, despite its status of being a secret text. While cataloguing manuscripts in the *khizāna*, I observed that the manuscripts the Dāʿī would be working with prior to his office hours would, regardless of their secret content, not return to their iron cupboards. Instead, they would be casually placed on one of the small stands next to the Dāʿī's cushion or stacked on piles on the floor.

What we witness here is the phenomenon of *secret manuscripts having a social life*, which I explain in my *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books* as follows:

> When believers would visit "the centre," they are thus made aware indirectly of the *khizāna*'s manuscript collection. They would see the manuscripts yet have no access to their content. Even though *batini* manuscripts would often be lying on the floor within arm's reach, believers would never touch them. After all, it was not their place in the *daʿwa* to do

38 Olly Akkerman, "The Bohra Manuscript Treasury as a Sacred Site of Philology: A Study in Social Codicology," in *Philological Encounters* 4 (2019): 1–21.

39 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 188, 189.

FIGURE 13.1
Ibrahim Bhai, the secretary of the *khizāna*, seen wrapping a cotton thread around a manuscript (top). A stack of codices (bottom left) and cotton envelopes protect the fragile manuscripts (bottom right)

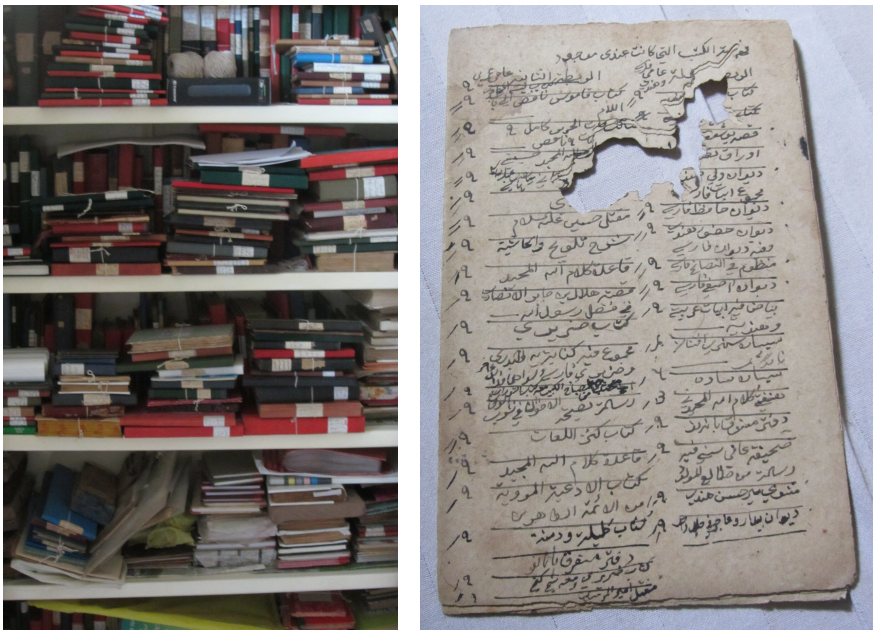


FIGURE 13.2 The collection of the *khizāna* documented (right) and in reality (left). These pictures show the enshrining practices of the community. Left: one of the iron cupboards of the *khizāna*, in which manuscripts and documents are stored. Right: historic *khizāna* book lists, including Gujarati numerals (below)

so. Yet the act of witnessing what is available yet not accessible is crucial. After all, the idea of something secret and undisclosed only functions if people know about it and witness it (…) In other words, I believe the community needs to see their clerics use these secret objects right in front of them, to see that *batini* manuscripts indeed do exist, to see what they cannot access, and, more importantly, to actually witness that the Bhai Sahebs, who are responsible for the fate of believers not only in the here and now but also in the afterlife, know and embody the secrets of their esoteric tradition. Through their material presence, it is thus not only the institution of the treasury of books but also its manuscripts that play a crucial role in legitimising power dynamics in the Alawi Bohra universe.[40]

In some cases, the manuscripts of the *khizāna* are opened during private audiences with the Dāʿī. If we return to the picture discussed previously, we see two believers, one kneeling on the ground and one kissing the hand of the

40 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 111–112.

FIGURE 13.3 The Dāʿī (right) during his office hours, receiving believers in the *khizāna*

Dāʿī. They have requested a talismanic cord for protecting a relative during her pregnancy. The third person in the picture is the Mazoon Saheb's secretary and accountant Ibrahim Bhai, who acts as the intermediary between the visitors and the Dāʿī. On the right, the Dāʿī can be seen preparing the magic cords, tying knots into which he will blow his sacred *rūḥ* (breath).[41] The cord is to be worn around the belly by the pregnant woman.

Practices of healing and protection, in this case regarding pregnancy, are recorded in the paratexts of the manuscripts of the *khizāna* and can often be traced in the first flyleaves of codices. The picture below (fig. 13.4) illustrates another manuscript which has been taken out of the cupboards and is witnessed by believers. We see depicted a chart with the planets of the universe, with a description above it in Persian. The chart is consulted to determine pregnancy, including the gender of the baby. During this ritual, the mother-to-be is asked to recite the *Fātiḥa* (the opening chapter of the Qurʾan) and randomly place her finger on the pie-shaped chart.

41 For a more detailed description of this practice, see Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 118–119.

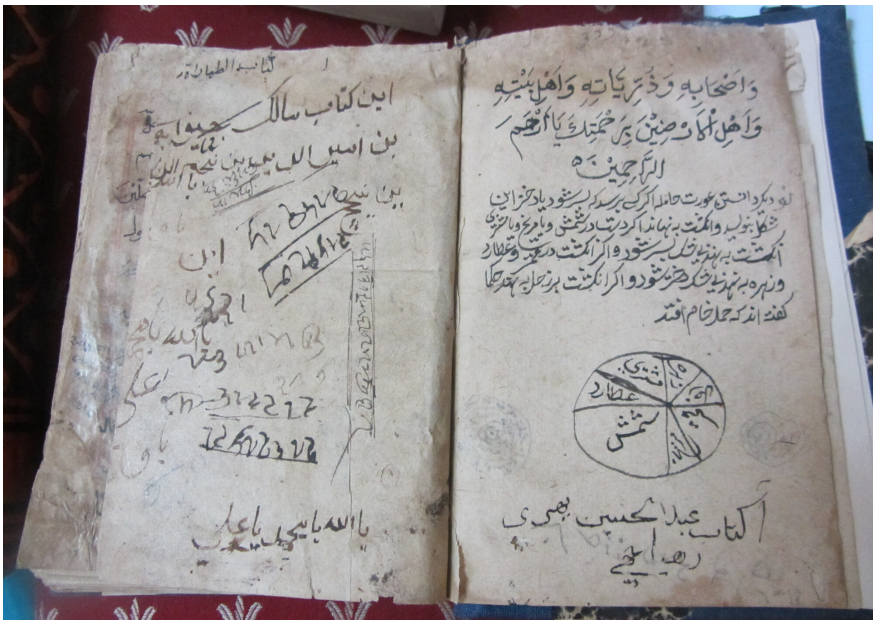


FIGURE 13.4 Paratexts describing the ritual of the planetary pregnancy pie on the right folio, with a description in Persian above.

This social-codicological example illustrates the close link between ritual practices of talismanic healing and divination and the paratexts found in manuscripts, which the clerics use as manuals while performing the ritual. In this case, too, believers see the manuscript. It is opened, but only the paratexts, written on the first flyleaves of the codex, are revealed. Another example in this regard is the ritual of *ʿilm al-fāl*, or Qur'anic divination. In the Alawi Bohra context, believers frequent their Dāʿī to have their "Qur'anic prediction" pronounced on matters such as marriage, career, or business,[42] as can be seen in fig. 13.5 During this popular ritual, the Dāʿī customarily consults the flyleaves of one particular manuscript title which describes the details of how the ritual is performed (fig. 13.6).

The social-codicological character of the ritual practices I just described and the efficacy of Bohra manuscripts lie at the intersection between the materiality of the manuscript, ritual practice, power, and access. Believers sense the tension that is inherent to the experience of having access to the physical space of the *khizāna* while only catching a glimpse of its manuscripts. This tension is

42 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 291.

FIGURE 13.5 A young couple and the Dāʿī during a session of Qurʾanic divination intended to help them in several of their life decisions.

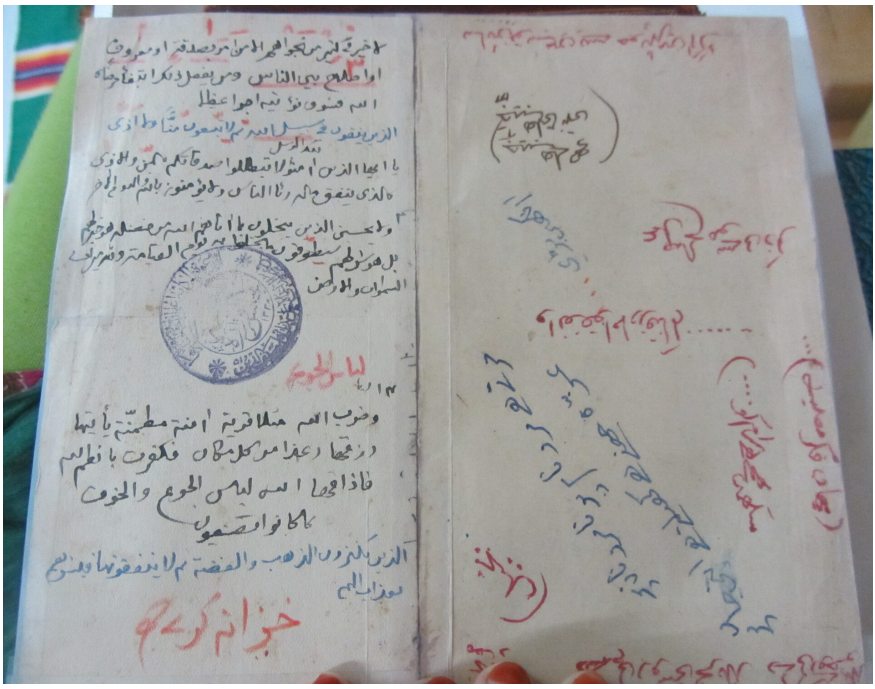


FIGURE 13.6 Notes in Arabic found in the flyleaves of a codex on how to perform *ʿilm al-fāl*, written in blue and red pencil, including the *khizāna* stamp and reference.

the result of what the Dāʿī *does* with his manuscripts: how he stores them, how and when he takes them out of the cupboards, whom he is granting ritualized access to, and so on. Yet the Dāʿī also explained to me the power his *makhṭūṭāt* have over him. As the community's sacred written heritage, the manuscript culture of the *khizāna* is his responsibility to keep alive. He must also transmit the sacred esoteric truths to ensure the survival of his community while at the same time keeping the esoteric content of the manuscripts undisclosed to those who may misinterpret them. This is no easy task in the humid monsoon climate of Gujarat, itself compounded by climate change.

2.2 *Touching: Evanescent Scrolls and the Devotional Gaze*

An unusual, but certainly not uncommon codicological format in the *khizāna* is the vertical roll, also known in the community as the *sijill*.[43] In their day-to-day usage, this codicological format is referred to by the Alawi Bohras as

43 For a discussion on the possible Fatimid origins of the Bohras' usage of the term *sijill*, see Akkerman, "Bohras as Neo-Fāṭimids," 286–308.

"scrolls." Despite its rather unpractical format, which does not, for instance, allow the reader to easily browse through the text or make the paper writing surface very robust for frequent usage, a substantial collection of historic scrolls is enshrined in the collection of the *khizāna*. *Khizāna* scrolls are stored horizontally, stacked on top of each other like codices, and are often held together by a string. All scrolls are handwritten, and they can contain signatures, seals, and secret alphabets. Whereas modern scroll copies are often laminated or kept in special plastic folders in order to avoid wear and tear, the historic scrolls are pasted around cardboard rolls (see figs. 13.7 and 13.8).

According to my observations, the popularity of the scroll in the *khizāna* can best be explained by the fact that it is the ideal textual format to be used to orate, recite, or reveal something from. Scrolls, as Marina Rustow also ascertains in the context of the Jewish community in Fatimid Cairo, were produced in such a way as to fulfil a public, ceremonial role as instruments of performance with an aura of evanescence.[44] This is certainly the case among the Alawi Bohras, as the social-codicological examples below demonstrate. According to the oral history of the community, the scroll, including its codicology, vocabulary, and social usage during ceremonies, is a documentary leftover of the Fatimid period.[45]

As an object of ritual performance, the scrolls of the *khizāna* may have their codicological format in common, yet this does not mean that they are all used for the same purpose. In fact, among the scrolls of the *khizāna* we find a great variety of social uses. The examples range from *waqf* scrolls of mosques and land, inheritance scrolls, which come in the special format of rollable charts, lists, and inventories of private possessions.

Here I will focus on two types of scrolls from which believers derive efficacy when they are revealed outside the *khizāna* during communal ceremonies. The first is the *ʿahd sijill* (scroll of the covenant), which is the main ritual object of the ceremony of the *mīthāq*. The *mīthāq* is considered the most important ritual of Alawi Bohra life as it marks the spiritual initiation into the community and its esoteric and exoteric truths.[46] During their *mīthāq*, Bohra children take an oath of allegiance in front of their Dāʿī as a rite of passage into adulthood.

In fig. 13.8 we see an Alawi Bohra girl during her *mīthāq*, which is taking place in the living room of her parents' apartment. This picture was taken right after

44 Marina Rustow, *The Lost Archive. Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo* Synagogue (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 381–401.

45 Based on palaeographical and codicological analysis, I have confirmed this claim here: Akkerman, "Bohras as Neo-Fāṭimids," 286–308.

46 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 148.

FIGURE 13.7 The Dāʿī carefully unrolling one of the oldest scrolls of the *khizāna* collection

the Dāʿī, who is seated on the right, revealed and carefully unrolled the laminated *ʿahd* scroll from his handbag. On the couch are the other members of the royal family, including his sons and grandson, while behind the girl the other clerics and community members are sitting on the floor. The scroll, torn due to heavy usage, contains a variant of the *ʿahd* formula dating back to the Fatimid period, which is read out loud by the Dāʿī. The content of this formula is only known to those who have taken the oath. The oath-receiver, the girl, responds

FIGURE 13.8 Social practice versus codicology. Above: *'ahd* ceremony, below: historic exemplars of *'ahd* scrolls. Note how the paper of the scrolls is pasted around cardboard rolls to stabilize the object.

after each sentence with *naʿm* (Ar.; "yes") as an oral agreement. As we can see, she is sitting so close to the scroll she can almost touch it. During the ceremony, the girl and the Dāʿī are connected through a golden cloth known as the *rakhi*, which they both hold in their hands. After the scroll is read out in its entirety, the girl is officially declared a *muʾmina* (female believer) and part of the community. She is now expected to perform her religious obligations as a marriageable adult.

Two elements are important in this rite of passage. First, the main sacred object is a manuscript from the *khizāna* in the form of a scroll, manually copied by the sacred hand of the Dāʿī. Without the material presence of the scroll, the ceremony cannot take place. Secondly, during this communal affair, the Dāʿī and the oath taker are connected sensorially through *touch* (through the golden cloth), *orally* (through the formula of the *ʿahd* recited from the manuscript), and *visually* (through the material presence of the scroll). This sensorial connectedness between the person taking and the person administering the oath creates a close physical and spiritual proximity between the Dāʿī and his devotee, a brief liminal moment which believers only experience once in their lives.

The second type of *sijill* is a secret scroll which is taken out of the *khizāna* only once a year during as the *ʿurs* or death anniversaries of certain important Dāʿīs. Throughout the centuries, the different Bohra communities have recorded the divine designation of the succession of their Dāʿīs in so-called *naṣṣ* (divine designation) scrolls. As such, they are political documents that legitimize power, and they are therefore considered highly secret objects, as they form the community's material proof of their genealogy of Dāʿīs, as opposed to their sister Bohra communities, who follow different pedigrees of royal sacerdotal families.[47]

In fig. 13.9 we see a snapshot taken during the Alawis' annual *ʿurs* to the city of Ahmedabad to pay respect to the sacred lineage of their Dāʿīs. Taken from afar, we see the men of the community in the *musāfir khāna* (pilgrim lodge) seated on the floor while listening attentively to the sermon of their Dāʿī. In the following picture (fig. 13.10), the Dāʿī shows his constituents a framed copy of a fragment of a *naṣṣ* scroll. As a controversial text, this particular scroll is partly written in *kitāb sirriyya* (see fig. 13.10), or secret script, which conceals the identity of the founder and namesake of the community, Sy. ʿAlī Shamsuddīn (d. 1637).[48] The secret object in question could thus not be deciphered or understood by the audience.

47 For a more elaborate description of the concept of what I call the *materiality of naṣṣ*, see Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 74–81.

48 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 74–81.

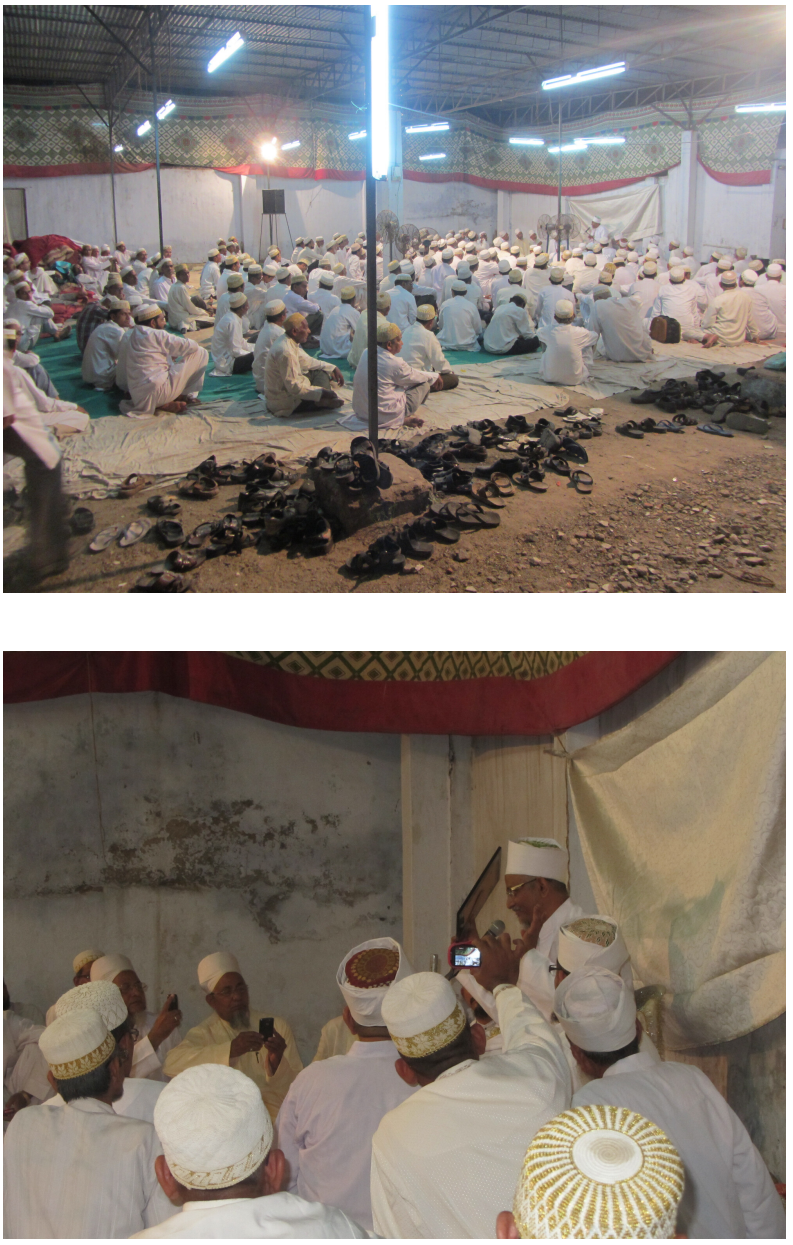


FIGURE 13.9 Above: picture taken from afar in the *musāfir khāna* (pilgrim lodge) in Ahmedabad before the Dāʿī reveals a *naṣṣ* scroll to a crowd of believers. Below: The Dāʿī reveals a framed copy of a fragment of a *naṣṣ* scroll during the *ʿurs* ceremony in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, while believers take pictures with their smartphones.

As I sat in the back of the *musāfir khāna* and observed, I realized that while the experience of witnessing a manuscript as a sacred object may be different from reading it, it can be just as powerful. As we know from other contexts, merely gazing at a sacred text that has strong healing powers attributed to it, such as the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* by the thirteenth-century poet al-Būṣīrī, can have restorative and cathartic effects on believers.[49] There was thus no need for the Dāʿī, who introduced the manuscript with much passion and excitement, to read out the document. While I was present during what could best be described as a choreographed performance of revealing the *naṣṣ* scroll, I observed the reaction of the crowd. Believers responded in awe and spontaneously started to pray and loudly exclaim *yā Ḥussayn*, while others took pictures with their smartphones to document this unique experience (see fig. 13.10).

The effect that this object has on the audience stems not only from seeing a historic document written in an esoteric script, which would be a once in a lifetime experience in and of itself for most believers. To the community, this particular *naṣṣ* scroll forms the material proof of the divinely designated legitimacy of the line of succession of the founder of the Alawi community.[50] As such, in the eyes of the believers who witness this document collectively in the ritualized setting of the *ʿurs*, it has the political agency, to refer to Jane Bennet, of holding together both the Alawi Bohra community and the cosmic universe at large.[51]

Having participated in several *mīthāq* ceremonies as well as in the *ʿurs* in Ahmedabad, however, I observed that there is more to the experience of witnessing secret manuscripts collectively than legitimizing power and strengthening communal cohesion. As objects that initiate and create a sense of togetherness, these secret scrolls provide believers with the sensory experience of witnessing or gazing at something that is not only secret, but more importantly, divine and sacred.

In discussing the practice of the devotional gaze in Muslim contexts and the concept of *naẓar* (lit. "vision"), Stephen Hirtenstein describes that, in the Sufi tradition, it is the act of "looking or observing with the outer senses rather than devotional practices such as prayer or reading that is seen as the first step of

49 See, for instance, Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "'From Text to Talisman: Al-Būṣīrī's Qaṣīdat al-Burdah" (Mantle Ode) and the Supplicatory Ode," *Journal of Arabic Literature* vol. 37, no. 2 (2006), 145–189; Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *Burda. The Mantle Odes. Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muhammad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

50 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 74–81.

51 Jane Bennet, *Vibrant Matter*, 32.

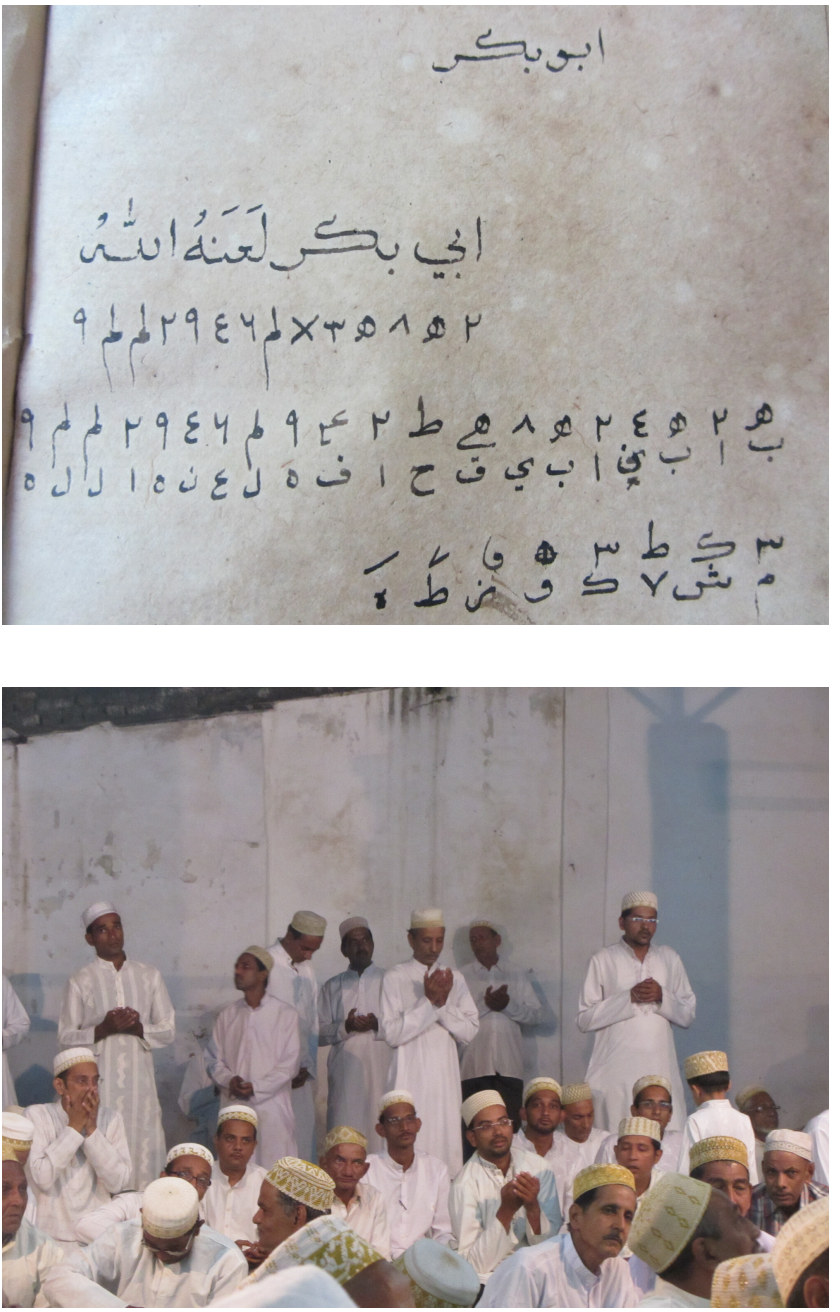


FIGURE 13.10 Above: a paratextual note found on the first flyleaf of an Alawi Bohra manuscript in *kitāb sirriyya* (not originating from the *naṣṣ* document, as this cannot be revealed). Below: believers responding in awe and prayer.

a pious life, before reflecting with the mind on what has been observed".[52] In the context of Hinduism as well as twelver Shiʿism in South Asia, Karen Ruffle argues that the devotional act of seeing is, in fact, a unique inter-sensorial mode of experiencing the divine. In what she calls "reciprocal gazing" at sacred artefacts, the tactile and visual senses are intertwined in such a way that seeing equals touching.[53] She uses the example of the *ʿalam* (standard used for processions) as a powerful material symbol of the Imams and the *ahl al-bayt*.[54] Among South Asian twelver Shiʿa, she argues, as sacred objects, the calligraphic inscriptions on the *ʿalams* become the embodiment of the Imams and their *baraka bodies*. The *ʿalam*s thus have Imamic body parts, such as a heart, eyes, head, and feet, which devotees "touch" and experience physically by fixing their gaze on them.[55]

The *ʿalam*, which is taken out of its storage once a year during the procession of Muḥarram, may not be part of the ritual repertoire of the Alawi Bohras, yet the secret scrolls and other manuscripts that are taken out of the *khizāna* fulfil a similar purpose. Gazing at secret scrolls during the ceremonies described above are in fact inter-sensorial modes of experiencing and indirectly "touching" the Fatimid Imams, the *ahl al-bayt*, and the Prophet Muhammad. In other words, gazing at sacred manuscripts should be seen as a pious practice through which believers seek physical and spiritual closeness to the divine.

2.3 *Hearing: Maljis Notes*

Various forms of single-leaf manuscripts are enshrined in the *khizāna*, including the *awrāq* (s. *waraq*). The *awrāq* are the personal notes of the Dāʿī, which function as reading and recitation aides during the *majlis* and other communal events. The *khizāna* enshrines a large collection of these clerical notes, some of which are centuries old and have been written by various generations of Dāʿīs. They are hand-copied onto single-leaf writing surfaces, which makes them easy to transport, read from, and carry by their owners. Moreover, they are easy to store in the *khizāna*; either in plastic Ziplock bags or paper boxes (see fig. 13.11).

52 Stephen Hirtenstein, "Human Looking, Divine Gaze: Naẓar in Islamic Spirituality," in *Naẓar: Vision, Belief, and Perception in Islamic Culture*, ed. Samer Akkach (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 63.

53 Karen Ruffle, "Gazing in the Eyes of the Martyrs: Four Theories of South Asian Shiʿi Visuality," *Journal of Material Cultures in the Muslim World* 1 (2020), 272. Karen Ruffle, *Everyday Shiism in South Asia* (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2021), 175, 176. See also the forthcoming volume edited by Yafa Shanneik, Fouad Gehad Marei and Christian Funke, *Beyond Karbala: New Approaches to Shiʿi Materiality* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2024).

54 Ruffle, *Everyday Shiism in South Asia*, 175, 176.

55 Ruffle, *Everyday Shiism in South Asia*, 175, 176.

FIGURE 13.11 The Dāʿī copying, storing, and reading his *awrāq* in the treasury of books. The clerics use the historic collection of *awrāq* for inspiration and as reference for their sermons.

The Dāʿī carries his notes in a simple plastic shopping bag, or, in the case of more fragile fragments, a special handbag which accompanies him on his travels.

The topic of studying clerical notes, such as for example those made by Central Asian muftis in *jung*-type notebooks, is slowly gaining momentum in the field of Islamic manuscript studies.[56] Clerical notes are a fertile topic of research as they reveal a vast world of information which one usually would not have access to, shedding light on the work routines and personal lives of imams, judges, and *muftis*. The collection of personal *awrāq* of the Dāʿī can be considered a small archive of historic and contemporary personal notes within the *khizāna*. In terms of their social usage, the *awrāq* can be considered the material object in between the esoteric manuscripts of the *khizāna* and the sermon believers hear in the mosque. They contain small portions of carefully selected esoteric knowledge that is digestible to the audience. The Dāʿī explained that this practice is like "lifting the small corner of the veil."[57] While he recites these small portions, such as in fig. 13.12, believers experience the esoteric truths not by seeing *awrāq* but orally through the skilful recitation of the Dāʿī and his entourage. In the Bohra tradition, this is considered the preferable way to receive this knowledge, as it moves slowly through the ear and into the chest, where it finally reaches the heart.

2.4 *Ingesting: Talismanic Seals and Sacred Book Hands*

The final social-codicological phenomenon in the *khizāna* to be discussed is that of talismanic writing practices. In its most classical form, this practice takes the shape of in the popular material object of the *taʿwīdh* or talisman, written by the Dāʿī during an official audience. As seen in fig. 13.13, believers, often accompanied by relatives, enter the *khizāna* and pay their respects to the Dāʿī by kneeling in front of him or kissing his hand, after which they discuss their personal problems or ailments. The Dāʿī can be seen copying Qurʾanic verses or magical *budūḥ* squares in Arabic on a small, single-folio piece of paper for healing and blessings, which the recipient, depending on the malady at hand, either ingests through dissolving the object in water or keeps close to the body as an amulet. In addition to the magical *budūḥ* squares, *taʿwīdh* often contain Qurʾanic verses, *duʿāʾs*, and secret scripts (see next section).

56 Jürgen Paul, "Mufti Notebooks: Two ǧung Manuscripts from Late Nineteenth-Century Bukharamore," in *Personal Manuscripts: Copying, Drafting, Taking Notes*, ed. David Durand-Guédy and Jürgen Paul (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2023), 359–394. See also Verena Klemm, "A Library in One Volume—The Collectanea of the Ismaili Scholar Sayyidī Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Hamdānī from Surat," *Philological Encounters*, forthcoming.

57 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 111.

FIGURE 13.12 Recitation from the handwritten *awrāq* during the *'urs* of several Dā'īs at the *Qabaristān* (graveyard) (above), and during the oration of the story of Karbala during Muḥarram in the mosque (below), both in Baroda

FIGURE 13.13 Left: The Dāʿī is writing a *taʿwīdh* for a believer during an audience in his office in the treasury of books. Right: boxes storing the various kinds of *taʿwīdh* in his office in Arabic, Gujarati, and *Lisān al-daʿwa*, the sociolect of the community

Believers experience the vibrations of these pieces of text, paired with the sacred qualities of the book hand of the Dāʿī and the *baraka*, either through taste and smell in case of ingestion, or directly on the body.[58] The vibrations of this *baraka* are believed to bless whatever matter it comes into contact with, including humans, animals, and objects, which become animate. In the Alawi Bohra *mohallah*, the *taʿwīdh* functions as a popular material, and even as an immaterial commodity in the community, as the visitor pays a small fee for this transaction. In other, larger Bohra communities, an entire economy exists based on these commodities and services. I was told that in these communities, upon death, it is customary that the Dāʿī writes a small note with a *duʿā'* for the deceased believer, which accompanies the body in the grave and helps the believer in their transition to the afterlife.[59]

In addition to handwritten books, paratexts, and script dissolved in water, agency is also attributed to another handwritten talismanic commodity in the

58 For similar practices, see Hanna Nieber, "'They all just want to get healthy!' Drinking the Qur'an between forming religious and medical subjectivities in Zanzibar," *Journal of Material Culture* 22(4) 2017, 453–475.

59 Interview with Dawoodi Bohras in Mombasa, Kenya, August 2022.

community: the *ʿalāma*.[60] The *ʿalāma*, or royal signature of the Dāʿī, consists of his personal calligraphed *basmala*, and it is ceremoniously written as a seal of authorization on pieces of paper (to be kept as a talisman), wooden planks (to be stored at home in a place of pride), or even on walls of buildings upon their inauguration.[61] Having visited many Bohra houses during my fieldwork, I can confirm that the *ʿalāma*, often paired with a portrait of the Dāʿī, is a common sacred object in many living rooms. According to their owners, the *ʿalāma* blesses the home and emits instant *baraka* when it is looked at.

Another ritual in which the writing of the *ʿalāma* plays a central role is known as *rasm-e Tayyibi*, which traditionally takes place during Diwali, the Hindu new year. It is customary in the Alawi Bohra community that, during this time of the year, its businessmen and shopkeepers buy new account books to start the new fiscal year. As can be seen in fig. 13.14, the Dāʿī writes his *ʿalāma* with a fountain pen on the first page of these account books to bestow blessings and prosperity on the business. I was told that, occasionally, these *ʿalāmas* are cut out from the account books, and even from *khizāna* manuscripts, and are clandestinely sold for hundreds of rupees on "the black market." Despite the fact that this practice is strictly prohibited by the clerics, the Dāʿī's *ʿalāma* is a highly sought-after commodity in the community.[62] As such, these *ʿalāmas* have thus acquired a new social, almost clandestine life outside the *khizāna*.

An interesting aspect of these talismanic commodities is that, as material "things" radiating *baraka*, these object provide the believers with the rare tangible experience of touching (in the literal sense) a little bit of the "sacred matter" from the otherwise "untouchable" manuscripts of the *khizāna*. This explains why believers are willing to pay enormous sums to be in the possession of a *taʿwīdh* or *ʿalāma*, even if these have been procured through unofficial routes. To understand the meaning of these objects from the perspective of the believers, Karen Ruffle's earlier-discussed notion of the *baraka body* in the context of the calligraphic inscriptions on the *ʿalams* is fitting. This holds true especially in the case of the *ʿalāma*, which, as an utmost sacred object, is the material symbol of the Dāʿī's hand and his almost-infallible body.

60 For a discussion on the possible Fatimid origins of the Bohras' usage of the term *ʿalāma*, see Akkerman, "Bohras as Neo-Fāṭimids."

61 Akkerman, "Bohras as Neo-Fāṭimids."

62 Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 114.

FIGURE 13.14 Above: The yearly *rasm-e Tayyibi* ritual. Below: exemplar of the late Dāʿī's *ʿalāma* written in green ink. Photo credits: Alawi Bohra *daʿwa*.

3 Sensing the Khizāna on the Screen

Nearly a decade has passed since I left Baroda. Badri Mohallah and its people, however, have stayed in my mind. Even though I am no longer physically part of the *mohallah*, some things remain exactly the same.[63]

It is five o'clock in the morning, and I am woken up by my phone. Given the odd hour of the message, it can only come from one time zone: India. It is a message, I realize, from the Dāʿī. Despite his royal title and busy schedule as the spiritual head of the community and its cosmic hierarchy, we have kept in

63 The following section is an abridged and modified version of two texts titled, "A Jihad for Books" and "A Case for Social Codicology," from my monograph *A Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*. Akkerman, *Neo-Fatimid Treasury of Books*, 345, 346, 350, 351.

touch over the years. As two bibliophiles, the Dāʿī and I occasionally continue our manuscript sessions over WhatsApp.

The Dāʿī, or "Syedna Saheb," as I call him, regularly sends me snapshots of his latest scribal achievements, new *khizāna* acquisitions and discoveries, and updates on his family and the affairs of his community. Respecting royal protocol as much as possible, I respond by sending him scans and pictures of Arabic manuscripts and the latest publications on codicology. Through our WhatsApp history, we have thus curated a digital, yet very personal *khizānat al-kutub*.[64]

Yet as fascinating as the Yemeni book hands and magical squares are that come my way, between our screens there is "something" that gets lost. Being far removed from the *khizāna*, I miss the sounds of the creaking spines of codices, the smell of dusty scrolls and the touch of leather bindings. The "something," I realized, that gets lost in our brief digital interactions is the tangible materiality of objects. Scrolling through a photograph of a handwritten talisman may still have healing benefits to those who ascribe agency and efficacy to it, yet the practice of having it in hand, dissolving and tasting its ink and ingesting it creates a different reality altogether.

On this early morning in April, I receive a special written text from the *khizāna* in the inbox. Rather than the usual leaf from a codex, it is a *taʿwīdh*, handwritten in Arabic by the Dāʿī himself (see figs. 13.15 and 13.17). The *taʿwīdh* has been written for the special purpose of protection against the new threat the world is facing: the coronavirus. We are in the middle of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The community, I learn, is in lockdown, and is forced to carry on its many functions and gatherings of worship online (see fig. 13.16).[65]

Many believers, I am informed, have fallen ill, including the Dāʿī himself. The *taʿwīdh* has been forwarded via WhatsApp to the entire community, and it is accompanied with a text in Gujarati which explains how to use it. It reads:

64 The exchange of manuscripts over WhatsApp and other social media, a phenomenon that Annabel Teh Gallop calls "Facebook Philology," raises ethical debates on digital materiality, ownership, and access. See Annabel Teh Gallop, "Facebook Philology: The Contribution of Social Media to the Study of Manuscripts from Indonesia and the Malay World," Simposium Internasional Pernaskahan Nusantara XVI MANASSA, Perpustakaan Nasional RI, Jakarta 26–29 September 2016, 1–12.

65 For exciting new research on Shiʿi digital worship during the COVID-19 pandemic, see Rhys Thomas Sparey, "#IAMHUSSEINI: Television and Mourning During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Religion* (2022), 284–305; Aleeha Zahra Ali, "Conjuring Karbala Online and Offline," *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 11 1 (2022), 124–145; Babak Rahimi, "Digital Technology and Pilgrimage: Shiʿi Rituals of Arabaʿin in Iraq," *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture*, forthcoming.

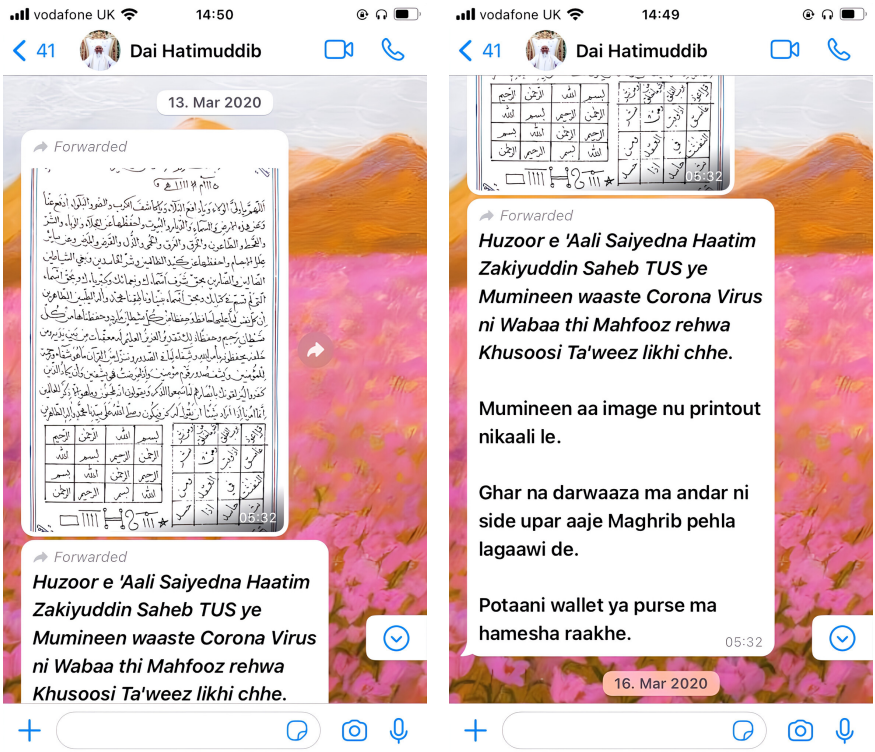
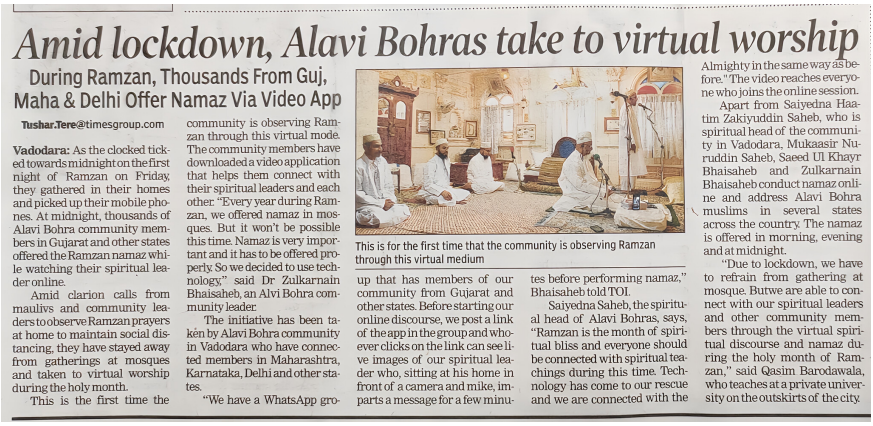


FIGURE 13.15 WhatsApp correspondence with the Dāʿī, who has forwarded me a picture of a handwritten *taʿwīdh*, accompanied with an explanation in Gujarati written in Latin script

Saiyedna Saheb Huzoor e Aali Haatim Zakiyudin Saheb (the full title of the Dāʿī) writes this special taʿweez for the faithful of Alawi community, for the muʾmineen (believers), against the fatal disease of the corona virus. Muminеen will remain in safety due to this special taʾweez.

Muʾmineen are requested to take a printout of this taʾweez and to stick it behind the main door of their houses at the top, and, if not possible, muʾmineen are advised to put the printout of this taʾweez in their wallet, bag, or purse. If they are ladies then they should carry it with them and always, inshallah they will be protected from the infection of the corona virus.[66]

66 I thank Mohammad Bhaisaheb Nuruddin Mukasir Saheb for providing me with this translation orally (also via WhatsApp).



Amid lockdown, Alavi Bohras take to virtual worship

During Ramzan, Thousands From Guj, Maha & Delhi Offer Namaz Via Video App

Tushar.Tere@timesgroup.com

Vadodara: As the clocked ticked towards midnight on the first night of Ramzan on Friday, they gathered in their homes and picked up their mobile phones. At midnight, thousands of Alavi Bohra community members in Gujarat and other states offered the Ramzan namaz while watching their spiritual leader online.

Amid clarion calls from maulivs and community leaders to observe Ramzan prayers at home to maintain social distancing, they have stayed away from gatherings at mosques and taken to virtual worship during the holy month.

This is the first time the community is observing Ramzan through this virtual mode. The community members have downloaded a video application that helps them connect with their spiritual leaders and each other. "Every year during Ramzan, we offered namaz in mosques. But it won't be possible this time. Namaz is very important and it has to be offered properly. So we decided to use technology," said Dr Zulkarnain Bhaisaheb, an Alvi Bohra community leader

The initiative has been taken by Alavi Bohra community in Vadodara who have connected members in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi and other states.

"We have a WhatsApp group that has members of our community from Gujarat and other states. Before starting our online discourse, we post a link of the app in the group and whoever clicks on the link can see live images of our spiritual leader who, sitting at his home in front of a camera and mike, imparts a message for a few minutes before performing namaz," Bhaisaheb told TOI.

Saiyedna Saheb, the spiritual head of Alavi Bohras, says, "Ramzan is the month of spiritual bliss and everyone should be connected with spiritual teachings during this time. Technology has come to our rescue and we are connected with the Almighty in the same way as before." The video reaches everyone who joins the online session.

Apart from Saiyedna Haatim Zakiyuddin Saheb, who is spiritual head of the community in Vadodara, Mukaasir Nuruddin Saheb, Saeed Ul Khayr Bhaisaheb and Zulkarnain Bhaisaheb conduct namaz online and address Alavi Bohra muslims in several states across the country. The namaz is offered in morning, evening and at midnight.

"Due to lockdown, we have to refrain from gathering at mosque. Butwe are able to connect with our spiritual leaders and other community members through the virtual spiritual discourse and namaz during the holy month of Ramzan," said Qasim Barodawala, who teaches at a private university on the outskirts of the city.

This is for the first time that the community is observing Ramzan through this virtual medium

FIGURE 13.16 News article clipping on the Alawi Bohras' virtual worship. Source: *Times of India* online.[67]

The brother of the Dāʿī explained to me that this digital *taʿwīdh* was sent via WhatsApp because it was not possible to deliver it to the houses of the community due to the lockdown that was imposed by the Indian government. He also said that he advised believers to make multiple copies of the printout. The WhatsApp *taʿwīdh* consists of two *duʿā's* in Arabic, known as *duʿāʾ al-karb* (The *Duʿāʾ* of Difficulty) and *duʿāʾ al-kashf* (the *duʿāʾ* of the unveiling of what is hidden).

The first *taʿwīdh* starts with two *basmalas*, one written in Arabic and one coded in *kitāb siriyya* (secret script). It ends with two magical squares, the right one containing *Sūrat al-Falaq* (no. 113, Chapter of Dawn) and the left one containing the *basmala*, which can be read in different directions. Beneath the left magical square another protective formula is written in *kitāb siriyya*. All four corners of the *taʿwīdh* contain a protective invocation, written clockwise starting with the right upper corner, reading the *yā shāfī* (o healer), *yā wāfī* (o reliable one), *yā muʿāfī* (o restorer), and *yā kāfī* (o sufficient one), which are popular phrases of divine supplication. These invocations are written in a different colour of ink to make them stand out from the main text.

Shortly after our WhatsApp exchange, the *taʿwīdh* is uploaded on the official Alawi Bohra website under a link titled *A Valuable Treasure of Taʿweez to ward off Sharr & Wabaa* (*Evil & Calamities*). The section is accompanied by a

67 Tushar Tere, "Gujarat: Amid Lockdown, Alavi Bohras take to Virtual Worship," *Times of India*, April 26, 2020, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/amid-lockdown-alavi-bohras-take-to-virtual-worship/articleshow/75383804.cms.

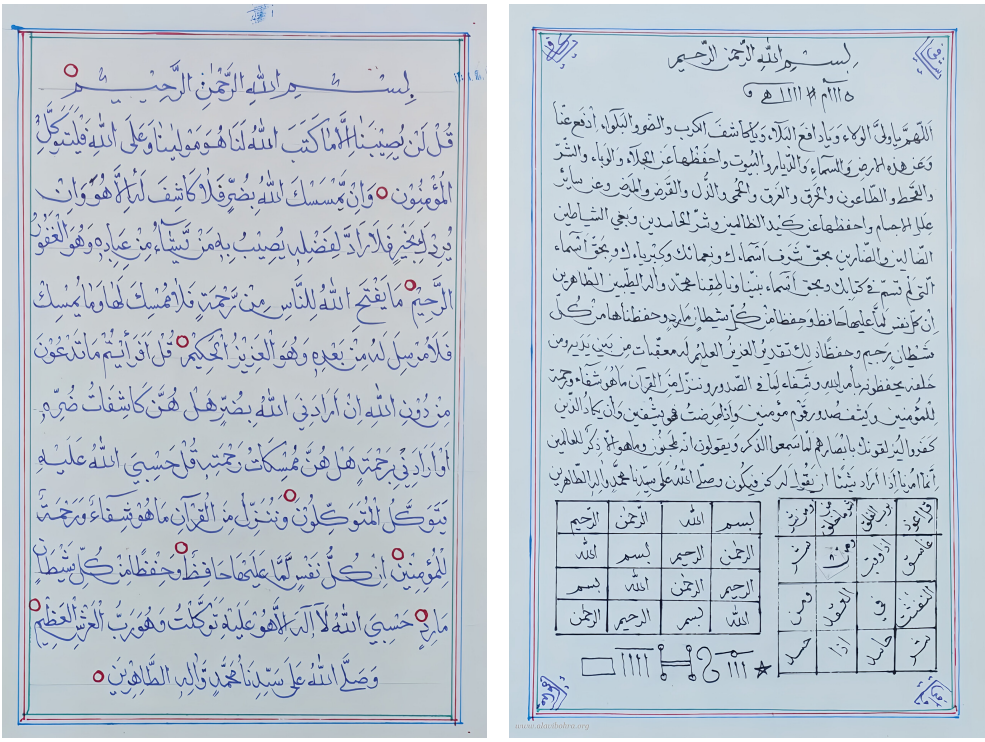


FIGURE 13.17 Two COVID *taʿwīdh* of *duʿāʾ al-karb* (*the Duʿāʾ of Difficulty*) and *duʿāʾ al-kashf* (*the Duʿāʾ of the Unveiling*).

transliteration and translation of the Arabic text of the *duʿāʾ* as well as a detailed interpretation.[68] It furthermore mentions that the Dāʿī has "prescribed this **Mujarrab** (effective) **Ta'weez** to seek grace and blessings from Allaah in this most scary times of sickness and viral disease caused by **Corona Virus (Covid-19)** worldwide."[69] The sensorial experience of the personal audience with the Dāʿī and watching him write the *taʿwīdh* is substituted by an audio fragment where the *duʿāʾ* is recited in a clear and pious voice.[70]

Not long after receiving the COVID *taʿwīdh*, another written text arrives from the *khizāna* into my inbox. It is a snapshot of a *qaṣīda* (poem) couplet in Arabic, written in 1664 in Ahmedabad by the Dāʿī Sy. Ḥasan Badruddīn b. Walī (d. 1679).

68 https://www.alavibohra.org/Dua-e-Kashf%20il-Karb.htm. Accessed 8 November 2023.
69 Ibid. Emphasis added in bold on the website.
70 https://www.alavibohra.org/images/audio/tasbeeh-duaa/kashf%20il%20karb.mp3. Accessed 8 November 2023.

FIGURE 13.18 Banner of the official website of the *daʿwat al-ʿAlawiyya*, with translation.[71]

I am soon to find out that a photo of this "*mubaarak* writing" (blessed writing) has been uploaded to the official community website as its main banner (see fig. 13.18).[72] In addition to its content, which asks God to keep the community protected in times of hardship, it is the handwritten word of one of the community's late spiritual leaders, the thirty-seventh Dāʿī Sy. Alī Shamsuddīn (d. 1248/1832), who copied it in his *khizāna* two centuries after its composition.

The sacred materiality and healing qualities that are attributed to it give this manuscript fragment an aura of evanescence and authority. The digital snapshot of the Alawi *qaṣīda* also reminds us of the famous example of the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* I discussed earlier and the thaumaturgic effects believers derive from merely gazing at the calligraphic text. Though now presented in digital form online, it is the sacred materiality of the text, the tangibility of the object, which believers know is stored in the treasury of books in their *mohallah*, that imparts strength and protection.

4 Conclusion: Talismanic Manuscript Efficacy in the Digital Age?

In this essay we explored social-codicological practices beyond reading and the ritualized efficacy of Bohra manuscripts. The above-described digital tal-

71 http://alavibohra.org/index.php. Accessed 25 November 2022.
72 https://www.alavibohra.org. Accessed 25 November 2022.

ismanic artefacts seem to challenge the paradigm of the closed *khizāna* and its sacred, untouchable manuscripts, which, as tangible material objects, only circulate outside the *khizāna* in ritually controlled and performed settings and ceremonies. It is through these carefully choreographed spaces, I have argued, that believers interact with the esoteric truths of the *khizāna* through the devotional gaze, touch, hearing, and even smell and taste, and rely on their efficacy in their day-to-day lives. The social-codicological character of these ritual practices and the efficacy of Bohra manuscripts lie at the intersection between the particular materiality of the manuscript, ritual practice, power, and the politics of access.

The question remains whether destabilizing global developments beyond the *mohallah*, such the COVID-19 pandemic have made it possible for secret manuscripts to be efficacious in a digital and thus immaterial form, operating outside the ritualized space that is culturally, historically, and materially so specific to the Alawi Bohras. Is Bohra manuscript efficacy and secrecy compatible with the digital age, and what are the implications of the digital age for the closed *khizāna* culture of the Alawis? The examples of the digital COVID *taʿwīdh* and the protective website banner as digital talismanic artifacts seem to indicate that the two are indeed compatible, as the book hand of the Dāʿī, as well as the invocations of protection and healing of the *duʿā's* and the *qaṣīda*, continue to be effective in radiating their protective *baraka*, even if it is from the screen or a printout.

In the case of the digital *qaṣīda* banner, the practice of *devotional screen gazing* can be considered as *seeing as touching* the divine. As such, the *qaṣīda* banner can be regarded as an immaterial digital artefact. In the case of the printed *taʿwīdh*, the screen acts merely as a medium that transmits the digital handwritten artefact to its tangible, printed form. Yet, as we have seen, a simultaneous digital, sensorial experience is created as the recitation of the *duʿā's* on the *taʿwīdh* are also available online. They can thus be listened to online, obviating the need for believers to experience their protective vibrations in the mosque or the *jāmaʿat khāna*.

For the Alawi community and their Dāʿī, the circulation of digital talismanic artifacts via WhatsApp has been instrumental in cultivating social cohesion during the lockdown and providing and receiving blessings and healing. Whether the thaumaturgic powers of these digital manuscripts are as effective as *in situ* is a question that awaits further research.

Unlike other Shiʿi communities in South Asia and the Middle East who have continued their virtual worship online, post-pandemic, the Alawi Bohras have returned to their devotional practices *in situ*. The secret manuscripts of the *khizāna* have reclaimed their place in ritual practice. Thus far, the *bāṭinī* codices

and scrolls have managed to stay off the screen. As they continue to dwell in their iron cupboards with no locks and keys, their social meaning and efficacy remain unchanged.

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Starting from the idea that manuscripts in their material, immaterial, ritual, and recited forms have social lives, biographies, agency, and efficacy, this volume is dedicated to the notion of social codicology. It brings together a new generation of interdisciplinary studies which combine history, philology, codicology, and anthropology, suggesting a more social, local, critical, reflexive, inclusive, yet at the same time material perspective on manuscript cultures in the Muslim world across time and space. Moving beyond the dominant focus on manuscripts as inert carriers of text, its focus is on the social framework in which manuscripts and other forms of writing constantly gain meaning through their interaction with communities, thus humanizing rather than exoticizing the people who write, use, and venerate manuscripts as part of their living, local, and day-to-day understanding of Islam in the past and present.

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